

‘Hail His Tabernacle!’

OFS Monthly Formation

March 2023

The Feast of the Annunciation:

As we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, it seems fitting to give honor to the Blessed Virgin Mary by way of these words from “A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary” by Saint Francis as follows:

“Hail His Tabernacle!
Hail His Dwelling!”

(Francis of Assisi: The Saint, p. 163).

Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, O.F.M Cap., one of the great Franciscan theologians and exponents of Mary, states “before the tabernacle was built, God first gave Moses a pattern, so that the entire work would be constructed according to the divine plan. All the mysteries of Christ, too, have been wonderfully prefigured in scripture’s plan before his incarnation and entrance into this world. Christ’s formation today in the womb of the Blessed Virgin is prefigured in the formation of Adam from blessed and virgin soil” Further in his sermon, with reference to the angel Gabriel being sent to the Blessed Virgin Mary, he states; “what a noble mission! God, the supreme King of the Universe, sends the prince of the angels to the Virgin Mary, the Queen of the World, on a mission of the utmost importance, the incarnation of the Word of God.... So today God, the Most High Father, sends Gabriel, the overseer of Paradise, to seek a spouse and also a mother for his Only-begotten Son. What a miracle! The Virgin Mary is at the same time mother, spouse, sister and a beloved daughter of Christ. Inasmuch as Christ is God, Mary is his daughter and spouse; as man, she is his sister and mother.” (*The Mariale*, Sermon Three: The Greatness of the Mission in the Mystery of the Incarnation, pp. 90-91).



Saint Lawrence of Brindisi (July 22, 1559 – July 22, 1619). Source: www.ofmcap.org

Reflection:

Indeed, the above, is very high praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In “A Letter to the Entire Order (1225-1226)” Saint Francis states “the Blessed Virgin is so honored, as is becoming, because she carried Him in her most holy womb”. (*Francis of Assisi: The Saint*, p. 118). Then in St. Francis’s “Letter to All the faithful, Second Version” he states that it was “from the Virgin Mary’s womb he received our human flesh and our frailty”. Let us therefore reflect, as we enter into our Lenten journey, that this flesh which Christ received from His Mother Mary, is also that flesh which hung upon the cross, for our salvation and that it is by this wounded flesh, that we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).



Our Lady, Queen of the Seraphic Order
Source: AirMaria.com



St. Francis kissing the feet of Christ/crucifix painting, Arezzo, Italy. Source: catholicregister.org

OFS Rule 9:

In reference to the Virgin Mary, “the Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently”.

Let us consider that in the Annunciation the Virgin Mary gave of her flesh to God, and that on the cross, Christ gave His flesh for us. These are the most heroic examples of sacrificial love and self-giving, worthy of contemplation on our Lenten road to Easter.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, how might you wish us to give of ourselves this Lent? Amen.