

The Angelus

St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order
August 17, 2025



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

August 17th Gathering Agenda

Opening Prayers - page 35 in the Ritual book;
page 57 in the new version

Business

- Welcome new visitors, birthday and profession acknowledgements

Formation

- Belonging and Caring for My Fraternity – Rita Colleran

Food and Fellowship

Liturgy of the Hours - Evening Prayer

Closing Prayers - Page 36 in the Ritual book;
page 59 in the new version

Minister's Message

The theme for August is the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Magisterium AI describes it in this fashion, "The Immaculate Heart of Mary is a profound devotion within the Catholic Church, symbolizing Mary's interior life, her virtues, and her immense love for God and humanity. This devotion is intimately linked with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, reflecting Mary's unique role in her Son's redemptive mission."

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on August 15th, acknowledges Mary being taken into heaven, body and soul. She followed Jesus with her whole heart. At the end of her life, God brought her home to be with Him forever.

This feast shows us what God wants for all of us. Mary stayed close to God and said yes to His plan. She reminds us to live with faith, love, and trust. The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary gives us hope that one day we too will be with God in heaven.

This month also showcases several significant Saints including St. Clare of Assisi, St. Maximillian Kolbe, St. Dominic, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Bernard of Clairvaux and many more.

Peace and all good!

Michael

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT'S MESSAGE

August 2025

A hearty hello to my Franciscan sisters and brothers!

Continuing our discussion of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition as we see it in our resource, "Discovering the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition" by John V. Kluse, we look at how the tradition views the Holy Trinity.

Even though we may never be able to fully fathom the Trinity, it is a mystery and a relationship in which we are all invited to participate. We have been reflecting on it as God's way of life for over two millennia. Scripture refers to the three distinguishable "persons" that Christians experience in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but never mentions it as the "Trinity".

St. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians said: "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Son), the love of God (the Father), and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you" (2 Corinthians 13: 14). Francis also referred to these three forms of God we experience when he tells Christians how blessed we are to have a loving "Father" in heaven, a "brother" Jesus who shares our humanity, and "spouse", the Holy Spirit, to whom our souls are united (Bonaventure, "The Soul's Journey into God. The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis, History of Christian Spirituality Series Chap. 6, section 2, 102-4)

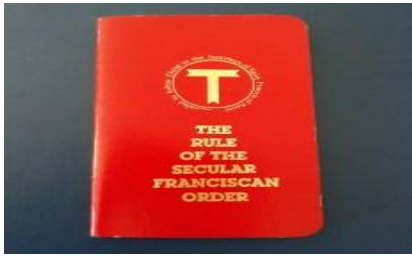
Later, Christians began to view that the term: "Trinity" does not simply describe the ways in which God relates to us, but also a relationship we have within God. God's very being is relational, a dynamic of love that exists among the three persons in the one God. What is important in understanding the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition is whether we stress the "three" or the "one" in the expression "three persons in one God". Franciscan thinkers after Bonaventure's time have tended to emphasize the "three"—our understanding of God is not solitary as in the philosophy of Aristotle, but rather is that of a dynamic relationship of love. Bonaventure started out with a description of God as Supreme Good.

Since the nature of goodness is self-giving, he concluded that God, the Supreme Good, must be total self-giving love. God must be love because love is the ultimate good. Therefore, while God is one, there must be some distinction of persons within God by means of which God can be literally a relationship of love. Bonaventure went on to state that the greatest love is when the love between two people is shared with a third. Thus, he concludes that there must be three persons within God.

In Scripture, we interpret the expression, "God is love" (1 John 4: 16), to mean that God is loving. While this is true, Bonaventure took the expression to a whole new significance with God: God is not just loving but is Love itself. Bonaventure, then saw God as a loving relationship of three persons that overflows into all of creation.

Next month: Other theologians views on this.

Peace, Mike



Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

CHAPTER TWO: THE WAY OF LIFE

Article 19

Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.

Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.

Thoughts to ponder

Clearly, we must be bearers of Peace; however, Peace is not passive. It must be actively cultivated.

In various encounters with family, neighbors and others during which discord is present, what role do we play? Do we stand quietly off to the side or, with love and humility, step in to find a resolution or encourage respectful dialogue.

In what other ways can we manifest the transforming power of love and pardon?

Try this Meditation Practice

1. **Find a quiet space.** Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
2. **Breathe deeply.** Inhale peace, exhale tension.
3. **Repeat slowly:**
 - “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.”
 - “Where there is hatred, let me sow love.”
4. **Visualize someone you struggle with.** Imagine the divine seed within them. Offer them peace in your heart.
5. **End with gratitude.** Thank God for the opportunity to be a bearer of peace today.





Apostolates Corner

Prayer Ministry



Lead:

Bette O'Connor

410-499-5504 oconnorbette46@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.

Happy August Birthdays!

Birthdays:

Tom McGrath – August 12th

Lilian Soriano – August 12th

Delia Sylla – August 17th

Aurea Roland – August 24th

(No August Professions)

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

Reminder

Our monthly Mass for our Living and Deceased Fraternity Members will be celebrated on August 17th, at Our Lady of Grace Church at 11 AM.

BEING FRANCISCAN

The Seven Deadly Sins

vs.

The Beatitudes

By Greg Davis, OFS

The Beatitudes and the Seven Deadly Sins present two strong contrasting visions of human behavior and spiritual life. The Beatitudes offer a path to holiness and divine blessing, emphasizing humility, mercy, and righteousness. The Seven Deadly Sins, on the other hand, represent vices that lead to moral (and therefore physical) corruption and spiritual downfall.

† **Pride vs. Blessed are the poor in spirit:**

Pride entails an arrogant and excessive belief in one's abilities, while being "poor in spirit" requires a humble, caring, and sharing attitude.

† **Envy vs. Blessed are those who mourn:**

Envy involves jealousy towards others' success, whereas mourning demands a compassionate and empathetic response to the suffering of others.

† **Gluttony vs. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness:**

Gluttony is not only overindulgence in food or drink, but also gorging on any physical, emotional, or intellectual desire without fear of consequences (indifference). Hungering and thirsting for righteousness implies a deep, balanced desire for moral justice and taking real action to achieve it.

† **Lust vs. Blessed are the pure in heart:**

Lust means intense or unbridled impure desire, including both physical and emotional attachments, and sometimes even intellectual endeavors. "Pure in heart" emphasizes self-denial and purity of attention and intention.

† **Anger vs. Blessed are the merciful:** Anger (wrath) evokes feelings of hatred and revenge, while mercy calls for forgiveness, reconciliation, and compassion towards others.

† **Greed vs. Blessed are the meek:** Greed is an excessive desire for material wealth and especially power and control over others. whereas meekness involves humility combined with a confident, gentle, and calm attitude.

† **Sloth vs. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake:** Sloth means spiritual and moral laziness (sometimes caused by fear of taking real, right action). Laziness is just another form of indifference towards others and especially to those you do not know. Sloth contrasts with the active pursuit of righteousness, even in the face of persecution, including criticism, rejection, and deliberate shunning.

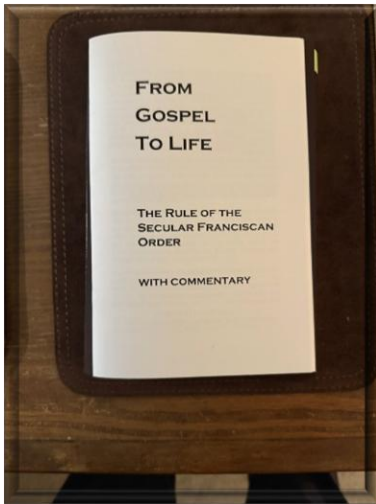
† **All 7 deadly sins vs. Blessed are the peacemakers:** Think about each of the 7 deadly sins above and their primary characteristics. Each one, in some way, contributes to violence one way or another and sooner or later.

For example, Greed (with the expanded definition as compared to traditional ways of describing it) embodies not just wealth, but control of others. Anger, by definition, can only lead to broken relationships, and not peacefulness. Pride, by its very nature, causes disruption to others who react negatively to "proud" selfishness. Envy's imbalanced jealousy can initiate a chain reaction of unwanted consequences. Lust, an insatiable desire, can result in a narrowly focused, rigid mindset, blocking any openness to new ideas.

BOTTOM LINE:

The seven deadly sins are rooted in selfishness, while the Beatitudes are anchored in selflessness.

Overcoming them consistently is a lifelong challenge for anyone. Each of us need to find our own way to combat the seven sins on our personal journey to holiness by committing to go “from gospel to life and life to gospel.”



Cover page of the new Rule document