

Fonte Columbo



This densely wooded mountain (formerly called Monte Rainerio) was visited by Francis in 1217. The origin of the name Fonte Colombo is derived from *fons columbarum* ("fountain of the doves"), a name that tradition says Francis himself gave to the spring. The beautiful fresh water, gushing out from beneath a high cliff, is located in the woods of the sanctuary. It was probably the property of the Benedictines of Farfa, who then donated it to the Friar Minor.

Francis, with companions, put together the final version of the friar' Rule of Life. Rome approved it on November 29, 1223. Francis underwent the cauterization of his eyes. This is the room where Francis underwent cauterization.

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Their source of heat and area for cooking

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Francis came to Fonte Colombo for solitude. One sees vestiges of A Rule for Hermitages concretized here: some caves or shelters along the side of the mountain, the little church bell atop the Chapel of Mary Magdalen, which Francis rang to call the brothers out of solitude to common prayer.

Chapel of Mary Magdalen built is 1100's. Francis prayed here and participated in mass here.



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Legend has it that Francis himself painted this Tau.



Chapel of St. Michael the Archangel where we did our Recommitment Ceremony.

The Cave of Francis

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The Cave of Brother Leo



The skeletons buried (sort off) under the “new” church.

One position on the development of the Rule, maintains that Francis and the brothers struggled together in a common venture to formulate a way of life. Another position maintains that Christ himself dictated the Rule to Francis. For this reason Fonte Colombo is sometimes called the Mt. Sinai of the Franciscan Order. As God appeared to Mose on Mt. Sinai and gave him The Law, so Christ appeared to Francis and gave him the Rule.

Whatever position one takes, it is important to remember that Francis and his way of life gave birth to a new movement in the church and society. He and the brothers dreamed a future they believed in which became possible and viable with the grace of God.

Fonte Colombo invites us to reflect on our commitment to the gospel and Franciscan vision of life and offer the opportunity for recommitment.

New Church

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A hand written copy of the Rule.

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A wood carving depicting Francis receiving the Rule from Christ. The brothers lower left came to Francis to say the rule was for him because it was too strict. Legend has it that Francis said to Christ: "See I told you they wouldn't want it." And Christ responded: "It is my rule and you will live it perfectly without any alterations." And the brothers scattered. Brother Leo is pictured in the lower left. The wood is from the tree that Francis supposedly sat under composing the Rule.



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Reflection

Note the importance of water (*fons columbarum*) and fire on this mountain. Here Francis sought out God's will for himself and his brothers. In collaboration with the brothers he was assured of God's direction. How do you discern?

Consider the role of "sickness" in the development of Francis' life and journey; toward God—a movement toward "light."

As Franciscans we profess a Rule of Life. Just as the Rule of 1223 underwent a long process of development, we must remember that we make our profession not only to a Rule but to *life* and its ongoing development today. We search out God's will in it within the context of community for our times. What might this mean to you?

How would you respond to Francis' brothers attempt to persuade him to water down the Rule?

Many Franciscan chapels were either dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen or at least had her picture inside. She is the example of penitent living. the gospel's call to repentance is never ending.