



February

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 – 1:00 p.m. - Sunday, February 12, 2023

- We are collecting can goods for the Poor Clare Monastery of Mary, Mother of the Church
- Opening Prayer – Ritual, p. 35.
- Ongoing Formation – Jan Martin, OFS will guide discussion on the Rule Article 5
- Fellowship
- Business Meeting
- Liturgy of the Hours – Evening Prayer II for the Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Psalter Week I, Proper of Seasons for 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Hymn TBD. Please bring your breviary and hymnal.
- Closing Prayers – Ritual, p. 36.

Remote Access to the Monthly Meeting Info

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85418000041?pwd=d0pFSDREaDJmdjZpNWlqbll4T20rZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

Dial by your location

Phone: +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

Minister's Notes

This month we start several months of focusing on part of the rule. This month we look at Article 5.¹ Article 5 invites us to encounter Christ in our brothers and sisters, in sacred

Scripture and in the church and liturgical activity. Please come to the fraternity meeting prepared to share on the following:

¹ **Article 5.** Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of Saint Francis, who often

said “I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood,” (Cf. Test 10 (1 FA:ED, p. 125) should be the inspiration and pattern of their eucharistic life.

- How do you recognize the living and active person of Christ in our brothers and sisters?
- Do you have imperfections that make this hard? (hint: we all do)
- Do others?

Our task is to be Christ to others and go beyond the disguises that may hide the image of Christ in others. Francis was grounded in Christ. Name one thing you do to be Christ for others.

This month, we again focus on the psalms and canticles we pray in Liturgy of the Hours. Even with a four-week cycle, the psalms can become rote when you pray them daily. After all, before the printing press the psalms were memorized. They were recited/sung hundreds of years before Christ. Jesus prayed the psalms. The Church herself has prayed the psalms a couple thousand years after Our Lord walked among us. If last month's suggestion did not help you, I offer another. Focus on the antiphons. Though Randy and I usually pray the liturgy of the hours together, most of the Fraternity prays by themselves. This gives you a lot of flexibility. Try praying the antiphon between verses similar to the responsorial psalm at Mass.

Last month we hosted both a fraternal and pastoral visitation. We have already received

Prayer Intentions

Peace in Ukraine

Maria Cassidy, OFS

Grace Coipuram, OFS

Virgina Roccapriore, widow of

Joseph Roccapriore, OFS

Bob Miller, OFS, Formation Director

of St. Anthony of Nagasaki Fraternity

Rest of the soul of Martin Kennedy,

father of Joe Kennedy

Rest of the soul of María Rosalía Salmerón

mother Br. Michael Meza, OFM, Cap.

Peace with China

positive preliminary feedback. I will freely admit I was relieved after the visitation to realize that is my last one as minister. I will set up the next election but only be minister for the very beginning. As soon as the next minister is elected, I am relieved. You may want to start thinking about who is next.

During the visitation, I neglected to announce what we were collecting for in kind contributions in February. Since you are being told so late, let's keep it simple with canned food for the Poor Clares.

We have a couple of months coming up where the Church calendar runs roughshod over our scheduled fraternity meetings. In April we will be meeting on **Apr. 2, Palm Sunday at 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall.** We will not meet Easter Sunday. Mother's Day, First Communion etc. has us meeting **May 21st at 1:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.** Jan Martin is in the process of trying to arrange a Saturday of reflection for a Saturday in late April, early May—we may use that for our Fraternity meeting. If you are willing to help with the May meeting, and our day of reflection, please let Jan or I know.

Pax et Bonum,
Andrea

Professions

January 11, 2001

Anne-Marie Pastorkovich (Jeanne d'Arc)

Birthdays of the Month

Ann Corro (5th)

Kully Dooley (14th)

Necrology

Dcn. James F Ambury, MD (Min.) – Feb. 7, 2005

Kathleen Kuhn – Feb. 2008

M Richard McKone – Feb. 3, 2009

Secretary's Note



The first item that I have is that we are invited to a free dinner for the patronal feast of our host parish, Our Lady of Lourdes. It is at 7:00 p.m. this Saturday, February 11, 2023. You need to scan the QR Code in the picture to the left to get to the registration page for the event.

Also, while doing study the Beatitudes for a Bible Study that Andrea and I facilitate at St. Charles Parish on Friday mornings, I came across a reflection on St. Francis and what we now call the Secular Franciscan Order by Pope Benedict XVI from *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*. You may find it profitable to read and on page 5.

This month we remember one of the early Poor Ladies, St. Agnes of Prague and I have included the fourth and last letter to her from St. Clare of Assisi that I found on the website of the San Luis Rey

Fraternity in Oceanside, CA. The letter is on page 6. St. Clare uses the idea of a mirror as a metaphor for contemplating Jesus in her letter. Keep in mind that a mirror in the 13th century was a polished piece of metal that only gave the best reflection when gazing at its center.

Peace and good,
Randy

Saints of the Month

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

February 3

Bl. Andrew of Segni, First Order Lay Brother (1240-February 1, 1302)

<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-andrew-of-segni/>

February 4

St. Joseph de Leonisse, Priest, First Order Capuchin (January 8, 1556-February 4, 1612)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-joseph-of-leonisse.html>

February 5

St. Jane of Valois, Founder, Franciscan Order of the Annonciades (1464-1505)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-jane-of-valois.html>

February 6

Martyrs of Japan, First Order Priests, Lay Brothers, and Third Order Secular (m. 1597)

<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0206-468.htm>

February 7

St. Giles Mary of St. Joseph, Lay Brother, Martyrs, Order of Friars Minor
(November 16, 1729–February 7, 1812)

<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0208-49.htm>

Bl. Pope Pius IX, Pope, Third Order Secular (May 13, 1792-February 7, 1878)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12134b.htm>

- St. Giovanni of Triora, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Martyr (March 15, 1760, February 7, 1816)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-john-of-triora.html>
- February 8
- Bl. Anthony of Stroncone, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (1391-February 7, 1471)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-anthony-of-stroncone.html>
- Bl. Jacoba de Settesoli, Third Order Secular (1190-February 8, 1273)
<https://franciscans.sg/blessed-lady-jacoba-of-settesoli-1190-1273/>
- February 9
- Bl. Leopold of Alpandeire, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (June 25, 1864- February 9, 1956)
https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/leopold-of-alpandeire/
- February 10
- Bl. Aloysius Stepinac, Bishop, Martyr, Third Order Secular (May 8, 1898 – February 10, 1960)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloysius_Stepinac
- Bl. Clare of Rimini, Poor Clare (1282-February 10, 1346)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-clare-of-rimini.html>
- February 13
- St. Eustochium of Messine, Poor Clare Nun (March 25, 1434 - January 20, 1485)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-eustochium.html>
- February 15
- Translation of the Relics of St. Anthony
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/relics-of-st-anthony.html>
- February 16
- Bl. Philippa Mareri, Poor Clare Nun, (1190/1200-1236)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-philippa-mareri.html>
- St. Veridiana, Virgin, Third Order Secular (1182-1242)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-veridiana.html>
- February 17
- Bl. Luke Belludi, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (1200-c. 1285)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-luke-belludi.html>
- February 18
- St. Bernadette Soubirous, Corderbearer (January 7, 1844-April 16, 1879)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-bernadette-soubirous.html>
- February 19
- St. Conrad de Plaisance, Hermit, Third Order Secular, (d. February 19, 1351)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-conrad-de-plaisance.html>
- February 20
- Bl. Peter of Treja, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (d. November 20, 1304)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-peter-of-treja.html>
- February 22
- Feast of the Chair of St. Peter
<https://mcgrathblog.nd.edu/the-feast-of-the-chair-of-st.-peter-and-how-to-observe-it>
- February 25
- Bl. Sebastian of Aparicio, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (January 20, 1502-February 25, 1600)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-sebastian-of-aparicio.html>
- February 26
- Bl. Antonia of Florence, Third Order Secular (1400-February 29, 1472)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-antonia-of-florence.html>
- Bl. Isabelle of France, Virgin, Poor Clare (March 1224- February 23, 1270)
https://www.traditioninaction.org/SOD/j236sd_IsabelleFrance_01_25.html

February 27

Bl. Jeremiah of Vallachia, Lay Brother Capuchin Friars (1556-1625)

https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/blessed-jeremiah-of-valacchia/

Bl. Jose Tous y Soler, Priest, First Order Capuchin (March 31, 1811-February 27, 1871)

https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/jose-tous-y-soler/

Bl. Louise Albertoni, Third Order Secular (1533)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-louise-albertoni.html>

March 2

St. Agnes of Prague, Virgin, Poor Clare (1205-March 6, 1282)

<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-agnes-of-prague/>

March 3

Bls. Liberatus Weiss, Samuele Marzorati and Michele Pio Fasoli, Martyrs of Gondar, Ethiopia, Priests, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1716)

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

Bl. Innocent of Berzo, Priest, First Order Capuchin (March 19, 1844-March 3, 1890)

<https://www.capdox.capuchin.org.au/saints-blesseds/blessed-innocenzo-da-berzo/>

March 5

St. John-Joseph of the Cross, Priest, Alcantarine Franciscan (August 15, 1654-March 5, 1839)

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-john-joseph-of-the-cross/>

March 6

St. Colette de Corbie, Foundress: Colettine Poor Clares (February 13, 1381-March 6, 1447)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-colette-de-corbie.html>

March 7

Bl. Christopher of Milan, Priest, First Order Franciscan (d. 1485)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-christopher-of-milan.html>

March 9

St. Catherine of Bologna, Poor Clare Sister (September 8, 1413-March 9, 1463)

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages/saint-catherine-of-bologna/>

St. Frances of Rome, Franciscan Third Order Secular, Oblates of St. Benedict (1384-March 9, 1440)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-frances-of-rome.html>

A Reflection on the First Beatitude in the Gospel of Matthew: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5:3)

But it may be a good idea—before we continue our meditation on the text—to turn for a moment to the figure whom the history of faith offers us as the most intensely lived illustration of this Beatitude: Francis of Assisi. *The saints are the true interpreters of Holy Scripture.* The meaning of a given passage of the Bible becomes most intelligible in those human beings who have been totally transfixed by it and have lived it out. Interpretations of Scripture can never be a totally academic affair, and cannot be relegated to the purely historical. Scripture is full of potential for the future, a potential that can only be opened up when someone “lives through”

and “suffers through” the sacred text. Francis of Assisi was gripped in an utterly radical way by the promise of the first Beatitude, to the point that he even gave away his garments and let himself be clothed anew by the bishop, the representative of God’s fatherly goodness, through which the lilies of the field were clad in robes finer than Solomon’s (cf. Mt 6:28-29). For Francis, this extreme humility was above all freedom for service, freedom for mission, ultimate trust in God, who cares not only for the flowers of the field but specifically for his human children. It was a corrective to the Church of his day, which, through the feudal system, had

lost the freedom and dynamism of missionary outreach. It was the deepest possible openness to Christ, to whom Francis was perfectly configured by the wounds of the stigmata, so perfectly that from them he truly no longer lived as himself, but as one reborn totally from and in Christ. For he did not want to found a religious order: He simply wanted to gather the People of God to listen anew to the word-without evading the seriousness of God's call by means of learned commentaries.

By creating the Third Order, though, Francis did accept the distinction between radical commitment and the necessity of living in the world. The point of the Third Order is to accept with humility the task of one's secular profession and its requirements, wherever one happens to be,

Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, Adrian J. Walker, trans., New York: Doubleday, 2007, pp. 78-9. Italics are mine.

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The Fourth Letter of St. Clare to St. Agnes of Prague

To her who is the half of her soul and the special shrine of her heart's deepest love, to the illustrious Queen and Bride of the Lamb, the eternal King: to the Lady Agnes, her most dear mother, and, of all the others, her favorite daughter: Clare, an unworthy servant of Christ and a useless handmaid (Lk 17:10) of His handmaids in the monastery of San Damiano of Assisi: health and a prayer that she may sing a new song with the other most holy virgins before the throne of God and of the Lamb and follow the Lamb wherever He may go (Rev 14:3-4).

O mother and daughter, spouse of the King of all ages, if I have not written to you as often as your soul and mine as well desire and long for, do not wonder or think that the fire of love for you glows less sweetly in the heart of your mother. No, this is the difficulty: the lack of messengers and the obvious dangers of the roads. Now, however, as I write to your love, I rejoice and exult with you in the joy of the Spirit (1 Thes 1:6), O bride of Christ, because, since you have totally abandoned the vanities of this

while directing one's whole life to that deep interior communion with Christ that Francis showed us. "To own goods as if you owed nothing" (cf. 1 Cor 7:29ff)-to master this interior tension, which is perhaps the more difficult challenge, and, sustained by those pledged to follow Christ radically, truly to live it out ever anew-that is what third orders are for. And they open up for us what this Beatitude can mean for all. It is above all by looking at Francis of Assis that we see clearly what the words "Kingdom of God" mean. Francis stood totally within the Church, and at the same time it is in figures such as he that the Church grows toward the goal that lies in the future, and yet is already in the present: The Kingdom of God is drawing near...

world, like another most holy virgin, Saint Agnes, you have been marvelously espoused to the spotless Lamb who takes away the sins of the world (1 Pt 1:19; Jn 1:29).

Happy, indeed, is she to whom it is given to share this sacred banquet, to cling with all her heart to Him whose beauty all the heavenly hosts admire unceasingly, whose love inflames our love, whose contemplation is our refreshment, whose graciousness is our joy, whose gentleness fills us to overflowing, whose remembrance brings a gentle light, whose fragrance will revive the dead, whose glorious vision will be the happiness of all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem;

Inasmuch as this vision is the splendor of eternal glory (Heb 1:3), the brilliance of eternal light and the mirror without blemish (Wis 7:26), look upon that mirror each day, O queen and spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face within it, so that you may adorn yourself within

and without with beautiful robes and cover yourself with the flowers and garments of all the virtues, as becomes the daughter and most chaste bride of the Most High King. Indeed, blessed poverty, holy humility, and ineffable charity are reflected in that mirror, as, with the grace of God, you can contemplate them throughout the entire mirror.

Look at the parameters of this mirror, that is, the poverty of Him who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. O marvelous humility, O astonishing poverty! The King of the angels, the Lord of heaven and earth, is laid in a manger! Then, at the surface of the mirror, dwell on the holy humility, the blessed poverty, the untold labors and burdens which He endured for the redemption of all mankind. Then, in the depths of this same mirror, contemplate the ineffable charity which led Him to suffer on the wood of the cross and die thereon the most shameful kind of death. Therefore, that Mirror, suspended on the wood of the cross, urged those who passed by to consider it, saying: "All you who pass by the way, look and see if there is any suffering like My suffering!" (Lam 1:2). Let us answer Him with one voice and spirit, as He said: Remembering this over and over leaves my soul downcast within me (Lam 3:20)! From this moment, then, O queen of our heavenly King, let yourself be inflamed more strongly with the fervour of charity!

As you contemplate further His ineffable delights, eternal riches and honors, and sigh for them in the great desire and love of your heart, may you cry out:
Draw me after You!

We will run in the fragrance of Your perfumes,
O heavenly Spouse!
I will run and not tire,
until You bring me into the wine-cellar,
until Your left hand is under my head
and Your right hand will embrace me happily
and You will kiss me with the happiest kiss of
Your mouth.

In this contemplation, may you remember your poor little mother, knowing that I have inscribed the happy memory of you indelibly on the tablets of my heart, holding you dearer than all the others.

What more can I say? Let the tongue of the flesh be silent when I seek to express my love for you; and let the tongue of the Spirit speak, because the love that I have for you, O blessed daughter, can never be fully expressed by the tongue of the flesh, and even what I have written is an inadequate expression.

I beg you to receive my words with kindness and devotion, seeing in them at least the motherly affection which in the fire of charity I feel daily toward you and your daughters, to whom I warmly commend myself and my daughters in Christ. On my part, these very daughters of mine, especially the most prudent virgin Agnes, our sister, recommend themselves in the Lord to you and your daughters. Farewell, my dearest daughter, to you and your daughters until we meet at the throne of the glory of the great God (Tit 2:13), and desire this for us. Inasmuch as I can, I recommend to your charity the bearers of this letter, our dearly beloved Brother Amatus, beloved of God and men (Sir 45:1), and Brother Bonagura. Amen

<http://www.slr-ofs.org/uploads/9/5/5/8/95584600/4> - the fourth letter of st clare.pdf (accessed on 2/5/2023)