



Decemeber 2023

THE CALL

St. Thomas More Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order *From Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel*

Minister: Andrea Bender, OFS; Vice Minister: Sita Chakrawarti, OFS; Secretary: Thomas Bender, OFS; Treasurer: Ann Wester, OFS; Formation Director: Janette Martin, OFS; Councilors-at-Large: Ann Corro, OFS, Michael Landrigan, OFS

Meeting – NO MEETING THIS MONTH (Advent Morning of Reflection replaced it)

Minister's Notes

Recently I listened to a podcast about the difference between Franciscans and Dominicans, other than being a straight line for many jokes. It was an interview with a layman and a Dominican priest. The Dominican had gone to undergraduate school at Franciscan University, Steubenville. So, I found his view well rounded. His view is that Franciscans try to follow Francis. They also put a high value on fraternity. Dominicans value fellowship with their fellow friars and the scholarship that feeds their preaching. Francis was suspicious of scholarship. He saw it as something that feeds pride. Franciscans place a premium on fraternity. How do you demonstrate your commitment to fraternity?

This year at my family's annual Thanksgiving gathering the next generation really stepped up. Several times a day there was someone going to the kitchen to check if garbage needed emptying or dishes were waiting to be washed. (Yes, it probably coincided with halftime, a team being so far ahead they were safe to leave, or some other football related time.) It seems a small thing, but it made a big difference not having to ask someone to step up. What can you offer the fraternity? (Hint: Every month I ask for volunteers to lead Liturgy

of the Hours. If you are reluctant, so sure you will mess up, I can pair you with someone to do it together so you can fly solo the next month.)

Another intercession from the Liturgy of the Hours is causing me grief. This one is from the Common of Apostles, Evening Prayer. That translates to having encountered it at least once a month usually twice a month since I began praying Vespers-maybe it is my time to be drilling down on intercessions (wonder what I am avoiding thinking about by focusing here?).

Father, you wanted your Son to be seen first by the Apostles after your resurrection from the dead—we ask You to make us His witnesses to the furthest corners of the world. So, what is my problem? Ever hear of Mary Magdalene being called the Apostles to the Apostles? Recall the story of Mary questioning the gardener if he knew where the body had been taken. Now reread the intercession. See my problem? What is your opinion?

Last Saturday we gathered for Mass at St. Ann's. The local lay Dominicans joined us and provided hospitality for our fellowship time.

The chapel guided meditation allowed fraternity members with Saturday morning apostolates to join the group without undue disturbance. Thank you, Jan, for the time of quiet shared prayer that was a result of lots of effort. Most of us were able then to pack up and move to lunch at the Benders. Extended fellowship over lunch and chatting. Randy and Sita tried to share the regional council's view on term limits and elections. We have about a

year to put together a slate, with a regional election this spring that may impact someone's availability. If you are interested in serving on the regional council, tell Randy ASAP. Starting next month, we will include a "job description" in each issue of the Call aiming at fraternity elections in the spring of 2025.

Pax et Bonum, Andrea

Prayer Intentions

- Peace in the Holy Land!
- *Bill Wester, Ann's husband, who is awaiting test to determine mode of treatment for heart issue.*
- Grace Coipuram, OFS
- *Virgina Roccapriore, widow of Joseph Roccapriore, OFS*
- *Peace in Ukraine and protection for Ukrainian and Ruthenian Rite Catholics there.*
- For the Poor Holy Souls in Purgatory.
- *For those who will not pray for themselves and with no one to pray for them.*
- For all imprisoned Christians imprisoned for their belief in God especially Bishop Alvarez of Nicaragua and for religious freedom.
- *In thanksgiving for the release of 12 priests in Nicaragua.*
- For the poor, the hungry, and the homeless.
- *For our Holy Father Pope Francis.*
- *For the health and well-being, and safety and protection of all priests.*
- For Marie, cousin of Anne Pastorkovich, who is undergoing chemotherapy.
- *For Louis, son of Clarissa, of STM Parish, for depression.*
- For the sister, of a friend of April, who does not want her sister to pray for her.

Professions

12/8/2002

Mary Ann Caruso - Our Lady of Lourdes

Prayer to the Holy Name of Jesus

Jesus, Name full of glory, grace, love and strength! You are the refuge of those who repent, our banner of warfare in this life, the medicine of souls, the comfort of those who mourn, the delight of those who believe, the light of those who preach the true faith, the wages of those who toil, the healing of the sick. To you our devotion aspires; by you our prayers are received; we delight in contemplating you. O Name of Jesus, you are the glory of all the saints for eternity. Amen.

St. Bernadine of Siena, OFM

Birthdays of the Month

Patricia Riggles (12th)

Mary Ann Caruso (21st)

Necrology

Anna Hannigan – December 1990

Fannie Emmert – December 2007

Thomas Coipuram – December 13, 2012

Catherine Wynne – December 17, 2017

Secretary's Note

On page 4 is a repeat from last month of the declaration of a special plenary indulgence to be given from December 8, 2023, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to February 2, 2024, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple in honor of the eighth centenary of the Christmas at Greccio. The indulgence can be gained with the usual conditions by visiting a Franciscan Church and praying before the creche. Local churches for us would be St. Francis in Triangle, St. Joseph in Herndon, Sacred Heart in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood of DC and The Franciscan Monastery.

Last month I passed on a text by Bl. John Duns Scotus, OFM on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Besides that solemnity and our Lady of Guadalupe, we also have the feast of Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Franciscan Order on December 15th. To help reflect on the significance of the Blessed Mother, on page 7 is an article by Fr. Chris Shorrock, OFM, Conv who was formally a national spiritual assistant on *The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Francis of Assisi*.

Finally, Jan led us in a reflection on the Incarnation and I won't add anything here. However, Christmastime has a hidden jewel in the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus on January 3rd. Spreading this devotion was a life work for St. Bernadine of Sienna, OFM (8 September 1380 – 20 May 1444). Even before it was restored to the General Calendar by Pope St. John Paul II, it had remained on our Franciscan Liturgical Calendar. A prayer of St. Bernadine to the Holy Name of Jesus is on page 2. The Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus can be found on the US Conference of Catholic Bishop's website: <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/litany-holy-name-jesus>. Below is an excerpt of a homily on the Holy Name of Jesus from St. Bernadine. Remember that this devotion is a great protection in the struggle with temptations and the demonic.

May you all have a blessed, joyous and peaceful celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace and Good, Randy

The Name of Jesus that Makes Us Children of God Is a Firm Foundation of Faith
St. Bernadine of Sienna, OFM

This is the most holy Name so long desired by the patriarchs of old. They waited for it with much anxiety. The delay in its coming caused them to languish. They called out for it with many a sigh; they prayed for it with many tears. When the moment of grace arrived, it was given with mercy. Put aside, then, I beg you, any name implying political power; let there be no mention of vengeance, no mention of justice. Give us the name of mercy. Let the name of Jesus resound in my ears because then indeed is your voice sweet and your countenance lovely.

The name of Jesus that makes us children of God is a firm foundation of faith. The faith of the Catholic religion is based on a knowledge and recognition of Jesus Christ who is the light of the soul, the gateway to life, the foundation of eternal salvation. Whoever

lacks this knowledge and recognition, or has abandoned it, is like a man who walks through the darkness of night without a light and like a person who rushes headlong through dangers with his eyes shut. However brilliant such a person's mind may be, he follows a blind leader when he follows his own understanding to grasp the secrets of heaven. He attempts to build a house without a foundation, he wants to enter through the roof because he left out a door. Jesus, then, is the foundation, light, and door. It is he who will show himself as the way to those who go astray. He has shown to all the light of faith through which God can be sought while yet unknown, believed when the search is ended, and found when believed. This foundation supports the Church built on the name of Jesus.

Continued - Page 8.



Conference of the Franciscan Family

Prot. N. 31/2023

Assisi, 04 October 2023

Solemnity of the Seraphic Father Saint Francis

To the attention of the
Brothers and sisters of the Franciscan Family

Plenary indulgence on the occasion of the eighth centenary of "Christmas at Greccio" as experienced by Saint Francis of Assisi

Dear brothers and sisters,


may the Lord give you peace! We write to you from Assisi, where we are gathered on the occasion of the celebrations for our Seraphic Father, to share with you the great gift and privilege that the Holy Father wanted to grant us on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of Christmas in Greccio. Here Saint Francis wanted to commemorate the birth of the Lord starting with a nativity scene, leading to the Eucharistic celebration, where Jesus Christ makes himself present in the bread and wine.

During this Centenary, on 17 April 2023, we addressed the following petition to the Holy Father: "*in order to promote the spiritual renewal of the faithful and increase the life of grace, we ask that the faithful receive a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions from 8 December 2023, the Solemnity of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to 2 February 2024, Feast of the Presentation in the Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by visiting the churches run by Franciscan families throughout the world and stopping in prayer in front of the nativity scenes set up there. Likewise, those who are sick or unable to participate physically can equally benefit from the gift of plenary indulgence, offering their sufferings to the Lord or carrying out practices of piety.*"


The Apostolic Penitentiary favorably welcomed the request, granting the right to announce it publicly. **Therefore, in all the churches entrusted to us for pastoral care, it will be possible for all the faithful to receive a plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, from 8 December 2023 to 2 February 2024.**

We ask you to share this "privilege" in all our locations which fits in well with the special relationship that was established between Saint Francis and the Church when he asked the Pope for the Indulgence for those who visited the Porziuncola; and we hope that it will be an opportunity for communion and spiritual renewal for every brother and sister in the entire Franciscan family. May the Lord guide your steps, and give you his mercy!

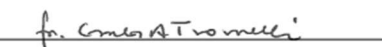
Your General Ministers and President




Frances Duncan OSF
President IFC-TOR



Massimo Fusarelli OFM
General Minister



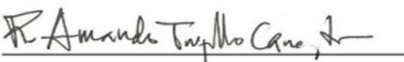
Carlos Alberto Trovarelli OFMConv
General Minister



Tibor Kauser OFS
General Minister



Roberto Genuin OFMCap
General Minister



Amando Trujillo Cano TOR
General Minister

Saints of the Month

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Franciscan-Saints-2022-1-Catalog-by-Mary-Lou-Coffman-OFS.pdf>

December 2

Bl. Mary Angela Astorch, Capuchin Poor Clare (September 1, 1592 - December 2, 1665)

<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-maria-angela-astorch/>

Bl. Raphael Chylinski, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Conventual (January 8, 1680/90 - December 2, 1742)

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=7637

December 4

Bl. François Galves, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, martyr (d. 1623)

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=3444

Bl. Pietro Tecelano, Third Order Secular (c. 1190-December 1289)

<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-pietro-tecelano/>

December 5

Bl. Peter of Sienna, Third Order Secular (d. December 4, 1289)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-peter-of-siena.html>

December 7

St. Mary Joseph Rosello, Third Order Secular before founding another institute (December 7, 1811)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-mary-joseph-rossello.html>

December 8

Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the Seraphic Order, Holy Day of Obligation,
Plenary Indulgence for tertiaries and cord bearers

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/saint/solemnity-of-the-immaculate-conception-of-the-blessed-virgin-77>

December 9

Bl. Clara Isabella Fornari, Poor Clare Nun (June 25, 1697 - December 9, 1744)

<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-clara-isabella-fornari/>

December 11

Bl. Francis (Arthur) Bell, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, martyr of England
(January 13, 1590-December 11, 1643)

<https://supremacyandsurvival.blogspot.com/2011/12/blessed-arthur-bell-ofm.html>

Bl. Hugolinus Magalotti, Third Order Secular (d. 1373)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-hugolinus-magalotti.html>

December 12

Finding the Body of Our Holy Father St. Francis

<https://www.churchpop.com/2016/10/04/the-mystery-of-the-hidden-tomb-of-st-francis-of-assisi/>

Bl. Bartolo da San Gimignano, Priest, Third Order Secular (1228-December 1300)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/bartolo-of-san-gimignano.html>

Bl. Pius Ludwik Bartosik, Priest, Friars Minor Conventual, martyr (August 21, 1909-December 12, 1941)

<https://militiaoftheimmaculata.com/blessed-martyrs-of-niepokalanow/>

Our Lady of Guadalupe

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07043a.htm>

December 14

Bl. Jean Discalceat, Priest, Franciscan (c. 1278-December 1349)

<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-john-discalceat/>

December 15

Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Franciscan Order

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/2021/11/28/the-blessed-virgin-mary-and-st-francis-of-assisi/>

Bl. Mary Frances Schervier, Founder Religious Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis
(January 8, 1819-December 14, 1876)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Frances_Schervier

December 23

Bl. Nicolas Factor-Estaña, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (June 29, 1520-December 23, 1583)

<https://anastpaul.com/2019/12/23/saint-of-the-day-23-december-blessed-nicolas-factor-estana-ofm-1520-1583/>

December 24

Bl. Bentivolio of Bonio, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1231)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-bentivolio-buoni.html>

December 25

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/st-francis-and-the-christmas-creche.html>

December 28

Bl. Mattha Nazzarei, Poor Clare Nun (March 1, 1253-December 28, 1319)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-matthia-nazzarei.html>

December 29

Bl. Gerard Cagnoli, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (c. 1267-c. 1342)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-gerard-cagnoli.html>

December 30

Bl. Margaret Colonna, Poor Clare Nun (c. 1255-December 30, 1280)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-margaret-colonna.html>

January 1

Mary, Mother of God

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2017-12/gospel-reflection-mary-mother-of-god.html>

January 3

Most Holy Name of Jesus

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=6850>

January 4

Bl. Christina of Tuscany, Virgin, Third Order Secular (d. 1310)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-christina-of-tuscany.html>

January 5

Bl. Didacus Joseph of Cadiz, Priest, First Order, Capuchin (1743-1801)

https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/didacus-joseph-of-cadiz/#

Bl. Ruggiero da Todi, Religious, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1237)

<http://catholic.net/op/articles/1513/cat/1205/ruggiero-da-todi-.html#>

January 6

St. Charles of Sezze, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (October 19, 1613 – January 6, 1670)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_of_Sezze

January 7

St. Angela of Foligno, Widow, Third Order Secular (1248-January 3, 1309)

<https://stfrancis.clas.asu.edu/article/angela-foligno>

January 8

Bl. Eurosia Fabris Barban, Third Order Secular (September 27, 1866-January 8, 1932)

<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0108-18.htm>

January 9

Bl. Giles of Laurenzana, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (1443-January 10, 1518)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-giles-of-lorenzana.html>

January 10

Bl. Gregory X, Pope, Third Order Secular (c. 1210-January 10, 1276)

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/gregory-x-pope-bl>

The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Francis of Assisi

(This article originally appeared in the TAU-USA Fall Issue #104)

Fr. Chris Shorrocks, OFM Conv., CNSA

During the months of September and October, we celebrate a number of significant Marian feast days – the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8 September), Our Lady of Sorrows (15 September), Our Lady of the Rosary (7 October).

It should be self-evident that the Franciscan Order, with its tradition of devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, certainly received its love for Mary from Francis of Assisi.

This becomes more evident as scholars continually uncover, or establish with more certainty, texts relating to Francis and thus confirm that the “Poor man of Assisi” (the poverello) was not only the “herald of the great King” but also the faithful “Knight of the great Queen.”

Of course, we have to avoid the risk of unduly applying to Francis of Assisi everything that later generations would have liked to admire in him. For this reason, we will rely on Francis’ own writings and those of the earliest biographers such as Thomas of Celano, who wrote his first biography at the insistence of Pope Gregory IX for the canonization of Francis in 1228/29 and his “second life” in 1247.

There is also the tendency to view Francis’ devotion to Mary as somewhat of an isolated entity, unrelated to his spiritual life as a whole. Yet, Francis’ love for Mary was so much a part of him that it is almost impossible to separate his Marian devotion from his daily life.

I am sure we are all aware that Francis was not a theologian, particularly as we understand the term today, and therefore we should not expect to find in his writings a clearly-defined Marian doctrine.

Francis was a man of his time, and “with his childlike faith he absorbed the Church’s teaching on the Mother of God and nourished his Marian spirituality on it.”¹ For Francis, prayer and meditation introduced him ever more deeply to the heart of the Marian mysteries and gave him a greater understanding of her pre-eminent role in God’s plan of salvation. His words and writings show us the fruit of his prayer in a way so personal, so original, and so unique that they can still move us today, eight centuries later. Franciscans

of every time have valued the words of Bernardine de Bustis (d. about 1515), which offer some insight into this aspect of the Franciscan tradition:

*The seraphic father himself admonished his brethren that they should attribute to the blessed Mother of God every privilege which may be appropriate to her excellence, and that they should exalt her with all the praise that is appropriate for such a pure human creature.*²

Let us then turn to some rather general remarks about Francis and his love and devotion to Mary. Francis endeavored to follow Christ as closely as possible by surrendering his life into the hands of his loving Father and therefore could not help loving in a special way the pure and most holy Virgin who was chosen by the Father to be the mother of his divine Son. Francis clearly perceived and presented Mary as the model of every Christian who responds to the presence of God in their lives.

According to St. Bonaventure (d. 1274), one of Francis’ early biographers, Francis placed himself and his order under the protection and guidance of Mary for all time.

*On one side we should show Mary in all her poverty of Bethlehem placing the most sweet son of God upon the rough straw of the manger. In the other half of our painting, we would portray Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God, and Queen of the Seraphic Order, in the chapel of Mary of the Angels stretching forth her arms in motherly protection over all her Franciscan sons and daughters.*³

From his earliest days, according to the biographer Thomas of Celano, Francis “burned with devotion toward the mother of all good.”⁴ When Francis abandoned the world, he placed himself under the loving care and protection of his heavenly Mother. He asked her to be his guide and advocate in his new life of poverty after the pattern of her Son. Thomas of Celano tells us:

He embraced the Mother of Jesus with inexpressible love, since she made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us. He honoured her with his own Praises, poured out prayers to her, and offered her his love in a way that

*no human tongue can express. But what gives us greatest joy is that he appointed her the Advocate of the Order and placed under her wings the sons he left behind, that she might protect and cherish them to the end.*⁴ Recalling the words of Thomas of Celano, “he embraced the Mother of Jesus with an inexpressible love, since she made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us,” Bonaventure adds “and, through her, we have obtained mercy.”⁵

In these simple words of the early biographers, we see the deepest foundation for the reverence Francis showed toward Mary. For him, the Incarnation was the basis of his whole spiritual life, and he would go

out of his way to follow in every way the example of the word made flesh. Therefore, it would seem only natural that he “owed” a special love to this unique woman, who brought God within our reach and “made the Lord of Majesty a brother to us.”

¹Cajetan Esser, *Repair My House*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963, p. 132.

²Cited by Geoffrey Bridges, “Mary’s Mediation in the Franciscan Tradition,” *The Cord IV* (1954), 217.

³Mark Sheehan, “Mary’s Troubadour,” *The Cord VII* (1957)

⁴Cel 198 (FA:ED 2:374)

⁵LM 9:3, FA:ED, 2:598

Holy Name of Jesus - Continued from Page 3

The name of Jesus brings luster to those who proclaim it because he causes men to preach it and enlightens men to heed it. To what do you attribute such sudden and brilliant light of faith in the world if not to the preaching of Jesus? Has not God called us into his marvelous light through the brilliance and sweetness of this name? To those who were enlightened and who in this light were beholding the light, the Apostle could say: *You once were in darkness. But now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of the light.*

Glorious name, gracious name, name of love and of power! Through you sins are forgiven, through you

enemies are vanquished, through you the sick are freed of their illness, through you those suffering in trials are made strong and cheerful. You bring honor to those who believe, you teach those who preach, you give strength to the toiler, you sustain the weary. Our love for you is ardent and glowing, our prayers are heard; the souls of those who contemplate you are filled to overflowing, and all the blessed in heaven are filled with your glory. Sweet Jesus, grant that with them we too may reign through this your most holy name.

Sermon 49, art. 1 Opera Omnia IV, pp. 495ff