

December, 2023

Volume 4, Issue 12

Il Poverello

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

*O holy Father, protect those in Your name (John 17:11) whom You have given to me
in the world; they were Yours and You have given them to me. (John 17:6)*

And the words which You gave to me I have given to them... - St. Francis of Assisi

www.thirdorderfranciscans.com



Something to Consider

With all the work, fun, waiting, and pure joy of the Advent and Christmas seasons, we may sometimes forget the sheer wonder of the birth of Jesus.

It certainly was out of the ordinary for a poor, devout Jewish girl of no more than 14 to be greeted by an angel. Mary was probably having a routine day, doing all the chores a girl of her age and station was expected to do – washing clothes, cooking and baking, tidying the house, perhaps picking fruit for the next meal, and generally helping her mother with daily tasks. Out of nowhere, without warning, she was approached by an angel, who told her not to be afraid, and that God was highly pleased with her! And, moreover, God wanted her to be the mother of His Son! This lovely young lady had the presence of mind to ask how this could happen, since she was a virgin, but in the end, she joyfully accepted God's plan for her!

It could not have been easy for St. Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary. He was a hardworking, faithful, and decent young man who was looking forward to his marriage, only to find his fiance was with child. He truly loved Mary, and was very conflicted with this state of affairs. The only solution for a respectable, loving, and moral man in his situation was to charitably and quietly "divorce" Mary (in other words, to call off the wedding and to give no public reason for it). Astonishingly, he also was visited by an angel, who greeted him with the same words – "Do not be afraid" – and explained that Mary was to be the Virgin Mother of the Son of God. It was a lot for him to absorb, and impossible to understand. But Joseph was a man of great faith who completely trusted God. So he carried on with his original plans, and took his beloved Mary, in her delicate condition, to Bethlehem to register for the Roman census.

Finally, the event that changed the history of the world took place, and Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, was born in the poorest of circumstances, with angels singing His praises, a beautiful star shining down, and shepherds coming from the fields to worship. And later, the Three Wise Men or Kings brought gifts fit for an earthly king to the little family who didn't know where their next meal was coming!

If this happened today, it would be very difficult to believe. And yet, we do!

Glory to God in the Highest, Good Will to All Men, and Peace on Earth!

Fraternity Council

Roberto Meza, TOF

– Minister

Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM

– Spiritual Director

James Miller, TOF –

Vice-Minister

Mary Dye, TOF – Secretary

Therese Harper, TOF –

Treasurer

Virgil Daniel, TOF –

Councilor

Chris Devore, TOF –

Councilor

Pepe Ventosa, TOF –

Councilor

Debbie Ventosa, TOF

– Formation Director

Susan Kramer, TOF

– Newsletter

**Next Gathering at
St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish
Sunday December 17
at 1:30 PM**

We are expecting you!

Catholic Quote of the Month



***"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you...
yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand."***

**St. Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1987) Feast Day – September 5
Founder of the Missionaries of Charity, Protector of the Poor and Dying,
Defender of All Human Life, Defender of the Church**

Eucharistic Adoration



Sunday

Betty DeMarco, TOF

Monday

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

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

Mary Dye, TOF
Bill Marshall, TOF
Jim Miller, TOF

Thursday

Joanne Angeletti, TOF
Denise Williams, TOF

Friday

Robert Burtscher, 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 25 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 – 37 Years
Julia Tarulli, TOF – 25 Years



Birthdays

Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM – 12/16
Denise Williams, TOF – 12/18
Jennifer Kerns, TOF – 12/23

Stand for Life



There is no one scheduled for the Stand for Life for December because of the bitter winter weather.

We lost the battle to exclude the right to abortion in the Ohio Constitution in November. But the war is not over. Our prayers and witness to the clear and logical teaching of the Catholic Church on human life is of vital importance every day.

Please do not forget to pray for the innocent unborn who are endangered by abortion, and for all those whose lives are at risk of unnatural death, including those on death row.

Formation News by Debbie Ventosa



At the Day of Reflection November 4, 2023 our three Postulants took the Novice habit.

Marlene Walker, Carolyn and Dennis Gacioch were received into the Novitiate by means of the clothing of the habit. The habit consists of a blessed scapular and a brown 5 knot cord. They also received a lighted candle representing the light of Christ as a sign of immortality. As members of the community now their names will be added to the registry of our fraternity.

As our Constitutions states the purpose of the Novitiate is to prepare them as they discern to dedicate themselves to God by profession, with a full realization of their obligations. This is a period of further formation in the Christian and Franciscan way of life.

Please keep Marlene, Carolyn and Dennis in your prayers as they continue to learn and grow in their Franciscan walk.



God bless and protect our new Novices!

Upcoming Christmas Gathering (December 17)

Sunday, December 17 will mark the day of our annual Christmas party, which will serve as our December Gathering. We will meet at 1:30 PM at St. Nicholas Byzantine Church as always.

Mary Dye, TOF will be sending out food assignments and sign-ups for those who want to share in providing our Christmas feast.

This year we will be enjoying a special treat – our first professional (or maybe semi-professional!) TOF Christmas Choir! Roberto Meza, TOF, Virgil Daniel, TOF, Chris Devore, TOF, and possibly Fred Kramer will be taking part in leading us in Christmas carols. If you are part of your parish choir, please join them – the more, the merrier!

The carols used will be taken from the Book of Christian Prayer we use for Liturgy of the Hours. In addition, Mary Dye, TOF will once again accompany them. Kenny Green, TOF will also present the Nativity story from Greccio.

We will also be renewing our Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. If you cannot attend the December Gathering, please pray the Consecration prayer at home. It can be found on the fraternity website, www.thirdorderfranciscans.com

Our good St. Francis especially loved Christmas and Baby Jesus! Please plan to be with us for this special Christmas Gathering!



Hospitality and Little Portion

The December Gathering on December 17 will serve as our Christmas celebration! Council will provide ham, turkey, paper products, and beverages.

Mary Dye, TOF will be sending out information on food assignments for those who want to contribute to our feast.

Cindy Russo, TOF will prepare the Little Portion, and Rick Dunlap, TOF will deliver it.

Please be sure to attend this most joyful celebration, which will commemorate the birth of Jesus!



As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.

Reminder!

It is part of our Franciscan duty to make proper arrangements for our funerals and wills. St. Francis himself went to the trouble of making things easier for his brothers by communicating his wishes before he entered eternal life.

Please contact Jim Miller, TOF to fill out the form for the Franciscan wake service if this is part of your plans – **even if you have already submitted a form previously**. Your Franciscan brothers and sisters are willing to pray the wake service at the calling hours or before the funeral, and your non-Franciscan family members will find this a great comfort.

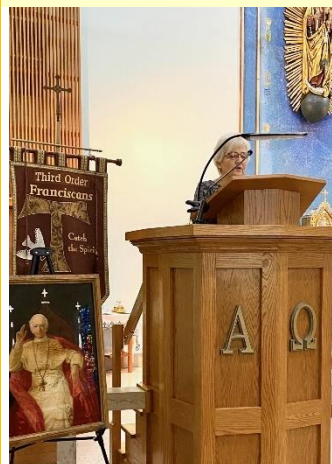


Debbie Ventosa, TOF has been in communication with Paula, a local woman who sews and has patterns for the habit lay Franciscans wear in death, which is similar to the OFM habit. She displayed a sample of the habit at our September Gathering and took orders as well. Anyone else who is interested should notify Debbie.

This is not something to leave to your family. When one of the original members of the St. Frances Cabrini OFS fraternity died a few years ago, her family wanted her to be buried in a habit, as her husband had been. But the poor woman had never ordered a habit, and her children were not Franciscans and did not know where to get one. Fortunately, her niece was a member of the fraternity and managed to get one delivered from out of state with only a few hours to spare.

In these post-Covid days, when things are more uncertain and delays are more frequent, it is perhaps better to make arrangements now, so our families are not burdened with these decisions. **Think about it.** See Jim Miller, TOF about the wake service as soon as possible so we have the information on hand.

Day of Recollection



Saturday, November 4, we spent a very spiritual and joyful day with our brothers and sisters from Our Lady of America fraternity and St. Padre Pio fraternity. We met at the Shrine in Youngstown for Mass, Confessions, Adoration, question-and-answer sessions with Fr. Vit, and fellowship with our extended Third Order Franciscan family.

Here are some memories!

← **Pat Cuttica, TOF, Minister of St. Padre Pio Fraternity, greets everyone to the DOF**

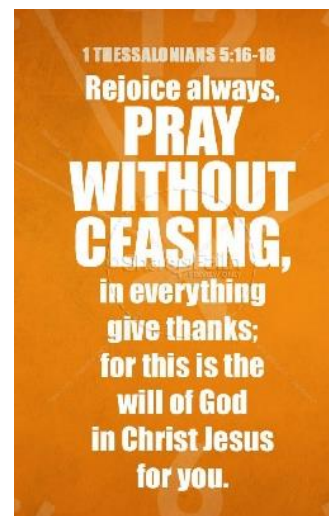
Fr. Vit and Fr. Ryan bless the scapulars →



Eucharistic Adoration and Daily Prayer

Council asks those of us who participate in Eucharistic Adoration – and the rest of our fraternity – to remember the following intentions every day when you pray:

1. **The spiritual protection of our fraternity and of all our members.**
2. **Those in our fraternity who are sick, and their families.**
3. **Pope Francis** and his intentions.
4. Our bishops and their intentions: **Bishop David Bonnar** of the Diocese of Youngstown, **Bishop Robert Pipta** of the Eparchy of Parma, **Bishop Earl Fernandes** of the Diocese of Columbus, and **Bishop Edward Malesic, JCL** of the Diocese of Cleveland.
5. The Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province of the OFM, particularly **Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM**, **Fr. Dennis Arambasick, OFM**, and **Fr. Robert Campagna, OFM**, who is the Provincial Minister.
6. **Our beloved, hard-working pastors and parish priests, and our parishes**, including **Fr. Miron Kerul'-Kmec** of St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish (Eparchy of Parma), who hosts our fraternity every month. We also pray for **Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF**, an Isolated Tertiary who is the pastor of St. George Byzantine Parish in Olympia, Washington and St. Irene Byzantine Parish in Portland, Oregon, as well as being a professor at SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Seminary and contributor to "Catholic Answers" on EWTN radio. And **Fr. Ryan Furlong, TOF**, who is pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Vienna, St. William Parish in Champion, and St. Robert Bellarmine Parish in Cortland (Diocese of Youngstown) and who is a member of the St. Padre Pio Fraternity.
7. **Fr. Gastor Temu Bahati**, of the Diocese of Moshi who is serving on the staff of his bishop, whom we have spiritually supported for several years.
8. **Frater Francis Tumaini** of the Diocese of Moshi, who is the Moshi seminarian we have adopted.
9. **All the seminarians of St. Mary Seminary and Borromeo Seminary in Cleveland**, which serves the Youngstown and Cleveland Dioceses, as well as **the seminarians of SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Seminary**, which serves the Eparchy of Parma. Our fraternity has spiritually adopted **Arthur Bodenschatz**, (St. Paul in North Canton) from the Diocese of Youngstown, **Joseph Rohan**, (St. Joseph Parish in Cuyahoga Falls), **Alex Krukemeyer**, (Our Lady of Victory Parish in Tallmadge), and **John Paul Antalek** (St. Mary Parish in Akron), all from the Diocese of Cleveland. These men, and Frater Francis of the Moshi Seminary, are the future leaders and servants of our Church.
10. Please add prayers **for the safety and protection of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, and for the conversion of Russia** as Pope Francis has done in his Consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Also, **for the spiritual and physical protection of Catholic priests, religious, and lay people everywhere, particularly in Nigeria, Peru, Nicaragua, the Middle East, the Far East, and other countries where our Faith is being attacked.**
11. For the **protection of all life**, born and unborn, womb to tomb.
12. For the blessing of **an increase in priestly and religious vocations – including the Third Order Franciscans, and for an increase of faithful Catholic marriages and families.**



That's a lot! But it is part of our holy Franciscan vocation to prayerfully support our fellow Franciscans, the Pope, our bishops, our priests, and seminarians and anyone in distress and danger. ***We have no Order without faithful Franciscans, no priests without our seminarians, no Eucharist without our priests, and no Church without the Eucharist.*** We all work together doing the mission God has given us, for His glory. All these individuals on the list sacrifice daily for us, and the very least we can do is to pray for them!

Lord, it is Good for Us to be Together!

- We met on Saturday, November 4 at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted in Youngstown for our annual Day of Recollection, which also served as our November Gathering.
- The Day of Recollection started at 9 AM. Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM and Fr. Ryan Furlong, TOF celebrated Mass in the Shrine church, assisted by Fred Kramer who was the altar server. All in attendance agreed Fred looks good in brown, especially in the Franciscan habit used by servers at the Shrine!
- The ceremony marking the progression from Postulancy to the Novitiate for Marlene Walker and Dennis and Carolyn Gacioch was included in the Mass.
- After Mass, we enjoyed a light morning tea/coffee break offered by our hosts, the St. Padre Pio Fraternity.
- As we enjoyed our tasty snack, Fr. Vit started his question-and-answer session with a variety of questions from TOF members on spiritual everyday matters.
- We then moved back to the church for a holy hour of Adoration and Confessions offered by Fr. Vit and Fr. Ryan, and we were very grateful to take advantage.
- At Noon, we were back to the social hall for a delicious lunch from the St. Padre Pio Fraternity, during which we socialized and reconnected with our Franciscan family from all over northeast Ohio.
- After lunch, Fr. Ryan Furlong, TOF thanked us for our prayer support and for the chance to get together with us before he headed back to his three parishes in Trumbull County. ***(We should be especially diligent about praying for our parish priests every day. It is now normal for them to care for at least two, and often more, parishes. They are sometimes spread over quite a distance, such as the case of our brother Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF, who cares for parishes in Olympia, Washington and Portland, Oregon. God bless and protect our parish priests!)***
- We then prayed the Midday Liturgy of the Hours, led by Kenny Green, TOF.
- At that point, Fr. Vit commenced with his second session of questions and answers.
- Our lovely day concluded at 3:30 PM with Fr. Vit's blessing on us all. We are very thankful for the generous and gracious hospitality of the St. Padre Pio Fraternity, and for the spiritual gifts Fr. Vit and Fr. Ryan shared with us! Let's do it again next year!

Save the Date (December, the Month of Advent and Christmas)

December 7	Day of Fasting for Third Order Franciscans
December 8	4 th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Third Order Franciscan Community Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the US - <i>Holy Day of Obligation</i>
December 12	Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas <i>(¡Viva La Virgen de Guadalupe!)</i>
December 25	Christmas - <i>Holy Day of Obligation</i>
January 1	Feast of Mary, Mother of God - <i>(not a Holy Day of Obligation this year, since it falls on a Monday and will be celebrated on December 31)</i>
January 21	January Gathering (<i>St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish, 1:30 PM</i>)
May 18	Pilgrimage planned by Our Lady of America Fraternity

“
How to find Christmas
peace in a world of
unrest? You cannot
find peace on the
outside but you can
find peace on the
inside, by letting God
do to your soul what
Mary let Him do to
her body, namely,
let Christ be formed
in you.”

-Quotable Fulton J. Sheen.

