

# Singing to Touch the Hearts of Children, Recording-Star Friar from Italy to Sing for 800 Baltimore Catholic School Children

At the invitation of Archbishop William E. Lori, Alessandro Brustenghi, the shy Franciscan friar who was catapulted to international fame as the “Voice from Assisi,” will offer free concerts for nearly 800 Catholic school students from mostly-inner-city Baltimore schools at the Baltimore Basilica October 17. Friar Alessandro, who has flown here from Italy just to sing for the children, says he wants to bring joy into their lives through his own celebration of life through song.

Following the concert, the children will be escorted by costumed “Pied Pipers” to the nearby Peabody Institute for an Umbrian Renaissance-style “Faire.” There they’ll be treated to food, music, games, dancing, face and hand painting, flower arranging, and puppet shows.

The concert and Faire are sponsored by the nonsectarian *Francis in the Schools* program and its 300 volunteers, who want to convey Francis of Assisi’s transformative message of hope and compassion to children growing up amid poverty, crime, and neglect. The program is designed to express these themes vividly and memorably, through the loving respect and kindness shown to the children by the volunteers themselves. After an earlier *Francis in the Schools* event, one child said, “Now I know what it’s like to spend one day in heaven.”

The friar will sing six songs at the concert, including “Fratello Sole, Sorella Luna” (“Brother Sun, Sister Moon”), which was written by Saint Francis.

Friar Alessandro, a natural talent and radiant tenor, is the first friar to sign a recording contract with a major record label (Decca Records). His debut album, *Voice from Assisi*, released in 2012, reached the top of the classical charts in England and was nominated for Album of the Year. His second album, *Voice of Joy*, was released in 2013. The friar’s YouTube videos have been viewed more than a

million times. He has performed throughout Europe and has sung for Pope Francis.

On the friar's first trip to America last October, he performed at a *Francis in the Schools* event for 1,400 children from the San Francisco Bay Area. Six hundred Washington children from mostly low-income D.C. neighborhoods will hear the friar sing at a *Francis in the Schools* event October 10 at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America.

The Baltimore concert is scheduled to start at 9:30 a.m. and last until about 10:20. The Faire is expected to be presented between 11:15 a.m. and 1:45 p.m.

Media are welcome. Press backgrounders are available, and media liaisons will be on hand to assist you. The event will not be open to the public.