



THE CLARION

St. Conrad Fraternity, Order of Franciscans Secular
St. Margaret of Cortona Region
Hanover, Pennsylvania

January / February 2019

Pax et Bonum

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From the Desk of Sister Cecilia

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we enter into a new year, I would like to recommend a new book by Fr. Murray Bodo, OFM, entitled “Surrounded by Love, Seven Teachings from Saint Francis”. In the Introduction of the book, Fr. Murray says: “St. Francis was not a medieval theologian, but a teacher of wisdom who used sayings, stories and rituals to show us how we can allow God to transform our lives.” The seven teachings are:

1. The Wonder of the Incarnation – this is the first and central teaching that St. Francis left us, and from which six other teachings cascade:
2. The Paradox of Evangelical Poverty
3. Living the Gospel
4. Go and Repair God’s House
5. Making Peace
6. God’s House Is All of Creation
7. The Joy of Humble Praise and Service of God

Saint Francis’ teachings become both a theology and a way of living. They emerge from the concrete, practical choices he made in the effort to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who is the teacher and the embodiment of what it means to live and love in God.

While we may have learned many things about Saint Francis along the way, it is always helpful to see from a new perspective, just as when we read and pray with the Gospel and discover new meanings all the time. Fr. Murray Bodo has

spent most of his life reflecting and writing about Saint Francis. I hope you will have an opportunity to read this new book and to discover more deeply how Francis invites you to follow Jesus in our time.

Blessings of this new year! Pax et Bonum,
Sister Cecilia, OSF

Minister's Message

As we enter a new year, we're hopeful that God will bless us and good things will happen, that we'll make good decisions, and that we'll do well in keeping our new year's resolutions. It's also a good time to examine decisions that we've made and to determine whether they've worked out as we hoped. And so I thought I'd look at one of the decisions I made many years ago to profess as a Secular Franciscan, and share with you why I became and remain a Secular Franciscan.

"I live the gospel," someone might say to me, "I don't need to be a Secular Franciscan in order to live the gospel." Maybe you've heard this, too; and while true, the attraction of St. Francis for me is how he took the gospel to another level, and found tremendous joy in it. Instead of seeing the gospel message as obligations or restrictions on what one can and can't do, such as I've got to go to Mass every Sunday or I've got to be nice to Mrs. Next door or I can't do whatever, Francis came to understand the gospel in a deeper way. The following story taken from *The Perfect Joy of Saint Francis* by Felix Timmerman illustrates Francis's deepening understanding on living the gospel.

Francis was returning from the market in a small town along with his father and a servant who had both gone on ahead. As he was praying and riding along, he suddenly noticed a leper standing on the path in front of him. The leper looked up at Francis with much sadness. Francis, however, in the grip of fear and revulsion, put his spurs to his horse and galloped away. But as he rode he remembered the message of Christ's gospel. He felt intensely ashamed of himself. Turning his horse around he rode back. The leper was still standing there. Francis dismounted, embraced and kissed the leper. All he felt was love.

This was a turning point in Francis's life. It was at this point that he began to learn to think as Christ. He began to see and understand the world, relationships, suffering, and life in a whole new way. As his understanding deepened, he found joy. Living the gospel was not a life burdened by obligation; rather it was a joy-filled existence seeing all the opportunities to grow in holiness provided in a life lived for Christ. What once had repelled him now became joy for him.

Again, from *The Perfect Joy of Saint Francis*, St. Francis was traveling and talking with Brother Leo. As they walked, Francis described a scenario in which they were rejected and mistreated. As he completes the story, he says to Brother Leo, "For above all the gifts of the Holy Spirit that Christ gives to his friends is the grace of conquering oneself and of suffering pain, injustice, and mistreatment

willingly, for love of Christ! We cannot take pride in any of the other gifts (think of talents, skills, strength, friends, etc.), because God grants them to us. Why should we glory in something that is not ours? But we can glory in the tribulations of the Cross, because we take it upon ourselves of our own free will, and it is ours.” St. Francis understood that this is what makes joy possible; that joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, that joy flows from willingly thinking and living life as much as humanly possible in imitation of Christ.

Joy is what attracted me to the Franciscan way of life and joy is what I’ve found. My decision to become a Secular Franciscan was a very good one. Now, looking at the year before us, my prayer is that others may come to know St. Francis and be called to consider the same decision that I made years ago, and receive more abundantly the gift of Joy from God.

Pax et bonum,
Jeff Topper

Holy Father’s Prayer Intentions

January

Evangelization – Young People

That young people, especially in Latin America, follow the example of Mary and respond to the call of the Lord to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the world.

February

Universal – Victims

For a generous welcome to the victims of human trafficking, enforced prostitution, and violence.

Prayer for Vocations

Heavenly Father, we beg you to send us many holy vocations, and to help those given such callings to respond freely, generously and faithfully. May their self-offerings and consecrations offer you fitting praise. Amen.

January Birthdays

Judy Topper..... 1/13

January Profession Anniversaries

Kathleen Clagg1/19/2013

January Necrology

Savilla Byer1/12/1978

Mary Cox1/21/1993

Eleanor Miller.....1/24/2014

February Birthdays

No February Birthdays

February Profession Anniversaries

No February Professions

February Necrology

Sarah Hoopes.....2/14/1999

Important Dates in January

- Jan. 1 - The BVM, Mother of God
- Jan. 6 - The Epiphany of the Lord
- Jan. 8 - St. Angela of Foligno
- Jan. 13 - The Baptism of the Lord
- Jan. 16 - St. Berard and Companions
- Jan. 21 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Jan. 25 - The Conversion of St. Paul
- Jan. 27 - St. Angela Merici
- Jan. 29 - Brother Juniper

Important Dates in February

- Feb. 2 - The Presentation of the Lord
- Feb. 6 - St. Paul Miki & Companions
- Feb. 11 - Our Lady of Lourdes
- Feb. 14 - Valentine’s Day
- Feb. 19 - St. Conrad of Piacenza
- Feb. 22 - Chair of St. Peter, Apostle
- Feb. 25 - Blessed Sebastian of Aparicio

Fraternity Prayer Vine

Please continue to pray for the health and the intentions of:

- José Barata
- Mary Barrick
- Pat Bilz
- Fr. Richard Forcier, ORM Conv
- Jessica – get well soon
- Mary Lou Gennaula
- Concetta Glorioso-special intention
- Sherlynn Holland
- Mary Minor
- Jackie Redding
- Sr. Cecilia Reilly



Just a reminder: if you want your prayer need(s) added to the prayer vine, or if you wish to have your name removed, please let your editor know (717-637-2026).

Prayer at Gatherings

For January, we will pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Please bring your breviaries.

At February’s gathering let’s plan to pray the Franciscan Crown Rosary.