

## **"Assisi Pilgrimage: Walking in Faith With Francis and Clare," Sept. 14, ABC**

By John Mulderig Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- The year 2009 will mark a significant milestone in the long history of the Franciscan spiritual community: the 800th anniversary of this now-worldwide movement's initial endorsement by the highest authority in the church, the powerful and far-seeing pope of St. Francis' day, Innocent III.

The enduring legacy of the two founders of the Franciscan orders is celebrated in the informative and evocative documentary "Assisi Pilgrimage: Walking in Faith With Francis and Clare." Written and directed by Franciscan Father Greg Friedman, the hourlong film will air on ABC stations and affiliates beginning Sunday, Sept. 14 (check local listings).

Interviews with pilgrim guides, including Franciscan priests and sisters, images of many of the outstanding works of art that adorn the Umbrian city and lush footage of its magnificent surrounding countryside establish the cultural and historical context into which these saints were born.

The familiar story of Francis' life -- his privileged youth, his military career, his gradual but dramatic conversion and his reception of the stigmata -- are recounted against the backdrop of the streets, churches and natural settings in which they took place. So too are the less well-known, but no less resonant, events that led his friend and collaborator to her equally radical commitment to the Gospel.

Clare's innovative spirituality, Franciscan Sister Margaret Carney explains, was developed within a milieu of changing social and economic roles for women in medieval Italy, and emphasized practical works of charity in the everyday world over the more traditional model for women religious, of cloistered prayer and contemplation.

The film also provides insight into the experience of contemporary pilgrims to the birthplace of Franciscan reform. Those interviewed describe their sense of closeness to the great spiritual partners and, through them, to Christ. As Franciscan Father Murray Bodo puts it, "There is something that emanates from these stones. God has somehow broken through into history in these places and that power still resides there."

"Assisi Pilgrimage," a presentation of the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission's "Vision & Values" series, was funded by a grant from the Catholic Communication Campaign.

A DVD of the program can be purchased by calling (800) 488-0488.

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Mulderig is on the staff of the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops. More reviews are available online at [www.usccb.org/movies](http://www.usccb.org/movies).

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