

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

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

**THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT NEWSLETTER**

**November 2022**

**Next Meeting: November 5th at the Aisling House for the retreat – see below**

**Blessed John Duns Scotus – November 6th**

John Duns Scotus has been one of the most influential Franciscans through the centuries. Born at Duns in the county of Berwick, Scotland, John was descended from a wealthy farming family. In later years, he was identified as John Duns Scotus to indicate the land of his birth; Scotia is the Latin name for Scotland.

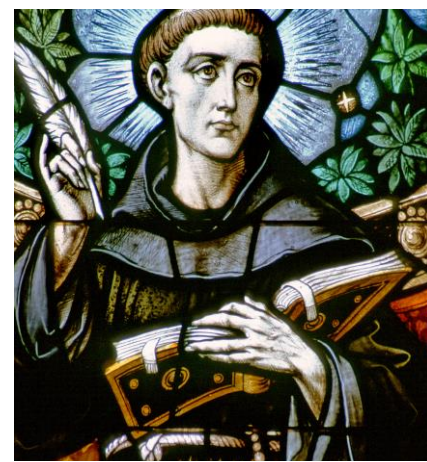
John received the habit of the Friars Minor at Dumfries, where his uncle Elias Duns was superior. After novitiate, John studied at Oxford and Paris and was ordained in 1291. More studies in Paris followed until 1297, when he returned to lecture at Oxford and Cambridge. Four years later, he returned to Paris to teach and complete the requirements for the doctorate.

In an age when many people adopted whole systems of thought without qualification, John pointed out the richness of the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition, appreciated the wisdom of Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Muslim philosophers—and still managed to be an independent thinker. That quality was proven in 1303, when King Philip the Fair tried to enlist the University of Paris on his side in a dispute with Pope Boniface VIII. John Duns Scotus dissented and was given three days to leave France.

In Scotus's time, some philosophers held that people are basically determined by forces outside themselves. Free will is an illusion, they argued. An ever-practical man, Scotus said that if he started beating someone who denied free will, the person would immediately tell him to stop. But if Scotus didn't really have a free will, how could he stop? John had a knack for finding illustrations his students could remember!

After a short stay in Oxford, Scotus returned to Paris, where he received the doctorate in 1305. He continued teaching there and in 1307 so ably defended the Immaculate Conception of Mary that the university officially adopted his position. That same year the minister general assigned him to the Franciscan school in Cologne where John died in 1308. He is buried in the Franciscan church near the famous Cologne cathedral.

Drawing on the work of John Duns Scotus, Pope Pius IX solemnly defined the Immaculate Conception of Mary in 1854. John Duns Scotus, the "Subtle Doctor," was beatified in 1993.



**Blessed John Duns Scotus**

**HAPPY AUTUMN!**

Birthdays:

- John Fay (1st)
- Francis Von Wald (22th)

Prayer Intentions:

- Maggie & Her Family
- Lynn & Her Family
- Marge Butta
- The refugees & others affected by the Ukraine – Russian conflict

**November Meeting: Meet 9:00 am at St. John's (Library side parking lot) & then carpool to the Aisling House**

***"How pitying and gracious the Lord is, how patient, how rich in mercy! He will not always be finding fault, his frown does not last for ever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve, does not exact the penalty of our wrong-doing. (Psalm 103:8-10)***

## From “The General Constitutions of The SFO” – Article 21-1

*“For Francis, work is a gift and to work is a grace. Daily work is not only the means of livelihood, but the opportunity to serve God and neighbor as well as a way to develop one’s own personality. In the conviction that work is a right and a duty and that every form of occupation deserves respect, the brothers and sisters should commit themselves to collaborate so that all persons may have the possibility to work and so that working conditions may always be more humane.*”

### Cardinal Zen will go to trial, set for October 26 - Aleteia News

Principal Magistrate Ada Yim Shun-ye issued her decision on the second day of a preliminary hearing. Cardinal Zen, 90, and five well-known pro-democracy advocates appeared before a West Kowloon Court on Monday and Tuesday.

They are being charged under the Societies Ordinance, a century-old colonial-era law, for failing to properly register the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, of which they were trustees. The fund was set up in June 2019 to help pay for the legal and medical fees of pro-democracy protesters that year.

The defendants pleaded not guilty. Their attorneys say the charity was not required to register under the Societies Ordinance. They object to the evidence gathered under a draconian national security law imposed by Beijing in 2020 to target pro-democracy movements, deeming it irrelevant to the case, AsiaNews reported.

“The defense wants the ordinance to be interpreted in light of the right of association enshrined in Hong Kong’s Basic Law, which will speak volumes about the degree of freedom still existing in the former British colony,” AsiaNews said. Hong Kong’s Basic Law is the “mini constitution” the territory adopted when Great Britain handed it over to the People’s Republic of China in 1997.

### Easter Vigil Homily of Pope Francis, delivered April 11, 2020 at St. Peter's Basilica.

“Tonight, we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us: the right to hope. It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is not mere optimism; it is not a pat on the back or an empty word of encouragement, with a passing smile. No. It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own. Over these weeks, we have kept repeating, “All will be well”, clinging to the beauty of our humanity and allowing words of encouragement to rise up from our hearts. But as the days go by and fears grow, even the boldest hope can dissipate. So, let us not give in to resignation; let us not place a stone before hope. We can and must hope, because God is faithful. Dear sister, dear brother, even if in your heart you have buried hope, do not give up: God is greater.”

## **FRANCISCAN TEACHINGS**

### Quotes of St. Francis

“Above all the graces and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of overcoming self.”

“We should seek not so much to pray but to become prayer.”

“Demons didn’t crucify Him; it is you who have crucified Him still – when you delight in your vices and sins.”

“My dear son, Be patient, because the weaknesses of the body are given to us in this world by God for the salvation of the soul. So they are of great merit when they are borne patiently.”

“If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassions and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.”

## **The only thing that convinces people of the existence of God** by Fr. Luigi Maria Epicoco

Jesus sends out his disciples before him. This is a significant detail. Every good sowing is preceded by plowing. His very coming is preceded by the mission of John the Baptist, who is, appropriately, called his forerunner.

But why does Jesus ask for something he doesn't actually need? Because if God is Love, then the only thing that can convince us of His existence is to see two people who truly love each other. By contrast, it's very difficult to believe in Love if we've never seen the reality of people who love each other.

Young people, for example, are helped greatly in their spiritual life if in their families and in their life in general they have met people who trust each other, who protect each other, who care, and who give to each other despite their own limitations. Seeing that the ties of human relationships can be trustworthy is what makes it possible for them to trust in a relationship that is not immediately visible, such as that with God. And this is precisely why much of the atheism among young people stems from a distrust of relationships born from their experiencing and witnessing unreliable and failed relationships in their own lives.

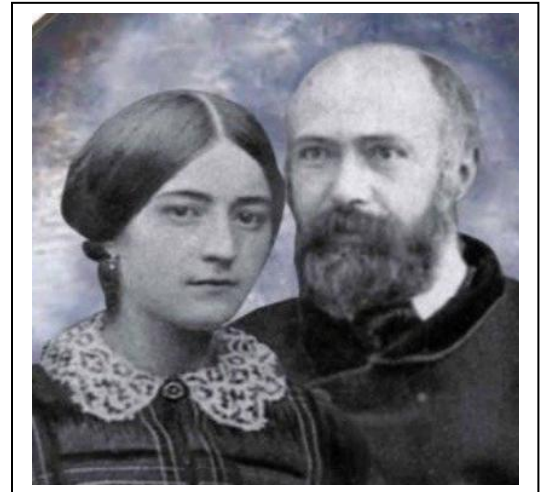
But this rule is not absolute; there's always room for exceptions. Certainly, however, we cannot overlook the fact that the greatest witness we can give to others is to love, not simply to do some praiseworthy act. In this sense, religious life makes sense not when it is focused on a mission or on a specific work, but when it's a witness to fraternal ties that work. What's attractive to those far from us is not our reasoning, but seeing people who truly love each other, who know how to forgive each other, who know how to give their lives to each other. This prepares the way for Christ.

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### **Donna's Message**

#### **Saints Louis and Zelle Martin**

I have recently read a story about these two saints. They were amazing people. We sometime forget that saints are people just like us. Saints Louis and Zelle were a married couple and the first couple to be canonized together. Zelle was a lace maker. But always wanted to be a nun and join a convent, but she was turned down. She continued with her lace making business and met her future husband through one of her customers who was his mother. Louis wanted to be a priest but was also turned down. So, the two decided to marry. But they wanted to live a life of celibacy. Both agreed but found out they loved children. Their confessor mentioned that maybe God was calling to them to have children. So, they went on to have 9 children. The first four died, because Zelle did not have enough milk and had other illnesses. A boy lived for 4 years or so, and they thought they had a priest in the making. But again, God had other plans. They went on to have 5 girls that lived to adulthood. The youngest was Saint Therese of Lisieux. Before Zelle could live to see what her girls had accomplished, she died of breast cancer. Louie moved to Lisieux with his 5 girls and one by one they all entered a convent; one became a Poor Claire. But Louie did not live long enough to witness this due to having a stroke and died. But look at the amazing lives these two saints had lived and yes, they were always doing God's will and He was leading them all the way! God has plans for all of us and He leads us as to where he wants us to go. We must listen and follow.



*Donna Willard - Spiritual Assistant*