



## THE CLARION

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

January / February 2020

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 - Father Tage Danielson, OFM Cap. .... (717) 755-7503

### **From the Desk of Father Tage**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Merry Christmas and Happy New year! Christmas is a special time for us as Catholics and as Franciscans, for we remember and celebrate the birth of Emmanuel, "God with us". St. Francis was so in awe of God who would humble himself to be born as a little babe in Bethlehem. God became one of us, to walk with us and to experience human life. This is a great mystery, but also a great joy, and we know how St. Francis in particular loved this celebration.

The celebration of Christmas reveals that God has come close to us in his Son, Jesus. We do not have to go on searching for God, longing to see him somewhere "out there". No, God has approached us; he has made the journey of faith easier for us by coming down to our level.

God remains near to us in Jesus. We encounter him in the Gospel readings at Mass and in our daily prayer. We encounter him in the Eucharist, when we are nourished by his body and blood. We meet him in people, especially the poor and the lowly. We have opportunities to meet Jesus each day, if only our eyes are open to these possibilities.

Our Christmas joy does not need to end when the season is over. Instead, this joy of experiencing God's love-come-near is to remain with us throughout the year. Through our participation in Holy Mass, our daily prayer life, and our meeting Jesus in the poor and lowly, we can experience the joy of knowing Jesus throughout our year. Our prayer for this year can be:

*Jesus, help me to see you in the people I meet, and to know that you love them and that you came to bring them good news. Open my eyes so that I may see you more clearly in the Scriptures. Give me a greater reverence for your body and blood present in the Eucharist. Lord Jesus, make me a living tabernacle, so that I may carry you with me and bring you to others. Jesus, live in me, remain with me, and never stop loving me.*

I wish for all of you a blessed start to the new calendar year. May St. Francis and St. Conrad continue to intercede for the fraternity. May each of you bear witness to a life lived in joyful adoration of our Lord, in imitation of St. Francis.

Peace and good,  
Fr. Tage Danielson, OFM Cap

### **Minister's Message**

Wasn't Christmas wonderful? And wasn't it heartwarming to see so many people at Mass on Christmas; hopefully many of your own family members? Almost three-quarters of Americans (73%) say they are Christian. But when you take a good look at our society, does this statistic ring true? A Barna report that came out in 2016 paints a different picture. When a self-identified Christian attends a religious service at least once a month and says their faith is very important in their life, Barna considers that person a "practicing Christian." After applying these criteria, the numbers drop to around **one in three U.S. adults (31%)** who fall under this classification. Barna researchers argue this represents a more accurate picture of Christian faith in America, one that reflects the reality of a secularizing nation.<sup>1</sup>

Remember when St. Francis of Assisi was praying in the little church of San Damiano? He was looking at a large wooden crucifix painted in the Byzantine style of an icon. The eyes of Christ seemed to be looking right at him. He prayed, "Lord, what do you want me to do? Show me what you want me to do with my life." And the Lord answered! A voice as clear as day responded: "Francis, go and rebuild my church which, as you see, is falling down." Doesn't it seem as if our church is in need of rebuilding today? There is still much work for us Franciscans to do!

First, we need to pray. Without God's assistance, we won't get very far or accomplish very much. Second, we need to live our faith in a way that provides a good example for others. We must show that faith matters. For years research has shown that many Christians think and behave as if they have no faith or that it matters not at all in regard to how they live their lives. If, through action, Christians show faith does not matter, why should non-Christians convert and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/state-church-2016>

why should children keep the faith of their parents? St. Francis knew, and so should we, that giving a proper example is very important. Third, we need to make quiet time for introspection so that we become stronger in our faith. Let me explain.

We all have weaknesses and we are all tempted. I believe that many people lose heart when, time after time going to confession, they have to confess the same sins. Many may believe they are making no progress and that God does not care and is not helping them to overcome their sins. But Jesus did tell us what to do. Jesus told us to be watchful – “Be constantly on the watch! Stay awake! You do not know when the appointed time will come.” (Mark 13:33) “Be on guard, and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but nature is weak.” (Matthew 26:41) So what does he mean? How are we to be watchful, on-guard, and awake? The answer, so difficult to grasp in this busy, hectic, fast-paced world, is to take time each day to look within and, with all necessary humility, shine the light of truth on our thoughts and actions. We can only truly see our weaknesses and failings when we humble ourselves and look at them face-to-face. Only then can we recognize our faults, come closer to God, accept his forgiveness, and begin to really grow in holiness. Pride does not allow us to do this. Humility is essential. By shining God’s light into our lives, we become the children of light. “Everyone who practices evil hates the light; he does not come near it for fear his deeds will be exposed. But he who acts in truth comes into the light, to make clear that his deeds are done in God.” (John 3:20-21) Every day take time to shine the light of God within and you will grow in holiness.

Let us build on the Advent preparations we made and the beautiful Christmas season so recently behind us. Let us go from Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel. Make time every day to pray and for spiritual introspection. Then go out into the world as children of Light and be the good examples our church needs us to be. Happy New Year!

Pax et bonum,  
Jeff Topper

### **Holy Father’s Prayer Intentions**

#### **January**

#### **Evangelization – Promotion of World Peace**

We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world.

#### **February**

#### **Universal – Listen to the Migrants’ Cries**

We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

**January Birthdays**

Judy Topper..... 1/13

**January Profession Anniversaries**

Kathleen Clagg.....1/19/2013

**January Necrology**

Savilla Byer.....1/12/1978

Mary Cox .....1/21/1993

Eleanor Miller.....1/24/2014

**February Birthdays**

No February Birthdays

**February Profession Anniversaries**

No February Professions

**February Necrology**

Sarah Hoopes.....2/14/1999

**Important Dates in January**

- Jan. 1 - The BVM, Mother of God
- Jan. 5 - The Epiphany of the Lord
- Jan. 8 - St. Angela of Foligno
- Jan. 12 - The Baptism of the Lord
- Jan. 16 - St. Berard and Companions
- Jan. 20 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Jan. 25 - The Conversion of St. Paul
- Jan. 27 - St. Angela Merici
- Jan. 29 - Brother Juniper

**Important Dates in February**

- Feb. 2 - The Presentation of the Lord
- Feb. 6 - St. Paul Miki & Companions
- Feb. 11 - Our Lady of Lourdes
- Feb. 14 - Valentine’s Day
- Feb. 19 - St. Conrad of Piacenza
- Feb. 22 - Chair of St. Peter, Apostle
- Feb. 25 - Blessed Sebastian of Aparicio
- Feb. 26 - ASH WEDNESDAY

**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 (717-637-2026).

**Prayer at Gatherings**

For January, we will pray the Liturgy of the Hours. Please bring your breviaries.

At February’s gathering let’s plan to pray the Franciscan Crown Rosary.