

FALL



# roubadour MAGAZINE

2024

Connecting Secular Franciscan Fraternities throughout our region.



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## What can we learn from our Blessed Mother?

*The greatest saints, those richest in grace and virtue, will be the most devoted in prayer to the blessed Virgin Mary, viewing her as the ultimate role model to emulate and a powerful ally to support them.*

- Saint Louis Marie de Montfort

Embracing a deep Marian devotion, I have always admired Mama Mary. Her remarkable qualities inspire me to mirror them in my daily pursuits. Though challenging, following her virtues is a fulfilling journey that motivates my personal growth. What lessons can we draw from Mama Mary?

### Mary exemplifies Humility.

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed." - Luke 1:46-48

### Mary embodies Generosity and Compassion.

"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?'" - Luke 1:39-56

### Mary epitomizes faithfulness.

"Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her." - Luke 1:38

### Mary stands unwavering.

"Mary epitomizes hope, from trusting God to work through her Yes to become the Mother of God, to her unwavering belief that the cross was not the end for her Son." - Catholic Mom, Holy Cross Catholic Ministries

The Blessed Mother's virtues are numerous, and she offers invaluable lessons for us to learn from. The Blessed Virgin Mary serves as a crucial guide in discernment, demonstrating perfect obedience to God's will.

Holy Mary, Pray for us!



Frances Acosta, OFS  
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**Listen, Discern, Go Forth**

2022-2025 OFS-USA THEME



Minister

Our Lady of the Angels Region

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### Franciscan Month

Brother Greg Cellini, OSF, a Franciscan Brother of Brooklyn and the Director of the Office of Mission, Ministry and Interfaith Dialogue at St. Francis College in Brooklyn, NY has initiated a program celebrating October as **“Franciscan Month.”**

I was asked to join a working group consisting of Capuchin friars, an OFM friar, an Alleghany Franciscan sister, and an Anglican Franciscan among others. Recently, Joan Geiger, OFS, the Spiritual Assistant for our neighbors in the Tau Cross region (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk) joined the working group.

The mission of Franciscan Month (October) is to celebrate the 800+ year Franciscan movement, educate about the movement and form others in the Franciscan way of life. It is targeted to those who are already immersed in the Franciscan way of life and, in particular, to those who have limited or no knowledge of this way of life.

The goals of this initiative are to enhance the visibility of the contribution the Franciscan movement has made to the world since its inception, to increase knowledge of the stories of St. Francis, St. Clare and the many other Franciscan role models, and, **to demonstrate how the Franciscan way of life is applicable to the 21st century.**

We are hoping for an outcome where more people are taking steps to learn about the Franciscan story, more people are living a Franciscan way of life and for increased participation in Franciscan groups, including our Order, the Franciscan Mission Service, Justice Circles, etc..

In 2023, a “soft launch” was initiated through reflections published by St. Francis College in their All Good Things blog.

In 2024, our focus is to launch Franciscan Month in the NY/NJ metro area with events and activities in October.

In 2025, we plan to hold events in locations around the US and around the world in 2026. Also in 2026, we want to receive official designation as Franciscan Month around the world in October and be recognized as such at 800th anniversary celebrations!

#### ***How can you help spread the word?***

The working group is preparing a script to be read in parishes (Franciscan and diocesan) at the Masses on the weekend of September 28/29. It will be a short 2-3 minute reading to promote Franciscan Month and the various events and activities planned. A bulletin announcement is also being considered.

Many fraternity gatherings are held in Churches or parish centers other than that of some of its members and so the Seculars were thought to be the best branch of the Franciscan family to promote Franciscan Month since many of us already have relationships with our home parishes.

I am looking for volunteers to engage their pastors to take the opportunity to evangelize our local communities in the upcoming Franciscan Month events and activities. If you are willing to speak at your parish on the weekend of September 28/29, please send me

**[cleoneofs@gmail.com](mailto:cleoneofs@gmail.com)**

your email address and the name and address of the parish where you will be speaking (once you have received permission to do so).

I am most grateful for your cooperation in this matter and who knows, the Holy Spirit may reward us with new vocations to all branches of the Franciscan family because of your involvement! Here's the logo!





Regional Spiritual Assistant

Our Lady of the Angels Region

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## Pearl of Great Price

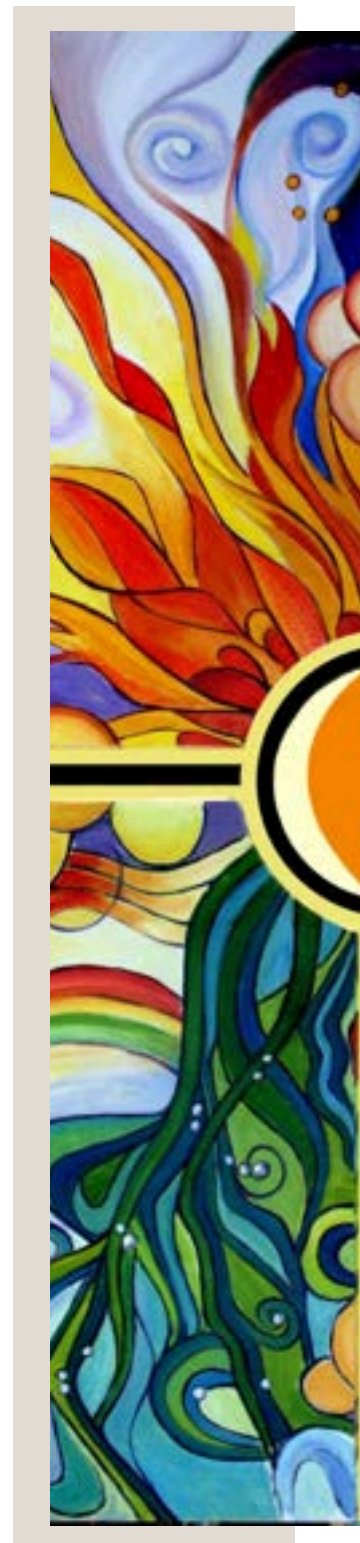
**Q**uick—If you had to run out of your house and could only take three items with you, what would they be? Funny how priorities tend to show themselves when time is scarce. Our priorities shift as we age and grow in wisdom. The things that took center stage in the past may now be considered insignificant in light of present-day needs and concerns. But what is of lasting value? What deserves our full attention and commitment? Is it: fashion, popularity, material gain, social status, pleasure, accomplishments? Such things, while good in themselves, can overtake and consume us unless we have a good grip on our priorities. It's all too easy to let our guard down and allow certain mentalities and actions contrary to Gospel living to enter and establish residence. This sacred vocation of ours requires that we continually refine our priorities. Hence, the necessity of prayer and sacraments coupled with a life marked by charity and self-sacrifice.

Priorities are essential to a well-ordered life. Without them we would be adrift on the sea of life, susceptible to every current and shifting wind. With them we are anchored onto something greater than our meager selves. As Christians this anchor is none other than Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. From the moment of our Baptism we are invited to wholeheartedly place our confidence in the all-knowing, all-loving, everlasting and eternal Trinity. As Franciscans, we fine-tune our priorities in accord with our time honored tradition and charism. Daily conversion is indispensable for our human and spiritual development. Priorities are the guardrails along life's highway.

"The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it" (Mt. 13:44-46). If that person had to run out of his or her house, I'm sure the first things they would grab would be the title deed to that field—and the pearl of great price!



*Bro. Rod*





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## It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year??!! (Actually, Four Years)

*"Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good... A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern." -Pope Francis*

Yes, it's that time again. Political season. It has been tumultuous to say the least, and it's still only August! I suspect that at times we are all tempted to just get under the covers and set the alarm for Inauguration Day 2025, when it will finally all be over.

But we won't do that. Because we are good Franciscans and good Catholics. And a good Catholic gets involved in politics. That of course means voting for your chosen candidates. It can also mean financial support, or active volunteerism (phone banks, letter writing, ringing doorbells, etc.)

So, how to choose?

Pope Francis cited the Social Doctrine of the Church. That's a good place to start. Catholic Social Teaching is based on the following seven themes:

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's Creation

If you wish to explore these themes further: <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching>

Collectively, these themes form the "seamless garment" which is Catholic Social Teaching. They are all interrelated. In a perfect world, one could simply identify and support the candidates who are aligned with all seven of these themes. There is a minor political party which does that, but they are not on the ballot in NJ and NY and would require write-in voting. <https://www.solidarity-party.org/>. Note that the inclusion of this link does not constitute endorsement.

Between the two major parties, it's not that simple. Some candidates for various offices may be stronger in certain aspects of Catholic Social Teaching, and weaker in others. That's where our prayerfully-formed conscience comes in. We must weigh all the pros and cons and determine which candidates we believe are, on balance, the best.



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## Continued

For example (and this is ONLY an example), for me the most critical theme is Care for God's Creation, specifically climate change, which I believe to be an existential threat to all life on earth. I would have a hard time supporting a candidate who went the wrong way on this issue. But each of us must make our own prayerful assessments.

To complicate matters further, we can and should consider the personal traits of the candidates, including but not limited to:

- Background and experience
- Legal and ethical compliance
- Overall level of competence
- Overall moral compass.

How do we do all that? One way to begin might be to engage in thoughtful, prayerful dialogue with family, friends, and maybe even your Fraternity brothers and sisters. Yes, I know the old adage about never discussing religion and politics. I have never been fond of that mindset. Francis and his followers had no fear of engaging in contentious discussions, and neither should we. Do not be unduly afraid of conflict. If properly managed, conflict can lead to consensus, and ultimately to truth.

The key is how the discussions are conducted. Do we engage in true dialogue, or mere debate? Are we interested in learning, or only in "winning"? Are we willing to change our position, maybe a little, based on what we hear?

The next few months will be a wild ride. When it is all over, some of us will be elated. Others will be disappointed, perhaps bitterly so. My prayer for all of us is that we make our decisions based on Catholic and Franciscan principles, that we respect one another's differences, and that we emerge stronger and more united - not in spite of our diversity, but because of it.

For further reading: <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-and-peace/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship>

*Jim*

*"We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern."*

-Pope Francis, Morning Meditation





## We Remember



### **Brother Douglas Soik, OFM Cap**

*Regional Spiritual Assistant representing  
Stigmata Province from 2012 to 2017*



Brother Doug came to our region not having had very much experience with Secular Franciscan Councils, but he was ready and willing to learn and to accompany Our Lady of the Angels Region on our Franciscan journey. He was always supportive of our vocations and exemplified the Franciscan charism. Brother was well-liked by the local fraternities who got to know him at regional gatherings and at local visitations. He always shared uplifting words with fraternity members and especially encouraged the smaller fraternities not to lose heart and to actively seek vocations.

I had the blessing of working with Brother while serving as Regional Vice Minister and Minister for the five years he was with us. He and I visited many local fraternities all around our region together. He was very appreciative when he received a GPS as a gift from us so that he could arrive at meetings on time and not get lost in our travels.

After Brother left our region, he was transferred to the infirmary at St. Lawrence Friary in Beacon, NY. Our present Regional Spiritual Assistant, Bro. Rod Pieretti, OFM Cap., was a good friend to Bro. Doug during the time he spent there.

Bro. Rod shared that prior to entering the Order in 1973, Bro. Doug served in the United States Navy. He earned the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. He received an Honorable Discharge on April 26, 1971. Brother made his Perpetual Profession of vows in 1979. He received a degree in Sociology at Ramapo College and was very committed to social work and enjoyed ministering in various parishes. While working with Catholic Charities he received an award from the NAACP for the promotion of civil rights. He greatly enjoyed gardening and working outdoors. Brother Rod and I were privileged to visit with Brother Doug the day before he embraced Sister Death. We pray that he is now resting in peace.

Diane F. Menditto, OFS  
Vice Minister, National Fraternity, Secular  
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# NEWS AROUND THE REGION



REST IN  
PEACE  
DEAR FRIEND



Photo credit: Diane Menditto



Article from:

17 OUR DIOCESE

THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT | MAY 23, 2024

## 92-year-old parishioner finds joy creating prayer intention cards

**By Annie Nason**  
Correspondent



Dolores Jules, inset, a 92-year-old member of the Order of Secular Franciscans has created nearly 5,000 prayer intention cards for others who are remembered in prayer at the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi's Blessed Sacrament chapel.  
— Courtesy photos

Ninety-two year old Dolores Jules has a deep love for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

"When I enter the Adoration Chapel the first thing I remember is that Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament and as I sit and pray I know he hears every word I say, and every thought that crosses my mind.

[It] is the most peaceful time to sit before our Lord, to give your heart and soul to him. I just love it." Her deep enjoyment for this time in prayer inspired a heartwarming project that has been a labor of love for over fifteen years. Now a parishioner of St. Helena's in Edison, Dolores was professed with the Order of Secular Franciscans since 1992, and has been an active minister in the St. John Vianney Fraternity since 2007.

Dolores was inspired to create a way that adorers can pray especially for the intentions of others. When St. Francis Cathedral in Metuchen began having Adoration in 2007, she was busy creating and donating blank, fillable prayer cards as a "Gift Of Prayer" that could be filled out and sent via mail to the person whose intention was prayed for.

Dolores, who is impressively comfortable with technology for her age, designs the cards via computer program on a CD-ROM, averaging about 300 cards per month. To date, she has made a total of 4,920 cards! And as she nears her 93rd birthday this summer, Dolores emphasized that as long as she knows the Cathedral needs to be restocked with prayer cards, she's thrilled to keep making them.

While she finds joy in this ministry, Dolores notes that the particular gift in it is that someone can find comfort in knowing that they are being prayed for. She emphasizes that consistent prayer life as well as "keeping busy" as she puts it, has given her a strength and vitality for life.

In addition to making the prayer cards, Dolores also creates and sends greeting cards for members of the fraternities who are celebrating anniversaries, stays connected with prayer ministries online, and enjoys crossword puzzles and spending time with her fifteen great-grandchildren.

An embodiment of faith in action, Dolores says, "Going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel, I try to live my life, my ideas, my prayers and my lifestyle as a witness to God's Holy Spirit which guides me every day."







“He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Quiet! Be still!” The wind ceased and there was great calm.” MK 4:35-41

## Visio Divina

I love to paint! Not walls, but pictures. Watercolor is my absolute favorite medium to work with. What's fascinating is how painting, photographs, or any visual art form can become a mode of prayer. Visio Divina, known as "Praying with your eyes," offers a distinctive approach to connecting with God and scripture. This practice invites individuals into a realm of "divine seeing," echoing the essence of the ancient tradition of lectio divina.

Just as lectio divina emphasizes a deliberate engagement with scripture through meditation and prayer, visio divina encourages a similar contemplation of divine presence through visual elements like photographs, icons, or artworks. Engaging in a prayerful reflection on these visual representations allows for a profound and unique experience of the divine in one's spiritual journey.

## Let's try it



For today, I have chosen the picture above and utilized a portion of the Gospel reading from Sunday. The selection of an image, whether it be a photograph, painting, or icon, can profoundly enhance our understanding and connection to the sacred texts we encounter.

Focus on the first thing you see in the image. Look at it for a minute without looking away. Take deep breaths while you do this.

Now, let your eyes gaze at the whole image. Take your time and look at every part of the photograph. See it all. Reflect on the image for a minute or so.

### Consider the following questions:

- **What emotions does this thought-provoking image evoke within you upon first glance?**
- **What does the image stir up in you, bring forth in you?**
- **Does this image inspire a sense of tranquility that beckons you to turn inward and connect with your spirituality through prayer?**

If your heart resonates with the sacred atmosphere depicted, allow these prayers to emerge within you and manifest in written words if you feel inclined to do so.

Now, offer your prayers to God in a final time of silence.

Visio divina is a contemplative practice that individuals may partake in alone or join a small group in a worship space. This practice involves selecting a piece of art to focus on during prayer. By blending scripture with the chosen artwork, the reflective journey is enhanced. This approach enables the observer to meditate on the scripture's teachings while exploring the visual aspects depicted in the art piece.

Frances Acosta, OFS

Founder of Stella Mundi Franciscan Ministry





## Living the Rule: One Article at a Time

By Antonia Fusco, OFS, St. Benedict the Moor Fraternity, NYC

“We are what we repeatedly do,” said Aristotle, “Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” For us Secular Franciscans that means living by our Rule; it is who we are. There are many articles in our Rule, though, so it can be daunting, something we read and live in abstraction rather than concretely and intentionally. At least it was for me until Deacon Luke Conroy, a brother in my fraternity, shared that he prayed one article of our Rule each day. So simple, so straightforward, yet challenging, too: prayerfully live one article a day lovingly and mindfully.

Through Deacon Luke’s support and the Holy Spirit’s guidance, I began to do just that: read one article each morning slowly and prayerfully, asking St. Francis and St. Clare to intercede for me to our Lord, that I may fulfill the particularity of the article throughout the day according to His will. I put my Tau around my neck as I repeat the daily article in my mind’s heart. With this intention, I go about daily tasks, reminding myself of the article’s directive, amidst the challenges and failures, joys and successes of the day.

As a public school teacher, I know that you have greater success with children, who struggle academically, if you chunk information into small pieces, with love and confidence in their ability to achieve. I have found this to be the case with praying and living the Rule in this way, one article at a time. I have also learned that we are not called to live comfortable lives—clearly, Jesus didn’t nor did any of his disciples or any of the Saints, for that matter, most especially our Seraphic father St. Francis. This is the hard Truth most of us are resistant to face. However, each article of the Rule helps us to enter that place of discomfort in our daily lives so that may shine the lamp He gave us in the darkness of our increasingly secular world.

To help internalize the content of each article of the Rule, I have recast the articles in the first person; I have also abridged them so each article is more concrete and actionable. (I am a teacher, after all!) Below are the recast, abridged articles (one through nineteen) from chapters one and two of our Rule.

I pray that you may live each article to the full potential God calls you to, through the beautiful and joyful charism of St. Francis. Amen!

- I am called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.
- I strive for perfect charity in my own secular state. I pledge to live the Gospel in the manner of St. Francis.
- I pledge obedience to the Holy Church even in changing times.
- I devote myself to careful reading of the Gospel, going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel.
- I seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in my brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity.
- I go forth as a witness and instrument of the Church’s mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by my life and words.
- I conform my thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of radical interior change, which the Gospel calls conversion, and I do this daily.
- I let prayer and contemplation be the soul of who I am and what I do. I participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. I also join in liturgical prayer to relive the mysteries of the life of Christ.
- I express my ardent love for the Blessed Virgin Mary by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.
- I unite myself to the redemptive obedience of Jesus by fulfilling the duties of my circumstances of life. I also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witnessing to him even in difficulties and persecutions.
- I seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying my own material needs. I am a steward of the goods I received for the benefit of God’s children. I also strive to purify my heart from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.
- I set myself free to love God and my brothers and sisters.

Continued on page 11



## Living the Rule: One Article at a Time

By Antonia Fusco, OSF, St. Benedict the Moor Fraternity, NYC

- I accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. I also place myself on an equal basis with all people, especially the lowly for whom I strive to create conditions of life worthy of a people redeemed by Christ.
- I build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. I exercise my responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.
- I promote justice by the testimony of my life and my courageous initiatives. In public life I make definite choices in harmony with my faith.
- I esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.
- In my family, I cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life. I strive to make life a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.\*
- I respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High." I strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.
- As a bearer of peace, I seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue. I trust in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. I am a messenger of perfect joy in every circumstance, bringing joy and hope to others.

★ This article also includes this if it's applicable to you: I live the grace of matrimony and bear witness to the world to the love of Christ for his Church. I also joyfully accompany my children on their journey, by providing a simple and open Christian education. I am attentive to the vocation of each child.

## Il Perdono

By AFP Kozhipatt OSF, St. Benedict the Moor Fraternity, NYC

My Secular Franciscan retreat weekend experience pivoted on Il Perdono. The Pardon that frees us from that which weighs us down. My weekend started with an unplanned detour on my drive to Mount Alvernia from Long Island. The search for a Catholic church for First Friday Mass led me to the St Anthony's Convent of the Sisters of Life at Catskills.

The Porziuncola replica chapel in the woods of the convent surprised me. I could barely fathom the coincidence of finding myself at the chapel of a little portion – Porziuncola on 2nd August, La Festa del Perdono or The Feast of the Pardon. The Divine Office mid-day prayers with the nuns in the convent in which I participated and the opportunity to join their weekly confessions followed by First Friday mass, and adoration gave me a break from my drive up on summer afternoon traffic.

The retreat opened with Deacon Patrona OFS, Deacon Verlezza OFS, and Friar Andre Cirino OFM with Il Perdono. The Porziuncola prayer after confession and the fellowship freed many burdens of the mind, including the soul. "It is in pardoning that pardon is received."

The cages built in the minds with bars of unfinished pains and bitterness keep us captive and the mental wounds begin to fester. The retreat's weekend first step entailed the crossing of the threshold of Porziuncola. The lecture 'St Francis, the Lover of Pardon - 'Il Perdono' to all that emphasized in me the importance of reconciliation to break free from these bars of the mental cage built with past anger, bitterness, and pain. I must say that we all owe it to ourselves.

The lectures on 'St Francis Lover of Fraternitas and the Eucharist' enlightened me with new facets of Eucharistic Fellowship. Christ's sacrifice on the cross, which we remember during our fellowship gathering, leads us to be born into eternal life. The Eucharist lecture reminded me that Christ who gave all of himself never holds back anything.

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## A Cross of Joy

By Br. Bill Arlia OFM Cap.

We just had visitation at St. Francis of Assisi friary in Wilmington, DE. The chairs were arranged, one facing the other for a face to face dialogue with the provincial. For me, it was an enjoyable anticipation; perhaps knowing Remo for over 20 years, and being aware of his affable qualities would make walking into the library, where our meetings took place, a non-threatening occasion.

He asked me how I'm doing and I answered honestly, "I'm doing well in the big picture of my life." That response led into describing the "smaller picture." Of course the smaller picture easily entailed sharing my struggle with MS. Struggling with the disease certainly is a major factor to what makes my life a challenge to live joyfully. Ironically I shared the experience of having a profound joy in the midst of the struggle with MS.

He asked me to talk about that. I told him that deep down inside I have a joy; not a giddy happiness, but a joy. He then said, "You should write about that." The joy I believe comes from a union with the cross of Christ. Remo filled in some of my description by adding, "You feel more connected to Christ." "Connected" would sufficiently describe the source of my joy as well.

There are no feelings of glory having the illness. It truly strips me of a lot. However, paradoxically there is a deep joy because I'm sharing in my own way in the cross of Christ. Being stripped of smooth mobility, clear and crisp speech, the inability to simply incense an altar along with other related actions in performing good liturgy, has lessened my personal satisfaction that accompany such wonderful work.

However, Knowing that Christ was incapable of much on the altar of the cross makes me feel deeply united or "connected" to him. He didn't have smooth mobility with nails driven through his hands and feet on that wood. His speech remained contained because of fatigue and labored breathing. His sermon was loudest though in his quiet acceptance of ill treatment.

Contemplating some of these truths of his passion familiarize me, in a very small way, with my own sharing in his passion. In the gospel, after John the Baptist was killed in prison, Jesus went to be alone. I'm sure to pray to his Father as well as anticipate realistically his own impending death.

He must have, in his humanity, felt the pressure of the crushing evils of his religious opponents closing on him. In my own way I feel a certain inevitable dying. Not that MS causes death, but progressive MS gets worse over time. Although all of us are declining with age, it occurs more rapidly with this disease. No matter what I do to slow the progression it takes its course at its relentless pace and I'm only 47.

Psychologically, it's a rather intimidating reality. Helpless is a feeling that accompanies such inevitability. What is Christ left to do but stoutheartedly continue his trek toward Jerusalem regardless of his knowledge of its end? I would rather not anticipate an incapacitated time with MS but being human I can tend to envision my worst fears. Yet there is a joy that remains through it all because I'm connected with Christ the Lord in his passion. I don't think anyone can truly be a Franciscan without not only pondering the cross in his life, but also providence. To see and experience the very care of God in its many facets and allowing gratitude with excitement to well up in my heart as a fruit is part of the joy I feel while struggling.

During chapter, before elections, we had a holy hour in the chapel. We were to pick a strip of paper containing a scripture passage. I picked one that I firmly believe was meant for me. There are no coincidences! It was Isaiah, chapter 30, verse 18. It reads, "Truly the Lord is waiting to be gracious to you. Truly he will rise to show you mercy. For the Lord is a God of justice: happy are all who wait for him." Wow! What a loving God. He's actually waiting to be gracious to me. The amount of times he is gracious to me is countless. There are the evident graces that occur in my daily life especially through caring brothers. There are so many graces that come unexpectedly and are exceptional.

The joy is not just the awareness of being connected to the passion of Christ but of delighting in the God of providence. These encounters never take away my unique carrying of the cross but they sure serve as reminders that I am never alone-God is here to help me and even dazzle me!



**Bro. Thomas Barton, OSF**

Franciscan Brother of Brooklyn and the Spiritual Assistant to St. Elizabeth of Hungary fraternity on Staten Island, NY.

## The Rieti Valley

The Rieti Valley is an important place in the life of Francis and his followers.

One place in particular is the Sanctuary of Poggio Bustone. There Francis received the grace to fully understand and believe that he was loved by the Lord and forgiven for his past life matters. He emerged from this experience with a new way to greet the people "buongiorno, buona gente" "good day , good people" and a bit later "May God give you peace!"

From that day Francis spent his life working, trying and praying that people would realize how good they are.

Wherever he went he spread goodness, God given goodness: to the Sultan Malik in the Holy Land, to the people of Greccio by reminding them at Christmas that the child Jesus was truly a human and not, as some taught, only an angel. He engaged the wolf of Gubbio with kindness, he saved a rabbit from becoming the brothers' Easter dinner and he appreciated the song of the lark in early morning. All good, all the time.

We cannot miss the fact that Francis spent perhaps 3-4 "lents" in solitude, praying for so many things and situations. All of the legend writers tell us this.

Yet, the Lent of St. Michael of 1224 was different. Francis went to his beloved LaVerna for the 4th and final time but this time it seems his intention was to ask God for something for himself. This is unheard of prior to this encounter. As he approached the heights of La Verna he prayed for this gift: he prayed that he might know in his heart the love that Jesus had for the people that would allow him to embrace the wood of the cross and to feel in his body the pain that Jesus endured for us and our salvation.. God's answer was the imprint of those wounds on his body and in his soul.

The stigmata as it is called is the first time recorded in history of this experience. We celebrate this encounter on September 17 after the church celebrates the feast of the Triumph of the Cross, September 14.

Let us then begin to greet others with these words of grace: Good morning, good people and may God give you peace.



Rieti Valley, Lazio

Photo credit: Italyreview.com



## Bridegroom of My Soul

By Jeannie Sweeney, OFS- Servants of God Fraternity

I have found the one whom my soul loves. (Songs 3:4)  
 The passionate love of the bride seeking her  
 bridegroom poetically expressed in Song of Songs  
 points to the multi-layered nuptial mystery of the  
 Wedding Feast between God and his Church. It is no  
 coincidence that I write this reflection on the Feast Day  
 of St. Mary Magdalene, apostle to the apostles (the day  
 after returning home from the Eucharistic Congress).  
 My deepest desire is to emulate Mary Magdalene  
 bringing gifts of perfume to the Lord, anointing his feet  
 with my tears of love in adoration for all eternity.

I have no doubt Mary Magdalene's sacred friendship  
 began the moment Christ healed her of seven demons.  
 This eternal bond between Mary and her Rabbinic  
 teacher sustained her all the way up the rugged hill of  
 Mount Calvary to the foot of the Cross where her  
 beloved bridegroom hung crucified until his last dying  
 breath. Mary Magdalene never left Jesus' side. She  
 remained with him when Jesus needed her the most  
 despite the dangers lurking at Golgotha, where the  
 brutality of humanity met the forgiveness of our  
 Redeemer. We know who won the victory over sin and  
 death! Always the servant who wanted to be the gentle  
 hand in his life, Mary's fervent desire to love and  
 embrace her Lord throughout his ministry and  
 Resurrection became a revelation of transformation  
 and hopefulness.

The Feast of Mary Magdalene following my life-  
 changing trip to the Eucharistic Congress is a perfect  
 transitional platform to reflect on because the readings  
 of this special day have everything to do with the love  
 of Christ and the sharing of Good News. This was more  
 than a trip; it was a pilgrimage that I wish every  
 Catholic believer could have experienced. Lucas Oil  
 Stadium, the famous sports arena, was transformed  
 into an altar of love and divine worship. Jesus entered  
 the arena fully present in his body, blood, soul, and  
 divinity of the life-giving gift of the Eucharist each day  
 in Adoration and in the Holy Mass. It was like a touch of  
 heaven. We are called to be tabernacles for the world  
 because Jesus is present in the temple of our hearts,  
 dwelling within our souls ignited by the Holy Spirit.  
 A portal of fresh air has opened up from heaven  
 allowing for a renewal of faith to emerge rising above  
 the sacred incense and ever-growing secularism of the  
 world.

Is this internal spiritual renewal an echo of Pope St.  
 John XXIII's "aggiornamento" for Millennial times?

Contemporary voices of today say we are living in a  
 post-Christian era. I believe this holy movement  
 feels like the burning bush that did not consume  
 the flames but was set ablaze as a fire of love  
 fueled by the desire of God to be close to us.  
 (Exodus 3:2-3) We are sons and daughters of a  
 good and compassionate Father and a steadfast  
 and loving Mother. One t-shirt at the Congress  
 proclaimed the following words: "Let us magnify  
 like Mary." This witness reflection is my way of  
 magnifying the Lord in word and deed.

Cardinal Tagle, Papal Envoy, beautifully presided  
 over Sunday Mass for the final event at the  
 Congress with fervor and conviction. Pope Francis  
 is calling each and every believer "to a conversion  
 of the Eucharist. As we receive as a gift (Eucharist),  
 we must give as a gift to others." Cardinal Tagle  
 described the "Eucharist as a privileged moment."  
 What beautiful poetry for the Lord! I see this  
 important message from the Holy See as a  
 Commission to go out and share the Good News of  
 Christ with others. I want to pour myself out from  
 my overflowing cup of grace dripping with  
 holiness. In his Apostolic Exhortation,  
*Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI states  
 that "the Eucharist is at the root of every form of  
 holiness, and each of us is called to the fullness of  
 life in the Holy Spirit." (94)

This reflection cannot give justice to all of the  
 events that took place at the Congress. The daily  
 sessions and community fellowship was a  
 euphoric experience for me. The panel of speakers  
 and musicians lifted me up to a place of divine  
 holiness. The visual beauty of seeing hundreds of  
 seminarians, priests, and bishops in white robes  
 processing into the Eucharistic Mass took my  
 breath away. Beautiful nuns in habits and those  
 without habits were adorned with love for Jesus.

The entire downtown Indianapolis was filled with  
 thousands and thousands of pilgrims lined up  
 along the sidewalks waiting in the hot sun for the  
 Blessed Sacrament to walk by hidden in  
 humbleness in holy procession. Reverence was in  
 the air that was expressed in silence.

Continued on page 15



## Bridegroom of My Soul

The Paschal Mystery inspires the Pentecostal witness of Jesus Christ to spread his divine Light in holy wonder. Each and every one of us is being called in a unique and special way to be his gift in the world. My commitment to daily Eucharist sustains me in my everyday offering to take up the Cross and follow Christ. I proudly wore my Tau Cross as a humble Secular Franciscan at the Congress with 60,000 other Catholics. This is the essence of Franciscan spirituality: the giving of oneself for the other.

We need to arm ourselves with the heroic zeal of St. Paul to keep the rally going in the Name of the Lord. Planning is underway for the next Eucharistic Congress in 2033. In the meantime, we need to keep the momentum alive and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us on our mission to bring Jesus to others. We can preach with our lives in holiness and virtue. We can glorify God and evangelize with our gifts. We can pray for others and be still and know that God is God. (Psalm 46:10) We should continuously keep our gaze on Christ in the Sanctuary (Psalm 63:2).

The Eucharistic Congress was a true revival in the highest form of awakening souls. Befitting for this moment are the words of Pope St. John Paul II:

*"Let us be glad to live in these times of ours, and let us courageously commit ourselves to the design which Providence is mysteriously accomplishing."*

I am writing this reflection in the hopes that my witness will inspire others to use their gifts to evangelize and become active participants in the beautiful love story of God. Faith and conviction are our gifts to Jesus who gives himself to us with love as Franciscans, we ought to follow this single path to allow the divine gardener to enter our hearts with love, where flowers of glory and praise blossom everywhere through the merciful power of God. St. Mary Magdalene's search for the bridegroom represents all of us on our faith journey with the Lord as he walks with us in our sufferings and joys. The Eucharist is where Jesus is fully present in the small wafer where the *Sacrament of love* abounds in joyful celebration.

St. Mary Magdalene, pray for us.  
Feast Day of St. Mary Magdalene  
July 22, 2024

## REFLECTIONS ON THE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

By Cathie Vieira, OFS- Most Holy Name Fraternity in Little Falls, N.J.

Lord Jesus, make me an instrument of your PEACE... The word instrument has many definitions. As nouns, instrument is defined as:

1. A means whereby some act is accomplished;
2. A person used by another to gain an end;
3. Is what an agent uses to perform an action or start a process. A person used by another to gain an end...is God the other using us to gain peace? Accomplishing an act or starting the process to peace? How do we do that? Of course we are not going to go to the Ukraine, Gaza/Israel, the mideast, etc. so what do we do? So many of us may begin to feel that just saying "pray" is just an action in futility. But this is what the Blessed Mother is continually asking of us, pray, pray, pray. Blessed Mother would certainly not recommend something that is futile, but rather prayer that can move mountains. There is actually a Medjugore Peace Chaplet-7 Our Fathers, 7 Hail Marys and 7 Glory Be's. Accomplishing peace extends more than countries at war. We need to pray for peace also in our streets, in our neighborhoods, in our hearts and in our minds. Prayer is step 1 that begins the process of accomplishing peace in our streets, our homes, our hearts... decreasing the violence we see each day in our news casts.

### **Where there is HATRED let me sow love...**

We have all been taught not to hate, even not to ever say the word hate. But as another thought, in a homily a priest once said that the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. Are we indifferent when someone is hungry? Not hungry for food, but for attention? Do we ignore them when they could use a pat on the back, or hear the words, good job?!

### **Where there is injury pardon...**

I imagine that most of our injuries are more mental than physical. Physical injuries are passing, and are a process of healing, as we develop scabs and scars. Mental injuries can be a long process. But when we pray to Him He does give us the grace to pardon, and through the process of healing, to forgive.

Continued on page 16

# FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS



A process where we need to have Christ present as He was tortured both physically and mentally. Mentally He is put before the crowd who is jeering at Him, casting insults at Him, and then His disciples running from Him at His hour in need. Where would we be if Jesus held onto grudges? Unable to forgive and pardon?

### **Where there is doubt, faith....**

Is our faith strong enough to stand firm during difficult times? Can we see the presence of Jesus and His grace to see us through? Is our faith strong enough to provide consolation to those who may be going through difficult times and doubting His presence? Do we doubt His presence in the Eucharist?

### **Where there is despair, hope...**

Despair is defined as “the complete loss or absence of hope”. We can only begin to imagine the despair the disciples of Jesus felt after His death on the cross like a criminal. The despair they must have felt not knowing where to turn, or who to turn to. But Jesus provided the comfort and answers they needed and what we need to this day – He sent us His Holy Spirit. We cannot despair when we also have the Resurrected Christ with us who said He will be with us until the end of time. He has also given us our prayer warriors who we can turn to in need. Jesus has provided all the means we need to never experience despair when we turn to Him.

### **Where there is darkness light ...**

St. Francis prayed “cast your light into the darkness of my heart”. Has God called upon us to reach out to those who may be experiencing darkness of heart going through the throes of despair? Can we bring words of comfort to them, to shine the light of Christ on them?

### **Where there is sadness joy...**

There is so much sadness in the world today with all the violence and wars. But as Christians/Franciscans it is up to us to maintain positive attitudes and as much as possible find solutions rather than become the problem. St. Francis found his joy amid all of God's creations.

### **Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek... to be consoled, as to console.**

Putting aside our own problems or sorrows so that we may be of some comfort to someone who is hurting.

### **To be understood as to understand...**

To put aside our pride in hoping people understand us, and to look into the heart of those who seek our understanding, perhaps learning why they need or want our understanding.

### **To be loved as to love...**

God has given us the gift of His love; he loves us deeply even when we sin, He is always wanting to show us His mercy. It is up to us then to share this love with all those He has created and whom He loves deeply.

### **For it is in giving that we receive...**

We experience this emotion each time we give a present at Christmas, or birthdays. Don't we feel happy when someone opens up their gift from us and see the joy (hopefully!) on their faces?

### **It is in pardoning that we are pardoned...**

Don't we love that feeling that comes over us when we exit the confessional? Such joy in experiencing God's mercy. God gives us that chance to give that feeling to someone who may have hurt us by forgiving them and making peace with them. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.

### **It is in dying that we are born to eternal life....**

As St. Paul said to the Galatians, (2:20) “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me”.... Each day we are given the opportunity to die to self through conversion. Beginning anew in living with and for Christ each day.

### **St. Francis pray for us!**







## PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

### Rite of Profession

#### **St. Francis Fraternity Hackensack, New Jersey**



Photo credit: Alessandra Panuccio

**June 13, 2024**

The Rite of Profession of  
**Maureen Menakis, OFS** and  
**Pamela Swords, OFS**

Pictured: Vivian Isaac, OFS, witness;  
**Pamela Swords, OFS**, newly professed;  
Diane Menditto, OFS, formator; **Maureen  
Menakis, OFS**, newly professed;  
Rosellina Iacono, OFS, witness.  
Regional Minister Chris Leone, OFS,  
joined us for the profession.

#### **Korean Martyrs Fraternity New York City, New York**



**August 4, 2024**

*Celebrated Rite of Profession*

*(3 persons), temporary profession (1 person)  
and permanent profession (5 persons)*

**at the church of St. Francis of Assisi, in  
Manhattan, NY.**

*Pictured are the 5 newly professed  
members (in white shirts) with Fr. Francis  
Kim, OFM (spiritual assistant),  
council members and assistant of formation.*

### Rite of Admission

#### **St. John Vianney- St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity Ringwood, New Jersey**



**June 29, 2024**

*Celebrated the Rite of Admission  
**Patricia Beasley, OFS,**  
**Minerva Arroyo, OFS,**  
**Rosemarie Ingersoll, OFS***

*in the photo are, left to right:  
Marie Palazzone, OFS, Minister  
Mandi Nacheff, OFS, Formation Director  
Patricia Beasley, OFS, **Candidate**  
Minerva Arroyo, OFS, **Candidate**  
Rosemarie Ingersoll, OFS, **Candidate**  
Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM,  
Spiritual Assistant*

#### **Most Holy Name of Jesus Fraternity Hackensack New Jersey**



Photo credit: Chris Leone, OFS

**July 1, 2024**

*Celebrated the Rite of Admission  
of **Christie Rice, OFS** and  
**Patti Policastro, OFS.***

*In the photo, left to right  
Christie Rice, OFS, **Candidate**  
Patti Policastro, OFS, **Candidate**  
Joe Wickham, OFS, Minister (behind Patti)  
Fr. Sam Monaco, OFS, Formation Director  
Jim Andreano, OFS, Formation Team  
Member, Betsy Saksen, OFS, Formation  
Team Member Agnes Czaplinski, OFS,  
Formation team member, Sr. Janice Jolin,  
SMIC, Spiritual Assistant*

#### **St. Mary of the Assumption fraternity in Pompton Lakes, NJ held it Chapter of Elections on August 13.**



Photo credit: Fr. John Aherne, OFM

*Left to right:*

**Ed Wojciechowski, OFS,**  
**Regional VM, President**  
**Roberto Reylado, OFS, Vice Minister**  
**Bill Schulenburg, OFS,**  
**Formation Director**  
**Joe Coralluzzo, OFS, Minister**  
**Patrick Hanley, OFS, Treasurer**  
**Joe Borowski, OFS, Secretary**  
**Br. Rod Pieretti, OFM Cap, Regional  
Spiritual Assistant, Ecclesial Witness**

# Congratulations!





## PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC



### 60th Profession Anniversary

On June 17th, St Anne's Fraternity in Fair Lawn, N.J. celebrated the 60th Anniversary of **Angela Rodin**

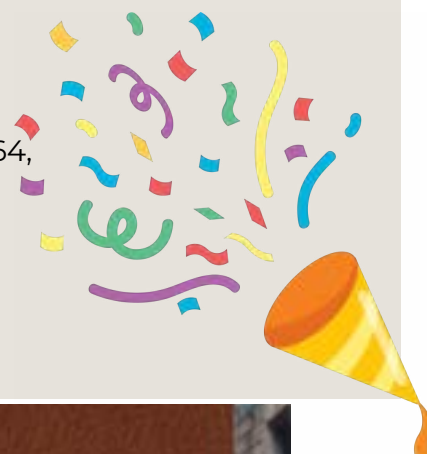
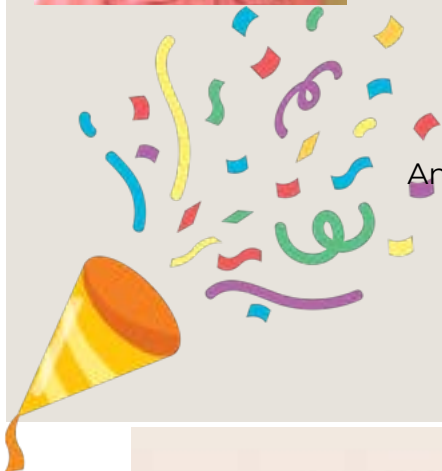


a professed member of the OFS, and long time member of our Fraternity, with a small party.

Angela was professed at St. Anne's on June 21, 1964, when the fraternity was 50+ strong.

**Congratulations Angela !**

Pictured are Angela Rodin, the recipient, and Fr. Jim Benard, our Spiritual assistant.



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## SERVING THE NEEDY



**ANNA MARIA BUCCINI FROM THE ASSUMPTION FRATERNITY IN WOODRIDGE, N.J.**

### My Personal Journey

After completing my temporary profession last year, I felt compelled to fill a gap in our Fraternity by launching a Facebook page for the Secular Franciscans of Assumption Fraternity. My name is Anna. In February, I made my permanent profession with the Secular Franciscans of Assumption Fraternity in Wood-Ridge, N.J. My path was filled with twists and turns before I discovered my vocation as a Secular Franciscan.

In addition to creating a social media page, I initiated efforts to support local animal shelters by establishing a ministry for annual donation drives. I used social media to gather donations has proven to be effective. Our initial drive was in support of the Homeless Animal Adoption League last year. Later drives, including the recent one in May, have been successful. For the Bergen County Animal Shelter drive, we collected clean blankets, sheets, and towels for the incoming kittens.



The response from our Facebook community was heartwarming and greatly appreciated by the shelter. Apart from donation posts, I find joy in sharing quotes from St. Francis of Assisi, prayers, and images of our Fraternity. My journey unfolds ahead, and I'm delighted to share parts of it through social media.



*Pictured :Anna Maria Buccini with the 1st collection drive for the homeless*

Photo credit: Anna Maria Buccini

*Continued from page 11*

### Il Perdono

"I have done what was mine to do; may Jesus Christ Show you yours!" St Francis's words resonated in my mind as I drove back home. "Ave Maria- Mother of God", as Friar Andre repeated became a mental worm. The silence during my drive choosing not to listen to music or podcasts on my drive amidst Summer Sunday traffic on Long Island Expressway somehow felt more rewarding. It occurred to me that my commute gives me time to contemplate and say my Rosary prayers thereby the automobile or my commuter train becomes my 'Chapel on Wheels'.

'Tony Paul', is a published author and a member of St Benedict the Moor Fraternity New York, New York.



# NEWS AROUND THE REGION



## ANNUAL RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS



Photo credits:  
Diane F. Menditto, OFS  
&  
Ed Wojciechowski, OFS

# NEWS AROUND THE REGION



Photo credits:  
Diane F. Menditto, OFS  
&  
Ed Wojciechowski, OFS



Minister

Our Lady of the Angels Region

cleoneofs@gmail.com

## OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGION RETREAT

On the weekend of August 2-4, starting with the feast of Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula, we held our annual retreat. What a blessed weekend it was! The retreat was led by Fr. Andre Cirino, OFM, Deacon Joe Patrona, OFS and Deacon Vinny Verlezza, OFS

Friday evening fittingly began with a presentation by Deacon Vinny on Il Perdono di Assisi, the Pardon of Assisi. St. Francis never used the word indulgence. Francis loved the Portiuncula, the place where the Franciscan movement was born, and he wanted it to be preserved as a model of humility and highest poverty for the Order (2 Celano 18).

Francis went to Pope Honorius III and asked his Holiness "to grant pardon, without requiring any offering, in that church on that anniversary of its consecration. If it pleases your Holiness, because of the favors God has granted this place, I ask that, whoever enters the place, having confessed their sins and, if necessary, being absolved by a priest, be freed from the guilt and punishment of all their sins that they have committed from the day of their baptism until the time they entered the church." Pope Honorius II responded, "I grant this request." (F. Bartholdi, Tract. De Ind. Porz., chapter 6, private translation). For Francis, all that was required was to cross the threshold of the church in the state of grace to receive the pardon. Today, the conditions to receive the Pardon include:

- Receiving the Sacrament of reconciliation to be in God's grace
- Attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion
- Visiting any church to pray,
  - The Creed to reaffirm one's Christian identity,
  - The Our Father to reaffirm one's dignity as a child of God,
  - And, an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for the intentions of the Holy Father to reaffirm one's belonging to the Church, whose visible center of unity and foundation is the Roman Pontiff.

On Saturday, Fr. Andre Cirino, OFM led us in a discussion on the birth of Fraternitas. In English, the word "fraternity" is gender specific. It may conjure up images of rowdy male college students. However, in Latin, "Fraternitas" is actually a feminine noun. The use of the Latin word is more inclusive and better reflects that we are all unique (what Blessed John Duns Scotus refers to as haecceitas or thisness meaning each being is unique).

Fraternitas with an upper case F meant the group or organization. Fraternitas with a lower case f was the relationship between Francis and each individual member and the relationships among the members themselves. So, fraternitas is a group of equals. It is reciprocal and the Trinity is the model of fraternitas. Keep fraternitas in mind when you are gathered together. It is important to note that in all of Francis' writings he never used the word "community." Consider the following at your next gathering – how do you live fraternitas in your fraternity? How do you move into greater fraternitas in your own relationships? Here is a link to Fr. Andre's presentation on Fraternitas from 2013 at St. Francis College found on YouTube:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_3l6kgLgcw&t=1532s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_3l6kgLgcw&t=1532s)

On Saturday afternoon, after some quiet time for reflection on the morning session, Deacon Joe led a discussion on Francis, Lover of the Eucharist followed by the celebration of Mass and, after dinner, Adoration and Benediction of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus (Francis never used the word "Eucharist" but always referred to the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus)!

A wonderfully ornate "Franciscan" monstrance was used for exposition.

After sharing on Sunday morning, we closed the retreat with a prayer on the San Damiano crucifix by Murray Bodo, OFM



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# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



## Calling for articles, poems, event photos

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The electronic format of The Troubadour is published quarterly: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. It is available for downloading on our Regional website.

To become a subscriber, you must be an active, professed member, or candidate in formation of our region, and your complete e-mail address must be registered in our database.

Wherever you see the spirit of Saint Francis at work in the world, in your lives, in your fraternity, in its members, and in your hearts we want to hear from you. Come, share with us.

### PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

All submissions for the next issue of The Troubadour, Winter, January 2025, are due to the Editor: [smfranciscanministry@gmail.com](mailto:smfranciscanministry@gmail.com) by **December 15th**.

### ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS:

- The right to copy all material printed in The Troubadour is granted provided you credit the Troubadour and author.
- When submitting articles for publication consideration, please state fraternity name and location, as well as your name and address.
- Photos are limited to 2 or 3. Some submitted photos will be used.

Because of our magazine article regional submission requirements, I am limited in the number of accepted submissions. Therefore, not all articles, poems or event images can be published in the current edition. I will give consideration for future publication.



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## Inspirational

### SAINTS

**St. Teresa Benedict of the Cross  
Edith Stein**



(1891-1942)

FEAST DAY: August 9th

*Let go of your plans. The first hour of your morning belongs to God. Tackle the day's work that he charges you with, and he will give you the power to accomplish it.*

*St. Edith Stein*

St. Edith Stein came from a Jewish family in Poland. After accepting Christ, she became a Carmelite nun with the name St. Benedicta of the Cross. When the Nazis persecuted the Jews during World War II, St. Edith was also arrested and sent to the Auschwitz camp. She remained calm and prayed fervently for peace. She had a chance to escape but she chose to remain with her people to her death.

**Lord, God of our fathers,  
you brought St Teresa Benedicta  
to the fullness of the science of the  
Cross at the hour of her martyrdom.  
Fill us with the same knowledge;  
and, through her intercession,  
allow us always to seek after you,  
the supreme truth, to remain faithful  
until death to the covenant of love  
ratified in the blood of your Son for  
the salvation of all men and women.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen**

