



THE KNIGHTS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI PRESENT

THE STORY OF THE BUILDING
OF THE PORZIUNCOLA NUOVA



KNIGHTS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

was founded in July, 2008 to protect, serve, and financially sustain the Porziuncola Nuova and the National Shrine of Saint Francis of Assisi. The mission of our arch-confraternity is to fulfill the tenets of our patron, Saint Francis of Assisi: to feed the poor; care for the sick; promote peace; care for Mother Earth; and protect the animals.

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Giovanni di Bernardone was born in 1182 to a cloth merchant. His father called him Francesco after his love of all things French. When Francesco grew into a young man, he rejected a career in his father's successful cloth business and turned away from all wealth and power. Francesco became a poor man who wandered through the hills and valleys of Umbria, Italy. One day, he came upon a tumbled down chapel in the woods outside Assisi and he decided to repair it and make it his little porziuncola, an Italian idiom meaning "his little corner of the world."



Eight hundred years later, people of all faiths know the message of Saint Francis. Even Hindus, Buddhists and other non-Christians know the story of Saint Francis. How fascinating that this one man spreading his simple lessons of God's love should be remembered in every age. How lucky we are in the City of Saint Francis to have the replica of his first church, his Porziuncola, in our little corner of the world.

Welcome to the Porziuncola Nuova!

Angela M. Alioto, SFO

National Director of the Knights of Saint Francis



From this chapel, il poverello, the little poor man as they called him, bought his message of the love of Christ, respect for the earth, the poor, and mankind to all who would listen. Saint Francis's thoughts and instruction ignited a fuse of love which literally burned like a fire throughout Europe. Within twenty years, there were over 30,000 friars and nuns calling themselves Franciscans in England, France, Spain, Germany and Italy. Five thousand people were in mud and stick huts camped next to the Porziuncola in Assisi so they could take lessons from Saint Francis and his cadre of followers.



“**W**hen the friars left the Shrine of Saint Francis of Assisi in 2005, I worried what would become of the Shrine,” Angela Alioto said. “Next to the church, there was an old gymnasium that was being used as a store. I got this idea that we could convert it into Francesco’s Porziuncola, his first church. I met with Archbishop Levada, soon to become Cardinal Levada, and while I was explaining my idea about converting the gym, he said, “Why not build a replica of the Porziuncola inside the gym?” We looked at each other, our faces getting wide, wide smiles. Of course!” Angela shouted. “We spent four hours together that day making plans for constructing the replica of the Porziuncola, for repairing the church next door, and creating a School of Franciscan Thought in the rectory.

“The first step was to build a replica of the Porziuncola. I’d been going to Assisi since I was a teenager and I knew how carefully the brothers guarded their Porziuncola. You weren’t even allowed to take a photograph in there. How would I create plans? How would I get the measurements? Could the replica even fit in the gymnasium? I phoned Nibbi Brothers Construction and Taylor Lombardo Architects and as whacky as this idea sounded, they thought it could be done, but I needed to show them measurements.

“So I gathered together a slew of friends and we set out for Assisi, Italy. Mission: to measure the Porziuncola. Surreptitiously, of course. We didn’t want the Brothers to turn us down, to forbid us from making a replica,” Angela said.



We Knew Franco Reguzzoni’s height our way of “measuring” the door.



"If I couldn't give measurements to Maurice Lombardo the architect, then there was no point in going further. We had to get the measurements."

Angela laughs and slaps her knee. "And our tools? Sneaky photography, putting people of known height in the picture, photographing our tape measure as it is quickly held up, and dental floss. Dental floss is cheap and easily concealable. Armed with our tools, we went to Santa Maria Degli Angeli and walked up to the Porziuncola. "

"Outside, Gavin Murphy had a large tablet with blanks for different measurements all laid out and ready. We fanned out in twos, took our dental floss and began to unravel it, breaking it off and knotting it where the measurement began and ended. Quickly, we rolled it up, went back outside and handed it to Gavin. He measured it and recorded the numbers, working this jigsaw puzzle trying to get the measurements of the Porziuncola. We had another group whose job was to distract the Brothers so they wouldn't notice us skulking around measuring things and taking photos. Oops. One of the brothers saw us. We were busted."



Photos of the Porziuncola are not allowed. What teamwork.

"I can tell you, when I was summoned by the Friars to meet with Frate Massimo and explain myself, I was scared to death," Angela Alioto said. "Frate Massimo said, 'Who gave you permission to do this?' I gulped and pointed to the sky, as if to say God did. The ice was broken and I told him how the City of Saint Francis would like to have a replica of Saint Francis's first church.

"I think Friar Massimo could see my love of Saint Francis and slowly, he agreed that this would be a good thing. Suddenly the flood gates opened and not only did the Brothers help us, they went out of their way to get us the original plans of the Porziuncola which were in their

archives and in the Vatican archives. We were off and running!"

"Maurice Lombardo our architect was so helpful. He saw all of our measurements, compared them to the size of the gym and came up with the idea to have it three quarter's size. John Kugler at Nibbi Brothers said the 'building inside a building' concept could be done."





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“I knew that just building the Porziuncola wasn’t enough. I needed to recreate all of the precious art inside the Porziuncola. All through the centuries since Saint Francis’s death, priceless art and frescoes had been hung on the walls—inside and out. How was I going to reproduce that? Then I noticed the carved doors, the old kneelers. Who does that

kind of woodworking anymore? What about the metal working? I had never seen an altar rail like the one in the Porziuncola. What about the stone behind the altar rail? Where would I get it? And the floors?” Anglela leans back and laughs. “Then came the string of little miracles.”

Who could reproduce the art?...

“As I was leaving our hotel in Assisi, I remarked to the concierge that I liked the art in the lobby. I wondered out loud if they could do the art in the Porziuncola? The doorman picked up the phone, called Stefano Lazzari and told him that a lady named Angela wanted to see him about some art. “Oh my goodness!,” he said. “I’ve had a dream that a woman named Angela was going to ask me to do something.” I can tell you, Stefano was at the hotel door in no time.

“I visited their studio in Castello de Citá and was completely blown away. The accuracy and the skill of Stefano, his father Romolo was



Romolo Lazzari's art studio. That's our altar painting he's working on.

amazing. The friars allowed them complete access to the paintings and that's why our art in the Porziuncola Nuova is so close to the originals. They studied it, they did computer imaging. It's fantastic.”

The project needed the pietra rosa for the floor, someone to carve the ancient wooden doors, and someone to recreate the iron work with those round brass buttons.



Lucio Duchi in his studio at Citta de Costello, Italy.

“Our artist, Stefano, said “I’d like to introduce you to Lucio, he does wood.” I said, Sure, okay. When I saw what Lucio Duchi had in his studio, I was completely blown away. This man was hand carving the most intricate designs. He did inlay and built furniture. I knew we had our man.”



Montly Montgomery ad Alfonso Ricciola collecting rocks outside Assisi.

“So we had two artists for the frescoes and we had a woodworker for the doors, but we hadn’t dealt with the stone for the floor or the stone for the Porziuncola itself. Then one day we

were driving out in the countryside and saw some stones on the side of a hill that looked like the stones in the walls of the Porziuncola. We stopped and sure enough, they matched!”



The group had so many stones in the trunk of the rental cars, they road dangerously low all the way home to Assisi. Back in San Francisco, Monty Montgomery of Western Construction was able to cut the stones down and use them in the front facing wall of the Porziuncola Nuova.

“Before we left for home, Alphonso Ricciola bought some Play-doh and made an impression of the decorative ironwork. We had no idea who could do it.”



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The troop came home from Assisi filled with hope. They had the friars on their side, artists for the frescoes and a woodcarver.

When the space in the old gym had been prepared, Angela and her group of stalwart friends and workers began to see the Porziuncola Nuova rise before their eyes.

(Right) Brother Massimo with artist Stefano Lazzari and Angela Alioto in Assisi.





Building the apse in back of the Porziuncola Nuova



Inside the construction, the stone goes into place

The back of the Porziuncola, almost ready for stone.

“We were moving along swiftly, but we still didn’t have the floor problem solved,” Angela said. “Where were we going to find the rose stone typical of Assisi? I made another trip to Italy to a quarry where they were supposed to have the pietra rosa. No, they told me. We had to shut down the mine because the caves under the city made it too unstable. They had the white marble, but I didn’t care for it. I wanted it like the original.

“Then a few weeks later, the quarry called me in San Francisco. The man said that a church in a nearby town was taking up their 600 year old floor and replacing it with wood. He wanted to know if I wanted the rose stone. Of course! Oh my god, we had our marble! It was amazing. Saint Francis himself was behind this. Every time we had a problem, it was solved. Every time there was an obstacle, he smoothed the road.”



The back of the Porziuncola is ready for stone.

The ironwork had to be done the old fashioned way.

“When Angela called me,” said Eric Clausen, “she said she had a job that no one can do. I had never heard of the Porziuncola and I said I’d come over and take a look. I saw the photos of the altar rail and all the iron grids on the doors and windows and I knew I was the man to do it.”

Eric understood the project and not only did he create the unusual grill work at the altar, but he manufactured the gates and window grills and hanging light fixtures. It was slow going... there were no short cuts.



It took two months to finish the laying of the stone inside and outside and all around the Porziuncola. Two more weeks to seal and polish it. Notice the complex pattern of the altar stones.



Marking out the pattern of the floor inside the Porziuncola.



The Frescoes arrive from Italy

There was lots of nail biting when the trucks rolled up in front of the Porziuncola. All of our art had arrived. Stefano came over from Italy to make sure things went right. Even the top brass at Nibbi were there.

"Tears choked me when I saw the art arrive," Angela Alioto said. "Oh my goodness, there it was. So beautiful. It was real. This was really happening."



The giant copy of German artist Johann Frederick Overbeck (original 1833) leans against the front door.



A magnificent copy of a fresco of the Crucifixion by the great Renaissance painter Perugino.

Students at the Academy of Art get involved

The building that houses the Porziuncola Nuova is not as grand as the magnificent cathedral in Assisi. We needed some character. Dr. Elisa Stephens at the Academy of Art loaned us some wonderful teachers and students. Angela Tirrell drew up some samples of typical medieval geometric designs.



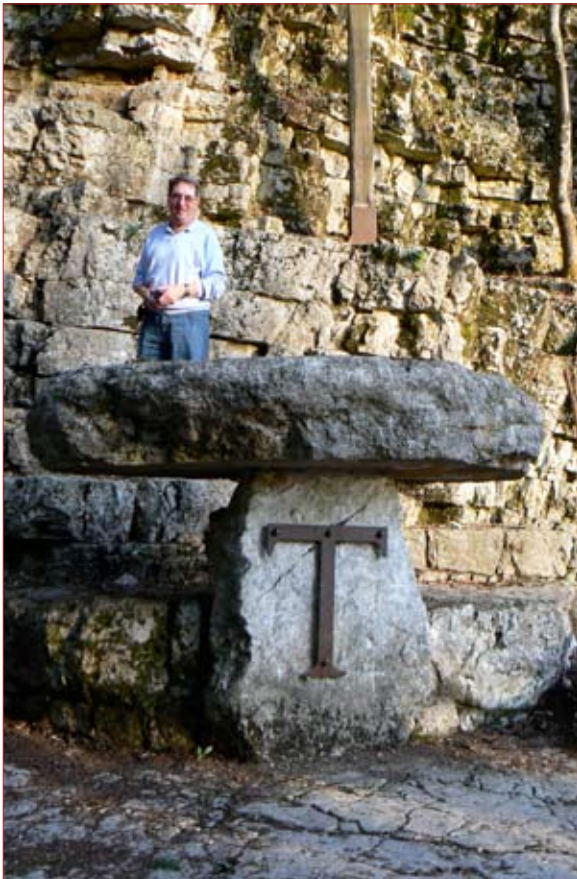
The Perugino fresco is set into place.



Architect Maurice Lomardo (far right), behind him is Alfonso Ricciola. They are surrounded by the Italian artists who worked for Stefano Lassari.

The story of the altar

Saint Francis liked to use the altar pictured below. I thought that we might be able to recreate it and set it in the Porziuncola. The stones we found weighed over 2000 pounds.



The Palla De Illario De Viterbo goes into place.



This is the view of the back of the Porziuncola Nuova from the huge round table of the Knights. The floor is finished. Things had come together!



At Last, Dedication Day Came

It was a scramble at the end—the floor was finished the night before. Trumpets blared. Cardinal Levada came from Italy. So did the mayor of Assisi. Even the artists were here. Everyone came to see the Porziuncola Nuova.



Archbishop Niederauer and Cardinal Levada open the Porziuncola Nuova, September 27, 2008



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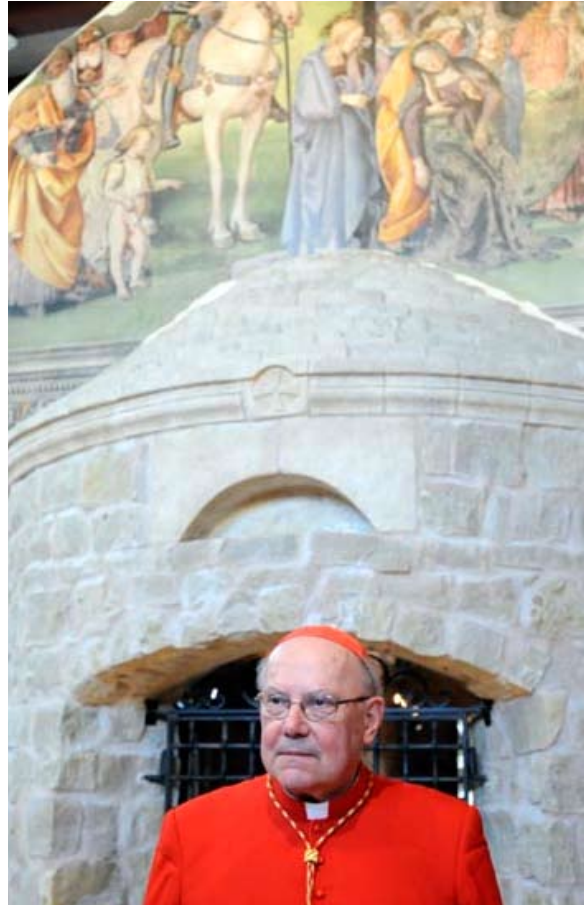


Deacon Chris next to Cardinal Levada as the Porziuncola is blessed.





Angela Alioto, Archbishop Niederauer, and Brother Massimo admire Saint Francis' Rock.



Cardinal Levada



Archbishop Niederauer proudly stands inside the Porziuncola Nuova on dedication day.



The Brothers come out from Italy and present The Rock to Angela Alioto for the Porziuncola.

The story of the rock.

"The Brothers in Assisi phoned and told me that during the last earthquake they lost some stone on the eastern elevation of the Porziuncola," Angela Alioto said. "They think the stones were from Saint Francis's reconstruction. They asked me if we would like one of the stones. Of course! When the Brothers arrived in San Francisco, they had a wooden box with the stone inside, all wrapped up in ribbon and sealed with wax."

The Knights of Saint Francis

The day of the dedication, Angela Alioto formed the Knights of Saint Francis. "The most wonderful people stepped forward to defend and protect the little chapel of Saint Francis," Angela said.

"Not only did I feel blessed, but I felt that Saint Francis had truly found a home in our city."



THE MISSION OF THE KNIGHTS IS

*to feed the poor; care for the sick; promote peace;
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And of course, take care of the Porziuncola Nuova,
a welcoming place of peace for all.*

THE KNIGHTS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI WELCOME MARCO SASSONE

Marco Sassone seems to have dipped his brush in Franciscan thought and brought to life a world of poverty and heartache that few see. He reminds us of the less fortunate, of the severity of urban poverty, while at the same time he thrills us with a portrait of Saint Francis worthy of a church wall.

*The Knights of Saint Francis of Assisi welcome
Marco Sassone to the City of Saint Francis.*

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Marco Sassone was born in Campi Bisenzio, a Tuscan village, in 1942. The family moved to Florence in 1954, and there he met painters Ottone Rosai and Ugo Maturo, who encour-

aged him to follow his interest in art. In 1959 he enrolled at the Istituto Galileo Galilei, where he studied architectural drafting for several years.

In the 1960s he studied with painter Silvio Loffredo, and exhibited his work in numerous group shows. Soon after the Florentine Flood, he departed for Athens, visited the Greek Islands and resided in London for six months and later settled in California. It was there in 1968 that he opened his first studio and began to paint boats and water in the manner of the Macchiaioli painters. He exhibited for the first time in the United States at the Dalzell-Hatfield Galleries in Los Angeles. He later moved to Laguna Beach, a small seaside community, Mediterranean in geography and

climate, with its own commitment to the arts. He became a regular participant at the annual Festival of the Arts.

Throughout the seventies, he exhibited extensively in the U.S. and abroad and returned to Florence in 1973 for a one man show at Gallerie d'Arte Internationale. The show was inaugurated by Piero Baugellini, the famous mayor of Florence during the flood.

In 1981 Sassone moved his studio to San Francisco. During the 80's his exhibition schedule continued along with his numerous lectures. In 1982 Marco Sassone was knighted by the president of Italy, Sandro Pertini, into the "Order to the Merit of the Italian Republic." In March 1988, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley inaugurated the exhibition, Marco Sassone, at the L.A. Municipal Art Gallery. The same year Sassone exhibited at the Bernheim-Jeune Gallery in Paris.

By the late eighties, Sassone had become increasingly concerned with social themes. He began extensive - and personal - research on the home-

less and painted a series of large canvasses and charcoal drawings portraying the life he observed on the streets. A number of these works were exhibited at the Chicago International Art Exposition, the Basel Art Fair in Switzerland, the Jan Baum Gallery in Los Angeles, as well as in the exhibition Body Politic at the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery.

In 2005, after 35 years of residence in the United States, Marco Sassone relocated his studio to Canada where he married Russian writer Emilia Ianeva. In 2008 he received a commission to create a mural for the lobby of the Bellagio tower in downtown Toronto. Currently the artist is working on his continuing exhibition schedule, always attracted by human restlessness and by the inaccessible secrets of nature and the urban landscape.



THE MARCO SASSONE EXHIBITION: **SANTUARIO**
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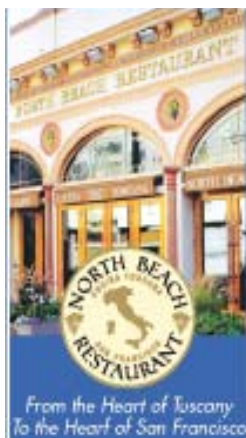


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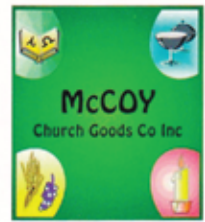
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THE LAW OFFICES OF MAYOR JOSEPH L. ALIOTO AND ANGELA ALIOTO



*"EQUALITY FOR ALL,
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NONE."*

The Law Offices of Mayor Joseph L. Alioto and Angela Alioto is distinguished by its expertise and national recognition in Civil Rights and Employment Law. We successfully represent individuals in the areas of workplace discrimination based on race, age, disability, gender, religion and sexual orientation, as well as harassment, wage/hour, retaliatory discharge, and wrongful termination. We also represent individuals in personal injury, elder abuse, industrial accidents and toxic exposure.

Based on the values and beliefs of former Mayor of San Francisco Joseph L. Alioto, the Firm has one mission: to deliver justice for our clients. We pride ourselves in working closely with each client throughout the legal process by building relationships that last.

If you have a case you would like us to consider, please contact us.



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