

March, 2024

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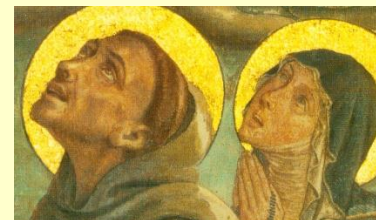
Il Poverello

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

We may have the impression that in order to become a saint, we must be extraordinary in our spiritual lives, and that it just isn't in us to measure up to God's high standard for saints. That we have to start early in life to live in a saintly manner or it will be too late to even try.

Well, think again.

St. Augustine was his mother's worst nightmare. St. Monica loved him with all her heart, but he was a constant disappointment to his devout mother for the first 30+ years of his life. He fell away from the Catholic Faith she so carefully instilled in him. He became a big shot in pagan society, with a very exclusive education to justify his disdain for the Church. To top it off, he had a mistress with whom he had a son, which thoroughly scandalized poor Monica. She never gave up praying for him intensely every day. After decades of pleading with God, Augustine finally turned over a new leaf, returned to the Church, became a priest and eventually a bishop, and was named a Doctor of the Church.



St. Paul was a rather self-righteous Jewish man who had no patience with the new Christians who renounced Judaism and were devoted to the teaching of Jesus. He actively persecuted anyone who identified as a Christian and took great satisfaction in it. We all know what happened next. God knocked Paul off his horse, blinded him, humbled him, and made him His own. Paul did a U-turn with his life, and became one of those he persecuted so cruelly in the past. He is one of the greatest saints of the Church.

Then, there is St. Joseph. A quiet, hard-working, moral, and decent man. Joseph lived his life strictly in accord with the teachings of the Bible. He was happy to stay in the background. He had a lovely fiancée, Mary, whom he loved with all his heart. He was ready to start his married life when he learned his dear Mary was expecting a child who could not possibly be his. He decided to cancel the marriage, when God sent an angel to tell him to wed Mary, and told him the truth about her child – that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was the Son of God! Joseph trusted and obeyed God and accepted marriage and fatherhood with great joy.

Sometimes it isn't we who decide to become saints. Sometimes God yanks us out of our plans and makes us into His saints!

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 –

Sunday, March 17

St. Nicholas Byzantine Church

1051 E. Robinson Ave.

Barberton, Ohio 44203

We are expecting you!

Catholic Quote of the Month

“St. Joseph was an ordinary sort of man, on whom God relied to do great things.”

St. Josemaria Escriva (1902-1975) Feast Day – June 26 Priest, Founder of Opus Dei



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.*

March Anniversaries and Birthdays

Profession Anniversaries

None this month!



Birthdays

Joanne Angeletti, TOF – 3/4

LeeAnn Devore, TOF – 3/24

Judith Hoyt, TOF – 3/29

Stand for Life



Mike Butts, TOF and Rick Dunlap, TOF will pray at the abortion clinic on State Road in Cuyahoga Falls on March 16. If you choose to witness to the Church's teaching on life by praying at the abortion clinic, don't forget our rules for your own safety. **Remember to use the residential parking around the corner. Do not use 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. Be sure to always remain on the sidewalk. If you cannot fulfill your commitment, find a substitute. *NEVER* go alone to the clinic – pray from home if your partner will be absent and you cannot find a substitute.**

Formation News by Virgil Daniel, TOF

The Inquiry group meets Mondays at 7:00pm in the St George Center on the St Nicholas campus. In March, we will meet on the 4th and the 25th. At the March Gathering we will celebrate their Reception into the Postulancy.

Our newly “minted” Postulants participated in the parish Mission at St Francis de Sales Church, 4019 Manchester Road, Akron – Feb 18 & 19, 7:00pm. “Knowing Francis & Living Francis,” Fr Brian Stacy, OFM Cap.

Don't forget to pray for *all* our Formation students – and their excellent teachers!

Hospitality and Little Portion

For our March Gathering, Judith Hoyt, TOF, Formation student Andrea Ferraro, and Debbie Ventosa, TOF will prepare our luncheon. If you want to help, please contact one of them to see what is needed.



Denise Williams, TOF will prepare the Little Portion for October, and she will also deliver it. The Little Portion Apostolate ministers to the homeless and street people of Canton and Akron by providing a simple meal of sandwiches, fruit, and anything individually wrapped for our brothers and sisters in Christ – usually at least 2 meals. You may also add small sized toiletries such as Purell, liquid soap, religious articles, disposable razors, etc. Tube socks are always very useful. Or you may want to deliver the offering. **If you are interested in helping, please contact Mary Dye, TOF.**

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

Requiescat in Pace

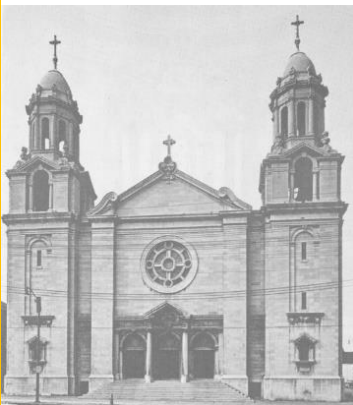


We extend our most sincere condolences to Joseph Zbasnik, a Novice of our fraternity, on the death of his beloved wife, Jennifer. Jennifer passed away recently after a long and courageous battle with Ewing's sarcoma, a form of cancer. May the angels lead her to the merciful arms of Jesus and welcome her to paradise. And may Jesus and our Blessed Mother Mary comfort Joe and hold him close.

Pilgrimage Update

Paul Fedele, TOF, Minister of the Our Lady of America fraternity is hard at work, firming up the details of our upcoming Third Order Franciscan Community Pilgrimage in May. Here is the information he has shared so far:

On Saturday, May 4 we will meet at the Shrine of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (patroness of the Third Order Franciscans), which is located at 9016 Buckeye Rd., Cleveland, 44104.



The day will begin with the opportunity for Confession starting at 8:30 AM, followed by a Traditional Latin Mass (a low Mass). After Mass, Reverend Canon Hoogerwerf and Reverend Canon Bovee will lead us in spiritual reflections.

Around 11:30 AM, we will head for the shrine hall for lunch, which will be provided by Paul Fedele, TOF (he will accept free will offerings).

After lunch, we will pray the Stations of the Cross, followed by the Litany of the Saints and the Litany of Loreto (remembering that May 4 is the First Saturday and May is the month of our Blessed Mother Mary). The day should conclude around 2 PM or so.

Carpools may be arranged – more details to follow!

God Bless The New Novices!



Joe Zbasnik entered the Novitiate on February 24 with Isolated Tertiary Mary Colon, who travelled all the way from Arizona. The ceremony took place after Mass at the Shrine in Youngstown, with several members of the St. Padre Pio Fraternity (Youngstown), Our Lady of America Fraternity (Ashtabula) and Ss. Francis and Clare Fraternity (Barberton) in attendance. A delicious lunch was provided by our generous hosts, the St. Padre Pio Fraternity.

Because he lives in Lake County, Joe continues Initial Formation with the Isolated Tertiaries but is a member of our fraternity. He and Mary hope to be formally Professed in November – which will be here before we know it!



Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM; Joseph Zbasnik, and Joe's mother, Mary Zbasnik ↑

Indulgences (to Clarify) by Virgil Daniel, TOF

After my discussion of Indulgences at the February Gathering, I felt that some strings were left hanging, as it were. (Or perhaps the Holy Spirit is prompting me?!)

First, and foremost, there is no mandate or obligation to seek an indulgence! It is an entirely optional practice, encouraged as part of a life of prayer and penance, to be sure, but nevertheless a personal option for each of the faithful. Thus, Pope St Paul VI taught that *“The Church also in our days then invites all its sons to ponder and meditate well on how the use of indulgences benefits their lives and indeed all Christian society. ... the Church nevertheless leaves it to each to use these means of purification and sanctification with the holy and free liberty of the sons of God.”*

Second, then, is the stipulation of certain requirements and practices attached to many familiar prayers, devotions, and practices. These are to obtain the indulgence; again, nothing says that you should change your current personal prayer routine. Keep doing what you are doing! On the other hand, if the matter of indulgences is of interest to you in developing a deeper sense of devotion in your prayer life, then you might consider adjusting your prayer regimen in a manner such as I suggested. I offered a list of options in the one handout; most are for partial indulgences. Pick and choose as you wish; I certainly do not mean to imply that you should adopt them, any or all. I have personally done so, and it works for me – but then, I am not you. And, as I noted, I offer all my daily indulgences as suffrage (intercessory prayers) for the poor Souls in Purgatory.

I'll give one example that sticks in my mind from the Gathering – using your fingers to keep count of the decades of the Rosary. Nothing wrong with that if it works for you. But, in the matter of indulgences, one must use their properly blessed Rosary beads; they are a sacramental, a specific object of devotion.

Finally, as I did note in my presentation, the obtaining of an indulgence must be a deliberate act and intention. We often, due to familiarity, rattle through our prayers in the course of the day and, indeed, we are constantly offering our prayers to God. Seeking an indulgence, on the other hand, causes us to pause, however briefly, and lift our mind deliberately to God. Our prayer is unchanged, but it is now “enriched” by the indulgence.

In closing, Pope Paul also taught: *“Although indulgences are in fact free gifts, nevertheless they are granted for the living as well as for the dead only on determined conditions. To acquire them, it is indeed required on the one hand that prescribed works be performed, and on the other that the faithful have the necessary dispositions, that is to say, that they love God, detest sin, place their trust in the merits of Christ and believe firmly in the great assistance they derive from the Communion of Saints.”*

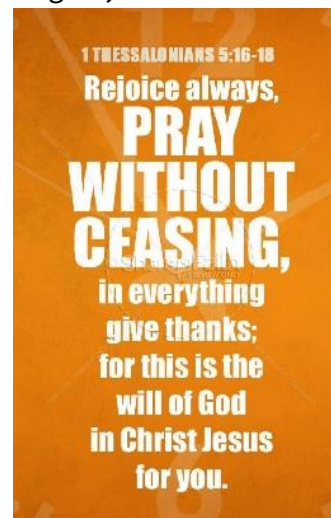
Reminder!

Please be sure to call Vice Minister Jim Miller, TOF if you are unable to make it to the monthly Gathering. Attending the Gathering every month is part of our duties as Third Order Franciscans, and it is something that should be taken seriously. Part of our charism is that we live in community – that we are a family - and we observe that by attending the Gathering and keeping in contact, just as some families come together for Mass and Sunday dinner. If you have a valid reason for not attending, such as illness, family obligations, and so on, please let Jim know via email, text, or phone. **We miss you when you are away!**

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) and **William Martzaklis** (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), **John Paul Antalek** (St. Mary Parish in Akron), all from the Diocese of Cleveland, and **Andrew Turpin** (University of Akron Newman Center, St. Bernard). 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 prayerful 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 Sunday, February 18, at St. Nicholas for our February Gathering. We had 30 in attendance, including visitors, Annie Butts, Fred Kramer, and our Spiritual Director, Fr. Vit.
- Roberto Meza, TOF welcomed everyone and led the opening ritual prayer.
- Kenny Green, TOF led the prayer before reciting the Office, and then the Liturgy of the Hours with Debbie Ventosa, TOF and Bill Marshall, TOF.
- Lectio Divina followed, beginning with Virgil Daniel, TOF proclaiming the Gospel of the day from St. Mark (the experience of Jesus in the desert for 40 days of temptation, “repent and believe in the Gospel”).
- We then had private discussions on the reading, after which Roberto led us in Grace before we enjoyed our lunch, which was prepared by Jim and Nettie Miller, TOF, and Susan Kramer, TOF.
- Eileen Dunlap, TOF gave an update on 40 Days for Life.
- After we finished, Roberto led the Grace after the meal.
- Roberto announced that Joe Zbasnik will enter the Novitiate on Saturday, February 24 at Noon Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted.
- Virgil Daniel led Ongoing Formation on the subject of Indulgences. We referred to the homework he sent with us last month.
 - An indulgence is the remission of temporal punishment.
 - Indulgences are about prayer and grace.
 - They are also about piety and devoutness in our Faith.
 - Conditions for plenary indulgences:
 - Confession within 8 days, followed by Communion.
 - Prayers for the intentions of the Pope
 - Our Father
 - Hail Mary
 - Glory Be
 - Within every plenary indulgence is a partial indulgence.
 - We may attain one plenary indulgence per day.
 - Indulgences specifically for the Third Order Franciscans:
 - On the day of investiture into the Novitiate.
 - On the day of profession into the Order.
- **Fr. Vit’s Ongoing Formation:** Fr. Vit spoke to us on penance:
 - There are two forms of penance:
 - The act of penance.
 - Living a penitential life.
 - Penance purifies us and brings us closer to God.
- **TOF Annual Community Pilgrimage:** The annual Pilgrimage will be held on Saturday, May 4. It will also serve as our May Gathering. See the article in this newsletter for a full outline of the details.
- **Formation Report:** Our Inquirers will all proceed to the Postulancy per approval of Council. Joe Zbasnik will proceed to the Novitiate on February 24 at Noon Mass at the Shrine.
- **Infirmarian Report:** Maria Elena Meza, TOF reported the following:
 - Per Bob Burtcher, TOF: Pat and Deanna Hurley’s (OFM) daughter Lynn died recently. Pat is in a wheelchair. Bob Burtcher, TOF and Rose Zaratsian, TOF attended the funeral.
 - Per Bill Marshall, TOF: Elizabeth Francis, TOF is losing her hearing. Bill did not visit this month.
 - Per Judith Hoyt, TOF: Sandy Pollino, OFS is embracing her health challenges and is cheerfully carrying on. And Dorothy Takacs, OFS continues to struggle with her condition.
 - Per Roberto Meza, TOF: Jennifer Kerns, TOF is suffering from blindness in her left eye and can no longer drive in the dark, which is why she is unable to attend the Gatherings until there is light in the evening. She asks for prayers



for her sister, Elaine. Also, Betty DeMarco, TOF has been unwell. And Rick Dunlap, TOF needs prayer support as he battles health challenges.

- **Isolated Tertiary Report:** Pepe Ventosa, TOF announced that the Inquirers are discerning entry into the Novitiate. Mary Colon of Arizona will have her ceremony at the Shrine on February 24 at the Noon Mass (along with Joe Zbasnik). All fraternity members are welcome and are encouraged to attend in support of the Isolated Novices.
- **Stand for Life:** Michael Butts, TOF and Rick Dunlap, TOF will cover the Stand for Life in March.
- **Little Portion:** Denise Williams, TOF will prepare and deliver the March Little Portion.



- **Wake Service and Burial Shroud Update:** Jim Miller, TOF has wake service forms available for those who have not made arrangements for this. We are still waiting for news on shroud availability!

- **Tridua Retreat:** Pepe Ventosa, TOF says the retreat is planned August 23 through August 25 at the Shrine. There are some rooms available (reserve early, please!), and members may bring their own tent and sleeping bag to camp on the grounds. More details to follow.

- **Fr. Vit's Books:** There are three books on praying for poor souls in purgatory, which Fr. Vit has made available to us. Please see Roberto if you would like to borrow them.

- **Prayer Intentions:** Roberto Meza, TOF led us in prayer for our intentions, including the following:

- For the members of our fraternity, both those present and those homebound.
- For our Isolated Tertiaries and those in Formation.
- For the spiritual integrity of our country.
- For the protection of all life, womb to tomb.
- For our family members, including Sheila Burtscher, Nico Ventosa, and all those in need of prayer.
- For Pope Francis, Bishop Pipta, Bishop Bonnar, Bishop Fernandes, and Bishop Malesic.
- For the OFM Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province, especially Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM, Fr. Dennis Arambasick, OFM, and Fr. Campagna, OFM.
- For Fr. Gastor Bahati of the Diocese of Moshi, Fr. Ryan Furlong, TOF of the Diocese of Youngstown, and Fr. Daniel Dozier, TOF, pastor of St. George Byzantine Parish of Olympia, Washington and St. Irene Byzantine Parish of Portland, Oregon.
- For our beloved and hard-working parish priests, especially Fr. Miron Kerul'-Kmec of St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish.
- For all seminarians, particularly:
 - Frater Francis Tumaini and his brother seminarians of the Diocese of Moshi seminary
 - Arthur Bodenschatz of the Diocese of Youngstown and Borromeo Seminary
 - Joseph Rohan of the Diocese of Cleveland and Borromeo Seminary
 - Alex Krukemeyer of the Diocese of Cleveland and Borromeo Seminary
 - John Paul Antalek of the Diocese of Cleveland and Borromeo Seminary
 - William Martzaklis of the Diocese of Youngstown and Borromeo Seminary
 - Andrew Turpin of the Diocese of Youngstown, who will enter Borromeo Seminary in August
- Roberto then led us in the Memorare and the St. Michael Prayer and concluded with the Closing Ritual Prayer.

Don't forget – our next Gathering will be at St. Nicholas on March 17! Blessed Lent!

One More Thing!

Our Minister, Roberto Meza, TOF, attended the Diocese of Cleveland Men's Conference on March 4 with Chris Devore, TOF, Matt Poletti, TOF, and Jerry Johnson, who is in the Inquiry period of Initial Formation. Roberto took advantage of the occasion to get the message out about our fraternity and the Third Order Franciscans. Matt Poletti arranged for a table and brought along our fancy new banner! It was an excellent opportunity to interact with Catholic men of all ages from Northeast Ohio – there were over 400 men in attendance!

Their table was happily situated at the end of a hall, right at the entrance to the chapel, so there was a steady stream of men who visited and learned about us. Many thanks



to Chris Devore, TOF; Matt Poletti, TOF, Roberto Meza, TOF, and Jerry Johnson (pictured at the right) who stepped up to represent us and the Third Order!

Well done, brothers!

Save the Date (March, the Month of St. Joseph)

March 17	March Gathering (St. Nicholas Byzantine Parish, 1:30 PM)
March 29	Good Friday (Day of Fast and Abstinence)
March 31	Easter Sunday – The Resurrection of Our Lord
April 7	Divine Mercy Sunday
May 18	Annual TOF Pilgrimage planned by Our Lady of America Fraternity
August 23-25	Tridua at the Shrine of Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted



**“THE GREATEST MALE SAINT WHO EVER
LIVED WAS NOT A DEACON, NOT A
PRIEST, NOT A BISHOP, NOT A POPE,
NOT A HERMIT, NOT A MONK...**

**HE WAS A HUSBAND, FATHER AND A
WORKER.”**

- St. Josemaria Escriva