



THE CLARION

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

November / December 2019

Pax et Bonum

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Minister's Message

Almost 800 years ago, St. Francis of Assisi visited the town of Greccio to celebrate Christmas. Greccio was a small town in a mountainous area. Vineyards covered the fertile area. A little Franciscan hermitage was located near the town but St. Francis realized that the chapel of the hermitage would be too small to hold everyone who would come for Midnight Mass. Near the town square he found a niche in the rock, some called it a grotto, where he brought some hay, an ox, an ass, and prepared a manger. It was here that St. Francis, Franciscans of the hermitage, and the townspeople celebrated Mass during the cold Christmas Eve of 1223. This night marked the beginning of the Christmas crèche.

The inspiration for the crèche came to St. Francis while on a visit to Rome some weeks earlier. The feast of Christmas had always been exceedingly important to St. Francis yet he did not think that it was celebrated properly. He believed that the poverty of the newborn Christ Child had become lost in the lavishness and excessiveness of the celebrations, which somehow only lessened the joy, peace and hope of this awesome feast. People were deeply touched by the simplicity of St. Francis's Christmas crèche. They were able to gain a new sense of the peace and joy of that holy night.

As we approach this wonderful time of year, a time to gather together with family and friends, let's strive to keep peace in our hearts. The best ways to keep peace in your heart are to forgive others, accept them as they are, pray

for them, and serve them as you are able. For St. Francis, his practice of forgiveness sprang from his own perceived need for God's forgiveness. He is recorded as having said, "It seems to me that I am a greater sinner than anyone in this world." We need to remember the Gospel message to forgive and you shall be forgiven.

Much unhappiness comes from not only being critical of others, but also from a deep need to change them in some way to suit you. We are all born with different God-given traits and temperaments and are not meant to be the same. Dropping the need to change others will bring tremendous peace.

*If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed
But hate these things inside yourself, not in another. – GANDHI*

We all have weaknesses and/or traits that we need to change, but only God can change us. The best we can do for others is to pray for them.

St. Francis was a man dedicated to prayer. It was through prayer that St. Francis found the courage and wisdom to be a man of peace. Prayer is the primary source for God's peace because it opens the heart to God's presence, and in the presence of God there is peace. Having God's peace in our hearts enables us to reconcile with and be at peace with others.

So as we prepare for the coming of Christmas, set up and gather with family and friends around our own Nativity scenes, may we not forget to hold in our hearts the Baby Jesus. Following in the footsteps of St. Francis, may we open our hearts in the presence of the Christ-child and be at peace with ourselves and everyone we meet this Season.

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas,
Jeff Topper, OFS, Minister

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

November

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.

December

The Future of the Very Young

That every country take the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.

November Birthdays

Kathy Clagg..... 11/13
Sr. Cecilia Reilly (Feast) 11/22

November Profession Anniversaries

Mary Lou Gennaula.....11/2/1993
Shirley Hewitt11/4/2000
Frank Klem 11/20/2016

November Necrology

Anna Corcoran 11/17/1990
Pauline Figdore 11/20/1981
Carolyn Hill..... 11/11/1999
Betty McCormick..... 11/29/1990
Dolores Pickell..... 11/7/1991
Mildred Seymore 11/12/2002

Important Dates in November

Nov. 1 - All Saints Day (Solemnity)
Nov. 2 - All Souls Day
Nov. 4 - St. Charles Borromeo
Nov. 11 - Veterans Day
Nov. 17 - St. Elizabeth of Hungary
Nov. 19 - St. Agnes of Assisi (sister of Clare)
Nov. 21 - The Presentation of the BVM
Nov. 22 - St. Cecilia (Sister's Feast Day)
Nov. 24 - Our Lord Jesus Christ the King
Nov. 28 - Thanksgiving Day

Fraternity Prayer Vine

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

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

On-Going Formation

Concetta Glorioso will lead the discussion on Rule #3 at November's Gathering.

December Birthdays

Cathy Livelsberger 12/14

December Profession Anniversaries

Jackie Redding.....12/6/1998

December Necrology

Gertrude Daylor 12/30/1977
Francis Rang..... 12/30/1994
Ruth Ratti..... 12/4/2016
Charles Redding..... 12/23/1970

Important Dates in December

Dec. 1 - Fraternity Christmas Party
Dec. 9 - Immaculate Conception of BVM
Dec. 12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe
Dec. 15 - The Blessed Virgin Mary
Queen of the Franciscan Order
Dec. 25 - The Nativity of the Lord
Dec. 29 - The Holy Family

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 November 17 gathering, we will pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Please bring your breviaries.

December's gathering is our annual Fraternity Christmas Party. Spouses are welcome. It will be held on December 1 beginning at 1 o'clock at the Homewood At Plum Creek library. There will be no Mass at the Christmas Party this year.

Apostolate

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

Meeting Dates for 2020

- January 26
- February 23
- March 22
- April 26
- May 17 – Elections
- June 28 – Annual Picnic
- July 26
- August 23
- September 27
- October 25 - Retreat
- November 22
- December 6 – Christmas Party

Final Thought

Lee, A seven-year-old boy, was asked to say thanks for the Christmas dinner. The family members bowed their heads in expectation. Lee began his prayer, thanking God for his Mommy, Daddy, brothers, sister, Grandma, and all his aunts and uncles. Then he began to thank God for the food. He gave thanks for the turkey, the stuffing, the Christmas pudding, even the cranberry sauce. Then lee paused, and everyone waited ... and waited. After a long silence, the young fellow looked up at his mother and asked, "If I thank God for the Brussels sprouts, won't he know that I'm lying?"