



The Porter

St. Conrad Fraternity, Annapolis, MD
Secular Franciscan Order – December 2015
<http://stconradannapolis.sfousa.org/>

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The Porter deadline for the January issue is January 4th. Please send news, prayer requests, poems, or interesting things that you think other members may enjoy to: Jean Gaes, 1824 Lang Drive, Crofton, MD 21114 or send to jrgofs@gmail.com

Fraternity Meeting  CHRISTMAS PEACE	Saturday, December 12th. at St. John the Evangelist Church, 607 Ritchie Hwy., Severna Park, MD 21146 in the Youth Room. All are invited to attend the 8:30 Mass in the church. Brunch, Christmas Peace Presentation, and Carols to follow
Refreshments 	Davidsonville will set up. As is customary in December we're asking everyone to bring a dish or treat for our Christmas brunch. Bring your own coffee cup too! Glen Burnie will be next. Plan to take the supplies home, restock, & return them at the next meeting.
	Hope for All: Urgent needs of the homeless are constantly changing. We'll be having a collection basket each month for Hope for All. Thank you for your generosity!
Light House Shelter 	A group from our fraternity makes and delivers lunches monthly for the residents. Shelter Lunch Making will be on Thursday, Dec. 10 th . At Joan Kvetkas home at 9:30 AM. We're collecting monthly for the much-needed bus tokens. Another shelter dinner is planned but the date is being finalized.
Liturgy	The Glen Burnie group will lead our prayer.
Council Meeting	Sunday, January 3, 2016 1:30 pm at the Tyrrell's
Treasury	Common Fund balance \$2, 182.71
Prayer Requests 	For our sick and/or homebound members , for all those in need of physical or spiritual healing, for victims of violence and oppression, refugees, and for the deceased members of our fraternity. Please help us update the prayer list. There will be an opportunity to do this at each meeting. If you can't be there please send them to Jean Gaes.

<i>Happy Birthday</i>	Genevieve Wilbourne 12/5, John Trechel 12/6, Marie Shelton 12/26, Jenny Moriera 12/31, George Ryan 1/7, Debbie Proctor 1/10
Profession Anniversary	Santa Ragot Dec. 14, 1980
Calendar DECEMBER 12 JANUARY 16	FRATERNITY MEETING/CHRISTMAS BRUNCH FRATERNITY MEETING

Minister's Minute

Brothers and Sisters, Happy Advent. We often hear of Advent as a time of waiting, waiting for Christ to come. Have you thought of “waiting with St. Francis”? Wouldn't we be praying for the light to come into our darkness, looking for Jesus in those who need our mercy, making “room in the inn” of our hearts for those like the Holy Family are poor and homeless, praising God for His goodness, humility and poverty as we look upon the infant Jesus in the crèche, asking for the grace to be Instruments of Peace in a world so torn by violence. May we unite together this Saturday in our Peace “skit” at our Christmas brunch with Scripture, Peace Prayer, Songs and Creche reflection by Br. James. May St. Francis and our Mother of Mercy pray with us and for us as we begin this Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Our Pope Francis has given us a heroic example of calling for peace while in Bangui, Central African Republic. We have agreed to send cards thanking him. He said “ To all those who make unjust use of the weapons of this world, I make this appeal: Lay down these instruments of death” at the Mass following the opening of the Door for the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. He called himself “a pilgrim of peace and an apostle of hope.” May we follow his example.

A special thanks to Brother James who gave us our Advent Day of Reflection on the Year of Mercy. The handouts will be available if you missed it. Have you read Pat's comprehensive article about Mercy in the November UpToNow? He has suggested many ways to live it out. The UptoNow has just arrived due to the passing of Alice Coffman, daughter of the editor, Mary Lou Coffman. May she rest in peace.

We rejoice with the addition of three new candidates following their Rite of Admission at the last meeting. Congrats once again the Jude Dodge, Francis and Deborah Proctor. Pax et bonum, Judith

Make a pilgrimage during the jubilee of mercy: <http://www.shrineofstanthony.org/>

...The Holy Year of Mercy begins December 8, 2015 and continues to November 20, 2016. The Shrine of St. Anthony is one of seven official pilgrimage sites with a "Holy Door" in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Please consider a trip to the Shrine during this special Jubilee Year. You are always welcome at the Shrine of St. Anthony!

Peace, Fr. Michael E. Heine, OFM Conv. Director Info@ShrineofStAnthony.org

Christmas Concert in the Shrine Chapel, Saturday December 19th, 7-8:30pm., dessert reception in Dining Room afterwards

Greccio Living Nativity, Saturday Dec. 12th & Sunday Dec. 13th, 7:30pm.



Jubilee of Mercy –begins on December 8th. There are so many ways to live it out! Pray the prayer! Meditate on “[Moments of Mercy](#)”... and the other links.

Prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee: Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: “If you knew the gift of God!” You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God. Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, - 2 - and restore sight to the blind. We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

[Read the documents written by Pope Francis that explains this Holy Year here:](#)

<http://www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/gdm/en/giubileo/bolla.html>

12. The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person. The Spouse of Christ must pattern her behaviour after the Son of God who went out to everyone without exception. In the present day, as the Church is charged with the task of the new evangelization, the theme of mercy needs to be proposed again and again with new enthusiasm and renewed pastoral action. It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy. Her language and her gestures must transmit mercy, so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father.

The Church’s first truth is the love of Christ. The Church makes herself a servant of this love and mediates it to all people: a love that forgives and expresses itself in the gift of oneself. Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy.

13. We want to live this Jubilee Year in light of the Lord’s words: *Merciful like the Father*. The Evangelist reminds us of the teaching of Jesus who says, “Be merciful just as your Father is merciful” (*Lk* 6:36). It is a programme of life as demanding as it is rich with joy and peace. Jesus’s command is directed to anyone willing to listen to his voice (cf. *Lk* 6:27). In order to be capable of mercy, therefore, we must first of all dispose ourselves to listen to the Word of God. This means rediscovering the value of silence in order to meditate on the Word that comes to us. In this way, it will be possible to contemplate God’s mercy and adopt it as our lifestyle.

15. In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates. How many uncertain and painful situations there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich! During this Jubilee, the Church will be called even more to heal these wounds, to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care. Let us not fall into humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine that prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism! Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism!

It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the *corporal and spiritual works of mercy*. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these *corporal works of mercy*: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And let us not forget the *spiritual works of mercy*: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.

We cannot escape the Lord's words to us, and they will serve as the criteria upon which we will be judged: whether we have fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger and clothed the naked, or spent time with the sick and those in prison (cf. *Mt 25:31-45*). Moreover, we will be asked if we have helped others to escape the doubt that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness; if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bonds of poverty; if we have been close to the lonely and afflicted; if we have forgiven those who have offended us and have rejected all forms of anger and hate that lead to violence; if we have had the kind of patience God shows, who is so patient with us; and if we have commended our brothers and sisters to the Lord in prayer. In each of these "little ones," Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us. Let us not forget the words of Saint John of the Cross: "as we prepare to leave this life, we will be judged on the basis of love".[12]

16. In the Gospel of Luke, we find another important element that will help us live the Jubilee with faith. Luke writes that Jesus, on the Sabbath, went back to Nazareth and, as was his custom, entered the synagogue. They called upon him to read the Scripture and to comment on it. The passage was from the Book of Isaiah where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those in captivity; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (*Is 61:1-2*). A "year of the Lord's favour" or "mercy": this is what the Lord proclaimed and this is what we wish to live now. This Holy Year will bring to the fore the richness of Jesus' mission echoed in the words of the prophet: to bring a word and gesture of consolation to the poor, to proclaim liberty to those bound by new forms of slavery in modern society, to restore sight to those who can see no more because they are caught up in themselves, to restore dignity to all those from whom it has been robbed. The preaching of Jesus is made visible once more in the response of faith which Christians are called to offer by their witness. May the words of the Apostle accompany us: he who does acts of mercy, let him do them with cheerfulness (cf. *Rom 12:8*).

<http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en.html>

The Manger He Made in Celebration of The Lord's Birthday

from Thomas of Celano's first Life of St. Francis

We should note then, as matter worthy of memory and something to be recalled with reverence, what he did, three years prior to his death, at the town of Greccio, on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was a certain man in that area named John who had a good reputation but an even better manner of life. Blessed Francis loved him with special affection, since, despite being a noble in the land and very honored in human society, he had trampled the nobility of the flesh under his feet and pursued instead the nobility of the spirit. As usual, blessed Francis had John summoned to him some fifteen days prior to the birthday of the Lord. "If you desire to celebrate the coming feast of the Lord together at Greccio", he said to him, "hurry before me and carefully make ready the things I tell you. For I wish to enact the memory of that babe *who was born in Bethlehem* (Mt 2:1-2): to see as much as is possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he *lay in a manger* (Lk 2:7), and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he rested on hay". Once the good and faithful man had heard Francis' words, he ran quickly and prepared in that place all the things that the holy man had requested.

Finally, the day of joy has drawn near, the time of exultation has come. From many different places the brethren have been called. As they could, the men and women of that land with exultant hearts prepare candles and torches to light up that night whose shining star has enlightened every day and year. Finally, the holy man of God comes and, finding all things prepared, he saw them and was glad. Indeed, the manger is prepared, the hay is carried in, and the ox and the ass are led to the spot. There simplicity is given a place of honor, poverty is exalted, humility is commended, and out of Greccio is made a new Bethlehem.

The night is lit up like day, delighting both man and beast. The people arrive, ecstatic at this new mystery of new joy. The forest amplifies the cries and the boulders echo back the joyful crowd. The brothers sing, giving God due praise, and the whole night abounds with jubilation. The holy man of God stands before the manger, filled with heartfelt sighs, contrite in his piety, and overcome with wondrous joy. Over the manger the solemnities of the Mass are celebrated and the priest enjoys a new consolation. The holy man of God is dressed in the vestments of the Levites, since he was a Levite, and with full voice sings the holy gospel. Here is his voice: a powerful voice, a pleasant voice, a clear voice, a musical voice, inviting all to the highest of gifts. Then he preaches to the people standing around him and pours forth sweet honey about the birth of the poor King and the poor city of Bethlehem. Moreover, burning with excessive love, he often calls Christ the "babe from Bethlehem" whenever he means to call Him Jesus. Saying the word "Bethlehem" in the manner of a bleating sheep, he fills his whole mouth with sound but even more with sweet affection. He seems to lick his lips whenever he uses the expressions "Jesus" or "babe from Bethlehem", tasting the word on his happy palate and savoring the sweetness of the word. The gifts of the Almighty are multiplied there and a virtuous man sees a wondrous vision. For the man saw a little child lying lifeless in the manger and he saw the holy man of God approach the child and waken him from a deep sleep. Nor is this vision unfitting, since in the hearts of many the child Jesus has been given over to oblivion. Now he is awakened and impressed on their loving memory by His own grace through His holy servant Francis. At length, the night's solemnities draw to a close and everyone went home with joy.

The hay placed in the manger there was preserved afterwards so that, through it, the Lord might restore to health the pack animals and the other animals there, as He multiplied his holy mercy. It came to pass in the surrounding area that many of the animals, suffering from various diseases, were freed from their illnesses when they ate some of this hay. What is more, women who had been suffering with long and hard labor had an easy delivery after they placed some of this hay upon themselves. Finally, an entire group of people of both sexes obtained much-desired relief from an assortment of afflictions.

At last, the site of the manger was consecrated as a temple to the Lord. In honor of the most blessed Francis, an altar was constructed over the manger, and a church was dedicated. This was done so that were animals once ate the fodder of the hay, there humans henceforth for healing of body and soul would eat the flesh of the immaculate and spotless lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us with supreme and indescribable love.

Alternative Gift Giving Ideas: Christmas novena cards, sponsorships, donations, fair trade products, etc.

<http://www.seraphicmass.org/>

<http://www.capuchin.com/>

<http://www.ixcanministries.org/>

<http://www.crsfairtrade.org/crafts/>

<http://www.amazonrelief.org/>

<http://franciscanfamilyapostolate.org/>

<http://franciscanmissionservice.org/>

<http://www.little-bethlehem.org/>

<http://www.myfranciscan.org/>

<http://www.monasterygreetings.com/?gclid=CKWNh8bKx8kCFQsjHwodj2sPkA>



The Fraternity Council is asking all of us to pray the Angelus together in spirit, each day at noon, to pray for peace. OUR PEACE CROSS IS AGAIN CIRCULATING! PLEASE PRAY FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS, REFUGEES, AND ALL THE SUFFERING PEOPLE IN OUR VIOLENT WORLD.

Don't forget to visit our fraternity website at: <http://stconradannapolis.sfousa.org/>

CARE FOR CREATION -WINTERIZATION

Dec 5 the gardens were winterized; thawing, wrapping up and storing all the hose, spreading some clover seeds and letting the wind take some milkweed seeds, spreading the composting straw to cover the clover and the planting area preparing for 2016, removing the pollinator vines and cutting back the pollinator perennials. Plans were discussed for involving more parishioners next year with germination, bale conditioning, planting, and maintaining the straw-bale garden making a sacrificial offering of time and talents to help serve the poor with organic vegetables.

