



FRANCISCAN VOICES — a distinctly Franciscan series of articles from Franciscan scholars around the globe, *exclusively for you from FSA.*



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PHD with
Gioco.

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"Franciscan history has been at the centre of my professional and personal life for more than 30 years. Here my teaching, research, and public outreach can be rooted in the down-to-earth spirituality that Francis fostered in the 13th century."

Darleen Pryds is a professor of History and Spirituality at the Franciscan School of Theology in San Diego, California. She is also the Academic Director of FST's Master of Theological Studies--Franciscan Theology, a completely asynchronous online graduate degree. She has written several books and articles on the lay Franciscan Spiritual tradition. She is a volunteer caregiver in hospice inspired by Lady Jacopa. In her spare time she enjoys hiking with her husband, Scott, and their dog, Gioco.



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CALENDARS ... FSA 2023
SHORT COURSE - WOMEN OF
THE STREETS – semester 1

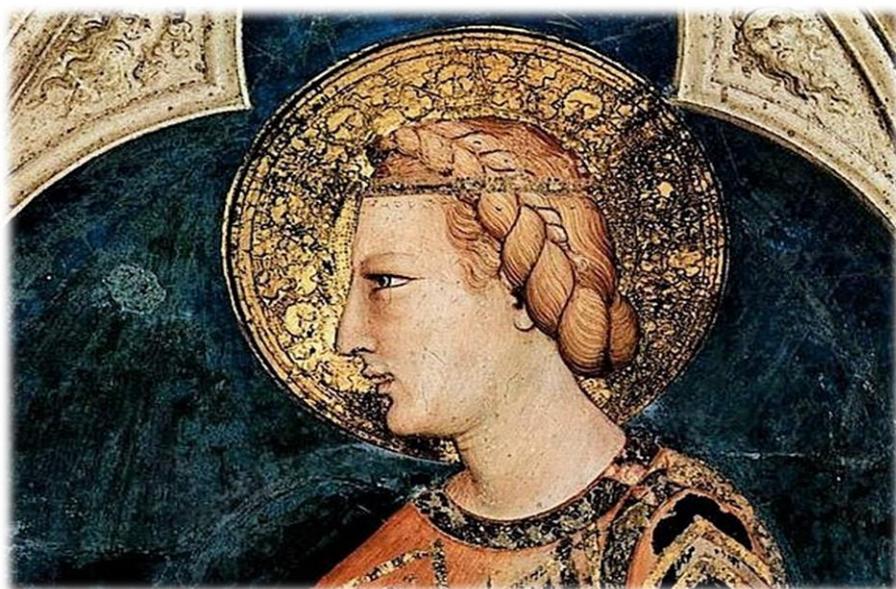


Image: Detail | Saint Elizabeth of Hungary | Series of frescoes with scenes from the life of St. Martin of tours in the Lower Church of Saint Francis of Assisi | Simone Martini

Gossiping our Faith: The Scandalous Faith of Elizabeth of Hungary

I'd like to share a little gossip with you. I'm going to tell you the story of a woman who shared her bed with strangers.

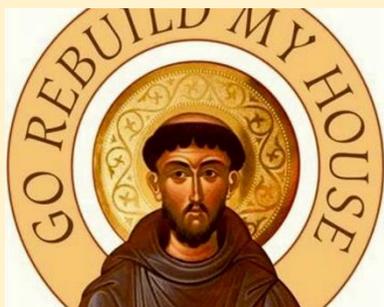
Does this surprise or even shock you?

Well let me go a little further and say that our faith as Christians and as Franciscans is built on gossip like this. We've become accustomed to a Christian faith that is nice and a Franciscan spirituality that is tender. But actually, this faith we claim was never meant to be tame. Instead, it was originally counter-cultural. This is a faith that shocks and even scandalizes with its raw vulnerability and relationality that overturns common expectations of success, power, and happiness.

The seeds for this overturning of expectations are done with gossip.

It might not be the kind of gossip that comes readily to mind, however.

Continued over



THROUGH ACTIVE SERVICE **FSA** SCHOOLS ARE THE FACE OF GOD TO AND FOR OTHERS

Mutual Transformation



Mount Alvernia students Brisbane serving with Rosies.



St Anthony's students Townsville conducting a virtual concert for a local retirement community.



Ave Maria students Melbourne and their SVDP winter appeal.

Eric Partridge in his book on English etymology reports that the word Gospel and its related term Godspell are antecedents to the verb "to gossip" comes from the verb "to see God."

To gossip...to tell stories... is to see God.

Kathleen Norris in her book *Dakota* reveals that the noun "gossip" comes from the words "God" and "sib" or sibling. Together, "Godsib" was someone who is an especially familiar acquaintance; such a close friend, you might invite her to attend a birth. Or someone with whom you share a personal conversation. A gossip is an intimate ...someone with whom you dare to be vulnerable. Someone with whom you share a real relationship.

It would seem, then, that our Gospels are gossip about Jesus and we are meant to be gossips. Now frankly, we may never be able to reframe the popular meaning of the word gossip back to its original intent, but as people of faith, we have daily opportunities to tell stories or holy gossip as a spiritual practice.

Saints are especially good subject matter for this holy gossip. And the feast days of our favourite saints are an ideal occasion to tell particularly juicy pieces of holy gossip.

On November 17 we

celebrate the **Feast Day of Elizabeth of Hungary**, the 13th century daughter of Hungarian royalty, who is known as a patron of the third order of Franciscans, known today as the Secular Franciscan Order. But I think her significance goes much further.

Like all saints and like all gossip, the stories we tell reveal our own state of mind and soul. Saints like Elizabeth had such rich and complex lives, there are many ways to tell her story. So, what we choose to tell and how we tell it reflects our own attractions, awareness, and sensibilities. I can say that over the years, as I have told the story of Elizabeth to students and retreatants, the way I have told her story has changed as I have changed.

For many years I liked to emphasize Elizabeth's royal standing and the life of privilege and prestige that she sacrificed in order to serve the poor. And because I often teach through images, I would bring in photos of paintings depicting her most famous miracle of bread turning to roses: The story roughly goes that Elizabeth, having brought bread and eggs from the family dining hall to share with the less fortunate in the town below, ran into her husband who wondered



FSA SCHOOLS offer radical hospitality



Principal Sam J dances with ECM client.

Be in relationship

Dance, have fun, don't shy away from fraternal, courageous conversations, act with humility and vulnerability.



St Anthony's Rockhampton hosts an Elders morning tea.

Love what you do through devotion to curriculum, joy filled approaches to learning and service we become gift to our schools & communities.

Open your heart



what she was carrying under her cloak. Knowing that there is little support in the household for her charitable acts, Elizabeth only reluctantly opens her mantle, but is surprised, as is her husband, to find a bouquet of roses.

But around the time when I got married, a different side of Elizabeth interested me. She is one of the few Catholic saints who appeared to have loved her husband, Ludwig, with whom she shared a mutually devoted and even fun-loving, family life. By all accounts they doted on each other and their children like young couples in love do.

We don't hear enough about holy Catholics who were giddy in love, do we?

While her loving family life continues to resonate with me today, I'd like to turn to the fact that she shared her bed with strangers. Yes, it's a scandalous story!

She cared for those who were ill in a way that was so radical, that she gave up her own bed to them.

Imagine for a moment: taking in a stranger, someone who was ill...perhaps even someone with the dreaded and feared condition of leprosy: and bringing them into your home and caring for them in your bed. You sit next to them while cooling their fever with a cool cloth; you prop them up with your

pillows so you can feed them soup. You care for all their physical needs in your bed.

This is a kind of radical hospitality that we rarely experience in our world. But this is the radical hospitality that Elizabeth teaches us if we dare to enter into her story deeply enough to tell it with all its graphic detail. Many forget that the word "hospitality" derives from the Latin word "Hospes" which means both "host" and "guest." Hospitality requires a relationship between host and guest. We'll miss the real meaning of Elizabeth's faith here if we think she was merely "helping" the indigent and ill. No, her offering of her bed allowed proximity and vulnerability with these people. It was in this exposed vulnerability of caregiving she could see Christ in them; and they could see Christ in her. Her serving the poor and ill opened the way for mutual transformation to occur. This kind of mutual transformation is at the heart of radical hospitality.

Imagine what our lives could be like if we entered the path of radical hospitality that Elizabeth of Hungary shows us. We might start seeing Christ all around us.

Darleen Pryds, PHD.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION OF CAREGIVING

Darleen Pryds, PHD presents 2022 Franciscan Zoom Lecture

Lay Franciscans and Their Tradition of Caregiving

Aust East Time **Nov. 4, 2022 @12:00pm-1:00pm**



FRANCISCAN SCHOOLS AUSTRALIA



*Staff from FSA schools in Brisbane share hospitality and care with friends at Emmanuel City Mission
FSA Ever Wider We Retreat, June 2022*

Reflection

Elizabeth understood well the lesson Jesus taught when he washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper: the Christian must be one who serves the humblest needs serves from an exalted position. Of royal blood, Elizabeth could have lorded it over her subjects. Yet she served them with such a loving heart that her brief life (24 years) won her a special place in the hearts of many.

Elizabeth is also an example to us in her following the guidance of a spiritual director. Under the spiritual direction of a Franciscan friar, she led a life of prayer, sacrifice, and service to the poor and sick. Growth in the spiritual life is a difficult process. We can play games very easily if we don't have someone to challenge us.

