



Our Lady of the Rosary
Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Williamsburg, Virginia

MARCH

2024

www.olrsfo.weebly.com

Message from our Minister ...

We are two weeks into Lent and I hope everyone is having a holy and profoundly spiritual Lent this year. I love knowing that if my Lent is not going the way I planned on Ash Wednesday, I can always start over. God knows our Lenten journey probably will have some ups and downs, but, if I ask, he will provide the grace I need to persist in my quest for perfection. God loves persistent people

On Saturday, February 24th, Theresia Ndunge Muli and I attended the St. Margaret of Cortona Regional seminar for Inquirers and Candidates at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, DC. The topic was "Living a Penitential Life." As Fr. Stephen King stated at the beginning of the seminar, **"The foundation of the Secular Franciscan life is doing Penance, and all flows from this."**

Today we have a tendency to think of penance as the act of satisfaction or reparation the priest assigns us as a part of the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Church also considers the external acts of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving as penance. All of these acts are considered *external acts of penance*. *These external acts help us reach an interior penance, a conversion of heart toward God and away from sin.*

This conversion of heart toward God is what the Secular Franciscan Order is all about. Before there was an official rule, Pope Innocent III told Francis to preach penance. He lived and preached penance for the rest of his life. As Secular Franciscans we are called to live a penitential life, a life of constant conversion toward God.

Lent is a penitential season in the Church calendar. Fr. Stephen asked us, **"Do you like Lent?"** I had never really thought to ask myself the question. As Secular Franciscans, as a penitential people, our answer should always be yes. We should embrace the idea of living Lent throughout the year. Do we? It is by living a penitential life that we open a space for God to act in our life and bring us close to him.

FYI, I'll be asking that question at the next meeting.

Peace and all good,

Peg



Theresia and Fr. Stephen

The following is a perfect prayer of praise for those doing penance. It comes from the Letter to All the Faithful by St. Francis.

Let every creature
in heaven, on earth, in the sea and in the depths,
give praise, glory, honor and blessing
to Him who suffered so much,
Who has given and will give in the future every good,
for He is our power and strength,
Who alone is good,
Who alone is almighty,
Who alone is omnipotent, wonderful, glorious
and Who alone is holy,
worthy of praise and blessing
through endless ages.
Amen.



Prayer Before the Crucifix

Most High,
glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart
and give me
true faith,
certain hope,
and perfect charity,
sense and knowledge,
Lord,
that I may carry out
Your holy and true command.



From our Formation Director - Donna Kendall

Here we are, a couple of weeks into the season of Lent and our desire to do something meaningful this year started out with the usual zeal and by now we need to remind ourselves of what we intended to do for Lent. I, personally, must remind myself daily that I set certain goals for myself this year and I intend to see them through. A sincere focus toward removing the obstacles to a closer relationship with Jesus is easier said than done. I find that it takes continual concentration to remove those impediments if they are rooted in habit. Fasting from foods, beverages, or fun activities is a place to start but fasting from our root sins is much more difficult. I'd like to call this latter type of fasting "Lenten Maturity." What do I mean by Lenten Maturity?

I believe that Lenten Maturity has everything to do with formation. As I was utilizing the Spiritual direction workbook for discovering my root sin, it didn't take long before my parents' voices came into my head. I heard them (my mother's voice in particular) correcting my behavior as a child. My root sins go back decades, apparently. Like most people, I couldn't wait to grow up, to be independent, to live life according to my own rules. Yet, I realize that my parents, my Catholic school upbringing, and all the homilies I heard at Mass helped form my Catholic conscience. I believe that to some degree, all of that was very useful – I'm not in prison.

Admittedly, adulting is not as fun as I thought it would be. I have made some unwise decisions that resulted in unwanted consequences. These decisions created the obstacles to growing in a closer relationship with Jesus. Without knowing how to overcome those obstacles my spiritual maturity was slow or stagnant. There were times I thought I was making progress but along came my root sin and oops, I'm back to square one, like playing the child's game Sorry.

Thankfully, Lent is one of those liturgical seasons in the church that offers us an opportunity to grow past those obstacles in a more progressive way. Making true progress in our relationship with Jesus during Lent is a profitable effort in Lenten Maturity. That is where formation comes in. With the help and guidance of our Franciscan spirituality, the various formation resources available to us, and the fellowship of our brothers and sisters we can grow in our maturity during Lent and make true progress in our unity with Jesus so that we can be truly converted and more easily recognize when we are in danger of slipping backwards in our root sins or creating new obstacles to our ultimate goal.

Pax e bonum



The Pope's Monthly Intentions

FEBRUARY



FOR THE NEW MARTYRS

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church

Birthdays

Ani Kelly — March 6

Karen Coulson — March 14



Anniversary of Profession

None in March

Meetings

Next Fraternity Meeting—March 17 at 1:15pm (social gathering from 12:30-1:15)

Meeting dates for 2024

The dates are normally the third Sunday of the month. We start with a social time at 12:30. The door to the Walsh room opens automatically at 12:30.

Do not enter the building until the door automatically unlocks even if staff or clergy will let you in. Entering early could negate our agreement with St. Bede.

March 17th

April 21st

May 26th (change because of conflict with St. Bede schedule)

June 23rd (change due to Father's Day)

July 21st

August 18th

September 15th

October 20th

November 17th

December 15th



**Never buy flowers
from a Franciscan
Only you can prevent florist friars**

