

December, 2020

Volume 1, Issue 1

The Troubadour

Newsletter of the Franciscan Tertiaries of
the Province of the Immaculate Conception



Our Franciscan Progress

As we celebrate the one-year anniversary as Franciscan Tertiaries of the Province of the Immaculate Conception, we reflect on changes in our Franciscan vocation since December of 2019.

A year ago, we placed ourselves under the leadership and spiritual direction of the OFM friars of the Immaculate Conception Province. We are blessed indeed by the faithful spiritual leadership of our good Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, who walked with us every step of the way and offered his sensible Franciscan advice as we moved forward. Without his support, we may well have floundered and lost our way.

We also are fortunate in our Ministers who worked hard to lead us through all the changes. Gil Pluhar, TOF; Pat Cuttica, TOF; and Bob Burtscher, TOF cooperated amongst themselves to lead the three fraternities of our Region through this first year of transformation and transition.

We celebrated our first investiture in July, when professed members received their new habits. Fourteen Novices entered the community and are currently in Formation Studies and working hard toward profession. We have come to know them, not only as friends, but as brothers and sisters.

Additionally, we joyfully welcomed our isolated tertiary, Fr. Daniel Dozier, a Byzantine Catholic priest and adjunct professor at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius. Father is pastor of St. George Byzantine Catholic Church of Olympia, Washington. We thank God for putting us together!

God is good! With His mercy and grace, may we continue to bring our Catholic Franciscan charism to all we touch, and serve the Church with joy!

Spiritual Director

Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM
Shrine of
Our Lady Comforter
of the Afflicted, Youngstown



Editor

Susan Kramer, TOF

Franciscan Quote of the Month

“Sanctify yourself and you will sanctify society.”

**St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) – Founder of the Franciscan Order
Deacon, Stigmatist, Mystic, Soldier, Salesman – Canonized 1228**



2020: A Year of Formation by Pepe Ventosa, TOF, Assistant to Fr. Vit

“Be strong and steadfast; have no fear or dread of them, for it is the LORD, your God, who marches with you; he will never fail you or forsake you.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

This first edition of “The Troubadour”, our community newsletter, comes as we begin the Season of Advent, a time to prepare to celebrate Jesus’ birth and look in anticipation to His second coming. It also comes as we celebrate the 1st year anniversary of the establishment of our community of Franciscan Tertiaries on December 8, 2019, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. As we journey together, it is good to reflect on our beginnings and praise God for His faithfulness and mercy. He is the One “who marches with you and will never fail you or forsake you”.

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| November 9, 2019 | Introduction on forming a new community of Franciscan Tertiaries. A Steering Committee was formed for the task of forming this new community. |
| November 16, 2019 | First meeting of the Steering Committee. At this meeting, it was discerned that the new community would adopt the Rule of 1883 promulgated by Pope Leo XIII. Several subcommittees were formed to transition from the OFS to the TOF, including subcommittees for deactivation of OFS fraternities, formation of new TOF fraternities and Formation. It was decided that fraternities would commit to daily Eucharistic Adoration. |
| December 8, 2019 | Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, formally established the new community of Franciscan Tertiaries of the Province of the Immaculate Conception. |
| December 14, 2019 | First community gathering took place at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted. |
| January, 2020 | Formation classes to enter the Third Order of St. Francis took off, meeting twice per month. |
| January, 2020 | Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM established a new “emerging fraternity”, the St. Padre Pio Fraternity, In Youngstown, Ohio, with 18 members and 4 in Formation. |
| January 24, 2020 | Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM established two new “emerging fraternities”, the Our Lady of America Fraternity with 7 members and one individual in Formation in Ashtabula, Ohio, and the Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity in Barberton, Ohio with 25 members and 11 in Formation. |
| May, 2020 | Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity launched their new website, www.thirdorderfranciscans.com . This website serves as a source of information for those looking into the Franciscan Third Order. If you have not visited it yet, we invite you to do so. There, you will find information about the Third Order, our Rule, the Constitution, our community statutes, and many other resources to strengthen your Franciscan vocation. |
| July 11, 2020 | Our first Investiture Ceremony, officiated by Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM and assisted by Brother Joshua Critchley, OFM took place at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted. Twenty professed members received their new habits, the scapular and the white cord. Ten individuals were accepted into the Novitiate, |

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| | receiving the scapular and the brown cord. Other members who could not attend this ceremony were invested over the following months. |
| July 23, 2020 | Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF was established as our community's first "Isolated Tertiary" . Fr. Daniel is a Byzantine Catholic priest and lives with his wife and children in Olympia, Washington. |
| October 3, 2020 | Celebration of the Transitus of St. Francis took place at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown and at St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Barberton. |
| October 6, 2020 | Our Community of Tertiaries Statutes were approved and signed. |
| November 14, 2020 | Our community had our first Day of Recollection. Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM was the speaker and this event took place at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown. |
| December, 2020 | The first edition of our quarterly newsletter, "The Troubadour" was launched. Look forward for the Spring, Summer, and Fall editions. |

"Praise the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever."
Psalm 136

Community Statutes

On October 6, 2020 the ministers of the three local Third Order Franciscan fraternities, Pat Cuttica, TOF (Padre Pio Fraternity, Youngstown), Gil Pluhar, TOF (Our Lady of America Fraternity, Ashtabula), and Bob Burtscher, TOF (Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity, Barberton) met at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted to sign, with Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, the Statutes of the Community of Tertiaries of the Province of the Immaculate Conception. The Statutes are guidelines specific for our community, covering a wide range of topics such as entering the Order, Formation, the role of the fraternity council, and several others. This document has been posted on the website of the Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity, www.thirdorderfranciscans.com. We invite you to study it to learn more about our new community. Each local fraternity will continue to work on their particular fraternity statutes.

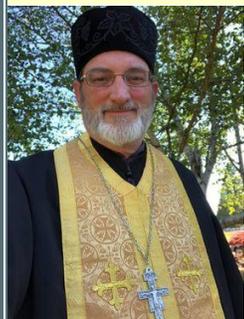


Third Order Tertiary Community Anniversary

December 8, 2020, the feast of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, marks our one-year anniversary of the establishment of the Franciscan Tertiaries of the Province of the Immaculate Conception, under the leadership of the OFM friars of the Immaculate Conception Province. Between this and the COVID-19 pandemic, it has certainly been a memorable year indeed!

Sometimes, God leads us to walk into the unknown in order to follow His will. And sometimes it is good to shake ourselves free of the what we have become accustomed to, so we can move in a more positive direction. In spite of the difficult decisions we faced and the unfamiliar path we took, God was clearly in charge and blessed us with able and faithful leadership in the form of Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, and our local fraternity ministers. **Let us rejoice and be glad!**

Isolated Tertiary News



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. He is a published author of Catholic apologetics, and has done work for the Catholic Answers website. We pray that God continues to send the TOF such worthy servants of the Church!

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

Day of Recollection

Saturday, November 14, our three Regional fraternities met at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown for our first 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 Ss. Francis and Clare fraternity of Barberton, 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. 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.

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 tasty 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.

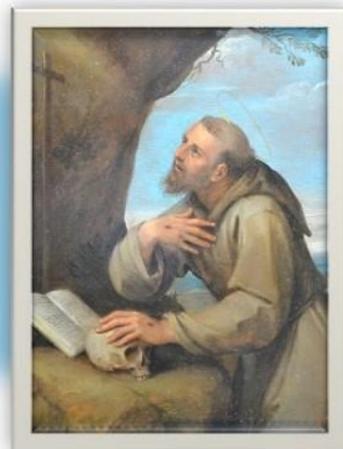
- Being overinvolved in Earthly things is unhealthy. The Earthly City will pass away.
- The Christian journey is linear. You are somewhere and you have to go someplace. There is a goal.
- Beware of Earthly leaders who mislead by saying good things. Satan denied God and lied. Many angels followed him.
- 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.

“Although the Third Order is not a body of persons who are already perfect, it is principally a school of integral Christian perfection, imbued with the genuine Franciscan spirit. For, it was instituted for this purpose: to satisfy fully the sincere desires of those who had to remain in the world but did not wish to be of the world. Therefore, the Third Order wishes to have as members those who burn with the desire of striving for perfection in their own station in life.”

Constitutions Franciscan Third Order, Article 39



Exercises of Religion – Monthly Recollection Day

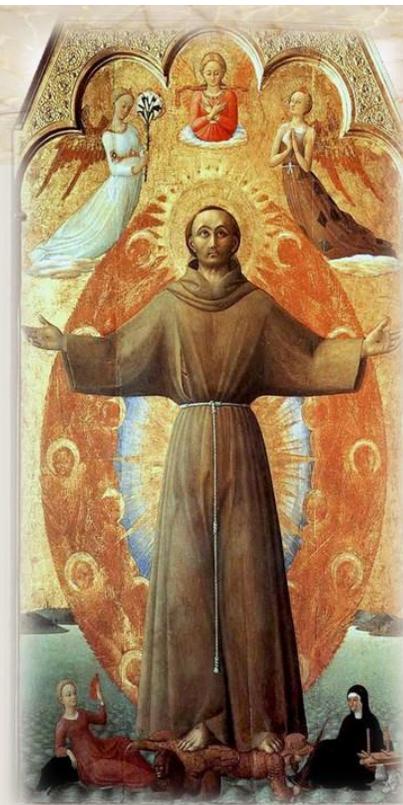
In fulfilling its mission of forming the Tertiaries in Christian perfection, our Constitution provides in section II a series of “exercises of religion” to assist us in achieving this goal. Article 65 reads: “A most effective means of renewing one’s zeal for perfection is the monthly recollection day. Tertiaries shall do their utmost to make one either with the fraternity or privately.” If you are interested in spending your own day of recollection overnight “in the woods” please contact Pepe Ventosa for information. These are taking place usually on the last Friday of each month. You will need to bring your own tent and food along with your spiritual aids.

Opportunities for Volunteering

Are you looking for ways to assist your Tertiary Community? The following are a few ways you can help:

- We are in urgent need for someone to make a brochure of the TOF. We have people looking for information and contacting the Immaculate Conception Province. The province would like us to make a brochure with information. These brochures can also be available for parishes. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Pepe Ventosa, TOF, and he will give you the information to include. Also would like to eventually have a separate brochure about Isolated Tertiaries.
- We are in the process of putting together a program of Initial Formation for Isolated Tertiaries (IT) and are in need of a couple of volunteers who would be willing to assist in forming IT's via online meetings. If you would like to get more information about this please contact Debbie Ventosa, TOF.

THANK YOU!!!



2021: A Year of Further Formation by Pepe Ventosa, TOF

Growth and development of a new community requires firming up the foundation that was laid, addressing the needs that arise, and future planning. Below are some of the exciting plans we will be working on together for the upcoming year.

- 1- **January:** Article 5.1 of our Statutes, quoting from Sacra Propediem, states: "It is, then, desirable that in every city, town, and even in each village, the Third Order count henceforth a sufficient group of members, not of inactive adherents satisfied with the mere title of Tertiaries, but instead, of those who spend themselves with zeal for their own salvation and the salvation of their brothers". As our novices approach their time for holy profession, it is now time to start preparing to form those who are sensing a call to join our community. In January 2021 we will have a "Come and See" in North Canton for those interested in joining the Order. If anyone has reached out to you for information about the Third Order, please feel free to refer to Debbie Ventosa, TOF, Formation Director of the Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity for details about this event.
- 2- **Spring, 2021:** As recommended in Article 26 of our Constitution, the novices should prepare for holy profession by making a retreat. This retreat will be organized by the Formation Directors and will take place during Lent in the Spring of 2021.
- 3- **August, 2021:** The profession of the novices is tentatively planned for August, 2021. More information to follow.
- 4- **September 6, 2021:** Labor Day Franciscan Hike. Please save the date for a morning of hiking, prayer, formation, food and fellowship (weather permitting).

- 5- **November 13, 2021:** Day of Recollection. Save the date.
- 6- There have been individuals contacting our Province for information about the Tertiaries. Currently, we have only one website which is the one from the Ss. Francis and Clare fraternity for information about the Tertiaries. It is our goal in 2021 to have a Tertiary section on the website of the Province of the Immaculate Conception.
- 7- We are working on a banner for our community and should be done in the next few months.
- 8- Throughout the year we will
- continue to work on the object and purpose of the Third Order of St. Francis, which is to form its members in Christian perfection (Community Statutes Art 1.4);
 - continue to develop a program of Initial and Ongoing Formation that is in full accord with Catholic doctrine, draws on the wellspring of the Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers and Franciscan tradition and support and challenges our members in their growth in Christian perfection (ref Community Statutes Art 4.5);
 - continue to foster devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the center of our community life;
 - work on developing a program for Initial Formation for Isolated Tertiaries;
 - continue to “foster this spirit of prayer among the members” (ref Community Statutes Art 3.2)
 - promote within our fraternities “works of charity and of the apostolate, so that all the tertiaries show themselves, both in the Church and in civil society, to be true heralds of the charity of our Lord Jesus Christ and of our holy Father Francis” (ref Constitution Art. 133.2);
 - continue to promote the Third Order of St. Francis.

“Praise Him for He is good and extol Him in your works, for therefore He has sent you through all the world that by word and deed you may bear witness to His voice.”

St. Francis of Assisi, Letter to All the Friars

End of Year Statistics

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| Professed Members | 51 |
| Novices | 14 |
| Isolated Tertiaries | 1 (Olympia, Washington) |
| Fraternities | 3 |

