

December, 2020

Volume 1, Issue 8

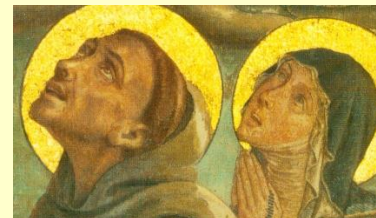
Il Poverello

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



Something to Consider

It has certainly been very different this year with the COVID restrictions placed on us. As we look toward Christmas under these circumstances, maybe this is an opportunity to reflect on how our good St. Francis celebrated Jesus's birth.

After his trip to the Holy Land, which was gripped in bitter and vicious wars between Muslims and Christians, St. Francis was inspired to illustrate the beauty and conditions of the first Christmas. It is thought that St. Francis visited Bethlehem during his Holy Land trip, although this is only conjecture. In 1223, near the end of his life, St. Francis recreated the Nativity of Jesus in Greccio, which is a few miles from Assisi. Francis had a great devotion to the Child Jesus, and he wanted to remember the poverty, humility, and simplicity in which Jesus became human, and to reinforce these values in his Order. At that time in Italy, as in the world today, rampant greed and materialism was the norm. St. Francis wanted a visible reminder of the power and grace in which Jesus came to us, in such modest circumstances.

St. Bonaventure recalled St. Francis's great affection for the Child Jesus: "The man of God (St. Francis) stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem." In this time of isolation and change, may we all remember what we are really celebrating this holy Christmas season!

Fraternity Council

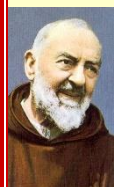
Robert Burtscher, TOF
– Minister
Roberto Meza, TOF
– Vice-Minister
Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM
– Spiritual Director
Larry McNutt, TOF
– Secretary
Pepe Ventosa, TOF –
Councilor
Debbie Ventosa, TOF
– Formation Director
Susan Kramer, TOF
– Newsletter

**Next Gathering –
Sunday, December 20
1:30 PM
St. Nicholas Byzantine
Church
1051 E. Robinson Ave.
Barberton, OH 44203**

**Please wear your masks,
in compliance with
COVID-19 restrictions!**

Franciscan Quote of the Month

“Joy, with peace, is the sister of charity. Serve the Lord with laughter.”



**St. Pio of Pietrelcina, OFM (1887-1968)
Franciscan Friar, Priest, Stigmatist, Mystic**

Eucharistic Adoration



Sunday
Betty DeMarco, TOF

Monday
Rose Akins, TOF
Louise Daniel
Virgil Daniel
Judith Hoyt, 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
Carol Perrine, TOF
Cindy Russo, TOF

Wednesday
Bill Marshall, TOF

Thursday
Joanne Angeletti, 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 24 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.*

December Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

Joanne Angeletti, TOF – 34 Years



Birthdays

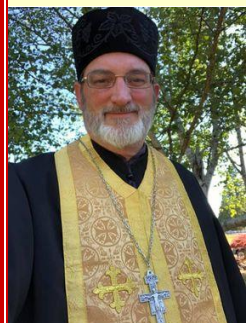
None this month!

Reminders!

If you want to pass out flyers at the Gathering, send group emails in the name of the Fraternity, or if you want to have the floor to discuss anything, please run it past Bob Burtscher before the meeting.

Also, Council is still looking for a volunteer to oversee the fraternity photo album. If the Spirit urges you, please see anyone on Council!

EWTN Appearance by Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF



Our isolated tertiary and Franciscan brother, Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF will be the guest of Fr. Mitch Pacwa, SJ on his EWTN program, "EWTN Live", which will be broadcast Wednesday, December 9 at 8 PM (check your cable listings to confirm). Fr. Dozier will discuss Eastern Rite Catholicism. We are certainly **very** thankful for Father and his work for Jesus and the Church, bringing the Word of God and the truth of the Church to all he touches, and preparing future priests for service to the Church.

Father is the pastor of St. George Byzantine Catholic Church in Olympia, Washington, and is also an adjunct professor at the Byzantine seminary, SS. Cyril and Methodius, as well as a devoted family man. In our fraternity, we especially value the Byzantine Rite, since we have made our fraternity home at St. Nicholas parish and have enjoyed the generous hospitality of Fr. Miron Kerul-Kmec for so many years. We are blessed as well to have St. Nicholas parishioners Joanne Angeletti, TOF, and Virgil and Louise Daniel as part of our fraternity family.

Don't miss Fr. Dozier on EWTN on Wednesday, December 9 at 8 PM!

Stand for Life

Joanne Angeletti, TOF, and Matt Poletti, Formation student, will represent the fraternity on December 19 at the abortion clinic in Cuyahoga Falls from 10 AM to Noon. If you wish to add your support, feel free to join them. ***Remember to use the residential parking around the corner, and not business parking or Acme's parking – you will be towed. It may be easier to pray without distractions across the street, rather than in front of the clinic. Also, be sure to remain on the sidewalk at all times, and to maintain a courteous, charitable, and Christian demeanor. If you are unable to fulfill your commitment, find a substitute. *NEVER* go alone to the clinic – pray from home if your partner will be absent and cannot find a substitute.***

Christmas Gathering – December 20

After some thought, Council has decided to proceed with our annual Christmas gathering, with a few adjustments in order to stay within CDC guidelines.

Council will provide fried chicken, and will be happy for any donations to the meal. If you are interested in bringing something to share, consider cookies, pasta salad, or anything along those lines. Bob Burtscher has already offered to provide the potato salad, and Fred and Susan Kramer will donate water and soft drinks. If you plan on bringing anything, please remember to bring a serving utensil. We will have members available to serve rather than have everyone handling the serving utensil. Also, please contact Susan Kramer if you are bringing a dish, so we can coordinate and to ensure we don't have too much of one food.

Looking forward to seeing everyone on December 20 at St. Nicholas (named in honor of the original Santa Claus!)

December Exercise Challenge

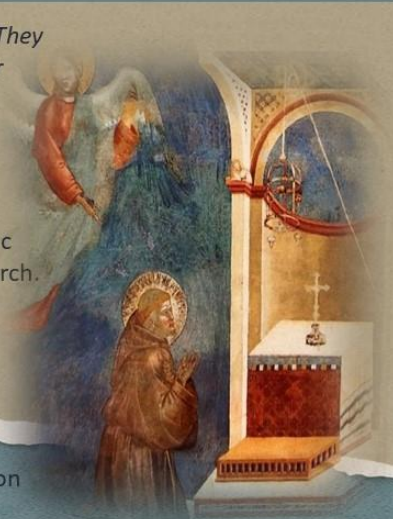
Submitted by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Last September our exercise focused on Article 58 of the Constitutions. This article reads, *“They shall show deep reverence for God’s churches, whether these are large and richly furnished, or small and poor; and they shall make visits to them readily, whenever an opportunity occurs. There they shall adore Christ with the words of their Seraphic Father: ‘We adore You, most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Your churches throughout the world; and we bless You, because by Your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.’”*

St. Francis had a deep awareness of Our Lord’s True Presence in the tabernacle of all Catholic Churches. He was known to kneel down and say this prayer whenever he saw a Catholic church.

As we enter the Season of Advent and prepare to celebrate Our Lord’s birth looking forward to his 2nd coming, it seems a good idea to work on this exercise again. It is said that repetition helps to develop habit. To be always conscious of His Holy Presence in all Catholic churches and to acknowledge Him with a simple act of prayer is a wonderful habit to possess.

Would you take the December Exercise of Religion Challenge and say this prayer each time you go by a Catholic Church during this month?



Meet Leslie Magda, Novice & Formation Student – by Elizabeth Francis, TOF

Leslie Magda is a cradle Catholic, who attended Catholic grade and high schools. It is a blessing to have such a wonderful foundation for life. A member of SS. Cosmas and Damian Parish in Twinsburg, she participates in Eucharistic Adoration weekly.

When she was a member of St. Mathias Parish, she knew a couple of women who were Secular Franciscans; one was Cindy Machi. Their “kindness and demeanor exuded Jesus.” Otherwise, she did not know about the TOF. The Holy Spirit is always at work, and Leslie listened. Cindy expressed how she was growing in her faith journey, and that she was in formation with the TOF. It is interesting that just a few weeks before hearing about the TOF, Leslie felt she needed “more structure or instruction.” The Holy Spirit was certainly at work, and Leslie listened.



Like many of us, Leslie is quite active. A member of the Padre Pio Prayer Group in Cleveland, she is the Coordinator for the Padre Pio Police Protection Rosaries, as well as having been the chairperson for the Padre Pio Shrine Fundraiser. Leslie says she doesn’t have any specific volunteer activities, but it sounds like she is quite active.

Leslie’s husband of three years, Mark, has Stage 3 cancer in the right lung, and Stage 1 cancer in the left lung. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.

She has the gift of laughter, and the gift of tears. “I can laugh very heartily, and I can cry when something touches my heart. It can be a story, or seeing an older couple holding hands. I look upon them both as gifts because God has allowed me to feel and love deeply.” These gifts come in handy when she looks after her grandchildren!

St. Francis loved animals – they, too, are God’s creatures. Three years ago, she lost Nelson, her Black Labrador. She still misses him and wants to hug him again. Maybe, someday, she will get another dog, or one will come into her life and adopt her.

Everyone needs to unwind, and Leslie finds reading relaxing. Currently, she is reading The Diary of St. Faustina. Her grandchildren have fleece blankets she made for them. She has learned to crochet as well.

Leslie has had the opportunity to travel widely – to Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Portugal, besides visiting most of the 50 American states.

“I have some saints I feel close to. Padre Pio is who I see for guidance and wisdom; St. Clare for conviction of faith, St. Peter because the Lord loved him despite his denials; St. Teresa of Calcutta because she taught me about *I thirst*; St. Faustina shows me how to better love Jesus and ask him for mercy, and of course, St. Francis because he keeps me structured.”

Lord, It Is Good for Us to Be Together!

Saturday, November 14 we met at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown for our monthly gathering and annual Day of Recollection. Our attendance of 38 included members of Our Lady of America fraternity of Ashtabula, St. Padre Pio fraternity of Youngstown, and our own fraternity, as well as several formation students, and of course, our beloved Spiritual Director, Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM.

We started out at 8:30 AM with a beautiful meditative Rosary and Litany of Our Lady led by Fr. Jules Wong, OFM. Mass followed at 8:45 AM, offered by Fr. Vit, during which he spoke on the great Apostle St. Paul and his journey in faith.

After Mass, we headed to the basement meeting room for a delicious breakfast courtesy of our host fraternity, St. Padre Pio. As we finished, Fr. Vit began his morning teaching. He highlighted St. Augustine, who believed if we are separated from God, we are separated from self, and the harmony between reason and Faith.

St. Angela Foligno, TOF had a mystical understanding of Jesus’s suffering and applied it to her own suffering. St. Angela said, “I met God in my heart,” which offers an outlook on why good people suffer – it brings us to a mystical union with God.

Returning to St. Augustine, Father expanded on some of the great saint’s thoughts in relation to our mission as Franciscans. These included:

- If I love God, I love everyone, born and unborn.
- Love for others means we want them in union with God.
- Self-love is a poison. Christ, united with ourselves, together become a whole human being.
- When two truly become one, they join to become a perfect human being.
- The Eucharist transforms us because we become one in Him.
- Christ prays for us – as a priest.
- Christ prays in us – in Communion.
- Christ prays by us – He is God.

St. Augustine's work, The City of God, illuminates reason and Faith. There must be no separation between our lives and our Faith. St. Augustine saw that history is governed by Divine Providence.

When there is indifference toward God, freedom from self will bring us to God, and we are responsible for making this happen, and fighting against decay in society (power, lust, vice, etc.)

Alexander the Great conquered against all odds by recognizing the enemy's weakness and attacking the leader. He took advantage of corruption to overcome. Weakness comes from destruction of morals, virtue, and ethics. The fall of Rome was due to the moral decay of centuries, not Christians.

We must choose which City we desire. The Earthly City turns to dust, while the Heavenly City of God is eternal. Love for God guides us to the City of God.

At 11 AM, we headed back to the church for Confession, Adoration, and personal prayer, and then returned to the meeting room for a delicious lunch again provided by our generous hosts, the St. Padre Pio fraternity.

Liturgy of the Hours was led by Kenny Green, TOF, Carol Perrine, TOF and Virgil Daniel, followed by Lectio Divina which was led by Our Lady of America minister Gil Pluhar, TOF.

Fr. Vit then started his afternoon session, expanding on the following:

- The "cities" mentioned in the morning teaching are symbols. The Earthly City is where we are. The City of God is the goal of our journey, the place of God's justice.
- These cities overlap. With our desire, we can be in the City of God while on Earth.
- Being overinvolved in Earthly things is unhealthy. The Earthly City will pass away.
- The Christian journey is linear. You are somewhere and you have to go someplace. There is a goal.
- Beware of Earthly leaders who mislead by saying good things. Satan denied God and lied. Many angels followed him.
- We judge so we can orient ourselves better. Is this leading me to the Earthly City or to the Heavenly City? We do not judge to condemn others.
- By nature, we are sinful, due to the sin of Adam. We are broken. We are incapable of fixing ourselves.
- Train your heart to accept any persecution and to be willing to be a martyr, even if you never may be. God can see in your heart your willingness to suffer for Him.

- Learn to not be disturbed by the unwillingness of others to accept truth. Are they willing to listen to you? If not, don't waste your time. Disturbance is not good for your spiritual life.
- Faith is enlightenment that brings transformation into Christ. We start seeing with the eyes of God.
- The essence of joy is knowing that the end is the beginning.

The names of deceased members of our fraternities were recited, one by one, in our annual ceremony of remembrance of our dead. Eternal rest grant unto them, and let the perpetual light shine on them. We also recited the renewal of Profession.

After a full day of prayer, instruction, and reunion with our brothers and sisters from our region, we ended our Day of Recollection. Many thanks to our generous and hospitable hosts, the St. Padre Pio fraternity of Youngstown, Fr. Vit, and all who worked hard to prepare this special annual gathering.

Save the Date (December, the Month of the Immaculate Conception)

December 8	Feast of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation) *One-year anniversary of the Franciscan Tertiaries of the Immaculate Conception!
December 9	Appearance of Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF on EWTN Live with Fr. Mitch Pacwa, 8 PM (check your cable listings)
December 12	Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas
December 20	Monthly Gathering (St. Nicholas Byzantine Church, 1:30 AM)
December 25	Christmas Day (Holy Day of Obligation)
January 1	Feast of Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation)
January 6	Feast of the Epiphany

Constitutions Franciscan Third Order, Article 39

*“The Third Order wishes to have as members
those who burn with the desire of striving for perfection
in their own station in life.”*



**“While you are proclaiming peace with your lips,
be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.”**

St. Francis of Assisi

Blessed Advent and Christmas!

Viva Christo Rey!

