

**St Mary of The Angels Fraternity
Order of the Secular Franciscan
The Angelus
February 19, 2023**



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The Angelus this Month: Susan Jamison

February: Month to Commemorate
THE HOLY FAMILY



February's Meeting Agenda

Business

March 11th Annual Day of Reflection for Inquirers and Candidates
John Doherty's Funeral Mass - May 6th, 5:00 pm at Our Lady of Lourdes in Bethesda
Annual Report completed
Fraternal Visitation to be scheduled
Archivist function

Formation

A Litany and Examination of Conscience based on the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Over the next year we will be spending some time reviewing a Franciscan Examination of Conscience. We will let it instruct us on how we are living our Rule and help us to do better.

For February we will consider just one item:

• **For all the ways I have brought division to my family, my community, my parish, or my fraternity,**

To prepare for this, examine the Rule for guidance on how we are to relate to family, community, our parishes and our fraternity—particularly in regard to unity. You will find some direction in the Prologue and Articles 5, 6, 14 and 17. You might find others. Feel free to look at The Franciscan Journey, our initial formation program, to remind you of your formation and what you learned then.

In February, Tom McGrath will lead a large group discussion for us. In the future we might use small groups to facilitate discussion and allow everyone to share their insights.

Discussion of possible Apostolates - bring the list handout from January's gathering and be ready to discuss what you are currently doing on your own or Apostolates you are interested in joining others in performing. The goal is to finalize the list along with sign ups.

Prayer

Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer

Fellowship

Great food and conversation!

Minister's Message

February is a busy month. It includes four birthdays among my extended family (including mine) and other popular celebrations such as Valentine's Day and President's Day. However, the **day of greatest significance in February for Catholics and Franciscans of all stripes is Ash Wednesday, which occurs on Wednesday, February 22nd.**

As we all know, Ash Wednesday kicks off Lent and a period of fasting and prayer and marks a 46-day journey to Easter. Its' significance was beautifully expressed by Pope Francis, who reminded us of all of the meaning of receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday in his homily on March 2, 2022 at the Basilica of Santa Sabina:

The ashes bespeak the emptiness hiding behind the frenetic quest for worldly rewards. They remind us that worldliness is like the dust that is carried away by a slight gust of wind. Sisters and brothers, we are not in this world to chase the wind; our hearts thirst for eternity. Lent is the time granted us by the Lord to be renewed, to nurture our interior life and to journey towards Easter, towards the things that do not pass away, towards the reward we are to receive from the Father. Lent is also a journey of healing. Not to be changed overnight, but to live each day with a renewed spirit, a different "style". Prayer, charity and fasting are aids to this. Purified by the Lenten ashes, purified of the hypocrisy of appearances, they become even more powerful and restore us to a living relationship with God, our brothers and sisters, and ourselves.^[SER]

Finally, as we contemplate what Ash Wednesday means to us and opportunities for continued conversion, let us turn to our Seraphic Father for inspiration as we approach and enter this year's Lenten season.

Francis of Assisi, circa 1225, A Letter to the Entire Order. Text from Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Volume 1.

"Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, give us miserable ones the grace to do for You alone what we know You want us to do and always to desire what pleases You. Inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and, by Your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, and are glorified God almighty, forever and ever. Amen."

Prayer to St. Francis For Fidelity to the Rule

Holy father, loving and most beloved St. Francis,

I beseech you by the holy wounds of

our Lord Jesus Christ,

which were imprinted on your body,

assist me to govern the five senses of my body

accounting to the will and pleasure of Almighty God.

**Intercede for me so that I may be most faithful in the
observance of your rule of penance.**

**Obtain for me contrition and devotion, faith, hope,
and charity, patience, and purity of body and soul,
together with the grace of preserving in the service of
our Lord; so that after this life I may merit to come
To you and with you to enjoy eternal happiness, which
I hope through your intercession to obtain from
Christ Our Lord. Amen.**

From the Secular Franciscan Companion

Kindly submitted by Portia



This is the fourth article of my series on the role of the Secular Franciscan in the spread of the Franciscan charism in the societal world of the third millennium. The content here, again, is based on the reference, "The Franciscan Charism in the Third Millennium" by Anselm W. Romb, OFM Conv. In this article, we will look further into how tertiaries, such as Third Order Franciscans, can apply their spirituality to the world of the third millennium.

The many canonized tertiaries have come from all walks of life: peasants and royalty, lawyers and businessmen, penitents and martyrs, as well as blacksmiths and physicians. Founders and foundresses of many institutes began as tertiaries and upgraded their movements into various religious congregations and associations. Queen St. Elizabeth of Hungary and King St. Louis of France were chief tertiary patrons of their countries because, in spite of their worldly positions, they chose to model their movement's charism in their perspective societies. St. Joan of Arc was a tertiary who became a saint because she responded to inner voices. As a militant, she fought another Catholic nation which resulted in her condemnation by a Church tribunal. This made her a martyr of the faith in the sense it made her a witness as a response to those inner voices inspiring her to unite her nation—a personal charism of hers. Her personal appearance, lacking most feminine features, was in line with most Third Order regulations of her time. Her completely secular, but very spiritual lifestyle did all of typify the tertiary life in the world of her time. It involved both God and man in a single endeavor.

It is said that Third Orders came into being rather quickly due to political expediency of the times. Cardinal Hugolino, who took the name of Gregory IX as pope, had the tertiaries take vows which exempted them from military service. This, obviously, made the Third Orders unpopular with feudal masters and lords for it greatly reduced an important source of available military personnel, but was supported by the popes and bishops. This, perhaps, was likened to that of the conscientious objector of more modern times who opposed wars they deemed unjustified.

Third Orders are not to be considered as parish or inter-parish societies: they are a new way of life. Demonstrations of public profession of the Gospel must always be enhanced by the tertiaries. It may not be as visible as it should be in our modern life. They live as a fraternal community, but its apostolates may not effectively model the Christ-life as it should. A Rule, Constitutions, candidacy, profession, and visitations provide a canonical structure. Office and spiritual conferences and chapters make them liturgical communities. But their charism as a movement is not always evident to the Church and world. Just as Franciscans are meant by God for the salvation of the world, tertiaries must demonstrate the Gospel in their lay lives more visibly; not as an affiliate of the First Orders. Unfortunately, this viewpoint may be emphasized in the minds of some Franciscan clergy by the short course in Third Order assistance given them during their seminary training.

Next month, we will take a look at the relationships and responsibilities shared by the First and Third Orders through the earlier centuries, and how they managed to develop the portrayal of the Franciscan charism through structural change.



A New Perspective on “Privilege”

“The life and mission of Padre Pio testify that difficulties and sorrows, if accepted with love, transform themselves into a privileged journey of holiness, which opens the person toward a greater good, known only to the Lord.”

—Pope John Paul II at Padre Pio’s canonization Mass in 2002