



# The Troubadour

St. Margaret of Cortona Region  
Our Lady Queen of the Angels Fraternity  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

*"The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan Order is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of life with God and people. Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly. Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel."*

— Rule #4, The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

## November—December 2019

### Upcoming Dates and Events:

**Monday, December 2—6:30-7:45 pm.**—Initial Formation at St. Leo the Great Church

**Thursday, December 5—6:30 p.m.**—Council Meeting at St. Leo the Great Church, Room 2

**Sunday, December 8—12:30-4:00 p.m.**—CHRISTMAS PARTY at St. Leo the Great Church

**Monday, January 6—6:30-7:45 pm.**—Initial Formation at St. Leo the Great Church

**Thursday, January 9—6:30 p.m.**—Council Meeting at St. Leo the Great Church, Room 2

**Sunday, January 12—12:30-3:30 p.m.**—GATHERING at St. Leo the Great Church



### Council

Kelly Ann Lynch, Minister

Mary Anne Fanale, Vice Minister

Susan Rineer, Secretary

Larry Rineer, Treasurer

Beth Treier, Formation Director

Julie Rasp, Councilor, Initial

Formation Presenter

Jim & Roberta Stefanow, Formation Presenters

Janet Kreiner, Interim Councilor

Dear Fellow Franciscans,

This week, in New York City, millions of spectators will gather to see the 93rd annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. With giant helium-filled balloons, Olaf, Snoopy and Sponge Bob Square Pants will come to life, or become larger-than-life, with the promise of being more spectacular than ever before. Our family will join the estimated 50 million viewers to watch this year's parade from the comforts of our home. The parade, since its beginning in 1924, culminates with the arrival of Santa Claus to mark the beginning of the Christmas season.

Christmas? But, wait—what about Advent? Many years ago, as I sat with my family around the tree on Christmas Day in a room filled with piles of wrinkled wrapping paper and opened gifts, I noticed something significant—our family's Advent calendar. We'd had it for years. It was given to me by a woman named Margaret Torney who once brought me Communion. Each year, beginning on the 1st day of December, one of 24 nativity pieces is placed on a laminated scene of Bethlehem. Using a small piece of putty to secure the shepherds and sheep, wise men and Star, our children have, over the years, filled the manger with the laminated paper figures, always adding the Christ Child on Christmas Eve. On occasion, if in the eager anticipation of Christmas morning, they'd forgotten, Santa would place the Christ Child in that manger, completing the nativity by Christmas morning. But, on this Christmas night, with our children grown a little older and life a little busier, our Advent calendar stared back at me, a half-complete nativity scene awaiting its key players. Where were Joseph and Mary and the Baby Jesus?

Were we too busy to prepare for the Christ Child? Too busy to wait in eager anticipation for His arrival? Simply put, we'd missed Advent.

Before the first Sunday of Advent reaches your doorstep, take a moment to recall the preparation involved in creating that first creche in 1223—the hay that had to be carried in and the animals and people made ready—and the holy saint who, upon its completion, preached about the Babe of Bethlehem and stood before the manger, "filled with piety, bathed in tears, and overcome with joy" (St. Bonaventure). Don't miss Advent, so that you too can stand before the manger on Christmas morning overcome with joy.

This newsletter is packed with information. Happy Thanksgiving. Merry Christmas. But, most importantly, Happy Advent.

With Great Joy,  
Kelly Ann Lynch

## PRAYER INTENTIONS FROM THE POPE AND THE OFS

Please pray for these intentions in **November**.

**From the Pope: Universal—Dialogue and reconciliation in the**

**Near East:** That a spirit of dialogue, encounter, and reconciliation emerge in the Near East, where diverse religious communities share their lives together.

**From the OFS:** For the CIOFS Presidency, for the Course of Formation for the Assistants, for the national fraternities of Taiwan (FPV) and Lebanon (Chapter).

**Our Father ...**



Please pray for these intentions in **December**.

**From the Pope: Evangelization—The future of the young:** That every country determine to take the necessary measures to make the future of the very young, especially those who suffer, a priority.

**From the OFS:** For all the national fraternities in difficulty and the national fraternity of Uruguay (Chapter).

**Our Father ...**



## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

**Wish them a Happy Birthday!**

November 9—Jeanette Durbin

November 11—Jackie Holzel

November 17—Janet Kreiner  
and Vicki Beers

December 2—Jean Reddy

December 15—Kelly Ann Lynch

December 16—Maureen Fitzgerald

December 27—Kathy Arndt

happy  
birthday

**Wish them a Happy OFS  
Anniversary!**

No anniversaries in November  
or December!

Happy  
Anniversary

**Happy Birthday, Jesus!**



*As we celebrate the anniversaries of our profession into the Secular Franciscan Order this year, the Council will present each of us with a small San Damiano cross and holy card that were purchased in Assisi and blessed at the Tomb of St. Francis. If you have celebrated an anniversary this year and have not received your gift, please see a Council member.*

## ST. FRANCIS AND THE CHRISTMAS CRECHE

by William Saunders (catholiceducation.org)

The story of the origin of the Christmas creche rests with the very holy man, St. Francis of Assisi.

In the year 1223, St. Francis, a deacon, was visiting the town of Greccio to celebrate Christmas. Greccio was a small town built on a mountainside overlooking a beautiful valley. The people had cultivated the fertile area with vineyards. St. Francis realized that the chapel of the Franciscan hermitage would be too small to hold the congregation for Midnight Mass. So he found a niche in the rock near the town square and set up the altar. However, this Midnight Mass would be very special, unlike any other Midnight Mass.

St. Bonaventure (d. 1274) in his Life of St. Francis of Assisi tells the story the best:

*It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought*

*hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem. A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvelously beautiful, sleeping in the manger, Whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep. This vision of the devout soldier is credible, not only by reason of the sanctity of him that saw it, but by reason of the miracles which afterwards confirmed its truth. For example of Francis, if it be considered by the world, is doubtless sufficient to excite all*

*hearts which are negligent in the faith of Christ; and the hay of that manger, being preserved by the people, miraculously cured all diseases of cattle, and many other pestilences; God thus in all things glorifying his servant, and witnessing to the great efficacy of his holy prayers by manifest prodigies and miracles.*

Although the story is long old, the message is clear for us. Our own Nativity scenes which rest under our Christmas trees are a visible reminder of that night when our Savior was born. May we never forget to see in our hearts the little Babe of Bethlehem, who came to save us from sin. We must never forget that the wood of the manger that held Him so securely would one day give way to the wood of the cross. May we too embrace Him with all of our love as did St. Francis. **T**





---

## FORMATION UPDATES

---

### UNITED WE STAND

In October, the Council decided to implement a Formation Team and hoped it might set a precedent for the future of our growing fraternity. As discussed at the October gathering, the role of Formation Director is great and vast. Council has been discussing this for months. With a fraternity our size, continually growing by the grace of God, something was needed. We prayed and decided that the approach to Formation could and should be a team approach. Jim and Roberta accepted the invitation to be part of that Team and became our Ongoing Formation Presenters, assisting Beth, our elected Formation Director. Julie had previously accepted the invitation to be part of that Team and is currently leading Initial Formation with the assistance of Ric, who also accepted the invitation to assist her. This has been a blessing for all of us, and one that seems to have been confirmed at the October gathering with something simple shared by Audrey—"United we stand, divided we fall." This most beautiful comment offered us confirmation that our new Formation Team approach was one guided by the Holy Spirit.

In October, we studied Chapter 3 ("Live the Gospel") of our current book used in ongoing formation—*Surrounded by Love, Seven Teachings from Saint Francis*. It gave us some insight on how to live the Gospel. "As Franciscans, use the Gospels to lead your life," Jim shared with the fraternity. He spoke about Gospel truths and the Rule.

In November, we moved on to Chapter 4 ("Go and Repair God's House") which is all about conversion (*see more on conversion on page 15 of this newsletter*). Jim discussed how Saint Francis was called to rebuild the church and what was truly

meant by this message, a message Saint Francis heard from Christ who spoke to him from the cross in San Damiano. "We are called to rebuild the church in ourselves," Jim shared. "[It's] how we react to our brothers and sisters. We are called to this conversion—to create a new person within us and allow Jesus to take root."

"And then there were two." Jim reminded us that the conversion witnessed by Bernard came after watching Francis from afar. When Bernard wanted to be certain of Francis' true conversion, he invited Francis to dinner. And then, silently, Bernard watched and listened as Francis prayed all night, "My God and my all!"

During the gathering, we spent time in small groups pondering and sharing on these questions:

1. What conversion/s have taken place in my own conversion story?
2. What conversion/s must take place in our new Candidates?
3. How can we best help our new Candidates?

Jim reminded us that "as Franciscans, we are called to honor Saint Francis who embodies the life of Christ." **T**



**"MY GOD AND MY ALL!"**

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

---



### Our Fraternity's Annual CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Sunday, December 8

12:30-4:00 p.m.

St. Leo the Great Church (Rooms 3 and 4)

A delectable menu of ham, scalloped potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, baked corn, salads, sweet potato casserole, rolls and butter



Desserts of cake and cookies,  
even an eggnog spice Bundt cake

A hot cocoa bar

Christmas carols



And a Franciscan celebration to celebrate the Birth of Christ

As a reminder, in lieu of a gift exchange the Christmas Celebration Committee is asking everyone to bring a \$10 donation or a \$10 gift card to Giant or Stauffers to be given to retired priests and sisters.



## FROM OUR OFS FRATERNITY ARCHIVES

*Reprinted from our own issues of The Troubadour*

### “If I Had Been There”

*submitted by Audrey Shadeck  
November-December 2008 issue of  
The Troubadour*

IF I HAD BEEN THERE on that first Christmas—who might I have been?

A FELLOW TRAVELER from Nazareth to Bethlehem, completely unaware of what drama would soon take place, with this couple, Mary and Joseph, as chief actors?

I'd like to think I would have been solicitous of Mary, making the trip so heavily pregnant.

The INNKEEPER, or one of his hired helpers, reluctantly turning this pair away because the Inn certainly was filled up?

I'd like to think I would be the one to say—“The least we can do is offer a place in the stable, for a little privacy and a place to lie down.”

A SHEPHERD or someone pursuing an everyday activity—suddenly struck with fear by dazzling light, angels and glorious singing—announcing the momentous occurrence?

I'd like to think I would be the first to say, “Let's go to Bethlehem to see this thing that has happened...”

A VISITOR FROM THE EAST, making an arduous trip to bring gifts and worship the Child?

KING HEROD, or one of the powerful of the King's Court, threatened by the predictions of the birth of a King, making plans to eliminate this usurper?

I'd like to think I would be the one to warn the visitors to return another way.

Perhaps I might have been—

SIMEON, a God fearing man, waiting for the Salvation of Israel, or

ANNA, the prophetess, who stayed in the Temple “waiting, worshiping, fasting and praying...?”

We've been blessed with the SCRIPTURES, and a host of witnesses;

WE HAVE BEEN THERE!

We know all the roles, the characters in that scene, so—

We can be SOLICITOUS of those in need;

We can show HOSPITALITY to all who come to us;

We can “GO AND SEE” through our Bible reading, worship, study and prayer;

We can BRING GIFTS for the spread of the Kingdom and the needs of the people;

We can, like Simeon, WITNESS to the “Salvation which has been prepared in the presence of all peoples,”

And like Anna, SPEAK “about the Child to all who are waiting for God to set them free.”

WE HAVE BEEN THERE!

We can—as did the Angels—loudly proclaim:

**GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN AND ON EARTH PEACE!** T



## FROM OUR OFS FRATERNITY ARCHIVES

*Reprinted from our own issues of The Troubadour*



### “St. Francis Preaches to the Birds”

*From the April 2005 issue of The Troubadour*

Father Francis and his companions were making a trip through the Spoleto Valley near the town of Bevagna. Suddenly Francis spotted a great number of birds of all varieties. There were doves, crows and all sorts of birds. Swept up in the moment, Francis left his friends in the road and ran after the birds, who patiently waited for him. He greeted them in his usual way, expecting them to scurry off into the air as he spoke. But they moved not.

Filled with awe, he asked them if they would stay awhile and listen to the Word of God. He said to them:

“My brother and sister birds, you should praise your Creator and always love him: He gave you feathers for clothes, wings to fly and all other things that you need. It is God who made you noble among all creatures, making your home in thin, pure air. Without sowing or reaping, you receive God’s guidance and protection.”

At this the birds began to spread their wings, stretch their necks and gaze at Francis, rejoicing and praising God in a wonderful way according to their nature. Francis then walked right through



the middle of them, turned around and came back, touching their heads and bodies with his tunic.

Then he gave them his blessing, making the sign of the cross over them. At that they flew off and Francis, rejoicing and giving thanks to God, went on his way.

Later, Francis wondered aloud to his companions why he had never preached to birds before. And from that day on, Francis made it his habit to solicitously invoke all birds, all animals and reptiles to praise and love their Creator. And many times during Francis’ life there were remarkable events of Francis speaking to the animals. There was even a time when St. Francis quieted a flock of noisy birds that were interrupting a religious ceremony! Much to the wonder of all present, the birds remained quiet until Francis’ sermon was complete. **T**

*(Pictured right is the spot where St. Francis preached to the birds, visited recently by Sharon Hickey, OFS and her husband, Bob)*





## OUR FRANCISCAN FAMILY

### Sue Bedard

In October, Sue Bedard shared some of her Franciscan journey with us. Sue was professed 31 years ago in Connecticut where she lived. She moved from there to St. Francis Village, a retirement village in Texas where she served 1 1/2 of her 3 year term as minister before moving to Lancaster. She had her name on the list at St. Anne's where she and her husband John currently live. When Sue was newly professed, she read the Rule and decided to read it, and live it, simply. "Simplicity is the best part for me," Sue shared. "We are stewards of what we have, and that makes it freeing for me." Sue also shared that the key to her spirituality is Adoration. "I love going to Adoration," she said, with the most sincere heart.

### Maureen Fitzgerald

At our November gathering, Maureen Fitzgerald shared how her Franciscan journey began with the invitation by Julie Rasp to attend a gathering. What she remembers most about that gathering is that everyone was hugging one another. She decided to go on retreat and pray about this. At the retreat center in Wernersville, under the spiritual supervision of Father Ed Sanders, Maureen found herself in the library where she picked up a book about Saint Anthony. Inspired by his dedication to Saint Francis and humble heart, Maureen felt Saint Anthony was calling her

to the Franciscan Order. "It's about love, about service," Maureen shared. "When you know you're a daughter of God, it's just incredible." Maureen believes Saint Anthony led her to Saint Francis. "It's a beautiful life," she said, "that brings you closer and closer to Our Lord's love and you learn how to serve Him."



### **OUR INQUIRERS ARE NOW CANDIDATES!**

**Please welcome Jessica Nourse, Katie Farren, Jill and Marianne Nicklaus and Vicki Beers, our new candidates, to the fraternity!**

**"The Secular Franciscan Fraternity of Our Lady Queen of the Angels very gladly promises to help you in your journey with friendship, prayer and the witness of its life. You, on the other hand, strengthen our fraternity in numbers, by virtue of your presence and participation, and through the sharing of your special gifts. You are most welcome!"**

*(Rite of Admission, Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order)*



## SOME FRANCISCAN SAINTS, THEIR FEAST DAYS, AND OTHER SPECIAL DATES

**November 4—St. Charles Borromeo**, Secular Franciscan Cardinal, Protector of the Franciscan Order (October 2, 1538-November 3, 1584)

**November 4—Bl. Teresa Manganiello**, Third Order Secular January 1, 1849-November 4, 1876 (*see right*)

**November 17—St. Elizabeth of Hungary**, Secular Franciscan, Patroness of the Third Order (July 7, 1207-November 17, 1231)

**November 19—St. Agnes of Assisi**, Order of St. Clare; St. Clare's younger sister (c. 1197-November 16, 1253)

**November 21—Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

**December 8—Feast of the Immaculate Conception**, Patroness of the Seraphic Order, Holy Day of Obligation, Plenary Indulgence for tertiaries and cord bearers

**December 12—Finding the Body of Our Holy Father St. Francis**

**December 12—Our Lady of Guadalupe**

**December 25—Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, CHRISTMAS DAY**

For a full list of Franciscan saints, visit <https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/franciscan-calendar.html>

(Reprinted from <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-margaret-of-cortona>)

### BLESSED TERESA MANGANIELLO

“A LUMINOUS WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL” (POPE BENEDICT XVI)

Blessed Teresa Manganiello was the 11th child of a farming family in southern Italy who became a Secular Franciscan Tertiary. Teresa was in the process of forming a new congregation when she died suddenly. However, her work having been blessed by Pope Blessed Pius IX, led to the creation of a new congregation—the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate. She was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI who said, “As Saint Francis, she sought to imitate Jesus Christ, offering sufferings and penances for the reparation of sins, she was full of love for neighbor, and she did everything she could for everyone, especially the poor and sick.”



Today, the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate serve all over the world including the beloved city of Assisi, Italy.





## OUR NATIONAL FRATERNITY



### A FEW WEEKS OF FRANCISCAN PEACE Kindness. Silence. Conversion. Peace.

#### From Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, National Animator, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation:

*I share with you this thought from Franciscans for Justice: "Francis of Assisi was poor only that he might be Christ-like. He recognized creation as another manifestation of the beauty of God. In 1979, he was named patron of ecology. He did great penance – apologizing to "Brother Body" later in life – that he might be totally disciplined for the will of God. Francis' poverty had a sister, Humility, by which he meant total dependence on the good God. But all this was, as it were, preliminary to the heart of his spirituality: living the gospel life, summed up in the charity of Jesus and perfectly expressed in the Eucharist." [source: Franciscan Media]*

*Take time to (re)discover the definition of "humility" that rings true for you. Why not take some special actions that express Humility. A few examples to help you: Stop talking. One way to practice humility is to spend more time listening than you do talking... Admit when you're wrong... Go last... Give compliments... Plant some seeds for winter vegetables... Write a politician about a concern you have...*

Carolyn forwarded **12 Weeks of Franciscan Peace** and suggested we pray this with our family or fraternity. The prayers and reflections are so beautiful, that I've chosen a few to include here, just in time for Advent.

### KINDNESS

**Week 9, November 28 – December 4:** The thought for this week is **Kindness**. Mother Teresa said, "I would rather make mistakes in kindness and

compassion than work miracles in unkindness and hardness."

Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. Being kind is a choice that we must make each and every day. It can be a difficult choice especially when others are not being very kind to you. But this is where we exercise our holiness, our being "set apart" from those who choose not to follow the Gospels. We do not think we are better than; we choose to behave as Jesus in the manner of Saint Francis.



Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer." Yes, people will forget what you said. People will also forget what you did. But they will never forget how you made them feel. Small and random acts of kindness cost nothing – except time and love.

"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the greatest intention." ~ Kahlil Gibran

**Psalm Fragment:** "For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!" ~ Psalm 117:1-2

**Reflection Question:** What is one small act of kindness you can do right now? So... go and do it!

**This week:** Practice small and random acts of

## OUR NATIONAL FRATERNITY

kindness – for no reason: Smile at someone you don't know. Give a lonely stranger a hug. Buy someone a hot cup of herbal tea. Journal your experience.

**Prayer for the Week:** Lord, may I be a living expression of your kindness – each and every day; especially when someone is being unkind towards me. I make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

### SILENCE

**Week 10, December 5 - II:** The thought for this week is **Silence**. Can you tolerate the silence? Silence is more than just the complete absence of sound.

Mother Teresa said, "In the silence of the heart, God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. It is only when you realize your nothingness, your emptiness, that God can fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence."

In silence, things are happening. God is speaking as you are emptying; and as you are emptying, God is filling you up with Himself. In our busy society, it has become more difficult to turn off all of the noise and gadgets and completely shut down and fall still. This is part of who we are called to be. If we are to follow Jesus in the manner of Saint Francis, then we must turn off all of the noise and fall still. Jesus and Francis both took the time to steal away from the others to become one with the Father in solitude and silence. This was when they were being emptied in order to allow God to fill them with His holy will.

"It is fair to say that if you never spend time with another person you would be hard pressed to justify describing yourself as being in relationship with the other. In order to foster a healthy and meaningful relationship with someone, time must be set aside

during which the other person is your focus and your presence to each other takes priority." ~ From *Dating God: Live and Love in the Way of St. Francis* by Daniel P. Horan, OFM

Make spending quiet time with the Lord your focus and priority, then see how your other relationships improve. The Sufi poet Rumi said, "In silence there is eloquence. Stop weaving and see how the pattern improves." Turn off the noise, quiet the busyness in your day, fall still and see how the pattern improves.

And then speak, but only if it improves the silence!

**Psalm Fragment:** "God of Zion, to you even silence is praise. Promises made to you are kept – you listen to prayer – and all living things come to you." ~ Psalm 65:1-2

**Reflection Question:** If you turned off your Smartphone or your mobile devices for one hour, what would you be missing? Is that worth one hour with the Lord?

**This week:** For one hour, turn off all the noise and electronic gadgets and fall still before the Lord. Slowly and reverently recite the Lord's Prayer and the Peace Prayer. Journal your experience.

**Prayer for the Week:** "O Lord, you examine me and know. You know when I sit down and when I get up; even from far away you understand my motives. You carefully observe me when I travel or when I lie down to rest; you are aware of everything I do." (Psalm 139: 1-3)



See *FRANCISCAN PEACE* (continued on pages 14 and 15)

## LET US PRAY

### St. Francis of Assisi's Prayer of Thanksgiving

You are holy, Lord, the only God,  
and Your deeds are wonderful.  
You are strong.  
You are great.  
You are the Most High.  
You are Almighty.  
You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.  
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.  
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good,  
Lord God, living and true.  
You are love. You are wisdom.  
You are humility. You are endurance.  
You are rest. You are peace.  
You are joy and gladness.  
You are justice and moderation.  
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.  
You are beauty.  
You are gentleness.



You are our protector.  
You are our guardian and  
defender.  
You are our courage. You are  
our haven and our hope.  
You are our faith, our great  
consolation.  
You are our eternal life, Great  
and Wonderful Lord,  
God Almighty, Merciful Savior.  
Amen.

### A Thanksgiving Prayer

by Father Mychal Judge, OFM  
May 11, 1933-September 11, 2001

Thank you Lord for life.  
Thank you for love.  
Thank you for goodness.  
Thank you for work.  
Thank you for family.  
Thank you for friends.  
Thank you for every gift  
because we know  
that every gift comes from you,  
and without you,  
we have and are nothing.  
So, as we celebrate this day  
in thanksgiving to you,  
keep our hearts and minds open.  
Let us enjoy each other's company,  
and most of all,  
let us be conscious of Your presence  
in our lives and in a special way in the lives  
of all those who have gone before us.  
And Father we make our prayer, as always,  
in Jesus' name who lives with You  
forever and ever.  
Amen.



*September 10, 2001  
His Last Homily  
FDNY, Bronx, NY*

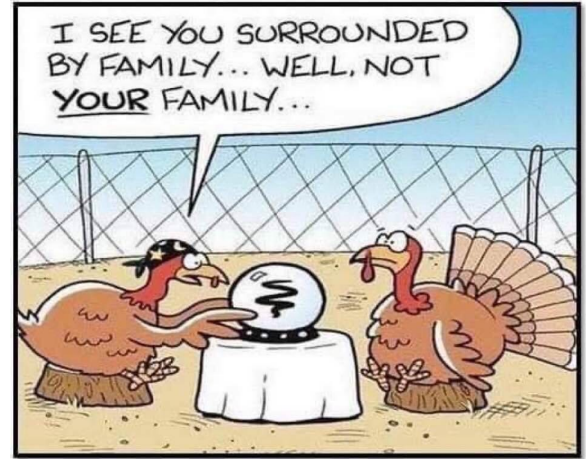


# A JOYFUL FRANCISCAN

## “For All You Lexophiles (Lovers of Words)”

Reprinted from the  
September 2005 issue of The Troubadour

- A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.
- He had a photographic memory that was never developed.
- The short fortuneteller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
- When you’ve seen one shopping center, you’ve seen a mall.
- Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
- Acupuncture is a job well done.
- Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.
- An optometrist fell into a lens grinding machine and made a spectacle of himself.



off the mark.com by Mark Parisi



offthemark.com otmCartoon@gmail.com 11-45 ©2019 Mark Parisi Dist by Andrews McMeel Synd.

My family told me to stop telling Thanksgiving jokes, but I told them I couldn't quit "cold turkey."

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



Thanks to John Michael Sullivan (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-23-2005

AT LEAST WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT UP IN A STABLE HOME



M. Nadler

## FRANCISCAN PEACE

*(continued from page 11)*

### CONVERSION

**Week 11, December 12 - 18:** The thought for this week is **Conversion**. Article 7 of the OFS Rule begins: "United by their vocation as 'brothers and sisters of penance' and 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 calls 'conversion.' Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily."

Conversion means to change (something) into a different form, so that it can be used in a different way. This is an awesome definition. Conversion is not just changing from something to something else; but also that it may be used in a different way. This second part is key: to be used in a different way – to go from Gospel to life and life to Gospel.

Conversion is not a one-time event. Our Rule says, human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily. Each day, we will revert back to what we know, to what is comfortable. This is the result of human frailty. Don't beat yourself up because you have not "arrived." While we are human, we will fall. But the good news is that God is there to pick us up again, if we so desire.

English clergyman John Bunyan calls conversion "wounding work"; it is a constant breaking of the heart. But without the wounding, without the breaking, there can be no radical change.

"To say, "I've been converted and that's that," is to say you have decided to quit growing. If life is about anything, it is about growing. The day I quit changing and learning is the day I die." ~ Steve Goodier, Author and Minister.

"God demands a conversion of the mind and heart as the basis of peace and security" (cf. Is 26:3).

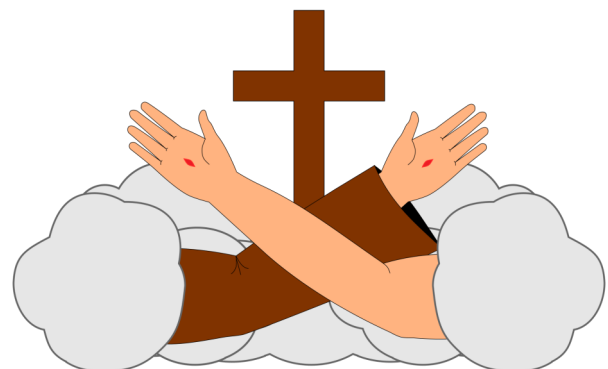
**Psalm Fragment:** "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me..."

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit." ~ Psalm 51: 10, 12

**Reflection Question:** What are the small, daily conversions in your life? How are you used in a different way because of them?

**This week:** Think about where the Lord may be calling you to conversion in your daily life and wanting to use you in a different way. Journal any new awarenesses.

**Prayer for the Week:** "My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen" (Thomas Merton)



## PEACE

**Week 12, December 19 - 25:** The thought for today is **Peace**. Peace Activist Claude Thomas writes: "Peace is not an idea. Peace is not a political movement, not a theory or a dogma. Peace is a way of life: living mindfully in the present moment.... We must simply stop the endless wars that rage within... Imagine, if everyone stopped the war in themselves – there would be no seeds from which war could grow."

Peace is a gift before it becomes a task. It is gift from our Lord Jesus: "My peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give to you. A peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you" (John 14:27). We have been gifted with the peace of the Lord; with his own peace. It is a gift that no one else can give to you. Sit and meditate on that rare and precious gift.

It happened, three years prior to his death, that Francis decided to celebrate at the town of Greccio the memory of the birth of the Child Jesus with the greatest possible solemnity, in order to arouse devotion. So that this would not be considered a type of novelty, he petitioned for and obtained permission from the Supreme Pontiff.

He had a manger prepared, hay carried in and an ox and an ass led to the spot. The brethren are summoned, the people arrive, the forest amplifies with their cries, and that venerable night is rendered brilliant and solemn by the multitude of bright lights and by the resonant and harmonious hymns of praise.

The man of God stands before the manger, filled with piety, bathed in tears, and overcome with joy. A solemn Mass is celebrated over the manger, with Francis, a levite of Christ, chanting the holy Gospel. Then he preaches to the people standing around him about the birth of the poor King, whom, whenever he means to call him, he called in his tender love, the Babe from Bethlehem. (St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Major*)

In his Testament, Francis tells us that "the Lord

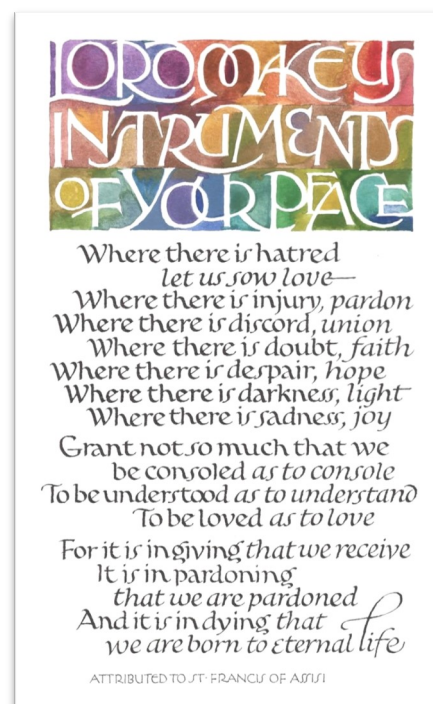
revealed a greeting to me that we should say: 'May the Lord give you peace.'" Saint Bonaventure recalls, "At the beginning and end of every sermon [Francis] announced peace; in every greeting he wished for peace." Both Francis and Clare greeted the people of Assisi with *Pace e Bene! Peace and Good!* As Franciscans, peace must be at the center of all our comings and goings.

**Psalm Fragment:** "The mountains will bring news of peace to the people, and the hills will announce justice." ~ Psalm 72:2-4

**Reflection Question:** When are you not being peace, even if you might be doing peace?

**This Week:** Greet everyone you meet with "Peace and Good!" Take a sacred pause to meditate on the solemnity of the nativity of Our Lord, the poor King.

**Prayer for the Week:** "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8). Lord, grant me true purity of heart that I may look down upon the things of earth and seek the things of heaven, and never cease to adore and behold the Lord God living and true with a pure heart and soul. (cf. Admonitions of Saint Francis)





# Advent Prayer

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a wonder at the wisdom and power of Your Father and ours. Receive my prayer as part of my service of the Lord who enlists me in God's own work for justice.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a hunger for peace: peace in the world, peace in my home, peace in myself.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a joy responsive to the Father's joy. I seek His will so I can serve with gladness, singing and love.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me the joy and love and peace it is right to bring to the manger of my Lord. Raise in me, too, sober reverence for the God who acted there, hearty gratitude for the life begun there, and spirited resolution to serve the Father and Son.

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose advent I hail.

Amen.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Minister's Letter (page 1)**
- **Birthdays, Anniversaries and Intentions from the Pope (page 2)**
- **St. Francis and the Christmas Creche (page 3)**
- **Formation Updates (page 4)**
- **Christmas Celebration (page 5)**
- **From the Archives: If I Had Been There (page 6)**
- **From the Archives: St. Francis and the Birds (page 7)**
- **Our Franciscan Family (page 8)**
- **Franciscan Saints (page 9)**
- **A Few Weeks of Franciscan Peace—Kindness, Silence, Conversion & Peace (pages 10, 11, 15 & 16)**
- **Thanksgiving Prayers (page 12)**
- **Franciscan Humor (page 13)**
- **An Advent Prayer (page 16)**

### Our Lady Queen of the Angels Secular Franciscan Fraternity

Lancaster, PA

established July 22, 1990

For information, contact Kelly Ann Lynch, Minister

(717)-538-6061 or [lynchkellyann@aol.com](mailto:lynchkellyann@aol.com)