



OFS: Secular Franciscan Order (& YouFra)

The Third Order of St. Francis in Ireland.

National Newsletter August 2025

“To follow Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis”

Website: ofsireland.org



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“She was the first flower in Francis' garden, and she shone like a radiant star.” - St. Bonaventure on St Clare

“Peace, Francis, peace -- this is what you should teach!” she exclaimed in one of many letters. “Let them keep their possessions. Let them keep their worldly power. Share with them the simple peace. This is enough. Tell them about the beauty of peace in every moment. Give them the simple steps that you and I know so well. Step by step, peace and more peace with everyone and everything.” Clare knew that peace would change hearts to reject material possessions, to reject the pursuit of power and sin. How apt that our current Pope, Leo XIV, recently began his pontificate with the simple invocation: “peace be with all of you!”

See page 2 for the full article on St Clare

Picture : St Clare of Assisi by Andrés Sanchez Gallque

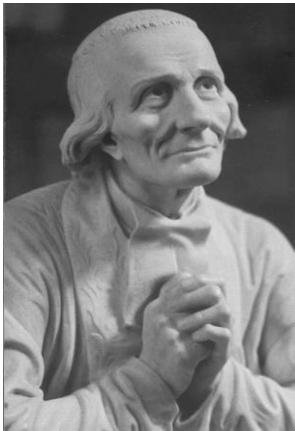
Professions in Cork

Recently five members of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) were professed in Cork.

(left to right): Paul Moynihan, Liam Guilfoil, Fr. Michael Holland OFM (Spiritual Assistant) John Dennis (to rear),

Jennifer Hernandez-Horgan, Finbarr Horgan, Maurice O'Brien (President OFS Cork)

This photo appeared in the Irish Catholic newspaper.



St John Vianney: Third Order Franciscan

August 4th, is the Feast of St John Vianney, Curé of Ars, and patron saint of diocesan priests. One little known detail from his life is that he joined the Third Order of St. Francis when he was a priest.

St John Vianney was greatly inspired by St Francis of Assisi. His admiration for St Francis was so great that Vianney himself desired to become a Franciscan Capuchin Friar. However, after strong instruction from his bishop not to leave his position as parish priest in the French town of Ars, Vianney found that the best way he could continue to live his Franciscan spirituality, while remaining a diocesan priest, was to join the Third Order Franciscans (*adapted from SFO Australia*).

Diocesan priests are still very welcome to join our fraternities.

National Assembly Saturday September 6th 2025 Cooke Street Dublin

Theme: Instruments of Peace

Agenda has been distributed by our National Secretary. It is important that all fraternities are represented.



St Clare of Assisi : Feast Day August 11th

As we gently move toward autumn and the summer rush winds down, it's fitting that we celebrate the Feast of St. Clare of Assisi on August 11th. Clare was so gentle and humble that the very thought of being the centre of celebration would likely have made her blush! In a letter to her fellow Franciscan, St. Agnes of Prague, she referred to herself as "Clare, an unworthy servant of Jesus Christ and useless handmaid of the cloistered ladies of the Monastery of San Damiano ..." Yet Clare was a beautiful servant to everyone, and to God above all. Born, like Francis, into a wealthy family, she was called to reject worldly privilege and follow Christ through Francis's example. By her teenage years she was determined to leave her family and their plan for her marriage and a privileged life to forge a new path alongside Francis – an act that was far from any rebellion her parents expected from this popular, mild-mannered girl. Her father and relatives tried to bring her back home, but she persisted. Beneath her outward humility lay a spiritual fortitude and will that few could match. Later, her own mother and some of her sisters went on to join the order she founded, now known as the Poor Clares. When Francis asked her to lead the order of sisters as abbess, she accepted out of obedience, even though she felt the role was far above her. Clare lived as a lowly handmaid to the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, enacting a Rule that exists to this day, and embracing a particularly severe form of poverty: from the beginning Clare insisted on what she called the "privilege of poverty," meaning that her community would own nothing. Pope Innocent III initially granted this "*Privilegium Paupertatis*," but subsequent church leaders sought to moderate such severe self-deprivation. During a visit to San Damiano, Pope Gregory IX worried that the sisters' health would suffer and offered to release Clare from her vow. Clare answered with loving firmness: "Holy Father, never and in no way do I wish to be dispensed from following Christ". Her determination persuaded the pope, and he reaffirmed the privilege of poverty for her order. This episode shows how completely she embraced poverty as a path to God and how respectfully she challenged authority when it threatened that commitment. Clare understood Francis's mission better than anyone else. They wrote to each other regularly and she offered loving encouragement when he needed it most. "Peace, Francis, peace -- this is what you should teach!" she exclaimed in one of many letters. "Let them keep their possessions. Let them keep their worldly power. Share with them the simple peace. This is enough. Tell them about the beauty of peace in every moment. Give them the simple steps that you and I know so well. Step by step, peace and more peace with everyone and everything." Clare knew that peace would change hearts to reject material possessions, to reject the pursuit of power and sin. How apt that our current Pope, Leo XIV, recently began his pontificate with the simple invocation: "peace be with all of you!" Young Catholics, such as Blessed Carlo Acutis, have begun to revive recognition of the awesome power of the Eucharist. Among Eucharistic miracles, Clare's witness was one of the most powerful ever documented. When Assisi was under siege by an army of Frederick II, who was at war with Pope Innocent IV, a physically diminished Clare rose from her sickbed and took a pyx containing the Blessed Eucharist. After telling her sisters she would protect them and imploring God's help, she went outside the convent and raised the Blessed Eucharist without fear. The soldiers fled when the Eucharist was brought before them, a force stronger than any man-made weapon or word. I recently read a wonderful piece that declared Francis and Clare as "Assisi's most dangerous citizens." They were "dangerous" not for physical prowess or brutal force, but because of their radical commitment to peace, poverty and service to God by serving the most marginalised people in society. Clare embodied the sheer power of this message. Even the most softly spoken and reticent among us can be mighty warriors waging peace for Christ, Gospel to life, life to Gospel.

St Clare quotes

"We are to become vessels of God's compassionate love for others"

"Love that does not know of suffering is not worthy of the name"

"We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become"

"Do not be disturbed by this world, which passes like a shadow"

"Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! And transform your entire being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation."