

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



CALLED TO SERVE

ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY
Vocation Newsletter

"In 1283 Saint Philip, Prior General of the Friar Servants of Saint Mary, attempted to lead back to obedience to the Apostolic See the citizens of Forlì then under interdict. He was driven out of the city with insults and violence. While this true follower of Christ was praying for his persecutors, one of the crowd, an eighteen year old by the name of Peregrine of the famous Laziosi family, repented and humbly asked Philip for forgiveness. The holy Father received him with love. From that moment the young man began to scorn the vanities of the world and to pray most fervently to the Blessed Virgin, asking that she show him the way of salvation. A few years later, guided by the Virgin, he received the habit of Our Lady in the priory of Siena where he dedicated himself to her service. There, together with Blessed Francis of Siena, he committed himself totally to the Servite life. After some years he was sent back to Forlì where, because of his love for God and Our Lady, he gave himself to the recitation of psalms, hymns and prayers, and to meditation on the law of God. On fire with love for others, he lavished a wealth of charity on the poor. It is said that he miraculously multiplied grain and wine during a severe shortage in his area.

Above all else, he was outstanding in his love for penance; in tears, he would reflect on the errors which he thought he had made and would frequently confess to the priest. He afflicted his body with various forms of mortification: when tired he would support himself on a choir stall or a rock; when overcome by sleep, he preferred the bare



earth to a bed. As a result of this type of life, at the age of sixty he suffered from varicose veins which degenerated into cancer of the right leg. His condition deteriorated to the point that a physician, who visited him in the priory, decided, with the consent of all the friars, to amputate the leg as soon as possible. The night before the operation Peregrine dragged himself before the crucifix in the priory chapter room. There he became drowsy and seemed to see Jesus descend from the cross to heal his leg. The following day, the doctor arrived to perform the amputation but

could find no sign of the cancer, or even of a wound. He was so shocked that he spread the news of the miracle throughout the town. This only increased the people's veneration of Peregrine. The saint died of a fever about 1345 when he was almost eighty years old. An extraordinary number of people from the town and countryside honored him in death. Some of the sick who came were healed through his intercession.

His body rests in the Servite church of Forlì, Italy where it is greatly honored by the people.



*Pope Paul IV declared him blessed in 1609 and Pope Benedict XIII canonized him in 1726.”
- From the Servite Liturgy of the Hours.*

There are three aspects of St. Peregrine’s life that are often remembered; his conversion to a deeper life of faith; his profound care for the poor; and his penitent life. St. Peregrine continually discerned the Lord’s call in his life. His conversion from a life of sin to a life of grace was aided by the example

of God and God’s law, St. Peregrine moved ever deeper into the mystery of God. His love for the poor was the fulfillment of Jesus’ command to love others. In the poor and the suffering, St. Peregrine encountered the Christ who was in need of loving care. The poor and suffering were Christ to Peregrine. To serve and care for them was to serve and care for Jesus. What a blessing this was in the life of the saint. The fruit of St. Peregrine’s prayer and meditation was the blessing of

Questions for Reflection:

Pray Matthew 22:34-40

1. What does loving God look like in my life? How do I serve God in serving others?
2. If I enter a religious community, how will I need the community to assist me in loving God and others?

of St. Philip Benizi. St. Philip’s humility and ability to forgive his attackers inspired the young Peregrine to realize that true joy is found in peace, not hate and violence. St. Peregrine’s profound care for the poor was fueled by intense prayer where the loving kindness and mercy of God was ever present. In his acts of penance, St. Peregrine realized that what is most necessary in life is the growth of grace that makes the believer ever vigilant to the encounters with God. In each aspect of his life, St. Peregrine continually meditated on the law of God. It was his obedience to the law of God that made St. Peregrine a faithful follower of the Lord.

encountering Christ and serving Him in others. As a consecrated friar, Peregrine searched for Christ and found Him in prayer, meditation, Servite communal life and in the poor.

As you discern your vocation of serving the Lord, prayer and meditation on Christ’s law of love in Matthew 22 needs to part of your process of responding to the Lord. As baptized Christians we are commended by the Lord to love God and others in great intensity and in joy. The life of the consecrated religious is the search for God. In daily living, Christ can be encountered in prayer, at Mass, in conversations with loved ones and in poor. Our responsibility is to lovingly respond to the best of our ability to loving others as God loves us. As you continue to discern the Lord’s call, loving God is the primary purpose for religious life and loving others is the ministry communities undertake. Doing both is worth the effort. St. Peregrine’s life reminds us of this.

Once a Pharisee approached Jesus and asked him “which commandment in the law is the greatest?” (See Mt 22:34-40). Jesus responds that love of God and love of neighbor are the greatest commandments in the law. The Christian life is defined by obedience to this law. All actions and words of the Christian are to be based on this law. After his reception into the Servite Order, St. Peregrine spent vast amounts of time meditating on this law. With each encounter with the Word

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