

The Angelus

St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order
December 15, 2024



Minister: Michael Oliver
Vice-Minister: John DiBenedetto
Formation Director: Carmencita Fiesta
Secretary: Susan Jamison
Treasurer: Portia Fiesta
Counselors: Tom McGrath, Michaelle Sylla and Aurea Roland
Spiritual Assistant: Michael Huether

December Gathering Agenda

Opening Prayers - page 35 in the Ritual book

Business

- Welcome new visitors, birthday and profession acknowledgements

Formation

- Videos and discussion - Christmas at Greccio and the Holy Year – Tom

Food, Fellowship and Gift Exchange

Liturgy of the Hours - Evening Prayer

Closing Prayers - Page 36 in the Ritual book

Minister's Message

Peace and All Good this Advent Season!

Christmas is right around the corner and there is so much to do to get ready - decorating, making plans with family, shopping, house cleaning and, perhaps, baking.

While all of this is necessary and a part of the Christmas season experience, it is more important to focus on the true reason for the season. First and foremost, Christmas is a Christian feast and Advent helps us to get ready for the coming of Christ.

Here is a snippet from a Catholic Culture blog that captures this topic so well. It states, "We should keep Advent as a season of waiting and longing, of conversion and of hope and keep our thoughts on the incredible love and humility of our God in taking on the flesh of the Virgin Mary. Let us not forget to prepare a peaceful place in our hearts wherein our Savior may come to dwell.

The best person we can turn to for help during Advent is Mary, Christ's and our Mother. She

awaited the day of His birth with more eagerness than any other human being. Her preparation was complete in every respect. Let's complete our preparation and borrow something of Mary's prayerfulness, her purity and whole-hearted submission to God's will." This is perfectly stated!

I wish you, Brothers and Sisters, a richly blessed and Joyous Christmas and New Year!

See you in 2025!

Spiritual Assistant's Message December 2024

Greetings to all of you!

Continuing and concluding our series on Francis's transformation of the church from Jon M. Sweeney's "How One Saint's Ancient Insights Are Transforming Today's Church", we look at the remaining of Francis's six ways.

CARE

This way, perhaps, summarizes Francis's gentleness not just to people and creatures, but to things, such as humankind, animals, sea life, plants, tree, and even rocks. He did this in order to be a follower of the Beatitudes. It was the gentleness and carefulness he had for little things that made him the saint for the environment we know today. In this respect, we see clearly how he was a man ahead of his time.

DEATH

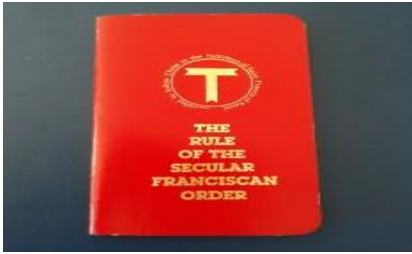
Unlike most medieval people during his time who talked of life fatalistically as a "dance with death", Francis embraced death as an important part of living. His welcoming of death was unprecedented in Christian teaching and is more important than ever for all people of all backgrounds to struggle with. He called death his sister, as we all know as Franciscans. This also shows himself to be a man ahead of his time.

In all these six ways, Francis made a new path. These same areas of Christian life have been reestablished by the pontificate of Pope Francis. Francis of Assisi merited tens of thousands of followers quickly when he was doing these things 800 years ago. But he died an unhappy man, according to historians, because his closest companions abandoned his original ideals and the values he taught the people were slowly compromised. Being Christian in his six ways became no longer realistic. Even before his death in October of 1226, it was "back to the usual" in spite of the establishment of Franciscanism.

Today, we already know that Pope Francis is reviving the spirit of St. Francis. In his "Joy of the Gospel", the pontiff wrote, "Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of the Gospel!" We must say "Amen" and then "How do we do it?" We look to the past not to just simply see what happened, but to understand not to do in the present. We need to continue to see what still needs to be done to perpetuate the transformation that started 800 years ago and is still happening today. We let Pope Francis lead us and let the Holy Spirit guide us as always and as inspired by our Seraphic Father Francis.

May you all have a blessed and joyous Christmas and a prosperous New Year!





Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

CHAPTER TWO: THE WAY OF LIFE

Article 16. Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.

Thoughts to ponder

Ask yourself -

How do I view work or daily tasks in view of our Franciscan charism? Do I view everything I do as a gift from our Savior? Do I offer it for redemption of others? Do my activities, in any fashion, serve our human community?



A friendly Secular Franciscan reminder!

If health or a special family obligation hinders you from attending our gathering, **please contact our Vice Minister, John Di Benedetto, and let him know.**

301-873-7883



Happy Birthday!

Carol Smith – December 2nd
Alina Zygmunt – December 7th
Genie Dutton – December 9th
Madonna Goody – December 19th
Greg Davis – December 21st

December Professions

None



Our monthly Mass for our Living and Deceased Fraternity Members will be celebrated on December 15th, at Our Lady of Grace Church at 11 AM.



Apostolates Corner

Prayer Ministry Lead:

Bette O'Connor

410-499-5504

occonnorbette46@gmail.com

Bette can be contacted by phone, text or email.

If desired, your prayer requests will be shared with the entire Fraternity. We will be happy to feature prayer requests in the Angelus.

In addition, your prayer needs can be shared in the daily Zoom prayer gathering at 3 p.m. Finally, feel free to submit names to the group each month for prayer support.



BEING FRANCISCAN

A Reflection on Psalm 23

by Greg Davis, OFS

My grandmother died at age 92, after living a very full, healthy life. If anyone was "sweet, gentle, and kind" she was the model person. Her funeral card had Psalm 23 printed on it. So did my mother, father, brother, and sister. I will too. I am going to start burying my pets with this card as well. I wish I had thought about that when my dogs, Tanya and Tasha died many years ago and our cat, Moses. I am going to hand deliver them when I get to Rainbow Bridge.

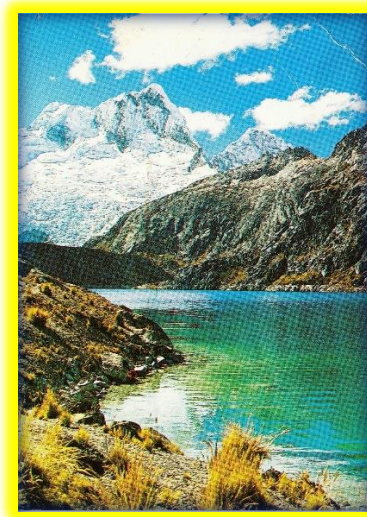
***"Besides restful waters he leads me."** The Church Fathers saw this as a foreshadowing of the waters of baptism that calm us at the beginning of our new life with Jesus.

***"You spread the table before me, my cup overflows."** This is recognized by the Church Fathers as the sacrament of the Eucharist. The body and blood of Jesus are "poured" out for forgiveness of sins, and overflowing (unlimited) mercy, one of the Beatitudes.

***"You anoint my head with oil."** The Church Fathers saw this as a reference to the sacramental oil used in baptism and confirmation, where we are anointed on the head.

I will fear no evil, for you are with me. In today's world, there is much evil still present, and it seems to be getting much worse in 2024 and beyond. ***Be bold and do what you can do; have faith that God will do what you cannot.***

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. Living the Sermon on the Mount (the Beatitudes) is a great way to go from Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel. Peace be with you.



The Valley of Lakes

Peru

** Restated from an article found in the July 21, 2024, Saint Aidan Parish newsletter, Wexford, PA*
