

## The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi

On October 3, Capuchin Franciscan Friars gathered at St. Lawrence Seminary to celebrate the *Transitus* of St. Francis, a unique Franciscan tradition that commemorates the “transition” of St. Francis from his earthly life to his heavenly reward.



The chapel was filled with the Franciscan friars and postulants, along with the students and staff of St. Lawrence Seminary and many invited guests. Brown robes (for the friars) as well as brown polo shirts (for the postulants) were very much in evidence.

The service was based on the “Peace Prayer” (sometimes attributed to St. Francis). The prayer was read in short sections by readers who ranged in age from a 14 year old freshman to an elderly friar. After each line (for example, “Where there is hatred, let me sow love...”), a short reading from the life of St. Francis written by his medieval contemporary, Thomas of Celano, showed how the sentiments of the prayer were lived by St. Francis.

Before St. Francis died, he distributed bread among the assembled friars. In a similar way, bread was shared by all those in attendance at the ceremony. The choir ended the ceremony with a beautiful rendition of “The Blessing of St. Francis.”



In contrast to the simple, somber mood of the evening *Transitus*, the next day (the Feast of St. Francis) had a more upbeat feel. Mass was celebrated by Fr. Zoy Garibay, rector of St. Lawrence Seminary. In his homily, Fr. Zoy reminded everyone about the difficulty of following St. Francis. Fr. Zoy connected the line from St. Luke's gospel reading ("I will follow you wherever you go") to the life of St. Francis as St. Francis was led to minister to the lepers, to the poor, to the sick, and to the unbelievers. At the end of his homily, Fr. Zoy told the congregation that St. Francis liked to burst into song, and Fr. Zoy did just that – leading the congregation in a rousing rendition of "I Will Follow Him," complete with tambourine and hand-clapping.



After Mass, a banquet was enjoyed by the entire St. Lawrence community, students, teachers, office workers, maintenance workers, etc.



The annual celebration of the life and death of St. Francis helps all Franciscans around the world to remember the founder of their order, and to recommit themselves to the way of life of humble service that they have embraced. This is especially important at St. Lawrence Seminary, because the school's mission statement begins with these words: "Inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the example of St. Francis of Assisi..."

St. Lawrence Seminary High School is a private, Catholic, seven-day residential school for young men, founded in 1860 by Capuchin Franciscans. It is a community of nearly 200 students from all across the world that exists to promote, foster, and live principles proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and articulated in the Roman Catholic Church. It is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. For more information about the school, visit [www.stlawrence.edu](http://www.stlawrence.edu) or contact 920-753-7518