

ST. JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO FRATERNITY

Gathering – December 21, 2014

Ministers Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Francis and Clare,

At our December Gathering we will celebrate Christmas as a community starting at 1PM. All were asked to bring a covered dish or dessert; you may also bring wine if you wish. We will end our Gathering with early evening prayer at 3PM, please bring your Liturgy of the Hours. We will be praying the Forth Sunday of Advent Evening Prayer II.

Your Fraternity Council

Letter from Our Spiritual Assistant – Br. Lawrence LaFlame, OFM. Conv.

Brothers and Sisters,

Yes, Christmas is indeed coming but I want to postpone comments on that great feast of humility until the Christmas season proper in order to speak with you about the often neglected season of Advent. You may already be aware of my giving a day of prayer at the Shrine during Advent season and it is preparing for that that I wish to share some thoughts with you here.

As I see it most people would probably say that Christ is not really missing as he appears to be for Christmas. Still, there is, for me, an advent season which, even in its apparent smallness, Christ appears to be missing. Why I am saying this is because advent seems to be all about our preparation for the celebration of the coming of the baby Jesus; a celebration of advent that is such that many tend not to be aware of the double preparation of the season. In other words, we are preparing for Jesus but forgetting for our preparation for Christ! Double-talk? Hardly, for my point is to remind us that there are, in fact, two comings for which we must prepare. We are 'all on it' when it comes to celebrating the look back to the first coming at Christmas and the spirituality which emanates from that, but I fear that there needs to be a renewal of our preparation and anticipation for our future hope. Our hope is not just in a God who became human and saved us, but also one of a God who will come again to take us with him. We are so focused on the past that we forget about what is to come.

Where does this come? Allow me to use of one of the great pieces of world literature and its concern with past, present and future to explain. In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* the three ghosts of Christmas haunt Ebenezer Scrooge and when Christmas past and present are given it is a wonderful time, so bright and lively that one wonders how Christmas can ever be called a "humbug." Still, there is the 'ghost of Christmas yet to come' and it is this specter whom Ebenezer fears the most. We are, like Ebenezer, all in a way fearful of the future. We know what the future holds for us and it is not, in the end, something to which we want to have happen. The advent season as a preparation can certainly assist us here. Christ is yet to come again, but most assuredly will. Just as he came in the past so it is certain to us who believe that he will come in the future (like the third ghost at a time of His own choosing). So what do we do? The operative word from the first coming is 'joy,' and I would like to say to you that one element of joy is the recognition on our part of the assuredness of Christ's coming again. We are, in

The Flyer



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- Spiritual Assistant:**
Br. Lawrence LaFlame, OFM. Conv
410 531-2802



Christmas Gathering Social

Christmas Party with plenty of wine, cheese and other goodies. Everyone is invited to bring a covered dish, or sweet or savory Hor's D'ouves or cheese and crackers, dip, etc. to share.



Please Pray For ...

- Connie Baker**, OFS
- Donna Duncan**, OFS
- Marlene Feaga**, OFS
- Mary Ferrara**, OFS
- Joy Kubricky**, OFS
- Marie Lindung**, OFS
- Jim Manning**, OFS
- Georgianna Papazian**, OFS
- Nancy Seaton**, OFS
- Jim Tebo**, OFS



OUR DECEASED BROTHERS AND SISTERS

- Frances Bastress**, SFO
- Joe Bezila**, SFO
- Jerry Cichowicz**, SFO
- Shirley Costello**, OFS
- Joe Cykoski**, SFO
- Stella Cykoski**, SFO
- Claire Lee Davison**, SFO
- Adela Duff**, SFO
- Charles Ferrara**, SFO
- Dolores Fritz**, OFS
- Marilyn Gilson**, SFO
- Richard Hall**, SFO
- Frances Langben**, SFO
- Bob Lewis**, SFO
- Jean Manning**, OFS
- Yvonne Proch**, SFO
- Betty Taylor**, SFO
- Bud Tenley**, SFO
- Regina Yeager**, SFO
- Dorothy Zalewski**, SFO

fact, so certain because we are filled with `joy` in the knowledge that whatever may happen “God is *always* in control.” That is what we need to become more aware of for the advent season. It is a realization of the God being in charge, if you will.

Let me conclude here with suggesting that we spend some of this advent season reflecting on the second coming as well. Its certainty equally as certain as the Bethlehem event so long ago. A reflecting on the realization that no matter what happens here in our seemingly crazy world God is always in charge and able to overcome whatever craziness humans manage to dream up. And in our reflecting on this aspect we look forward to the second coming as being one where God’s kingdom will assuredly come and all of that `fear` of the world will no longer be there for us in the future kingdom. - Peace, Br. Lawrence

Upcoming Events

Our Next Book Sharing Meeting – All Are Welcome

Date: Saturday, January 3rd - 2:00pm ~ 4:00pm

Place: Geri Flynn’s Home: 5072 Bucket Post Court, Columbia
Tel. 410 730-4395

Book: "Francis, the Journey and the Dream", by Murray Bodo
Chapters: "Of Violence" - Page 111
"Breaking Point" - Page 112
"On the Road" - Page 113

January 18, 2015 – Gathering at The Shrine of St. Anthony Friary - Extraction of Saints

February 15, 2015 – Gathering at The Shrine of St. Anthony Friary – Brother Manny on Secular Franciscan – Poverty Chastity and Obedience

Regional Special Events

March 20-22, 2015 — Chapter of Mats.
Our Chapter of Mats will be held at the PriestField Retreat Center, PriestField, W.Va..

April 18, 2015 — Sixth Annual Day of Reflection
The Regional Annual Day of Reflection for Inquirers, Candidates and Newly Professed, will be held on April 18, 2015 at St. Anthony Shrine, Ellicott City, Md.

April 25, 2015 — Regional Council Elections
The Regional Council will hold elections of officers at the Franciscan Monastery, Washington, D.C. on April 25, 2015. If you would like to hold a position at the regional level, please contact Bob Longo, OFS as soon as possible.

July 1-6, 2016 — Quinquennial Congress – Denver, CO
Save the date, make plans, and come journey with your brothers and sisters in the Mile-High City. The “Q” will



Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance: \$1083.71
 Income 555.00
 Total \$1638.71

Expenses:

Franciscan Friars 100.00
 Brother Lawrence 50.00
 Francis Corps 300.00
 Amazon Relief 300.00
 Fr. Julio 100.00
 Fr. Emmanuel 100.00
 Charlestown 100.00
 Website Fee 15.00
 Total Expenses: \$1065.00
Ending Balance: \$ 573.71

Thank You for your monthly
 contributions

Contribution is Tax Deductible

December Birthdays



Joan Bundy, OFS	12/15
Edward Burgee, OFS	12/17
Diane Witherspoon, OF	12/18
John Handiboe, OFS	12/18
Mark McPherson, OFS	12/23



Remembering Your Profession

Kevin Corcoran, OFS	12/16/09
Marie Lindung, OFS	12/16/09
James Soltysiak, OFS	12/16/09
Jim Manning, OFS	12/27/73

focus on “relationship”, and will feature “Dating God” author Fr. Dan Horan, OFM, as a keynote speaker. Father Dan was ordained in 2012 and is already a prolific author with six books published and two more due out this year.

A Christmas Story

St. Francis and the Crib - by Leonard Foley, O.F.M.



To celebrate the birth of Christ, St. Francis recreated the manger scene in a cave in the hills above Greccio, Italy. The real miracle was not, as some people say, that the figure of the infant came to life—but that there St. Francis first understood the humility of the Incarnation.

Christmas was 15 days away. Francis was staying at a hermitage at Fonte Columbo. He had just come from Rome—the last time, for he would die in three years—where the pope had approved his Rule. The brief future would be filled with pain, even the pain of the wounds of Christ.

How to celebrate Christmas? He remembered his visit to the Holy Land, to Bethlehem.

Why not? A kind of replica of the manger there. There was a cave, in Greccio...

He had a good friend, Giovanni (John) Vellita, whom he had met on one of his preaching tours. John was a military man, lord of Greccio, just two miles away. John had fallen under the spell of Francis, had renounced all worldly honors and was trying to live a life imitating that of Francis as well as he could.

Francis, with the assurance of friendship, sent word: “If you want to celebrate the Feast of the Lord at Greccio, hurry and diligently prepare what I tell you. For I wish to recall to memory the little child who was born in Bethlehem. I want to set before our bodily eyes the hardships of his infant needs, how he lay in the manger, how with an ox and ass standing by he lay upon the hay.”

John began immediately. People prepared torches and candles to light up the night. The manger was prepared in the cave, and the ox and ass brought in. When Francis came to the friars’ hermitage, he was delighted.

The great evening arrived. People began to come in procession, carrying their torches and candles. The woods rang with their song. They were rediscovering the joy of childhood.

Today, in Greccio, one can still see the stone—perhaps three feet high and two feet wide—on which the hay was placed. It has a brownish gray top and bottom, with a band of gray in the center. The top has a rough, shallow, V-shaped indentation. Here the carved image of the baby was laid. There were no figures of Joseph and Mary, just the two animals.

As the villagers and friars crowded around, a priest began the Mass. Francis gave the sermon. His biographer, Thomas of Celano, Francis’ contemporary, writes: “The saint of God stood before the manger, uttering sighs, overcome with love and filled with a wonderful happiness. He sang the Gospel in a sonorous voice, a clear and sonorous voice, inviting all to

the highest rewards. Then he preached to the people standing about and spoke charming words concerning the birth of the poor King, and the little town of Bethlehem....When he spoke the name 'Child of Bethlehem' or 'Jesus,' his tongue licked his lips, relishing and savoring with pleased palate the sweetness of the words."

The accounts do not say whether the child was a living baby or a carved figure. It was probably the latter, for it is recorded that at least one of the observers "saw the infant come alive."

The simple celebration was not the first time the birth of Jesus was celebrated in a dramatic way, as we shall see. But Francis brought to the scene a vision that saw more than the pleasant tableau we now have.

As quoted above, he wanted to show the hardships Jesus suffered already as an infant. In the daring phrase of St. Paul, he saw the emptying of the glory of the Son of God, born of a gentle mother but still thrown upon a stony and resisting world.

Francis wanted to realize and help people realize exactly what God had done for his people, and "how poor he chose to be for our sakes." Francis himself had chosen the bitter poverty of being on the margin of society, with no resources or security. He saw the Son of God placing himself, as it were, on the margin of divinity.

He saw a truly human Jesus, not a divine being hiding behind a deceptive physical facade. The humility of the Incarnation and of the Cross was his constant preoccupation. He wanted to think of nothing else—Bethlehem and Calvary.

His life centered, then, around poverty and humility, sister virtues. He told his friars not to be ashamed to beg, "since God himself became poor for our sakes. Poverty is the heritage which our Lord Jesus Christ has acquired for us."

Thomas of Celano says, "He would often meditate on the desolation of Christ and his holy mother with tears, and he maintained that poverty was 'the queen' of the virtues, as she had become so radiantly manifest in the King and his mother."

Francis' love and compassion for the suffering and Passion of Christ were so deep that he no longer cared about his own pain. In the year after this celebration, he would be so identified with the suffering Christ that the five wounds appeared in his body.

After reading the above story, all I can say, what a beautiful gift given to us by our Holy Father Francis. May you and your family receive every blessing during this holy season of Christmas.

Merry Christmas to all.

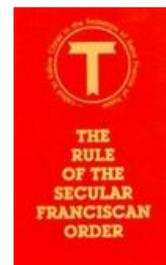
Bob Longo, SFO
Minister

OUR GATHERINGS – Active members should make every attempt to attend our Gathering every month. If you are unable to attend due to illness, work or family obligations, please contact a council member (see page one for telephone numbers). If you are professed and miss a gathering, please send your check for the Common Fund to:

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	<h2>Calendar</h2>
<h3>At the Friary</h3>	
Christmas Concert December 20, 2014 7:00pm. - 9:00pm. Go to: http://www.shrineofstanthony.org/event/	
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Christmas Eve Mass 4 PM and 10 PM Christmas Day Mass 12 PM	



Rule 5 of the Secular Franciscan Order

Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of Saint Francis, who often said "I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood," should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.

Food for Thought: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart." – Helen Keller