

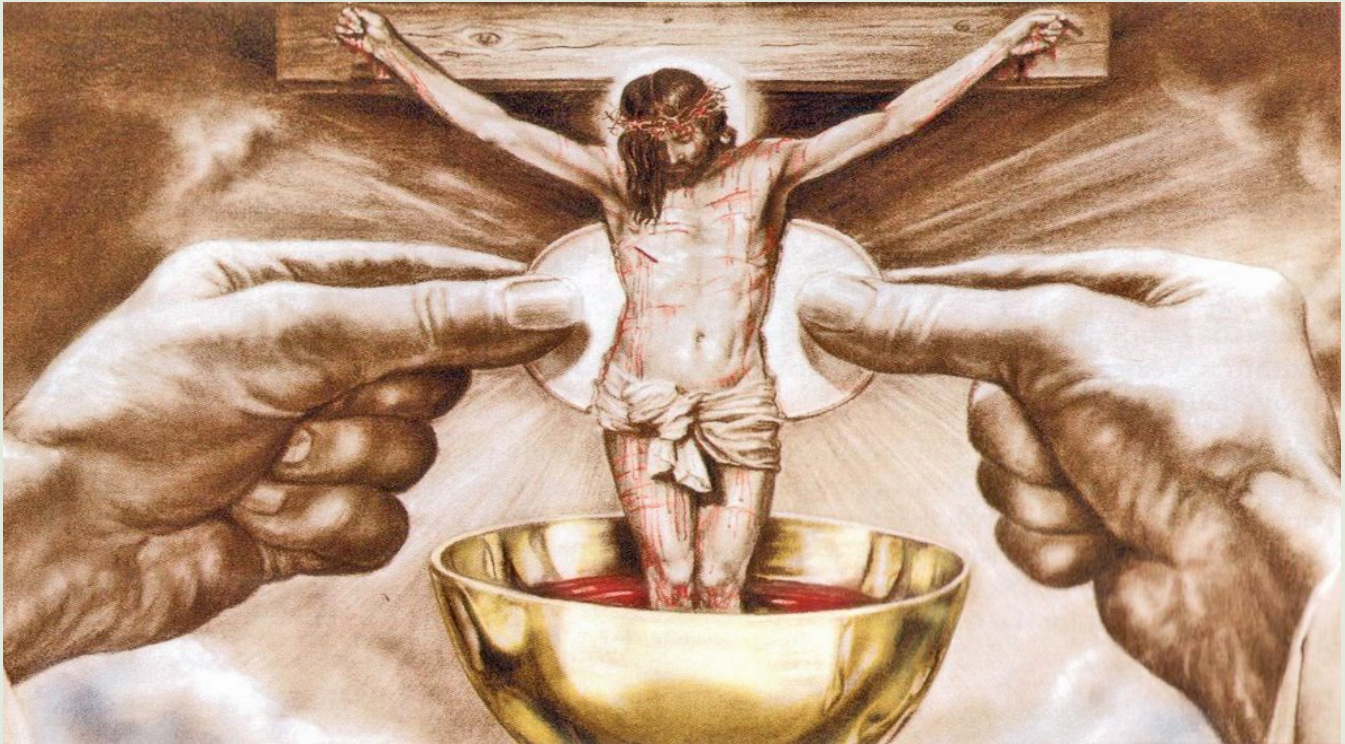
St Mary of The Angels Fraternity
Order of the Secular Franciscan
The Angelus
July 16, 2023



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

July is the month that we honor the Precious Blood of Jesus





Meeting Agenda

Opening Prayers - Page 35 in the Ritual book

Business

**Upcoming Fraternity retreat in September
Walter's museum update
NAFRA Ukraine National Fraternity appeal**

Formation

**The real presence of evil—Father Jim Bocabella
Formation Retreat review— Carmencita, Portia, Tom, Michaelle,
Lilian and Mary**

Food and Fellowship

Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer

Closing Prayers - Page 36 in the Ritual book

As I write this (or type this to be more accurate) I am sitting in the service department of the dealership where I purchased my car waiting for its' 10K mileage service to be completed.

Instead of watching TV in the waiting room or idly going through emails on my iPad, I felt inspired to research the theme for the month of July in the Catholic church, the **Precious Blood of Jesus**. I think it's the Holy Spirit at work!

Last month's devotion was to the **Sacred Heart** and next month is devoted to the **Immaculate Heart**. This month's devotion fits perfectly between the two.

In an excerpt from ***The Precious Blood of Christ*** by **Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.**, he says, "To understand the meaning of the Precious Blood we must get some comprehension of the gravity of sin, of the awfulness of offending God, because it required the Blood of the Son of God to forgive that sin. We are living in an age in which to sin has become fashionable." How true!

I found a wonderful article in *Aleteia* that offered several suggestions on how we can consciously align our lives to the Precious Blood this month:

- 1. Pray the morning Fatima offering**—"Precious Blood of Jesus, save us" "Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us" "Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us"
- 2. Spend some time in Eucharistic adoration**
- 3. Receive Communion as often as possible during the week**
- 4. Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet regularly this month**
- 5. Invoke St. Longinus in prayer** (the centurion who stood facing Jesus saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" —Mark 15:39)
- 6. Decorate the house in honor of the month's devotion** (e.g., red flowers, a red table cloth or runner, an image of Jesus in a prominent place)
- 7. Perform a deed of sacrificial love or an act of mercy** (e.g., give your time, talent, or treasure to those in need this month, even when it isn't easy, and offer it up)

Greetings All!

This is the second of my series on St. Francis and the Beatitudes. It is based on the reference entitled, "Brother Fire, Sister Earth" by Adela DiUbaldo Torchia. In this article, we will take a look at the second Beatitude of Matthew's Gospel: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Mathew 5:4) and how it impacted Francis's way of life.

The Need to Mourn

There are a number of situations and issues of life we react to by mourning. We mourn because we grieve the loss of a loved one through death tops the list. But other losses such as failure to accomplish or meet one's potential or goals, missed opportunities, or wasted gifts. Francis mourned his earlier life of selfishness because it prevented him from experiencing God's presence and love. But even after his conversion rewarded him with the joyful presence of God, he still continued to mourn over life's many distractions and trivialities hindering others' movements toward God.

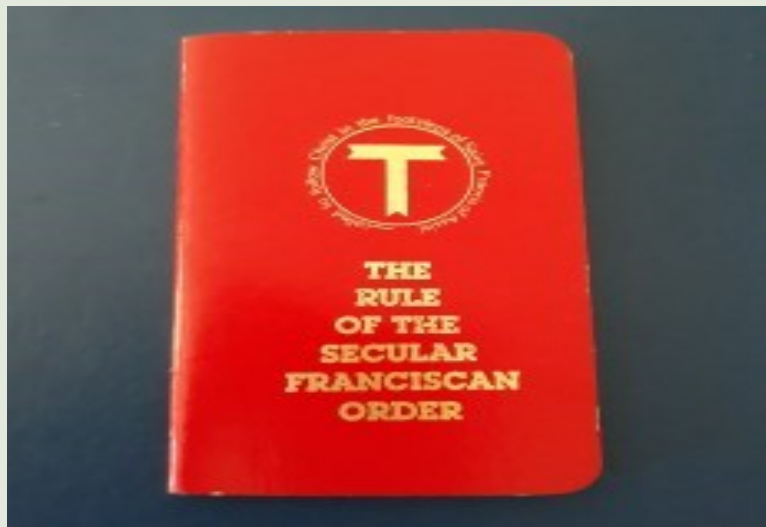
But Jesus said in this Beatitude that mourners will be comforted. The nature of this comfort, however, is not so obvious especially since mourning and repentance are often connected. If we are mourning over losses due to our own negative behavior, then the comfort that we will receive will be the experience of God's forgiveness and healing. We Franciscans are all brothers and sisters of penance and so our belief that being forgiven is the greatest of comforts that the fragile human nature can request of God.

Excessive guilt is not humanly healthy and can be detrimental to human personality. But we must realize some guilt in order to seek a cure for it. The great Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, stated that we cannot dismiss guilt altogether as some psychologists may suggest. To do so, says Rahner, would mean to also take away the desire for healing and forgiveness, even the forgiveness of God. If we are allowed to mourn the losses caused by our own ego-centric behavior, then change and recovery will come sooner and by way of God's forgiveness and healing mercy. A bad infection will never heal without the proper medication. It will most likely lead to a loss if left untreated.

After his plans for military honor and glory were dashed, Francis began his conversion experience with a long period of mourning. But these many months of sadness eventually lead him to a break with the past that permitted him to pursue a new spiritual direction. Francis realized his guilt and laid down all his sorrows before God acknowledging his sinfulness, and especially that of his preoccupation with seeking glory. He turned from mourning his failed plans to that of his misguided motivations which led him to his glory-seeking plans. Francis made an "about face" with his life with his efforts at seeking God's forgiveness and healing grace.

Next month, we will look at the meek and see how much they get for less.

May the Lord give us mercy and forgiveness,
Mike



Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

Chapter 1 Article 2

The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of St. Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church .

Questions to ponder— Does your local fraternity feel connected to any other local fraternities? Do you feel the connection to your regional fraternity? Why or why not? How often does your fraternity read and/or study the Rule? Do you, individually, read/study/meditate upon the Rule? When was the last time you did so?

One answer— Our connection to local fraternities and the regional fraternity occurs through email updates, conferences, retreats and the annual picnic. For example, we will enjoy a joint retreat with Mt. St. Sepulchre Fraternity in September. We have discussed the Rule during the formation portion of our monthly gatherings and just started the Rule feature in the Angelus. We, each, must examine ourselves to answer the last two questions.

Note: we will be highlighting one article of the Rule each month

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
Tap Nguyen: July 2nd

No July Professions:

Our monthly Mass for our Living and Deceased Fraternity Members will be celebrated on July 16th, at Our Lady of Grace Church at 11 AM.

Treasurer's Report 05/01/23-05/31/23

Beginning Balance ----- \$4,538.16

Contributions- ----- \$370.00

Expenses ----- \$93.19

Ending Balance----- \$4,809.76

Expenses include Spiritual Assistant Stipend, Angelus, postage and kitchen supplies



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