

ST MARY OF THE ANGELS FRATERNITY  
ORDER OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN  
THE ANGELUS \* DECEMBER 8, 2019



**“We consider Christmas as the encounter, the great encounter, the historical encounter, the decisive encounter, between God and mankind. He who has faith knows this truly; let him rejoice.”**

**—Pope Paul VI**

 Minister: Susan Jamison - Vice-Minister: Genie Dutton  
Spiritual Assistant: Michael Huether - Formation Director: Tom McGrath  
Secretary: Porsha - Treasurer: Carmencita Fiesta  
Counselors: Lillian Soriano, Mary Badjo & Irma Jean-Baptiste  
The Angelus: Mary Badjo and Susan Jamison



## **LET'S MAKE DECEMBER 6TH**

### **A SPECIAL DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER.**

**YOU CAN OFFER IT UP WITH LOVE EITHER FOR OUR SINS OF DISUNITY COMMITTED AGAINST THE CHURCH AS TOM SUGGESTS BELOW OR AS REPARATION FOR THE PACHAMAMA INCIDENTS DURING THE AMAZON SYNOD AS FOUR IRISH EXCORCISTS HAVE CALLED FOR IN A WORLDWIDE APPEAL. WHICHEVER WAY YOU OFFER IT, PLEASE DO IT WITH HUMBLE SERVANT'S LOVE.**

#### **St. Nicholas, Pope Francis and Acts of Charity, submitted by Tom**

St. Nicholas has long been associated with our tradition of giving gifts at Christmas. He was well known for his acts of charity, especially for providing anonymously for the needs of those under his care.

My mother used to tell a story of the Feast of St. Nicholas (Dec. 6) from her childhood. We hang up stockings on Christmas Eve. In my mother's family, the stockings were hung on the eve of the feast of St. Nicholas. On the morning of Dec. 6 the children would take their stockings and pour out the treats onto their beds. One year, my mother took her stocking and poured out coal onto her bed. This was a warning: there were less than 3 weeks to repent and get her act together or Christmas might be more of the same!

We might use the Feast of St. Nicholas in a similar way. Why don't we on Dec. 6 turn to prayer, fasting and almsgiving in repentance for any acts of ours that might tend to create division in the Church? Do we gossip and disparage another? Let us repent! Do we unduly criticize someone? Let us repent! Do we inspire others to question the authority of the Church? Let us repent.

Unity in the Church can be measured by how close we are to Peter and his successor, the Vicar of Christ. Always those united to the Church have stood with the pope. Let us be aware of any tendency to stand apart from the pope. As Franciscans we have a special charism of obedience to the pope that goes back to St. Francis and which he put into his rules. Our current Rule, Article 6, says it like this:

They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialog of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

**Let us exercise this now. How might we fast? Pope Francis has untiringly recommended charity toward the poor to us. I did a search for "Pope Francis and Acts of Charity" and came up with these results on Catholic News Service just for this year: Perfection is found in small acts of charity, Pope Francis tells contemplative nuns: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/perfection-is-found-in-small-acts-of-charity-pope-tells-contemplative-nuns-27174>**



**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS  
for stepping up to the plate to serve as  
Franciscan Servant Leaders for 2019 - 2022**



**L-R Susan Jamison, OFS, Lilian Soriano, OFS, Sonia Bernardo, OFS, Portia Fiesta, OFS, Carmencita Fiesta, OFS Tom McGrath, OFS, Mary Badjo, OFS and Irma Jean-Baptiste, OFS.**

**OUR DECEMBER MEETING;**

**Please remember to bring your gifts for our neighborhood family in need. We are so grateful to Alina for bringing this dear family to our attention. Donations to help defray the cost of the 30 TURKEYS we bought and gave to Father Michael to help the poor celebrate Thanksgiving also gratefully received. Thank you to Carol for orchestrating this and fronting the funds to make this happen.**

**PSLAM 51**

**CHRISTIAN PRAYER**

**CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS BY CARMENCITA AND PORTIA**

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION OF MEETING TOPICS FOR 2020**

**DISCUSSION ON THE RIGHT ATTITUDE  
OF A FRANCISCAN TOWARD  
THE PACHAMAMA CONTROVERSY**



MINISTER'S MESSAGE

**The Happiest Day of the Year Is Upon Us!  
Love to you all.**

Merry  
Christmas

— AND —

HAPPY NEW YEAR

OUR DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

December: 2 – Carol Smith; 7 – Alina Zygmunt; 9 – Genie Dutton; 19 – Madonna Goody; 21 – Greg Davis; 29 – Rose Lawrence

No Five Year Professions. Please, let us remember to pray for each other!



**OUR FRATERNITY'S  
POTLUCK CHRISTMAS \_  
PARTY**

**DATE: SUNDAY JANUARY 5, 2020  
TIME: 11:30 AM—3:00 PM  
ADDRESS: 209 MONROE STREET  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
PARTY ROOM**

**BRING A DISH TO SHARE,  
a Christmas table centerpiece or  
other decoration, a gift for our  
gift exchange, and your Christian  
Prayer book.**

**PLEASE... we need volunteers at  
11 AM to help set up.**

**PLEASE CONTACT  
LILIAN SORIANO FOR  
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS  
OR CONCERNS.**



**Our Father Francis Is Credited For The First Nativity Scene**

As many of us may already know, our Father Francis began the true Christian tradition of Christmas nativity scenes, also called Creches. He did so because he desired to keep alive and vibrant people's awe and wonder the miracle of Christmas and its true significance since that first Christmas in Bethlehem.

Before Francis set up that first nativity scene in 1223, Christmas was celebrated primarily by attending mass and contemplating upon the sermon told by the celebrant as he related that event of the birth of Christ in the latin language. Churches who had sufficient resources displayed artistic depictions of Christ as an infant. But none could really be considered a realistic manger scene compared to what is done today. There were certainly no other decorations or displays like we see today. So Francis decided to exemplify this holy scene and make it the central focus of the greatest of celebrations in all of the Catholic and Christian churches.

Francis was living in the town of Greccio, Italy at the time and, just as he did in obtaining papal permission for our Order, he asked for and was granted permission from Pope Honorius III to proceed with his plan of setting up that first Creche. He asked a close friend, John Velita, to loan him some of his farm animals and straw to set the manger scene up. Francis wanted to make this moment of the birth of Christ as realistic as he possibly could to help the people to envision what it was like to be present during the first Christmas as they came to celebrate the vigil. The live creche was set up in a cave just outside of Greccio. It featured a waxed figure of the infant Jesus. A man and woman in costumes depicting Joseph and Mary and a live donkey and oxen were also included. Shepherds tending to their sheep in the surrounding fields enhanced the realistic atmosphere of the scene just like those shepherds of Bethlehem as they watched over their sheep on that first Christmas.

In St. Bonaventure's "Life of St. Francis of Assisi", he described what happened that night:

"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(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

**Continued:**

**Bonaventure's "Life of St. Francis of Assisi" also tells that the people who attended that live Christmas presentation took the straw from the manger scene and fed it to their cattle. Upon so doing, the cattle were cured and protected of all diseases they were susceptible to. This further emphasized the glory of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and witnessed to the healing power of His mercy.**

**During the course of this celebration on Christmas Eve of 1223, Francis told the Christmas story as it was related in the Gospels, and then expounded on it in his homily. For the first time, he stressed to the congregation the great impact on our faith that the birth of our Lord in a simple manger in Bethlehem could make in their lives and how it manifested the true meaning of the virtues of humility and simplicity, two virtues characteristic of our Franciscan way of life. He went on to emphasize that we need to be humble and simple in our lifestyles and to minimize the occasions of hatred making it more conducive to love with the help of God's graces.**

**As time went on, this first nativity scene presentation caught on in popularity and began to be replicated as both live and still scenes in Christmas celebrations throughout the world. Christians of all faiths celebrated Christmas by visiting and praying at live and still scenes set up in their town squares, churches, and homes. These creches were later on enhanced by the addition of more characters and figures such as angels, shepherds, sheep, cattle, and eventually, the three Kings of Orient with their camels introducing the story of the three Magi as part of the story of Christmas.**

**So to all of my Franciscan sisters and brothers in Christ, have as happy, healthy, joyous, and Holy spirit-filled celebration of our "Babe of Bethlehem"!**

**Mike**



**Our meeting falls this year on DECEMBER 8th, the Feast Day of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. Let us consecrate our meeting to Our Lady with love. If at all possible, please pray Psalm 51 three times with outstretched arms just before our meeting to receive signal graces as promised by Our Lady to Sister Pierna Guili in 1946. Our Lady told Sister that she wished to be known as the Mystical Rose. If anyone has the Mystical Rose statue, please bring it to the meeting. We will recite Psalm 51 together in Our Lady's honor at 1 PM to close the hour together.**

***SPECIAL HOUR OF GRACE on DECEMBER 8<sup>th</sup> at NOON or as close to Noon as possible given the time of our meeting.***

***This can be done at Church or at Home***

***Sister Pierina asked how to prepare for this Hour of Grace. To which the Blessed Mother said:***

***“With prayers and penance:***

***Pray the 51<sup>st</sup> psalm with outstretched arms three times.***

***During the Hour of Grace, many spiritual graces would be granted.***

***The most hard-hearted sinners will be touched by the grace of God.”***



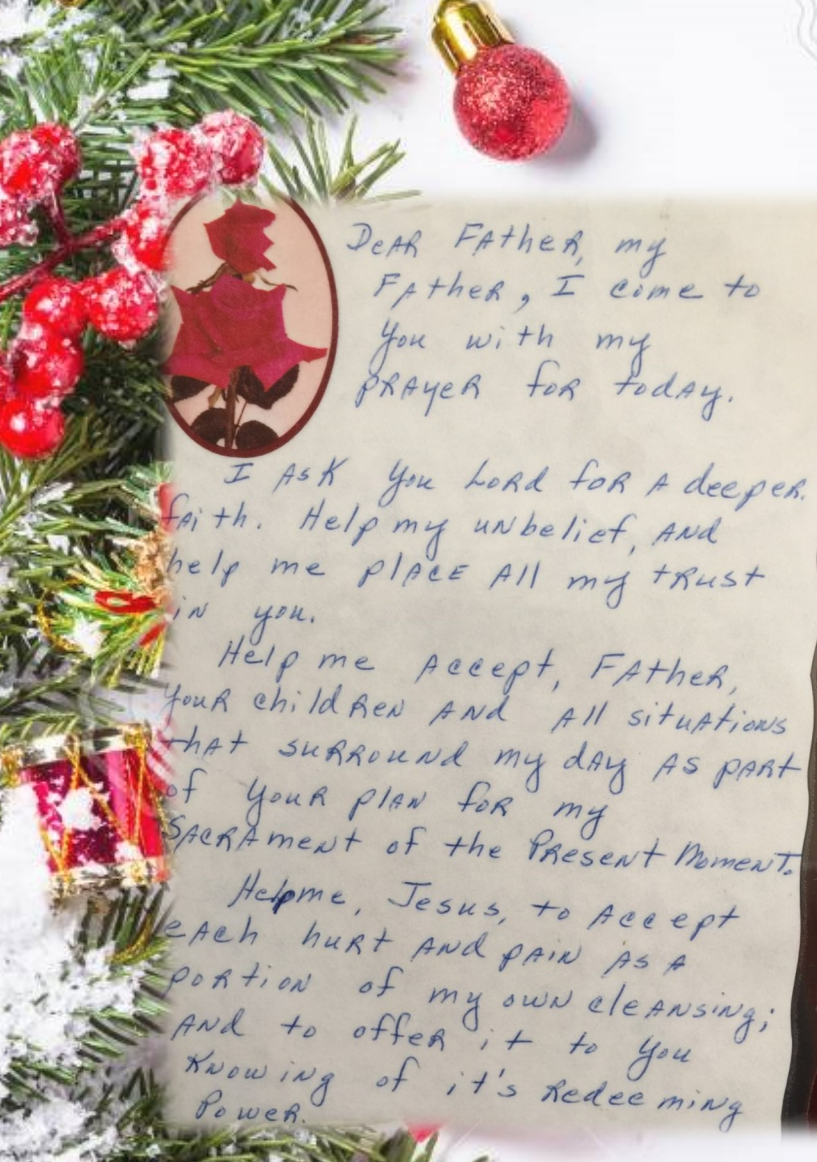


**PSALM 51**

**Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offense. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. My offenses truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. That you may be justified when you give sentence and be without reproach when you judge. O see, in guilt was I born, a sinner was I conceived. Indeed you love truth in the heart; then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom. O purify me, then I shall be clean; O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear rejoicing and gladness, that the bones you have crushed may revive. From my sins turn away your face and blot out all my guilt. A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervor sustain me, that I may teach transgressors your ways and sinners may return to you. O rescue me, God, my helper, and my tongue shall ring out your goodness. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise. For in sacrifice you take no delight, burnt offering from me you would refuse; my sacrifice, a contrite spirit. A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn. In your goodness, show favor to Zion: rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice, holocausts offered on your altar.**



## A PRAYER FROM ROSE



DEAR FATHER, my  
FATHER, I come to  
you with my  
PRAYER for today.

I ASK you LORD for a deeper  
faith. Help my unbelief, AND  
help me place ALL my TRUST  
in you.

Help me accept, FATHER,  
your children AND all situations  
that surround my day AS PART  
of your plan for my  
SACRAMENT of the Present Moment.

Help me, Jesus, to accept  
each hurt AND pain AS A  
portion of my own cleansing,  
AND to offer it to you  
knowing of it's redeeming  
power.

THANK you, FATHER, for sending  
Jesus to show us how to love.  
Jesus, may I ALWAYS show  
your love to those AROUND  
me AND treat them AS you  
would.

THANK you, FATHER, for your  
many gifts; among which ARE  
your healing, loving, touch  
through others. I thank  
you too, LORD, for your  
joy, peace, love AND your  
special GRACE.

Help me, LORD, always  
know AND believe you ARE  
with me, today, next week  
AND forever.

THANK you, FATHER, in Jesus  
NAME.

Amen. Alleluia.

**Dear Friends,**

**Our beloved Rose Lawrence, now living near Hanover PA, is very ill and needs your prayers while she struggles with dementia and sufferings from a recent fall. Genie, Susan and Mary visited her recently and Rose's sister Pat showed them this beautiful prayer which Rose had written many years ago. We wanted to share it with you. It was both wonderful and hard to see Rose in her present condition but we trust OUR LORD JESUS is using her present sufferings to bring about an unimaginable bounty of future and eternal happiness.**





**Reflection and Prayer**  
—Genie Dutton

**SOLDIER OF CHRIST  
BEARER OF HIS WOUNDS  
WHERE ARE YOU TODAY?  
WHERE ARE OUR WOUNDS?  
WHERE ARE THE POOR, THE LONELY,  
THE GASPING FOR FREEDOM FROM APPALLING ABUSE?  
WHY ARE WE HERE?  
WHY ENJOY OUR COMFORTS,  
DIRECTLY PROVIDED FOR FROM THE KING OF KINGS  
AT HIS CRUCIFIXION?  
CAN WE DO MORE?  
WILL WE?  
CAN I CALL UPON MY WARRIORS  
IN THIS AGE FOR LOVE,  
AND COMFORT AND CARE?  
WILL YOU STEP OUT  
INTO THE DISCOMFORT OF MY CHILDREN?  
I AM CALLING YOU.  
I AM FRANCIS  
I AM CHRIST**



**LETS REALLY CELEBRATE THESE AMAZING  
DECEMBER FEAST DAYS!**

**St. Lucy — December 13**



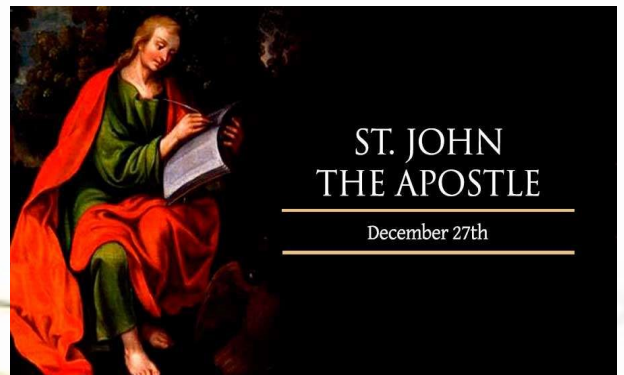
St. Lucy is a virgin and martyr of Syracuse in Sicily, whose feast is celebrated on December 13th. According to tradition, Saint Lucy was born to rich and noble parents in the year 283. Her father was of Roman origin, but his early death left her dependent upon her mother, whose name, Eutychia, seems to indicate that she was of Greek heritage. Like so many of the early martyrs, Lucy had consecrated her virginity to God, and she hoped to devote all her worldly goods to the service of the poor. Her mother, Eutychia, arranged a marriage for her, but for three years she managed to postpone the marriage. Lucy prayed at the tomb of

Saint Agatha to change her mother's mind about her faith. As a result, her mother's long haemorrhagic illness was cured, and she consented to Lucy's desire to live for God. Saint Lucy's rejected bridegroom, Paschasius, denounced Lucy as a Christian. The governor planned to force her into prostitution, but when guards went to fetch her, they could not move her even when they hitched her to a team of oxen. The governor ordered her to be killed instead. After a gruesome torture which included having her eyes torn out, she was surrounded by bundles of wood which were set afire, but the fire quickly died out. She prophesied against her persecutors, and was then executed by being stabbed to death with a dagger.

According to later accounts, Lucy warned Paschasius he would be punished. When the governor heard this he ordered the guards to gouge out her eyes; however, in another telling, it was Lucy who removed her eyes in an attempt to discourage a persistent suitor who greatly admired them. When her body was being prepared for burial, they discovered her eyes had been restored. This and the meaning of her name ("light" or "lucid") led to her patronage with eyes; the blind, eye trouble, and other eye ailments

**St. John The Apostle—December 27**

St. John, the son of Zebedee and brother of St. James the Great, was called to be an Apostle by our Lord in the first year of His public ministry. He became the "beloved disciple" and the only one of the Twelve who did not forsake the Savior in the hour of His Passion. He stood faithfully at the cross when Christ made him the guardian of His Mother. His later life was passed chiefly in Jerusalem and at Ephesus. He founded many churches in Asia Minor, and he wrote many important works, including the fourth Gospel, three Epistles, and the Book of Revelation is also attributed to him. Brought to Rome, tradition relates that he was by order of Emperor Dometian cast into a cauldron of boiling oil but came forth unhurt, and was banished to the island of Pathmos for a year. He lived to an extreme old age, surviving all his fellow apostles, and died in Ephesus about the year 100. St. John is called the Apostle of Charity, a virtue he had learned from his Divine Master, and which he constantly inculcated by word and example. The "beloved disciple" died at Ephesus, where a stately church was erected over his tomb. It was afterwards converted into a Mohammedan mosque.



John is credited with the authorship of three epistles and one Gospel, although many scholars believe that the final editing of the Gospel was done by others shortly after his death. He is also supposed by many to be the author of the book of Revelation, called the Apocalypse, although this identification is less certain.