

# SandalPrints

Issue # 157 ... Clare the Light ... 2015AD  
*Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis of Reconciliation - Palm Springs, CA*  
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## Start With Yourself

*By Sister Angela Marie*

When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country.

But it, too, seemed immovable.

As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing only my family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it.

And now as I lay on my deathbed, I suddenly realize: *If I had only changed my self first*, then by example I would have changed my family.

From this inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed the world.

## FRANCIS AND CLARE - A HOLY FRIENDSHIP

*By Richard Brakefield, J.D., SFO, KC\*HS*

Cicero tells us that "A friend is, as it were, a second self." Most of us develop early in life an ability to make and maintain friendships. Indeed, the human condition seems to require friendships for healthy social and emotional

growth. There are many kinds and degrees of friendship but it seems to be universally agreed that longtime friends are a blessing that ennoble and give a certain quality to life that we relish. If the perfect friendship is one in which the friends are a second self one to the other, then Francis and Clare shared such a friendship.

Strong in their commonality of purpose and love of Christ, Clare and Francis were nevertheless different people. Francis was of common origin and Clare was born to a noble family. Both families were wealthy and may have had business dealings or may have known of each other in adjacent circles of a society where the mercantile class was in ascendancy in wealth and political power. However, if Francis and Clare had any knowledge of each other in their childhood, their social status would have precluded any close association. Far less is written of St. Clare than of St. Francis but all those who have written agree that the two had a deep admiration for each other. When the admiration began is unclear. Clare probably became aware of Francis' conversion and his abandonment of wealth when she was about twelve years old. She had certainly heard the rumors of the mad man of Assisi who had given away some of his father's goods to beggars and spent time with lepers treating their sores. Clare would not have deemed Francis mad but would have found his actions courageous, admirable and very much in sync with her own attraction to the religious life. Despite the apparent social obstacles to the development of a friendship, their mutual

spiritual focus glued the two saints-to-be in a bond as strong as any friendship.

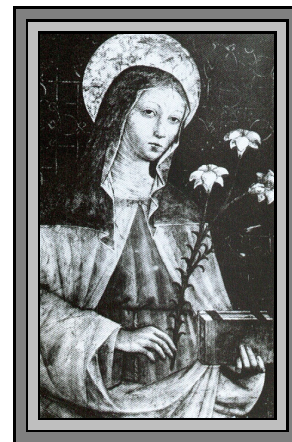
Clare was intrigued by Francis' selfless attitude and attracted to his total abandonment of wealth and comfort. While some labeled him a fool, Clare recognized the simple sincerity of Francis' commitment to the gospel life. History tells us she first heard Francis preach when she was fourteen and was attracted to the life of renunciation that Francis had embraced. In time, she began secretly to attend mass at San Damiano accompanied by an aunt who understood her attraction to the religious life. Each time she heard Francis preach was as if the Holy Spirit were speaking directly to her. Soon, she became convinced of her vocation but by the time she was seventeen and not yet married her family was demanding that she choose among a number of acceptable suitors. Clare was uncooperative and intent upon choosing her own path in life. She announced her desire to live the life Francis had chosen and on Palm Sunday, 1211 she broke from her family and took the habit of the new knights of littleness, marrying herself to the Lord with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Clare went straightaway to the Benedictine convent at nearby Bastia where she remained but a few days. Pursued by her outraged family who wished to return her forcibly to her former life, Clare sought refuge with the Benedictine nuns of San Angelo di Panzo on the slopes of Mount Subasio. She was soon joined by her fifteen year old sister, Agnes, and together, with Francis' blessing, they established their own convent at San Damiano. There, many followers joined her and the small group of nuns blossomed into the Order we know as the Poor Clares and spread throughout the world.

Despite the fact that Clare spent the rest of her life cloistered with her sisters, her life is well known and she is revered everywhere. Although their meetings were few and infrequent, Francis and Clare were remote from one another only physically. Their spirits

were so closely joined in love of Christ and their lives so exemplary that one can hardly breathe the name of Francis without uttering that of Clare. The Poor Clares and the Friars Minor were the new spiritual knights and ladies of their day and they regarded each other as such. From the very earliest days of the movement, their followers burgeoned in numbers and Franciscans remain the largest and most universally recognized group of religious men and women in the Catholic Church.

Just as Francis reflected in his life the life of Christ, so did Clare. They shared the same charism of simplicity of life and joyful celebration of God's presence and love for mankind. As Francis betrothed himself to poverty, Clare, the noble woman born to wealth and privilege, found poverty to be her greatest and most precious privilege. Together these two holy souls have left an impression that has truly changed the world and continues to profoundly impact lives after nearly nine centuries. Much has been written about St. Francis, regrettably less about St. Clare. Yet, one of the clearest descriptions of her influence was penned by Pope Alexander IV in the Bull of Canonization:



*“On earth this light was enclosed within walls, and yet its rays were seen far beyond; she lived in a strict monastic circle, and yet her light was diffused in the whole world; she restricted herself within, yet she was manifested to those outside. Clare hid herself;*

*and her life is known to all; Clare was silent, yet the fame of her was everywhere heard; she remained in her cell; yet she was preaching to the city."*

Clare's light remains brilliant, as does Francis' but where does such a light come from? Its source is God's love for you and me. It is the light that was before creation, was manifested to Abraham in the fiery bush and which blazed in the glory of Jesus' act of salvation on the cross. It destroys sin and conquers death. And all are called to bear witness to it and reflect it in life. The privileged are called to reflect the Light. The deprived are called to reflect the Light. The poor, the rich, the sick and the healthy, men and women, young people and seniors are called to reflect the Light. Clare and Francis were called and they answered in unison and their imitation of Christ has inspired millions. Their friendship endured because it was centered in the most important and true friendship one can have . . . a friendship with Jesus who is the Light.

Place your mind before the mirror of  
eternity!  
Place your soul in *the brilliance of  
glory!*  
Place your heart in *the figure of the  
divine substance!*  
And *transform* your whole being into  
*the image* of the Godhead Itself  
through contemplation!  
So that you too may feel what His  
friends feel as they taste the *hidden  
sweetness* which God Himself has  
reserved  
from the beginning  
for those who love Him.

*Clare of Assisi*

### Website Watching

Have you stumbled upon a great website recently that you'd like to share with the readers of SandalPrints? If so, please email it

to: [Anthony@FranciscanCanticle.com](mailto:Anthony@FranciscanCanticle.com) and we'll put it into the next issue under Website Watching. This issue's website of interest is another project of Franciscan Canticle, please visit the new site:

**www.FranciscanCanticle.com**

### Franciscan Saints, Blessed and Holy Ones August

2. Portiuncula
4. St. John Mary Vianney, III Ord.
6. Ven. Anthony Margil, I Ord.
7. Bls Agathangelus & Cassian, I Ord.
8. Holy Father Dominic, *Dominicans*
9. M. Maryanne of Molokai, III Ord.
11. St. Clare of Assisi
14. St. Maximilian Kolbe, I Ord.
15. Assumption of Our Lady
18. M. Mary Bertivoglio, II Ord.
18. Bls John, Protase and Sebastian, I Ord.
19. St. Louis of Toulouse, I Ord.
21. St. Pius X, III Ord.
22. Queenship of Mary
23. Blanche of Castille, III Ord.
25. St. Louis IX, patron of III Ord.
29. Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

*Clare became a light to the whole Church because she followed Jesus Christ with all her strength. Clare had a keen sense of the Mystical Body of Christ; she knew that her nuns at San Damiano were connected to every other part of the Church.*

### THE CANTICLE OF EXHORTATION TO SAINT CLARE AND HER SISTERS

1225

Saint Clare and the nuns at San Damiano were worried about Francis' health and saddened that he could not visit with them. In turn, Saint Francis sends them this message, written in the dialect of the Umbrian Valley and probably meant to be sung, containing words of consolation and encouragement.

Listen, little poor ones called by the Lord,  
who have come together from many parts and  
provinces.  
Live always in truth,  
that you may die in obedience.

Do not look at the life without,  
for that of the spirit is better.  
I beg you out of great love,  
to use with discernment  
the alms the Lord gives you.  
Those weighed down by sickness  
and the others wearied because of them,  
all of you: bear it in peace.  
For you will sell this fatigue at a very high  
price and each one will be crowned queen  
in heaven with the Virgin Mary.

*Excerpt from the book  
St. Francis At Prayer  
by Edd Anthony (Spring release)*

### Clare

Clare  
a light not hidden  
shining bright  
behind walls  
carefully chosen  
to enclose  
a heart on fire  
by God's love

Clare  
woman of strength  
sending hope  
to a world  
beyond the garden  
where she lived  
a focused life  
of dedication

Clare  
a single flower  
lighting hearts  
so many  
nurtured by grace (Francis)  
to become  
a bouquet of  
simplicity

*Fr. Edd Anthony*

Let us pray for the intentions of those who  
asked us to pray for them.

T

Abba Douglas, the disciple of Abba Bessarion, said:  
When we were walking along the sea one day, I was  
thirsty, so I said to Abba Bessarion, Abba, I am very  
thirsty. Then the old man prayed, and said to me,  
Drink from the sea. The water was sweet when I drank  
it. And I poured it into a flask, so that I would not be  
thirsty later. Seeing this, the old man asked me, Why  
are you doing that? I answered, Excuse me, but so that  
I won't be thirsty later on. Then the old man said, God  
is here, and God is everywhere.

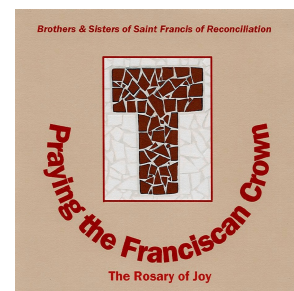
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