

April, 2020

Volume 1, Issue 1

Il Poverello

The newsletter of the SS Francis and Clare Fraternity
of the Third Order of St. Francis

Lord, help me to live this day, quietly, easily. To lean upon Thy great strength, trustfully, restfully. To wait for the unfolding of Thy will, patiently, serenely. To meet others, peacefully, joyously. To face tomorrow, confidently, courageously.
St. Francis of Assisi

www.thirdorderfranciscans.com



“Praise the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever” – Psalm 136

After much prayer and discernment, the SS. Francis and Clare Fraternity was established as an “emerging” fraternity by Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, on January 24, 2020. Our fraternity of Franciscan Tertiaries was born out of a deep desire to live our Franciscan vocation in the manner that Third Order Franciscans lived their vocation for centuries, that is, under the spiritual direction and guidance of the Friars Minor. Being blessed with the presence of members of the First Order of St. Francis “next door” at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted, we have been gifted with the opportunity of growing in our vocation in close relationship with this community, the friars of the Province of the Immaculate Conception. As stated in the letter of establishment of our fraternity, “the Friars of the Immaculate Conception, living at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown, Ohio, commit themselves to guide and spiritually care” for our fraternity.

Our fraternity is joined in this effort by two other fraternities, both also under the spiritual direction of the OFM Friars of the Immaculate Conception. These two fraternities are Our Lady of America Fraternity in Ashtabula and the St. Padre Pio Fraternity in Youngstown. We look forward to getting to know each other as we move forward in this journey.

As our mission statement reads, “by profession and urged by the Spirit, we commit to reach the perfection of charity and to live the Gospel in the manner of St. Francis by means of the Rule of 1883 to the Franciscan Third Order Secular approved by Pope Leo XIII”. Following the example of St. Francis and his intense love and devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist is the center and the source of life in our community. The Gospel, our guide.

As we continue to praise our Lord for his mercy and favors, we continue to pray to the Holy Spirit for His guidance and ask from Our Lady, in her title of “The Immaculate Conception”, for her motherly intercession.

Pax et bonum,
Pepe Ventosa, TOF
Chair Steering Committee

Fraternity Council (to be elected soon)

Robert Burtscher, TOF – Acting
Minister
Roberto Meza, TOF
– Acting Vice-Minister
Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM – Spiritual
Director
Debbie Ventosa – Acting
Formation Director
Susan Kramer – Newsletter

Monthly Gathering

3rd Sunday, 1:30 PM
St. Nicholas Byzantine Church
1050 Robinson Ave, Barberton
**Next Gathering –
TBA after COVID-19 Quarantine
is lifted**

**Visitors are always joyfully
expected and are heartily
welcome!**

Franciscan Quote of the Month

What do you have to fear? Nothing. Whom do you have to fear? No one. Why? Because whoever has joined forces with God obtains three great privileges: omnipotence without power, intoxication without wine, and life without death.

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) – Deacon & Founder of the Franciscan Order



Something to Consider

This inaugural issue of Il Poverello marks a new and hopeful chapter in our vocation as Third Order Franciscans. For most of us, it was not an easy decision to go forward in this direction, and it did not come about without a great deal of prayer and soul searching. Anything worth having is not accomplished without sacrifice.

None of us take our Franciscan vocations lightly. It helps to remember it wasn't easy for St. Francis to completely uproot himself from his very pleasant life and give everything to God. The son of a prosperous merchant, eating the finest foods and wearing well-tailored, splendid clothing, living in a lovely home with servants, enjoying the company and admiration of his many friends, and singing to and flirting with pretty girls, Francis had ambitions to become a knight and a nobleman with wealth and recognition as a civic leader, with a wife and family. There was nothing wrong with any of it, except that God had other ideas for him. It took a great deal of time and prayer before St. Francis gave it all up to joyfully follow the true path God chose for him. The world has never been the same since.

God has a plan for all of us. Like Il Poverello (*the poor little man of Assisi, our good St. Francis*), we may have to forgo what has become familiar in order to serve God. In imitation of St. Francis, may we attain perfect joy in our sacrifice of what has become comfortable and familiar, to go forward in our Franciscan vocation, serving God with trust in His providence, and with gratitude for the privilege of sharing the cross, sorrows, and joys of Jesus. God bless and protect us!

Important Reminder!

If any of our members is in need of food, meals, pharmacy visits, or anything at all, please contact Maria Elena Meza, who is in charge of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary apostolate of our fraternity. Council is very concerned for the well-being of our members, especially those who may not have any immediate family or any means to get essential supplies. As a spiritual, Franciscan family, we are here to care for one another.

And don't forget – wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds at a time – which equals one Our Father or two Hail Marys!

Requiescat in Pace

We were profoundly saddened to learn of the death of our dear Franciscan sister, Joyce Brown, OFS. Joyce was a member of the St. Frances Cabrini Fraternity in Akron for several years. She was the wife of Deacon Fred, who was also a member of the St. Frances Cabrini Fraternity. Joyce diligently attended classes at the seminary in Cleveland with Deacon Fred, assisting him as he prepared to be ordained as the first African American deacon of the Cleveland Diocese. Deacon Fred and Joyce faithfully served Our Lady of Cedars Maronite Parish in Montrose and St. Mary Parish in Akron for many years, and raised a beautiful family of six children, including Fr. Stephan, who serves the Diocese of St. Petersburg in Florida. Her good sense and quiet joy in serving the Church and her family was an excellent example of true Franciscanism to all of us. Joyce's funeral was held Saturday, March 7 at Our Lady of Cedars. **God bless, protect, and comfort Deacon Fred and all the Browns, and may the angels meet and guide Joyce on her journey to Jesus.**



SS. Francis and Clare Fraternity Lectio Divina App



“St. Francis put into practice his ideal of imitating Christ by constant recourse to the Gospel. Actually, this is the only way any Christian can follow effectively in Christ’s footsteps; he must consult the Gospel if he is to find out how to live, for it is there, in the Gospel, that Our Lord has left us a record of his life.” *from Call to Commitment.*

Would you like to imitate St. Francis by going to the Gospels to follow in Jesus’ footsteps? Would you like to develop the habitual practice of praying with the Gospel in Lectio Divina?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, please join our fraternity’s “TOF Lectio Divina App.” By joining, you will be praying the Gospel and sharing the Word with your brothers and sisters.

For more information, please contact Pepe.

Formation News – Debbie Ventosa, TOF

The Formation class has been patient as we develop the new community, and are observing the quarantine. As of January, 2020, we have been blessed to have a formation team working with twelve Inquirers. Father Vit Fiala, OFM has been active by attending formation classes as we develop the program. Rose Akins, TOF, Cindy Russo TOF, LeeAnn and Chris Devore, TOF, Roberto Meza, TOF and Susan Kramer, TOF are the formation team members. We are learning what a third order is, the history, the requirements, the Rule of 1883 and most importantly improving our prayer life to grow in holiness in imitation of St. Francis. We meet twice monthly for a minimum of two hours, and have modified the program to continue learning remotely until the quarantine is lifted. Keep us in your prayers.

Drive Up Adoration – Betty DeMarco, TOF

Father Benson of St. Michael Church in Canton has agreed to expose the Blessed Sacrament, Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 6 PM in the window of the church, which can be seen from the lower parking lot. Father agreed to this as long as there is someone there through these hours. If you are able to commit to an hour, please let Betty know - email at mdemarco001@neo.rr.com or phone (330) 492-7449 with the times you are willing to commit. St. Michael is located at 3450 St. Michael Dr. NW, Canton, 44718.

Mass and Adoration via Television, Facebook, and You Tube

It is very difficult for all of us to be unable to attend Mass and Adoration at our home parishes. In addition to the opportunity shared with us in the article above, be sure to check with your home parish and diocese to find out when and by which means Sunday or daily Mass is offered, and even Adoration, on television, Facebook, and You Tube. For instance, the Cleveland Diocese airs Sunday Mass at 6 AM on Fox 8 television, as well as on their website, where you can also access daily Mass from St. John Cathedral. If your parish has a website, be sure to check for messages from your pastor and information on Masses which may be broadcast from your home parish. And, as always, EWTN is an excellent source to view daily and Sunday Mass, as well as the Rosary, Divine Mercy chaplet, and other programming.

April Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

Bill Marshall – 28 Years
Richard Russelo – 24 Years



Birthdays

Clarice DeJesus – Apr 4
Bill Marshall – Apr 7
Richard Russelo – Apr 15
Betty DeMarco – Apr 17
Nettie Miller – Apr 30

Eucharistic Adoration



Sunday

Clarice DeJesus
Betty DeMarco, TOF

Monday

Rose Akins, TOF
Louise Daniel
Virgil Daniel
Judith Hoyt, TOF
Richard Russelo, TOF

Tuesday

Michael Butts, TOF
Chris Devore, TOF
LeeAnn Devore, TOF
Eileen Dunlap, TOF
Rick Dunlap, TOF
Therese Harper
Larry McNutt, TOF
Lucy McNutt, TOF
Maria Elena Meza, TOF
Roberto Meza, TOF
Cindy Russo, TOF

Wednesday

Bill Marshall, TOF
Carol Perrine, TOF
Richard Russelo, TOF

Thursday

Joanne Angeletti, TOF
Carol Perrine, TOF

Friday

Robert Burtscher, TOF
Debbie Ventosa, TOF
Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Saturday

Susan Kramer, TOF

The apostolate of daily Eucharistic Adoration is VITAL to our Fraternity. It does not depend only on the 27 brothers and sisters listed above and is not only limited to one day. If you wish to take a place on the Adoration list, please contact Susan Kramer. When you find yourself at church, say a prayer of adoration to our good Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Franciscan Cord and Scapular

Did you know that as Third Order Franciscans we have a habit? We do!

Franciscans wear a Tau Cross. It is a universal Franciscan symbol, a visible sign of our vocations, which is still worn today by most Franciscans. In the past, there were two other items we wore to remind us of our vocation. The first item is the Franciscan scapular, worn under our clothing. The scapular is a modification of a full habit many years past. Through time, that habit decreased in size, and is no longer worn as an outer garment. Today, our habit, the Franciscan scapular, is worn beneath our clothing.

There is a second part of our habit, a cord worn around the waist, under our clothing. Friars and nuns still wear the cord, with three knots, and normally on the outside of their habits. The three knots represent, and remind the wearers, of their commitment to poverty, chastity, and obedience.

For Third Order Franciscans who wear the cord (under their clothing), there are five knots: Three knots which remind us of our promises (not vows) of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The other two knots represent penitence and detachment. For Third Order Franciscans, it is made of thin, rope-like material, as it will be worn under the clothing, and thus it is not bulky, nor readily visible to others.

To wear the cord, it is folded in half and then put around the waist. The two ends of the cord are then pulled through and folded within itself so that the end knots hang down. If you cannot quite visualize this, take a look at how the friars wear their cords over their habits.

The cords and knots, and the scapular, are very tangible reminders of our profession to the Third Order, and our call to the Franciscan way of life. As we put this cord on, we may say a short prayer, asking that we have the strength and blessings to be aware of the meanings of the cord, and may persevere in our vocations.

Scapulars and cords will be given at the investiture. We look forward to our growth in Christian perfection and these sacramentals as a means of grace.

Updates on the Structure of the Tertiaries, Phase Two – Pepe Ventosa, TOF

The steering committee, composed of Fr. Vit, the ministers of each fraternity and myself, have been meeting for the last several months on a regular basis. Some of the items accomplished during this period include:

- developing a common path to guide us in leaving the OFS in order to return to live our vocation of Third Order Franciscans under the direction of the First Order of Friar Minors;
- adopting the Rule promulgated by Pope Leo XII in 1883 as our program of sanctification and way of life;
- searching for the Constitutions for the Rule of 1883 and making these available to members;
- searching and finding the old Ritual book, distributing prayers for opening/closing of gatherings and meetings and for the Investiture Ceremony;
- developing guidelines to enter the new Tertiary community, including guidelines for those from other OFS fraternities that may want to transfer in;
- planning of the Investiture Ceremony, including obtaining the new habit to be received and developing Certificates of Reception. Unfortunately, this ceremony was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic and will be rescheduled;

During this time period we also discussed various ideas on the best way to function and operate that would suit each of the fraternities involved. Different models were discussed. These included:

- one “regional” community at the Shrine composed of 3 fraternities. This “regional” entity would have a full council and the local fraternities would have a simple council consisting of a minister and vice-minister;
- independent local fraternities with their own full council, and no “regional” community;
- and a few other concepts between the two options above.

After our last meeting in March, 2020, it was discerned that the best model would be that of the “independent” local fraternities. As such, our effort now will shift from building a community at the “regional level” to focusing on establishing solid local fraternities. This will entail the following, which is being implemented already. Each fraternity:

- will have its minister request the consent from the local ordinary;
- will have its own full council;
- will gather at their usual place of gathering once a month;
- will have their own Formation and On-going Formation program (in process);
- will have their own apostolates;
- will have their own newsletter. Susan has been on top of things and compiled this first edition for you. Thank you, Susan!
- will have their own set of statutes (in process);
- will have a website or another method to reach out to others. In process and hopefully will be completed within the next three months;
- will maintain archives of important documents.

Although the fraternities are to be “independent”, there will be a common thread that will keep us united. This include:

- All the fraternities will be under the spiritual direction and care of the OFM of the Province of the Immaculate Conception, specifically under the friars at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted.
- The ministers of each fraternity will meet about two times a year with Fr. Vit to discuss and plan joint activities that would promote growth in Franciscan spirituality, continual conversion and fellowship. Example of such activities include: days of recollection, retreats, picnics and attendance at each other gatherings. The first meeting will be in September, 2020.
- Eventually, Fr. Vit would like to have a common set of statutes for all fraternities. Each local fraternity will use these in conjunction with their own statutes.
- Local fraternities will be able to share their resources with other local fraternities as needed and as agreed between them. For example, two fraternities doing together Initial Formation or sharing the same On-going formation program.

The Steering Committee has completed its task. We now move forward to “phase two,” where the focus will be building a strong, well organized and functioning local fraternity.

I would like to give my sincere thanks to all of you who in one way or another gave up of your time to assist in this process. As we ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of our Blessed Mother, St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Mother Cabrini and all the saints we look forward to this journey together.

Dates to Remember

April 5	Palm Sunday
April 12	Easter
April 19	Divine Mercy Sunday
April 26	Gathering cancelled due to COVID-19 Quarantine

One More Thing!

Do you have a little corner or space at home where you pray? A special quiet area where you talk to God or pray the Liturgy of the Hours? If so, take a picture and send it to Susan Kramer and maybe we can create a collage of our personal Portiunculas for the May newsletter. Now go wash your hands for 20 seconds (one Our Father or two Hail Marys!)



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Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.