



THE CLARION

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

May / June 2019

Pax et Bonum

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From the Desk of Sister Cecilia

We all remember our birthdays and celebrate the day joyfully. Do we know or celebrate the date of Baptism, when we received the gift of Divine Life? Just recently we celebrated the Paschal Mystery, the death of Jesus and his glorious Resurrection.

In the Gospel we read how Jesus called each disciple to follow him. Several hundred years later in the 13th century, Jesus called a young man, Francis of Assisi. At the end of his life when Francis was dictating his Testament, he recalled the first call of the Lord. "This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God led me into their company and I had pity on them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me, and I did not take long before leaving the world."

Francis teaches us about the blessing of the Lord's call in the events of daily life. He recognizes the Lord's presence in his encounter with the lepers. He does not say, "I, Francis, decided to go there," but clearly asserts that the Lord was guiding him there. This was a life-changing event for Francis. What did he see in that leper that drew him close? He saw a deformed person ravaged by disease but he also recognized him as a person created and loved by God.

At the end of his life, Francis recalled this experience in his ministry to the lepers, "When I left the world, that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body." Francis saw in the lepers the life of Jesus when he was born in poverty. During his public life, he relied on alms and the care of others. At his death on the cross, he was shunned even by close friends and relatives.

To understand Franciscan spirituality, we must begin with the spirituality of Francis himself. Francis centered his prayer and his life on the life of Jesus. In imitation of Jesus he became poor and completely dependent on God. Through prayer he discovered Jesus as the preacher of conversion, announcing the reign of God. Over the years, he saw Jesus as the incarnate Son of God and the suffering Servant on Calvary; then as the Lord of all things raised up in glory. The spirituality of Francis and that of the Franciscan tradition after him has been characterized as "Christocentric".

For Francis, to follow Christ is not only to serve him, it also means becoming like Him in his lowliness and his suffering. From the time when Francis heard the message from the Crucifix in the little Church of San Damiano, he was devoted to the Passion and love of Christ for us.

Francis loved nature and saw all creation as a gift from God that was meant to be enjoyed. For Francis, all creation is in relationship. We are all brothers and sisters bound together by love and equal in the eyes of God. For Francis, Christ lives in you and in your neighbor. In meditating on the Cross, Francis saw that God's love lacked nothing and that nothing was held back.

Let us say the blessing which Francis gave to Brother Leo:

*May the Lord bless you and keep you,
May he show his face to you and have mercy upon you
May he turn his countenance upon you and give you peace.
May the Lord bless you.*

In God's Love,
Sister Cecilia, OSF

Minister's Message

Lent is over and we've all breathed a sigh of relief. After all, for those who take lent seriously it is not an easy time. Let's not be too quick, however, to give up all the spiritual discipline we gained during lent. The Devil is at work spreading his lies and we must be ready and able to fight the good fight.

Satan promises much but what he delivers is degradation. For example, to the first humans, Adam and Eve, he promised that they would be as gods; whereas, they actually became like "the beasts that perish," (Ps. 49:13). Satan's gifts pervert the order that God created. The price to be paid for his

gifts is the perversion of our relationship to God. If we kneel before the Devil, then God is lost to us.

St. Francis recognized the value and dignity of the soul and had this to say about it. "The greatest care ought to be taken of the soul, for man has not many, but only one. If God had given us two souls, as He has given us two eyes, or two feet, then should one be lost or taken away, we might guard and save the other. But as we have received only one, very weak and languishing, assailed by three most powerful enemies, and exposed to the fiery darts of the world, the flesh, and the devil, it is not lawful for it to repose securely for one single day, but it must always be striving and fighting. The Apostle gives us to understand how continual this warfare must be, when he says: 'Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.'"

As a person striving to stay physically fit continues to exercise and workout throughout their lifetime, so should we who strive to stay strong spiritually continue our daily prayers and other spiritual exercises even though lent is now past. As St. Francis said, "Let us, therefore, most earnestly beseech Our Lord to protect us by His grace, and, in the midst of so many dangers, mercifully defend us from our enemies."

Pax et bonum,
Jeff Topper

Spiritual Assistant

Sister Cecilia Reilly, OSF, is retiring effective the end of June as our spiritual assistant. She has served our fraternity faithfully and has been a wonderful example to us for living a Franciscan life. At our June 30 gathering, which will be our annual picnic in the grove behind the church, we will celebrate Sister's move into retirement. Please join us for this celebration.

Our new spiritual assistant will be Fr. Jonathan Ulrick, OFM Cap. He is serving as parochial vicar at St. Joseph Catholic Church in York, Pennsylvania. He will attend our gathering in May to be introduced to our fraternity. Please plan to attend.

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

May

The Church in Africa, a Seed of Unity:

That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.

June

The Mode of Life of Priests:

That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to a solidarity with those who are most poor.

May Birthdays

Hendrika Strathmeyer 5/22

May Profession Anniversaries

No May Profession Anniversaries

May Necrology

Marguerite Eriksson 5/8/1984

Raymond Moore 5/7/1983

Thelma Moore 5/7/2012

Thomas Murnane 5/25/1978

John Rebert 5/4/2013

June Birthdays

Pat Bilz 6/22

Delores Caicco..... 6/17

June Profession Anniversaries

José Barata 6/3/2002

Dick Bonini 6/19/1994

Sherlynn Holland 6/29/2008

Mary Minor 6/24/1979

Henny Strathmeyer 6/27/1982

June Necrology

Margaret Nash 6/24/1988

Frances Provenza 6/20/1996

Sophia Sauerwald 6/27/1984

Angela Wintrode 6/4/1995

Important Dates in May

May 1 - St. Joseph the Worker

May 12 - Mother's Day

May 13 - Our Lady of Fatima

May 16 - St. Margaret of Cortona

May 20 - St. Bernardine of Siena

May 30 - The Ascension of the Lord

May 31 - Visitation of the BVM

Important Dates in June

June 9 - Pentecost Sunday

June 10 - BVM, Mother of the Church

June 13 - St. Anthony of Padua

June 16 - The Most Holy Trinity

June 16 - Father's Day

June 23 - The Most Holy Body and Blood
of Christ (Corpus Christi)

June 28 - Sacred Heart of Jesus

June 29 - Saints Peter and Paul

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.

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.

On-Going Formation

From the book *To Live as Francis Lived*, at May's gathering we will cover Reflection No. 51 – Profession/Commitment.

June 30th is our annual picnic; there will be no on-going formation that day.

Prayer at Gatherings

For May, in honor of Mary we will pray the Rosary.

Also, please remember that May's gathering will be on **May 19**, the third Sunday. This is to avoid conflicts with plans on Memorial Day weekend.

June's gathering is on **June 30**, the fifth Sunday of the month. This is our annual picnic in the Church grove behind St. Joseph Church on Grandview Rd. This year it will also be a celebration of Sister Cecilia and all the years she has been our spiritual assistant as she moves into retirement. Please plan to attend.

Attendance at the Gathering

All active members should make the Gathering a priority. If you are unable to attend, please contact one of the council members. We are a family and, naturally, become concerned when we don't hear from one of our brothers or sisters.

For our brothers and sisters who are unable to attend our regular gatherings, you are very welcome to come and bid Sister Cecilia a fond farewell at our annual picnic in June. We would dearly love to see you again.

Final Thought

A religious education teacher asked the children just before she dismissed them to go to church, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"

A little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

S aint Anthony of Padua (1195 – June 13, 1231)

The gospel call to leave everything and follow Christ was the rule of St. Anthony of Padua's life. Over and over again, God called him to something new in his plan. Every time, Anthony responded with renewed zeal and self-sacrificing in order to serve his Lord Jesus more completely.

His journey as the servant of God began as a very young man when he decided to join the Augustinians in Lisbon, giving up a future of wealth and power to be a servant of God. Later when the bodies of the first Franciscan martyrs went through the Portuguese city where he was stationed, he was again filled with an intense longing to be one of those closest to Jesus himself: those who die for the Good News.

So Anthony entered the Franciscan Order and set out to preach to the Moors. But an illness prevented him from achieving that goal. He went to Italy and was stationed in a small hermitage where he spent most of his time praying, reading the Scriptures and doing menial tasks.

The call of God came again at an ordination where no one was prepared to speak. The humble and obedient Anthony hesitantly accepted the task. The years of searching for Jesus in prayer, of reading sacred Scripture and of serving him in poverty, chastity, and obedience had prepared Anthony to allow the Spirit to use his talents. Anthony's sermon was astounding to those who expected an unprepared speech and knew not the Spirit's power to give people words.

Recognized as a great man of prayer and a great Scripture and theology scholar, Anthony became the first friar to teach theology to the other friars. Soon he was called from that post to preach to the Albigensians in France, using his profound knowledge of Scripture and theology to convert and reassure those who had been misled by their denial of Christ's divinity and of the sacraments.

After he led the friars in northern Italy for three years, he made his headquarters in the city of Padua. He resumed his preaching and began writing sermon notes to help other preachers. In the spring of 1231, Anthony withdrew to a friary at Camposampiero where he had a sort of treehouse built as a hermitage. There he prayed and prepared for death.

On June 13, he became very ill and asked to be taken back to Padua, where he died after receiving the last sacraments. Anthony was canonized less than a year later and named a Doctor of the Church in 1946.