

**THE ST. JOSEPH FRATERNITY OF
THE SECULAR FRANCISCANS**

**ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA REGION
"ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARI"**

THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT NEWSLETTER

April 2022

**Next Meeting: April 2nd at 10:00 am
Back in the St. John's Library**

St. Conrad of Parzham – April 21st

Born 22 December 1818, he was baptized with the name of John, the son of Bartholomäus Birndorfer and Gertrude Niedermayer, and was born on the family farm in Parzham, now a part of the town of Bad Griesbach, then in the Kingdom of Bavaria, now part of Germany.

Young John's devotion was noticeable especially when he prayed in church, the distant location of which was no hindrance to his visiting it frequently even in inclement weather. He had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and each day fervently recited the rosary. On feast days he frequently made a journey to some remote shrine of the Blessed Mother. During such pilgrimages, always made on foot, he was engaged in prayer, and when he returned in the evening, he was usually still fasting.

John spent his early years on the family farm. His mother died when he was 14; his father two years later. After attending a parish mission in 1838, he decided to enter the religious life. The following year, at the age of 31, and after distributing his inheritance, he was admitted as a lay brother among the Capuchin Franciscan friars.

Immediately after his profession in 1842 he was sent to the Friary of St. Ann, in the city of Altötting. The friary served the Shrine of Our Lady of Altötting, the national shrine of Bavaria to the Blessed Mother. Conrad was given the task of assisting the porter at this shrine. In March 1851, he had to leave Altötting to go to Burghausen to care for a dying priest. The following September, he entered the novitiate at Laufen, where he was given the name Conrad in honor of Conrad of Piacenza.

Conrad was known to be diligent at his work, sparing in words, bountiful to the poor, eager and ready to receive and help strangers. Brother Conrad fulfilled the task of porter for more than 40 years, assisting the inhabitants of the town in their needs of body and soul. Conrad loved silence in a special way. His spare moments during the day were spent in a nook near the door where it was possible for him to see and adore the Blessed Sacrament. During the night he would deprive himself of several hours of sleep to devote the time to prayer either in the oratory of the friars or in the church. It was generally believed that he never took any rest, but continually occupied himself in work and exercises of devotion.



St. Conrad of Parzham

HAPPY LENT!

Birthdays:

- None

Prayer Intentions:

- Maggie & Her Family
- Lynn & Her Family
- Pat Budzinski
- Janis Donley
- Joseph Sampson in Ghana
- The refugees & others affected by the Ukraine – Russian conflict

April Meeting: 9:00 am Mass at St. John's & then meeting in the Library (just for this meeting)

Formation: We will review Part 1 The Immaculata of the book, "Aim Higher" from St. Maximilian Kolbe. Also bring your Crown Rosaries.

"Praise the Lord, the Lord is gracious; his mercy endures for ever; what tongue can recount all the great deeds of the Lord, can echo all his praise?." (Psalm 106:1-2)

From “The General Constitutions of The SFO” – Article 17-1

“Called to work together in building up the Church as the sacrament of salvation for all and, through their baptism and profession, made “witnesses and instruments of her mission,” Secular Franciscans proclaim Christ by their life and words. Their preferred apostolate is personal witness in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world.”

How Our Lady of Fatima can help stop World War III from happening - by Philip Kosloski - Aleteia website

The private revelations of Our Lady of Fatima to Sr. Lucia can be disturbing to some, as many believe parts of her messages have already come to pass, while others think the messages appear to predict another world war. St. John Paul II addressed these concerns when he published the third part of the “secret” of Fatima in the year 2000. In this document the following description of the private revelation is recorded by Sr. Lucia.

“[W]e saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendor that Our Lady, radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: ‘Penance, Penance, Penance!’”

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, future Pope Benedict XVI, wrote a commentary about the “flaming sword” and how Our Lady of Fatima appeared to predict a new world war. At the same time, this potential catastrophe could be stopped by Our Lady and her call to penance. He explains how this pending war is not set in stone, but can be prevented.

“In this way, the importance of human freedom is underlined: the future is not in fact unchangeably set, and the image which the children saw is in no way a film preview of a future in which nothing can be changed. Indeed, the whole point of the vision is to bring freedom onto the scene and to steer freedom in a positive direction. The purpose of the vision is not to show a film of an irrevocably fixed future. Its meaning is exactly the opposite: it is meant to mobilize the forces of change in the right direction.”

The key, according to these private revelations at Fatima, is to follow Our Lady’s words and to strive for personal and communal conversion, practicing penance for our sins and turning our hearts to God. There is always hope. Cardinal Ratzinger ended his commentary with the following words of Jesus.

“I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.” - John 16:33

Notice: If you are interested in sending in your “Fair Share” funds or want to donate to Joseph in Ghana or other of the Fraternity’s causes, please make out you check to “St. Joseph’s Fraternity” & mail it to Greg Gering at: 95 Smokebox Circle, Stewartstown, PA. 17363.

**FRANCISCAN
TEACHINGS**

We Cannot Control the
Mission

Time and again, my little worldview is shaken by something wider; my plans are almost always dashed by bigger, better ones. If I’ve learned anything as a friar, it is that being a Christian means leaving behind absolutely everything I can imagine and being totally fine with accepting whatever God gives me—big or small, happy or painful. No matter what I come to expect, no matter how large and creative I think my imagination is, I always fall short of what God wants to accomplish. We cannot control the mission, and any attempt to cling to what we think we want only serves to slow down our own complete abandonment to Christ’s leadership.

— from the book **Let Go: 7 Stumbling Blocks to Christian Discipleship** by Casey Cole, OFM

Is Lent working for you? If not, try this... By Marshall Connolly (Catholic Online)

For many Catholics, Lent is something of a grind. A real chore. It's a period of sacrifice, but one made so they don't disappoint others around them. For others, it's easy because it consists of giving up sugary beverages or chocolate. For both groups, Lent is unsatisfying, and they are looking forward to Easter, because then it's all over for another year.

When Lent is done right, it is nothing like a chore. Yes, there are sacrifices and some challenges, but these are happy sacrifices, even when they are tough. They pay off because they change you in a profound way. They change your life.

Lent is a beautiful time of year because your faith community is sacrificing alongside you. You have mutual support from others, which you might not have during other times of the year. Your friends lift you up, and you can compare experiences and encourage one another.

Lent is a time for cleaning up your life. By eliminating distractions and things which are unhealthy, you find you have more time for good things, from better diet, to exercise, to more time to pray and devote to God.

Sadly, many people haven't graduated from giving up sodas, or candy, or social media, things that we would expect a teenager to do without for 40 days. But such sacrifices do little to change adult lives. Lent is like that. What you invest determines what you get back. Invest little and you will have little to show for it. Invest a lot, and it can truly change your life.

This secret, if you will, was explained by the Vatican Almoner, Archbishop Konrad Krajewski. When Pope Francis arrived at the Vatican, he visited the archbishop in his office and instructed him to go out and distribute alms in person. However, the archbishop protested, referring to the mountain of work on his desk. Pope Francis ordered, "Sell your desk."

Archbishop Krajewski later discussed his experience, explaining that giving can change you. But there's a trick to it: "it has to cost you so it can change you." The archbishop spoke about how priests visiting the Vatican would give pocket change to homeless people in the area, but that it made little difference to anyone. He explained that when he reached down into his pocket and gave a lot more, enough to miss a meal, or several meals, it changed who he was as a person.

This makes sense. When we give so that we must truly sacrifice, we are forced to change. Giving up sweets doesn't do much for anyone. It might save a pound of weight, or a few dollars here and there, but that money is later spent on something else just as decadent. In the end, the sacrifice doesn't do much, because it did not cost anything.

The final tip therefore, from the Archbishop himself, is to make Lent work by making a real sacrifice. Something that costs you. No, not your mortgage, but perhaps a meal, or several. There are plenty of wonderful charities worthy of giving.

Mark Wahlberg shares quote from the movie, 'Father Stu' that we all need today

As we impatiently wait for the release of Father Stu — the movie based on the real-life story of an amateur boxer-turned Catholic priest — lead actor Mark Wahlberg revealed a quote from the movie that couldn't have come at a better time as we experience such uncertainty in our lives with a pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Although the movie arrives in theaters on April 13, the Catholic actor gave us a sneak peak on his Facebook page, with an important quote from the movie:

"We shouldn't pray for an easy life but the strength to endure a difficult one."

It's something that we sometimes forget, and it's not always easy when we feel at our wits' end, but our Heavenly Father is there to give us the fortitude and courage to navigate life's travails. All we need to do is ask. Life is not easy, but the Lord gives us strength and walks with us.