

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

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

THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT NEWSLETTER

October 2022

**Next Meeting: October 1st at 10:00 am
At Neumann Hall (behind the Old Church)**

The Transitus of St. Francis – October 3rd



Each year on the evening of October 3rd the Franciscan family throughout the world pauses to celebrate the solemnity of our Holy Father Francis's Transitus, passing over from this life to the next. In his famous Canticle of the Creatures, the saint from Assisi wrote "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape." That line, written near Francis's own embrace of Sister Bodily Death, reflects the importance and natural character of death in the life of all creation. Francis was not afraid of what would come at the end of his earthly life, choosing instead to recognize in that experience, not an end, but a transition from one way of living to another. Br. Thomas of Celano recorded an account of that transition, that transitus:

St. Francis spent the last few days before his death in praising the Lord and teaching his companions whom he loved so much to praise Christ with him. He himself, in as far as he was able, broke out with the Psalm: I cry to the Lord with my voice; to the Lord I make loud supplication. He likewise invited all creatures to praise God and, with the words he had composed earlier, he exhorted them to love God. Even death itself, considered by all to be so terrible and hateful, was exhorted to give praise, while he himself, going joyfully to meet it, invited it to make its abode with him. "Welcome," he said, "my sister death." (Celano, Second Life.)

When the hour of his death approached, Francis asked that all of the brothers living with him be called to his death bed and softening his departure with consoling words, he encouraged them with fatherly affection to love God. He spoke of patience and poverty and of being faithful to the Holy Roman Church, giving precedence to the Holy Gospels before all else. He then stretched his hands over the brothers in the form of a cross, a symbol that he loved so much, and gave his blessings to all followers, both present and absent, in the power and in the name of the Crucified. (St. Bonaventure, Major Life.)



**St. Francis of Assisi -
Transitus**

HAPPY AUTUMN!

Birthdays:

- Claudia Casseday (21st)
- Janis Donley (16th)
- Shelley Pokrivka (14th)

Prayer Intentions:

- Maggie & Her Family
- Lynn & Her Husband
- Mary Jo & her husband
- Joseph Sampson in Ghana
- The refugees & others affected by the Ukraine Russian conflict

Meeting: 9:00 am Mass at St. John's & then meeting in Neumann Hall.

Transitus: Meeting Monday, October 3rd at St. John the Baptist at 7:00 pm in Neumann Hall (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

"Peter said to him, I will never let thee wash my feet; and Jesus answered him, If I do not wash thee, it means thou hast no companionship with me. Then, Lord, said Peter, wash my hands and my head too, not only my feet." (John 13:8-9)

From “The General Constitutions of The SFO” – Article 20-1

“Secular Franciscans, committed by their vocation to build the Kingdom of God in temporal situations and activities, live their membership both in the Church and in society as an inseparable reality.”

Why Padre Pio was grouchy in the confessional

by Philip Kosloski – Aleteia website

Sometimes St. Pio would lose his temper in the confessional, a weakness he struggled with during his life.

While Padre Pio was clearly a saint during his life on earth, it doesn't mean he didn't struggle with his own weaknesses.

In particular, it was difficult for Padre Pio to stay calm and collected in the confessional.

In Padre Pio: The True Story, the author explains how the saintly friar would lose his temper and how he regretted it.

In June 1920, he had written to Padre Benedetto: “My only regret is that, involuntarily and unwittingly, I sometimes raise my voice when correcting people. I realize that this is a shameful weakness, but how can I prevent it, if it happens without my being aware of it? Although I pray and groan and complain to Our Lord about it, he has not yet heard me fully. Moreover, in spite of all my watchfulness, I sometimes do what I really detest and want to avoid.”

One reason Padre Pio would get angry in the confessional was encountering a penitent who was not truly sorry for their sins.

On another occasion, Padre Pio blamed his “fits of temper” in the confessional on overwork and the sight of so many hardened and unrepentant sinners. He thought, at least at times, however, that his own anger might have been a reflection of God's indignation.

He would also deny absolution to many of these penitents, asking them to come back when they were ready.

A majority of these penitents would return to the confessional, recognizing the weight of their sins and professing true repentance.

Each saint had their own struggles and weaknesses and for Padre Pio, one of those struggles was his “fits of temper” in the confessional.

Do you have something you want to see in the newsletter? Email Greg at kocgering@yahoo.com or call at (717) 552-8173. I would like to put more in the fraternity's newsletter that would allow us to all celebrate each other's good news. Also, if you wish to contribute to the Fraternity's Fair Share assessment or for Joseph in Ghana, please send me a check made out to “The St. Joseph's Fraternity”. My address is 95 Smokebox Circle, Stewartstown, PA. 17363. Thank you much!

**FRANCISCAN
TEACHINGS**

Quotes of St. Francis

“Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, & suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

“The deeds you do today may be the only sermon some people will hear today.”

“I have been all things unholy. If God can work through me, He can work through anyone.”

“We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, & to bring home those who have lost their way.”

“No one is to be called an enemy, all are your benefactors, & no one does you harm. You have No enemy except yourselves.”

October 2022 Reflections by Brother Vincent

I recently saw a photograph taken by one of our brothers of a crucifix. He captured a shadow to the left of the cross that truly spoke to me. Well, not literally, but what came to me immediately was the scripture verse, “if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up your cross and follow me.” Matt. 16: 24.

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross we hear the words of St. Paul to the Philippians, “...he emptied himself...becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this God greatly exalted him...”

St. Ignatius wants us to be aware of the profoundly personal nature of Christ’s passion and death. He reminds us in his Spiritual Exercises, “to consider that Christ suffers all this for my sins. My sins put Jesus on the cross.” Jesus lovingly offers himself in suffering the punishment that is do me.

By praying with the passion, we will more effectively recognize the cross as an aspect of our lives and the decisions we have made for Christ—even to desire to suffer for Christ and embrace our cross.

Gregory Cleveland writes, “Suffering willingly endured will purify our hearts in love and bring us to greater identification with Jesus.” Cleveland continues, We discover in our own afflictions the value of pain endured in union with Jesus, which awakens us to a new dimension of our existence and reveals the evangelizing power of suffering.” Isn’t this exactly what our father, Francis, discovered upon receiving the stigmata?

Neither can we avoid the cross. “I do not fear my cross because I know that when a cross comes, you always come, too.” St. Therese of Lisieux. “All the thorns which He has given me have, in the long run, blossomed.”

St. Paul describes how his sufferings, in union with Jesus, help to bring about Christ’s life in others: We are “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.” If we willingly bear the cross in imitation of Christ, we can extend the forgiveness of Christ and truly help others.

Mary is associated with Jesus at Calvary in the redemption by her loving compassion. Suffer with those who suffer; do all you possibly can to help them. Help them to understand little by little the price of the Cross. If Jesus sends the Cross, it is always out of love. When Jesus gives you a cross, it is His Cross which He really puts on your shoulder, and He is relieved of that much of it.

“Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit.” “Today you will be with me in Paradise.” The body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross. That being so, if you go back to the shadow image that I first shared, you are no longer on your cross either. You are together with the Resurrected Lord!

John 3: 13 proclaims that, “the Son of Man must be lifted up...”in the Greek it translates ‘exalted.’ The Preface for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross reads, “Through him the Angels praise your majesty, Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you. Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim worship together with exaltation. May our voices join with theirs in humble praise...” Yes, this feast is a reminder that, like that shadow, we cannot be separated from the cross. This is our vocation.

Your Life Belongs to God

Trust in God requires not the felt experience of God but the handing over of one’s life to God in darkness and silence, realizing that one’s life is not one’s own but belongs entirely to God. Francis trusted in the power of God’s love present in the poor, the lepers, the sick, and the simple creatures of life. He handed himself over to this power as one completely embraced by love. Through the fire that consumed his ego, Francis gave birth to a deeper self in love; he was born anew, and this birth was a new Francis in whom was visible the face of Christ. – from the book *Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St. Francis* by Ilia Delio, OSF