

Our Lady's Fraternity

OF THE ORDER OF SECULAR FRANCISCANS

FRATERNITY NEWS

There's a lot of news to catch up on, so I'm going to start at the most recent and work my way backwards in time.

Christmas giving: Again this year Our Lady's Fraternity will help a family in Bedford have some extras for Christmas. We've been asked to help out a little girl and a boy with clothing and appropriate toys:

Girl - 3½ years	Boy - 7 mos
Clothing - Size 5 Toddler - needs warm clothing	Clothing - Size 12 mos
Loves Disney's Moana	Age appropriate learning toys
Any age appropriate toys	Age appropriate toys

A couple of us have tucked in a gift card for gas, groceries, and clothes (Marshall's) for the parent/parent/grandparents as well.

If you can bring the gifts wrapped, great! Just mark which child they're for. If you can't, don't worry; we'll have paper & tape.

Holiday Fair: For the third year in a row we had a table at St. Michael's Holiday Fair. This year we made close to \$250! This goes a long way to bringing up our bank balance as we look ahead to our Fair Share assessment due in March (more on that later). Thank you Ann & Grazia for taking care of business!



Ann & Grazia at Our Lady's table for St. Michael's Holiday Fair

Next Fraternity Meeting

December 9, 2018*

2:00--Fraternity Meeting

3:30--Social Time

Refreshments: TBD
(volunteers?)

Upcoming Meetings:

December 9
Refreshments: TBD

January 13
Refreshments: TBD

February 10
Refreshments: TBD

March 10
Refreshments: TBD

April 14
Refreshments: TBD

Upcoming Events:

December 8: Advent Retreat,
St. Andrews, N. Billerica

*If the weather forecast warrants cancelling our meeting, you'll get a call no later than Saturday.

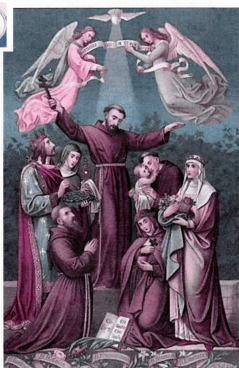
As always, though, stay safe. If you aren't comfortable on the roads, please stay home.

Eternal life is not something sought after —it is something responded to. That means it's a gift. We don't have to fight for it. We don't have to work hard to earn it. We don't have to obey laws in order to deserve it. We already have it. Love knows this.

Richard Robr OFM



Mass of Franciscan Profession
Patricia Justine Fazzone



St. Anthony Shrine
the church on Arch Street

*"A prophetic, Franciscan, Catholic community
welcoming all people through prayer and outreach."*

Blessings upon blessings!

October was a very good month for our fraternity *and* the Order. On the 14th, Patricia Fazzone made her profession at St. Anthony Shrine in Boston. Fr Gene Pistacchio OFM (for those familiar with St. Anthony's) presided, and Fr. John Maganzini OFM gave a wonderful homily. It was a beautiful welcoming of Patricia into the OFS.

At our regular October meeting, we welcomed Paula

Petricone as a Candidate for profession. Paula has been a part of the fraternity for the past few years, and we rejoice that the Holy Spirit has called her to move closer to becoming a full member of the order.

Both Patricia and Paula bring much wisdom, insight, love, and joy with them; we are blessed to have them in our family, and without doubt they will help all of us grown as Franciscans.

O Lord,

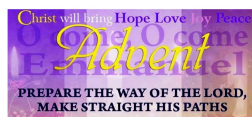
look kindly upon those whom you have called to the holiness of gospel life in the Secular Franciscan Order. Grant [us] the grace to fulfill [our] commitment to the gospel life which [we] have embraced with spirit and generosity.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

From The Annual Renewal Of Profession

REGIONAL & DISTRICT NEWS

As you may know, we are part of District 2 of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Region, the other fraternities being St. Bernard's (Leominster), St. Francis (Tewkesbury), and St. Ann's (Northborough). One of our hopes over the past several years has been to better connect with our district's sisters and brothers, and we have an opportunity to do so on December 8. St. Francis Fraternity is hosting an *Advent Day Of Reflection* at St. Andrew's Church in North Billerica. The day begins at 8:00 & ends



St. Francis Fraternity Advent Day of Reflection

When : Saturday December 8, 2018
Where: Saint Andrew Church
45 Talbot Avenue
N. Billerica, MA

8:00-8:45am: Downstairs Hall. Coffee, Pastry and Welcome
9am: Guest Speakers begin
11:30am: Liturgy Upstairs Church
12:30: Lunch and Discussion
1:30: Franciscan Crown in honor of "The Immaculate Conception"

Closing Meditation with Lisa Cyr, our Spiritual Assistant
The day will end around 2:30pm with a FREE RAFFLE
Cost is \$15 (due 4:00pm) cash or check made out to FOF

For questions, Call Mary Sarno 308-414-6111 or email SecularFranciscan@outnet.com

around 2:30. The cost of \$15 includes lunch. The contact person is Mary Stavro at 508-414-0111; let her know if you plan to attend ASAP. If you are interested in attending and need a ride, let Andy know. Also we can cover the cost (\$15) if that helps (again, let Andy know).

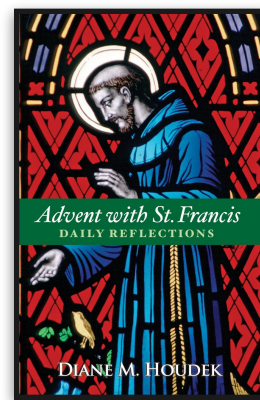
ONGOING FORMATION

By now everyone should have a copy of *Advent With St. Francis*, by Diane Houdek. We discussed using this last year, but it was too late to order copies; this year we decided at the October meeting, but then had to contend with backorders.

Since we'll only meet once during Advent, and since several of our members aren't able to regularly attend meetings, we decided that each of us should choose how best to use the book.

Each day has scripture readings, a reflection, and a prayer. While each day's readings won't take long, let's approach them as we would devotionals during a retreat, savoring each element & opening ourselves to the movement of the Spirit. Also, let's picture ourselves in fraternity with the other members, using the same texts on the same day—sort of "virtual fraternity time" together.

The one "requirement" (not really, more of a suggestion) is to record your feelings and/or thoughts on each day. Spiritual journals, writing in the margins of the book, Post-it notes, or even just a thought or two on a piece of paper, all work. The primary goal here is for each of us to enrich our Advent, the secondary goal is to see how our feelings and thoughts develop over the Advent season, the third goal is to give us material for our discussions in December and January.



If you'd like to try keeping a spiritual journal for Advent, here is a primer from the Daughters of St. Paul:

HOW TO KEEP A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL LIKE THE SAINTS DID

There's always been a special place in the Catholic Church for the keeping of spiritual journals. Some of our most beloved saints, including St. Therese of Lisieux (her journal was published as *The Story of a*



Soul) and St. Ignatius Loyola (whose journal became the *Spiritual Exercises*), kept spiritual journals.

Closer to our own time, Pope John XXIII kept a personal journal from when he was a teenager until he died, and Pope John Paul II's personal notes are also soon to be published in English.

These journals were originally meant to be simply dialogues between individual souls and God; but they continue to be a source of inspiration and encouragement to millions of people who can grow and learn from these revelations of great saints' interior lives.

So what exactly is a spiritual journal?

It's not the same thing as a diary. A diary is a chronological accounting of daily events. A journal is much more: it's a prayer, a capturing on paper of an interior dialogue between the writer and God.

This is clear in Gabrielle Bossis' spiritual journal, *He and I*; it's a back-and-forth between her and Jesus. Father Gaston Courtois kept notebooks that he carried around everywhere and that reflected his interior conversations with God; they later became *When The Lord Speaks to Your Soul*.

Most of us don't hear Jesus' voice as clearly as did these people. We all try; and sometimes, if we're blessed and fortunate, we're able to get a glimpse of that same light the saints were blinded by. But we can all still come closer to God through keeping a spiritual journal.

How do you do it?

Here's what you'll need:

- an empty notebook or journal. It can be as plain or as fancy as you'd like, but try to find one without too many distracting pictures and embellishments inside. You're going to be listening hard for God's voice, not trying to match your thoughts and prayers to some artist's idea of what you should be writing.
- a couple of sturdy pens (so that you don't have to interrupt your writing should the first one stop writing).
- a quiet place where you can be alone with God.
- a Bible and a favorite spiritual classic. We have some excellent choices if you don't have one in mind: besides Gabrielle's own *He and I*, we have Gaston Courtois' *When the Lord Speaks to Your Heart*; Helena Burns' *He Speaks to You*; and Jean LaFrance's *Pray to Your Father in Secret*, which are all great places to start.

In her book *The Artist's Way*, Julia Cameron talks about writing early in the morning before the distractions of

the day begin. She suggests thinking of what she calls "morning pages" as a form of meditation. Writing early in the day can be a way of finding your own quiet center, the place where you can hear your own voice and also the whispering of the Holy Spirit.

But if you're not a morning person, then perhaps the quiet of the evening when all your tasks are finished—children in bed, dinner over, work completed—is a better time. Choose what makes sense for you.

How to use your spiritual journal

Start with prayer. Actually, that's a good prescription for any endeavor: always start with prayer! Open yourself to God's voice and sit still and silent before addressing him with words; God often speaks to us through silence. Wait, and listen. What is it that God wants of you at this moment, for this day, this month, this year?

Now take a few minutes to read. Read a passage from Scripture or a page or two from whatever book you've chosen to accompany your new practice. You may find that God's voice will spring out at you as you read.

Finally pick up your new journal, ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you, and write whatever your prayer and your reading have inspired in you. Just write. Don't be disappointed if it's not deep, or interesting, or "important"—just write.

Don't worry about making sense in your journal: this is between you and God, and God already knows what is in your heart. The journal is really for you, for clarifying your thoughts and beliefs, for exploring the depths of your relationship with God, for helping you make choices and decisions in your daily life. So don't fret about spelling or grammar or whether your handwriting looks good. Just write.

If you get stuck or can't find time for your spiritual journal, don't berate yourself. God understands. When you can, just reread the preceding pages and begin again. Relax! God is with you. You may not always find the words. You may not even find the message that you're looking for. Don't worry: that may be exactly what the message for this time is supposed to be!

Pray. Write. Read. Reflect. No matter what happens, never forget that any time spent with God in the quiet moments of your life is always time well spent.

Daughters of St. Paul posted on 1/26/2017 9:31:00 AM

<http://www.pauline.org/Pauline-Books-Media-Blog/ArticleID/2960/How-to-Keep-a-Spiritual-Journal-like-the-Saints-Did>



FEATURE: BR. JOHN COOPER OFM CAP.

As I was preparing this newsletter, I checked the website for our sister & brother Seculars in Australia (<http://www.ofsaustralia.org.au>). I often find very good resources there, but lately I've been enjoying Brother John Cooper's monthly spiritual message (Br John is the national spiritual assistant for Australia). He's been marking the 40th year of the OFS Rule with reflections on our Rule and life as Secular Franciscans. For August and September he included some of our Secular saints, so I thought I'd share his writing in lieu of the *Secular Franciscan Saint of the Month*.



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF THE RULE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER (Part 7) - Monthly Spiritual Message September 2018
Saturday, September 01, 2018

Freedom to Love

Witnessing to the good yet to
and obliged to acquire purity of heart
because of the vocation, they have embraced,
the Seculars should set themselves free to love God
and their brothers and sisters.[1]

It is, with the Royal Tertiaries that we find a tremendous out-pouring of charitable works. Their fervor and zeal for the poor was identical to that of the poorer Tertiaries, but the vastness of their charitable works is due to their position, influence and their great financial resources. Among these two stand out:

St Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) was amazing in her care for the poor and is another good example of the fact that such, "extravagant charity" is not acceptable to all, for when her husband died she was forced by his relatives to leave the castle and live in poverty herself, which she realised was a blessing in disguise. Dying at age 24 she was canonized in 1235.

St Louis IX King of France (1214-1270), ranks well with St Elizabeth of Hungary, however being a King he had much more power. Besides many Convents and Monasteries, he built hospitals at Paris, Pontoise, Compiègne, and Vernon. De Joinville his biographer writes that, "In addition to all this, the King gave countless generous alms, to poor religious, to poor hospitals, to poor sick people, to poor gentlemen and gentlewomen, and girls, and to fallen women, to poor widows and women in childbed, and to poor old or sick minstrels." It is said, that he worked in the hospitals and even slept there; feeding the sick himself, while his noblemen, because of the stench of the sick, waited

outside. St Louis IX was also noted for his reign of peace because at the very beginning of his reign he settled ongoing disputes with both Spain and England. The absence of war allowed him to focus on the building of the great Cathedrals.

Even the Franciscan Mystics like **Bl. Angela of Foligno** (1248-1309), did not neglect the poor and needy. Angela and her community of Tertiaries did not keep an enclosure, but visited the sick in the hospital and even went to nurse the lepers.

This care of the sick reached into the extraordinary in Tertiaries like the young **St Roch of Montpellier** (1350-1379).[2] He tended the plague-stricken victims with such devotion that miraculous healings began to occur simply by him making the sign of the cross on the victim's forehead. For this reason, he became so famous and popular that he felt he had to escape to the forest to be free of the demands of the people. There in the woods, he almost died of the plague and starvation. The story goes that each day a dog faithfully brought him food. Perhaps the question should be asked: How many good Tertiaries died in nursing the sick, especially during the plague?

As peace makers, the Tertiaries were an excellent bulwark against the greed, ambition, and the feuds of the times, which plagued families. Among these stands out **St Elizabeth of Portugal** (1271-1336) who seemed to spend her whole life trying to stop wars between the Kings and Nobles.

John of Peace (1353-1433) a converted soldier from Pisa, began one of the great examples of Tertiary activity. Pere Leon tells us that, "John's life was entirely devoted to works of charity. He chastised his body with an iron chain and other severe austerities" John founded a pious society at Pisa, the members of which regularly contributed to a common fund. These alms, with great delicacy and kindness, were secretly distributed to poor people who were too ashamed to beg. He succeeded in implanting so solid a spirit of charity in this Confraternity, that as long as the organization existed, which was up to the disturbances caused by the French Revolution this noble work continued.

St Albert Adam Chmielowski (1845 -1916) called "Brother Albert" was a Polish artist, who became a tertiary. At the core of his spiritual transformation was his mystical experience of Christ, whose desecrated image he discerned in the poor. For their sake, he took up quarters in humble shacks, living as a pauper among paupers, so that by way of an "apostolate of presence"



he might uplift people in their social condition and, even more, point out to them the way to God. To assure continuance and stability of this undertaking, he became a religious in 1887, thus giving origin to the Order of Brother Servants of the Poor in 1888. He died with a reputation of sanctity on December 25, 1916. In a life of profound contemplation and ardent love of God, he drew inspiration for projects of social welfare based on the evangelical principle of love of neighbour. During his almost thirty years of life among the oppressed, together with the men of his religious order,, he erected homes for the poor in many places. In Poland, and elsewhere, Brother Albert is referred to as another St. Francis of Assisi. Pope John Paul II canonized him in Rome on November 12, 1989.

A more modern story of the generosity of the Third Order comes from Detroit at the beginning of the "Great Depression." The Stock Market collapsed on the 24th of October 1929. During this terrible time, many friaries became legendary for their charity to the poor. For example, long lines of men waited patiently for food at the Franciscan friary on 31ST Street in New York.

However, in Detroit, at the Capuchin Friary, the situation became extreme and friars like Fr Bernard Casey OFM Cap, struggled to feed everyone from the front door of the friary as the lines of men reached 600 and 700 morning, noon and evening. To cope with this situation, the Guardian asked the friar Director of the Third Order if the Tertiaries could help. Immediately, the Third Order turned over their Third Order Hall for the care of these poor men and established the famous **Soup Kitchen of Detroit**. Then, for the first five years, ladies of the Third Order, beginning at 7:00am

and working until 5:00pm prepared, in the beginning, soup and later on stew for the thousands of men who came to the soup kitchen.[3] It was in the midst of this situation that Blessed Bernard Casey lived his miraculous life and ministry. He was beatified on the 18th of November 2017.

Br John Cooper OFM Cap
National Spiritual Assistant
Secular Franciscan Order of Australia

[1] The Rule of the OFS Number 12.

[2] The Feast of St Roch is a Secular Franciscan feast. So too, is the Feast of St Pope Pius X. His mother, also a tertiary, is quoted as saying to her son, as she came up to kiss the Ring of the Fisherman, "You must kiss my wedding ring first, because without it you would not have the ring of the Pope!" He did.

[3] Catherine Bicknell, Ph.D. *Breaking Bread and Mending Spirits: Detroit's Capuchin Soup Kitchen 1929 -1979*. Fidelity Press, Detroit, Michigan. 1979. pp. 15, 16ff. The fact that the Third Order was there at the very beginning of the Soup Kitchen in Detroit, handing over their Fraternity Hall so as to found the Soup Kitchen and providing meals for at least five years is an extraordinary story. It was estimated that the soup kitchen, had provided over 10 million meals by 1979, which was its 50th year of operation. It continues to this day.



Cooper, Br. John, OFM Cap. "CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF THE RULE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER." *Secular Franciscan Order Of Australia*. N.p., 1 Sept. 2018. Web. 9 Nov. 2018. <<http://www.ofsaustralia.org.au/resources/celebrating-40-years-of-the-rule-of-the-secular-franciscan-order-part-7-monthly-spiritual-message-se>>.

ANDY'S COLUMN

When I was teaching English, I used to spend time talking about metaphor with my students. I would tell them that metaphors worked in powerful ways that other forms of expression don't; the comparing of two unlike things causes our minds to try reconciling those distinctions, and in doing so opens us to new ways of understanding. I was thinking about metaphor the other day when I looked out the window into the woods in front of our house and thought to myself, "I don't think I'm ready for fall to be over." The storms over the last few weeks have stripped the leaves from the trees, and now the woods are settling into their winter sleep. I couldn't help but think that there must be a metaphor in there somewhere, so I started

wondering what seemed appropriate at that moment. What came to mind was that old expression, "you can't see the forest for the trees." Looking out of the woods, the trees stripped of their summer glory, I realized that I *was* in fact seeing the forest. And that got me thinking...

Everyone at some point realizes that life is finite, and many people of faith come to understand that living this life is preparation for the next. One of the many gifts of aging is that our experiences allow us to see bigger pictures than when we were younger—seeing the forests, as it were, instead of the individual trees of our life's experiences. Our Secular Franciscan Rule is emerging as one of the grandest forests in my life,



coloring all the trees of my experiences with colors more beautiful than any New England autumn. It allows me to look back on events in my life that were challenging, if not downright difficult, and see them differently. The same is true of the happy, if not downright joyous, experiences. Accepting (even if it's imperfect) Christ's infinite love for us casts a brighter clearer light on the details of my life, such that I have begun to understand (I hope) what Father Francis meant when he said, "What had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body" (Testament #3).

Don't get me wrong; I have a long way to go until someday—maybe—I'll be able to live life a little closer to our Franciscan ideals. Our Rule, though, is both my guide and my comfort along the way. God willing, I'll have many more years ahead in which the trees of my life will be brightened by His love, shining down through our Franciscan charism. -Andy



TREASURER'S REPORT

As mentioned earlier, we took in around \$250 at St. Michael's Holiday Fair. This brings our bank balance to \$600.49! Our Fair Share assessment should be around \$588.00: \$42.00 per member x 14 active members (remember that those of us who can no longer make it to meetings are still considered "active"). So it looks like this year there won't be any last-minute appeals to make up any difference between our dues and our bank account.

Maureen Reyling, the rental and events coordinator at St. Michael's, has given us an early Christmas present! She approached Msgr. Cuddy about no longer charging us for room rental since we are a more-or-less part of the parish. This saves us several hundred dollars a year!

I think we can take this as a sign that our efforts to be just that, a part of the parish and more visible in its life, have been successful!

If you run into Maureen or Msgr. Cuddy, be sure to thank them.

St. Michael's parish bulletin

CALENDAR

I decided to include a separate monthly calendar with the newsletter instead of the lists I was using before. It seemed to me that it would be more useful to have a calendar that could be put up someplace where it could be seen rather than having it at the end of the newsletter. And it frees up a little more space for something else. let me know what you think.. -Andy

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