

## ***PRESENTATION OF THE ASSISI MISSION MISSIONE DI ASSISI***



*Francis and Clare as pioneerspionerer of "the Spirit of Assisi"*

### **The roots of the association**

About 800 years ago God put his own "fingerprint" on Assisi when he sent Francis and Clare and the rest of the supporters of the renewal to this small, humble medieval town in Central Italy, not far from the main centre of the Christian church in Rome. Francis' most important message to his age was to demonstrate the path of imitating Christ by living as Jesus himself did in his 3 years of public activity as a travelling preacher of the Kingdom of God and in practising Christian charity through healing, help and care of the lowly and outcast. In this mission he founded an Order of brothers and sisters, which is still today the greatest and most important monastic movement of the Catholic Church. Clare became the most important inner support of Francis, and she and her spiritual daughters, the Poor Clares, withdrew from the world to offer their lives to God in an unending prayer life. Among the many breakthroughs and renewals of the collective consciousness, for which Francis was responsible, he was the first religious leader who took the initiative of inter-religious dialogue. In 1219 – at the time of the third crusade, when Muslims and Christians fought some of their bloodiest battles - Francis was walking in the Holy Land, and he went to see the Egyptian Sultan, Melek el Kamil. Francis preached the message of the Gospel about salvation through Christ to him. Francis named the Muslim his brother, and the Sultan was so taken by Francis that he invited him to stay in the palace!

**ASSISI MISSION** has its roots in the mission of Francis and his universal understandings of the unity of humanity as brothers and sisters and the unity of Creation. It was Father Mizzi, who in 1960 followed in the footsteps of Francis, and in "*the Spirit of Assisi*" became one of the great pioneers of our time in promoting unity through ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, which especially after the great Peace Meeting in Assisi in 1986 spread like wildfire all over the world.

### **Foundation of the association**

When in 2001 in Assisi Father Mizzi and Bente Wolf started their co-operation on Father Mizzi's inter-religious and ecumenical activities and expanded this to comprise course activities as well, Bente learnt that for many years Father Mizzi had entertained a hope that a group of people would actively back up his mission. Bente had a similar desire for an association, which could be joined by

people dedicated to work idealistically in *"the Spirit of Assisi"* for the unity of the human family - also in a more visible and active way. As Bente's work in Assisi resembles that of a "modern" nun also with direct connection to the Franciscan Order as a lay sister, i.e. a life of material simplicity in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare, Bente and Father Mizzi were considering how this could be done in a way that reflects and encourages the idealism, persistence and the spirit of self-sacrifice which are essential prerequisites of the mission.

Friday March 30, 2007 was a day to celebrate. With the assistance of good friends, who are all very dedicated to *"the Spirit of Assisi"*, we found a suitable model. The association **ASSISI MISSION**, in Italian: **MISSIONE DI ASSISI**, was founded, which in its structure is an idealistic, democratic and non-profit-making association

According to the articles, which comply with the usual articles of a non-profit-making, idealistic association, the objectives of the association are:

- 1) To create and uphold a focus for divine inflow in Assisi.
- 2) To promote and spread *"the Spirit of Assisi"* – the Assisi Spirit of Christ Consciousness, Unity and Brother-/Sisterhood of humanity.
- 3) To co-operate with and support orders and associations that work to promote the unity and brother-/sisterhood of humanity across religions and cultures.

The association works to further its objectives:

- 1) By one or more of its members having permanent or long-term residence in Assisi.
- 2) By education, meditations, newsletters and travelling to stimulate the idealism of the members and to further people's dedication to the Spirit of Assisi and the unity of humanity.
- 3) By co-operating with and supporting the Franciscan Order OFM Conv. at the Sacro Convento in Assisi (among others), in the Order's efforts to further the brother-/sisterhood of humanity through inter-religious dialogue.

The association **ASSISI MISSION** has been founded in order to create in a more visible way a network of people, who both in outer and inner ways support and dedicate themselves to the work for unity of the human family through *"the Spirit of Assisi"*. When there are more of us, who openly and consciously work together, it is possible to intensify divine help through inner and outer networks, which together with numerous other networks around the world are furthering God's plan to realize the unity of the human family.

In May 2007 Father Mizzi wrote the following prayer for **ASSISI MISSION**:

### Prayer for Assisi Mission

Dear Lord Jesus, we entrust to your protection and guidance  
the new association *Assisi Mission*,  
which intends to promote *"the Spirit of Assisi"* - the Spirit of God, the Spirit  
of St Francis,  
the spirit of love, respect and universal brotherhood - by means of prayer,  
meditation and dialogue both ecumenical and inter-religious.

Lord bless and protect all its members, collaborators and supporters.  
Make us instruments of peace and reconciliation in a world which is thirsty  
for peace, love and brotherhood. Make us bridges that unite and not barriers  
that divide.

Lord, help us to share the vision of Pope John Paul II  
with generosity and in an unselfish way  
when in 1986 he invited the world religions to Assisi  
to pray for peace.

On that occasion he showed us the way to peace, love, respect and unity by  
means of prayer and inter-religious dialogue.

*“It is in giving that we receive”.*

It is by surrendering to you that we receive light and energy  
through the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Fr. Max Mizzi OFM Conv.  
Sacro Convento, Assisi

If you wish to have further information about *ASSISI MISSION* and ways of subscribing, please  
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