

St Mary of The Angels Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order
The Angelus
December 17, 2023



Minister: Michael Oliver
Vice-Minister: John DiBenedetto
Spiritual Assistant: Michael Huether Formation Director: Carmencita Fiesta
Secretary: Susan Jamison Treasurer: Portia Fiesta
Counselors: Sonia Bernardo, Tom McGrath, Michaele Sylla
The Angelus this Month: Michael Oliver and Tom McGrath

December is dedicated as the Month of Divine Infancy





December Gathering Agenda

Opening Prayers - page 35 in the Ritual book

Business

- Feedback from Fraternal/Pastoral visit
- Special thanks to the Christmas Gathering Committee

Formation

- Christmas Greccio talk - Tom

Liturgy of the Hours—Evening Prayer

Food and Fellowship

Gift Exchange

Closing Prayers - Page 36 in the Ritual book

Peace and All Good this Advent Season!

We got (or ate our way) through Thanksgiving. Christmas is suddenly right around the corner and there is so much to do to get ready—decorating, making plans with family, shopping, house cleaning and, perhaps, baking.

While all of this is necessary and a part of the Christmas season experience, it is more important to focus on the true reason for the season. First and foremost, Christmas is a Christian feast and Advent helps us to get ready for the coming of Christ.

Here is a snippet from a Catholic Culture blog that captures this topic so well. It states, “We should keep Advent as a season of waiting and longing, of conversion and of hope and keep our thoughts on the incredible love and humility of our God in taking on the flesh of the Virgin Mary. Let us not forget to prepare a peaceful place in our hearts wherein our Savior may come to dwell.

The best person we can turn to for help during Advent is Mary, Christ's and our Mother. She awaited the day of His birth with more eagerness than any other human being. Her preparation was complete in every respect. Let's crown our preparation and borrow something of Mary's prayerfulness, her purity and whole-hearted submission to God's will.” This is perfectly stated!

I wish you, Brothers and Sisters, a richly blessed and Joyous Christmas and New Year!



SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT'S MESSAGE

December, 2023

May the Feast of the Incarnate Christ be with you all!

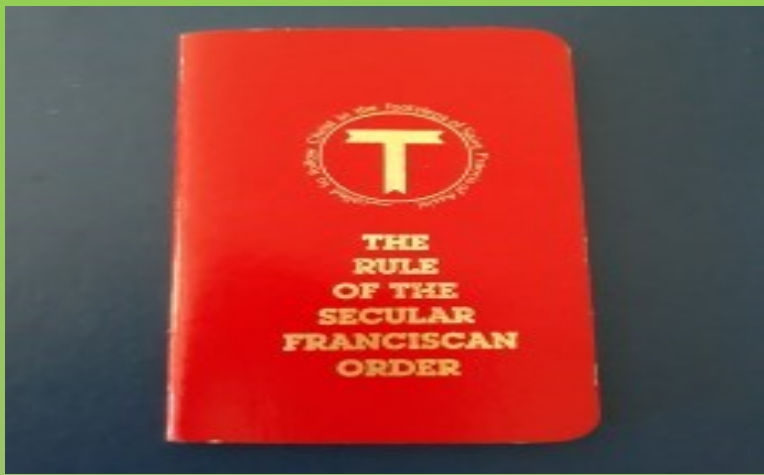
Our next article on Francis and the Beatitudes will talk about how good we are as peacemakers. This Beatitude states: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). We acknowledge our resource: "Brother Fir, Sister Earth: The Way of Francis of Assisi for a Socially Responsible World" by Adela DiUbaldo Torchia, doctor of religious studies at the University of Manitoba.

Living harmoniously with others is certainly important to us as Franciscans and Christians. At the end of his "Canticle of Brother Sun", Francis added at a later time words about the happiness of those who endure peace. This addition specifically referred to a conflict involving noblemen or civil authorities at a local situation he had to diffuse. The concern to diffuse tense situations was familiar to him. As Franciscans and as clearly defined in his "Peace Prayer", Francis was known as a person of peace. But we also know that he experienced disagreements and tensions in his life. Early Documents, for example, often mentioned Francis's admonitions to his friars to keep them from saying anything critical to or about the local parish priests whose approval was required before any of the friars could preach in that parish. Also causing hardships to the friars having deep desire to share their visions of God's goodness with the local people. Much of this unfortunately was driven by petty jealousies and vested interests among some local priests and church authorities. It was difficult to curtail the friars' sharing for an indefinite period of time. Therefore, Francis had to be insistent that the priests were not to be criticized.

The calling to be peacemakers unfortunately does not always mean avoiding conflict. Sometime, it is the result of attempted peacemaking. Next month, we will see that this conflict can involve persecution for doing the right thing.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all my Franciscan Sisters and Brothers and all their families and friends!

Mike Huether
Spiritual Assistant



Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

Chapter 2 The Way of Life

Article 7. United by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance”, and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls “conversion”. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily. On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and the source of grace.

Question: Do you remember significant conversion experiences in your life? (besides the daily ones!)

Listed are several "tools" for renewal. What has been your experience with any/all of these tools?

Christ Renews His Parish— Tools include: RCIA; Charismatic Renewal; Bible Study; Small group faith sharing; Marriage Encounter; Retreat week/ weekend and other venues

Suggested actions:

Reflect on your significant conversion experiences

Focus on daily conversion events and opportunities

Consider your experiences with the list of renewal tools and opportunities for using one or more of these going forward

Note: we will continue to highlight one article of the Rule each month in the Angelus

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Carol Smith—December 2nd
Alina Zygmunt—December 7th
Genie Dutton—December 9th
Delphine Bilowa—December 19th
Madonna Goody—December 19th
Greg Davis—December 21st

No December Professions

Beginning Balance	—	—	—	\$2,218.38
Contributions	—	—	—	\$ 432.00
Expenses	—	—	—	\$ 102.90
Ending Balance	—	—	—	\$2,591.48

Expenses include Spiritual Assistant,
Angelus & Postage, Kitchen supplies

Our monthly Mass for our Living and Deceased Fraternity Members will be celebrated on December 17th, at Our Lady of Grace Church at 11 AM.

A friendly reminder



If health or a special family obligation hinders you from attending our gathering, please contact our Vice Minister, John Di Benedetto, and let him know.

301-873-7883

Apostolates Corner

Prayer Ministry



Lead:

Bette O'Connor

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Lilian Soriano

240-205-5995 lilianisoriano@yahoo.com

Bette and any, or all, team members can be contacted by phone, text or email. If desired, your prayer requests will be shared with the entire Fraternity. We will be happy to feature prayer requests in the Angelus.

In addition, your prayer needs can be shared in the daily Zoom prayer gathering at 3 p.m. Finally, feel free to submit names to the group each month for prayer support.

Formation Update

The Rite of Welcoming was held at our November 19 Gathering for the following Aspirants:

Debbie Dubuque

Patrick Taylor Henry

Bette O'Connor

Marilyn Taylor

The Aspirants expressed their desire and interest in the Franciscan way of life and, thus, were welcomed by our Minister and Fraternity, with support and encouragement and prayers for their Formation.

The "Biography of St Francis" was given in order to learn how to live the gospel life of our Lord Jesus Christ by following his example .

Prayer & blessing from Michael Huether-Spiritual Assistant.

Welcome Inquirers !!!

Carmencita Fiesta - Formation Director

And the Formation Team:

Portia Fiesta

Michael Huether

Tom McGrath

Michaëlle Sylla

Rite of Welcoming

Carmencita with our new Inquirers: Marilyn, Debbie, Bette and Taylor

