

**REGIONAL FORMATION: SUMMER STUDY ON FRANCISCAN
SAINTS**

ST. CLARE OF ASSISI



ARTICLE WRITTEN BY:
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1. Introduce yourself [Fraternity & Franciscan journey]

I am Gurusamy Arumugam[Baptismal name: Anton Dominic Selvam], Secular Franciscan and Formation Director of St. Joan of Arc Fraternity, Germantown, TN. My spiritual exercises include Holy Mass, Eucharistic adoration, and Rosary. I take delight in praying for people and motivate when they talk about their needs. I love to pray for people really needs it with bible stories.

2. Choose a Franciscan saint of your choice.

I chose St. Clare of Assisi, as she is our region's patron and Franciscan saint, and she was the first woman follower of St. Francis. She is a founder of poor Clare, and she followed St. Francis teachings especially she followed a strict poverty. Additional gift is that we visited our son's family in Aylesbury, UK this summer [from where I am writing this article] and his parish church is St. Clare Church, where we attend Sunday masses with our Son's family and grandchildren.

3. Write a paragraph of saint's bio description: One paragraph:

Feastday: August 11

Patron: of eye disease, goldsmiths, laundry, television

Birth: 1194

Death: 1253

Canonized: Pope Alexander IV on September 26, 1255

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=215“St. Clare of Assisi was born in Assisi on July 16, 1194, as Chiara Offreduccio, the beautiful eldest daughter of Favorino Sciffi, Count of Sasso-Rosso and his wife Ortolana. Tradition says her father was a wealthy representative of an ancient Roman family and her mother was a very devout woman belonging to the noble family of Fiumi. As a young girl, Clare dedicated herself to prayer. At 18-years-old, she heard St. Francis of Assisi preach during a Lenten service in the church of San Giorgio and asked him to help her live according to the Gospel. On Palm Sunday in 1212, Clare left her father's home and went to the chapel of the Porziuncula to meet with Francis. While there, Clare's hair was cut off and she was given a plain robe and veil in exchange for her rich gown. Clare joined the convent of the Benedictine nuns of San Paulo, near Bastia, under Francis' orders. When her father found her and attempted to force her back into his home, she refused and professed that she would have no other husband than Jesus Christ. In order to give her the greater solitude she desired, Francis sent Clare to Sant' Angelo in Panzo, another Benedictine nuns monastery. Clare's sister Catarina, who took the name Agnes, joined her at this monastery. The two remained there until a separate dwelling was built for them next to the church of San Damiano. Overtime, other women joined them, wanting to also be brides of Jesus and live with no money. They became known as the "Poor Ladies of San Damiano." They all lived a simple life of austerity, seclusion from the world, and poverty, according to a Rule which Francis gave them as a Second Order. St. Clare and her sisters wore no shoes, ate no meat, lived in a poor house, and kept silent most of the time. Their lives consisted of manual labor and prayer. Yet, they were very happy, because Our Lord was close to them all the time. San Damiano became the center of Clare's new order, which was then known as the "Order of Poor Ladies of San Damiano." For a brief period of time, the order was directed by St. Francis himself and by 1216, Clare became the abbess of San Damiano. Ten years after Clare's death, the order became known as the Order of Saint Clare. Following Francis' death, Clare continued to promote her order, fighting off every attempt from each pope trying to impose a rule on her order that would water down their "radical commitment to corporate poverty."

4. Write the virtues on Holy Spirit's gifts and fruits visible to you in Saint's life:

One paragraph: In reading and reflecting the life of St. Clare I can witness the Holy Spirit's gifts such as fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord in her life. Most

importantly, she portrayed the virtues of courage, simplicity, humility, and poverty, in spite of her wealthy upbringing. She left wealth and comfort behind to follow Jesus.

5. **How the saint's life influences your secular Franciscan:** In St. Clare life there were many miracles attributed to her. Among them there are a few miracles that drew my attention. Multiplication of bread and oil bottles when there was none, which explains how God honored her poverty and the practice of relying upon God's providence. Next most important miracle was associated with the protecting power of Eucharist. In 1240 September, Saracen troops attacked the convent. St. Clare showed the Blessed sacrament with faith and prayer saying, " O Lord, protect these Sisters whom I cannot protect now," she prayed. A voice seemed to answer: "I will keep them always in My care." In that moment, a sudden fright struck the attackers, and they fled as fast as they could without harming anyone in Assisi. St. Clare's faith in the power of Eucharist protected the nuns and the entire city. In addition, she cured the sick with the sign of the Cross. From these miracles, as OFS, I understand the importance of Eucharist and its power, significance of poverty and God's providence, and the value of prayer and faith which can be applied in day-to-day prayer life. Going to daily mass may be one of the best Spiritual exercises a secular Franciscan can adopt that may enrich the spiritual life.
6. **How saints' life may help to guide us in our Secular Franciscan life:** There are many virtues from St. Clare's life may guide us to live a Secular Franciscan way of life. To become closer to Jesus, St. Clare followed perfect poverty, walking with bare foot, sleeping on the ground, no meat, and complete silence. She believed that the above practices could bring her closer to Jesus. In humility, she referred herself as mother, handmaid, or servant rather than abbess. St. Clare's heroic virtues portrays love for Jesus.