



THE CLARION

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

September / October 2019

Pax et Bonum

Jeff Topper, OFS, Minister (717) 637-2026
José Barata, OFS, Vice Minister (443) 293-7334
Judy Topper, OFS, Secretary (717) 637-2026
Patricia Bilz, OFS, Acting Treasurer (410) 848-8329
Kathy Clagg, OFS, Formation Dir..... (443) 293-2755
Spiritual Assistant - Brother Tage Danielson, OFM Cap..... (717) 755-7503

From the Desk of Brother Tage

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

May the Lord give you peace! September and October are rich months, liturgically speaking, for Franciscans.

On September 14, the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. In the Gospel reading for that day, Jesus, speaking to Nicodemus, foretells that he will be lifted up on the cross.

On September 17, Franciscans celebrate the Stigmata of our Holy Father Francis. This feast commemorates how St. Francis, two years before he died, received on Mount La Verna the sacred wounds of our Lord Jesus. Two decades after Francis' conversion to Jesus and his Gospel, Francis was graced with bearing the painful wounds of his Savior, the Stigmata. Francis' love for the Lord was fulfilled by his complete identification with him. Truly, at this point, it was not Francis who lived, but Christ who lived in him.

On September 23, the Church and the Franciscans celebrate the Memorial of St. Pio of Pietrelcina. When Padre Pio, as he is commonly known, was 31, he received the Stigmata in his body. Padre Pio was graced with the same favor from God as was St. Francis. Padre Pio lived a life of intense suffering from these wounds, and from scorn and rejection by others, but he never failed to unite his sufferings to Jesus on the cross. His immense faith

sustained him throughout the decades of suffering and abuse that tormented him.

Finally, on October 4, the Church and the Franciscans celebrate St. Francis of Assisi. In the general church calendar, it is a Memorial, but for us Franciscans, this day is a solemnity! In the second reading for Franciscans who celebrate Holy Mass, we hear from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, where St. Paul says that he only wants to glory in the cross of Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to him and he to the world. These words from St. Paul describe the life of St. Francis. Jesus on the cross! Jesus' love for St. Francis and the world shines through on that cross! St. Francis loved the cross because he saw how God condescended to humanity through Jesus' self-offering. God became man in order that we might return to God. In God's movement of Heaven to Earth, we are able to move from Earth to Heaven.

We Franciscans love the cross. On the cross is revealed God who emptied himself to become man, who as man suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation. Jesus, poor, naked, crucified -- with nothing to call his own. This Jesus was who St. Francis followed throughout his life. This Jesus is who we Franciscans are called to follow. Like Jesus, and like St. Francis, we strive not for earthly gain, power, or prestige. We strive to offer our lives in sacrifice to our God who loves us. This September and October, as we celebrate the cross and how it has been revealed in the saints, let us thank God for our Franciscan vocation and always keep our eyes on the cross. Let us imitate St. Francis and Padre Pio who accepted their sufferings, uniting them to Jesus. Like St. Paul, we too can say that we want only to glory in the cross of Jesus Christ. With and in Jesus, we can endure anything.

In advance, I wish you all a blessed and happy Solemnity of St. Francis of Assisi! Let us pray for each other.

Peace and good,
Br. Tage Danielson, OFM Cap

Minister's Message

As Franciscans, we often talk about living the gospel. Every day we make countless decisions that either follow gospel teaching or not. Too often our thinking stops at that point -- we think we've either avoided sin or we haven't. Whether we realize it or not, however, each decision involves not just a point in time, but also takes us down a path. This is why the church teaches that conversion is a process that is carried out daily. It is why our faith is not a once-and-done decision.

Living the gospel means that we have embarked on a journey from pride to humility, from selfishness to selflessness, from greed to poverty, and from

hatred to love. OFS Rule 7 says it this way, “. . . motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls conversion.” In our daily living of the gospel, over time we become different persons.

Unfortunately, the change which the gospel brings about in us does not make us perfect; we are still human. The conversion process, therefore, never ends. Each day of our lives, including the last, requires us to continue going from gospel to life and life to gospel, making decisions and putting into practice as best we can the gospel message.

Our culture today constantly entices us to seek things of this world, recognition, power, fame, wealth, with the assurance that these bring happiness. It tells us that truth is relative, life is not sacred, men are infected with toxic masculinity, and there are other alternatives to male and female. So look around. How many really happy people do you see today? Do you see peace or division?

Francis and Clare embraced the gospel to the extent that they took radically different paths from the culture of their day; and they found peace in Christ. As the canticle in Luke says, “In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Living the gospel not only brings about radical interior positive change in us, Francis and Clare have shown us through their example that it also brings us peace. May we all strive to more perfectly live the gospel and enjoy the peace of Christ.

Pax et bonum,
Jeff Topper

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

September

The Protection of the Oceans

That politicians, scientists and economists work together to protect the world's seas and oceans.

October

A Missionary "Spring" in the Church

That the breath of the Holy Spirit engender a new missionary "spring" in the Church.

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.

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.

Prayer at Gatherings

For the September 22 gathering, we will pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Please bring your breviaries.

October's gathering is our annual spiritual retreat at the Aisling House in Manchester. Please plan to arrive between 9 and 9:30am on Sunday, October 13. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS THE SECOND SUNDAY. Also, please let your minister know if you'd like to attend but cannot afford the recommended contribution of \$30 at this time.

September Birthdays

Jeff Topper 9/26

October Birthdays

Concetta Glorioso 10/8

September Profession Anniversaries

Pat Bilz 9/23/2001

October Profession Anniversaries

Mary Barrick 10/27/1996

September Necrology

Helen Bunty 9/28/1979

Rosella Elsesser 9/28/1977

Catherine Gross 9/15/1983

William Muller 9/21/1997

October Necrology

Rev. Clair Anstead, TOR 10/22/1988

Verena Deller 10/9/1982

Ruth Murnane 10/21/1997

Mary E. Sheeley 10/16/1990

Important Dates in September

Sept. 2 - Labor Day

Sept. 8 - Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

Sept. 14- Exaltation of the Cross

Sept. 15- Our Lady of Sorrows

Sept. 17- Stigmata of St. Francis

Sept. 18- St. Joseph of Cupertino

Sept. 23- Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina

Sept. 23- Finding of the body of St. Clare

Sept. 29- Archangels – Michael, Gabriel

And Raphael

Important Dates in October

October 4 - Feast of Our Holy Father Francis

October 7 - Our Lady of the Rosary

October 11 - Feast Divine Maternity of Our Lady

October 14 - Columbus Day, observed

October 18 - St. Luke, Evangelist

October 23 - St. John of Capistrano

October 28 - Sts. Simon & Jude, Apostles

October 31 - Halloween

Fraternity Prayer Vine

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

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

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 (Jeff Topper) know.

Reflection – Padre Pio

Referring to that day's Gospel (Matthew 11:25-30) at Padre Pio's canonization Mass in 2002, Saint John Paul II said: "The Gospel image of 'yoke' evokes the many trials that the humble Capuchin of San Giovanni Rotondo endured.

Today we contemplate in him how sweet is the 'yoke' of Christ and indeed how light the burdens are whenever someone carries these with faithful love. The life and mission of Padre Pio testify that difficulties and sorrows, if accepted with love, transform themselves into a privileged journey of holiness, which opens the person toward a greater good, known only to the Lord."

On-Going Formation

From the *Gospel To Life* pamphlet (will be provided), we will cover the first rule.

Apostolate

Please don't forget to bring canned goods you want to donate. This is a new apostolate for our fraternity.

Final Thought

A mother was preparing pancakes for her young sons. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, "Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait." The oldest boy turned to his younger brother and said, "You be Jesus."