

Classic Franciscan



The Hands and Feet of Prayer

By Julia Pearson, SFO
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Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing.
Proverbs 28:27

St. Francis and the Wolf is a favorite story of Matthew Farrington, OFM. Matthew remembers a young student telling him: "You have to find your wolf and make peace with it." Making peace means feeding both body and soul hungers, just as Francis fed the wolf with food and friendship.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio and raised in Chicago, Illinois, with his brother and sister, Matthew was nurtured by a warm, traditional Catholic family life. Three of his grandparents were Irish immigrants. In the early 1990s, while attending Kent State University in Ohio, Matthew was first introduced to Catholic Worker. Upon graduating with a degree in history and political science ten years ago, Matt worked full time with Catholic Worker. Feeling the call of a deeper spiritual commitment, he entered the religious community five years ago as a Friar Minor of the Assumption Province.

Less than a year ago, the feet of prayer brought Matthew to his present home, Nazareth House, in Raleigh, North Carolina. Nazareth House is a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality that serves as a respite care center for ill people. Matt works alongside Scott Bass and Roberta Mothershead, a married couple who are a retired minister and veterinarian respectively, serving people undergoing medical treatment, people recuperating from major surgery, people who shouldn't be alone and have no one to care for them - some are homeless.

Deeply inspired by the life work and prayer-fed social activism of Dorothy Day, Matt has traveled to Columbus, Georgia, four times over the past ten years to peacefully protest the School of the Americas, re-named as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Funded with American tax dollars, the Institute is infamous (and reputed) for training death squads of Latin American countries that target farmers, community organizers, and church workers. This past November, he joined 20,000 others in the solemn funeral procession memorializing the victims of graduates of the School of the Americas. Crosses are carried with inscriptions of the names of those killed.

Nazareth House is just two miles from North Carolina's death row in Raleigh. A primary purpose of the House is to work for the abolition of the death penalty. The families and loved ones of those sentenced to die are provided loving hospitality, when they are in Raleigh to visit the inmates. According to Matt, the Catholic Worker is the Franciscan work of serving people one-on-one, and coupled with the Benedictine spirituality of prayerfulness. Seeing the great needs of the poor and marginalized in a very personal way, Matt says he asks always: "How is this a prayerful experience? Where is the grace?" Lectio divina, "absorbing the word of God and taking it into your spirit," is the spiritual bookends of Matt's days at Nazareth House. Like all good devotion, he says it "brings you into the presence of the sacred."

Secular Franciscans

MARCH FOR LIFE

Reminding everyone of the importance of all life – **from the moment of conception to NATURAL death**, the annual *March for Life* took place on January 22, 2008 in Washington, DC.

No matter the weather (usually cold, rain or snow), Secular Franciscans from the area converge under a sign that states, Secular Franciscans for Life – Pro Vita!