



Pace e Bene Peace and Good

Christmas in the Year of Our Lord, 2014

Dear Friends,

I pray that your Christmas and that of your loved ones be filled with all the love, peace, and joy of the Jesus who became Incarnate for us. This is the good news which no power on earth can take from us: He loved us so much as to become one of us that we might return with Him to the Father! Thank you, Jesus!

During 20 14, God has been so prodigal with many generous gifts, the greatest of which was to spend ten days with twenty two of the most wonderful people on earth in Rome, Greccio, La Verna, and Assisi reflecting on the life of St. Francis and St. Clare right in the places where they walked this earth. And, oh yes, we

cheered wildly in Rome when we were privileged to see his Holiness Pope Francis! Just a nice, intimate group of about 300,000+ pilgrims happily sharing their faith and being blest by the Vicar of Christ on earth as Pope Francis wended his way around St. Peter's Piazza.

Our days in Assisi were also filled with blessings as we visited the Basilica of St. Francis, the Portiuncula, the Carceri, San Damiano, the Basilica of St. Clare. And our day trip to La Verna . . . it's always a favorite of pilgrims and this year it was no different. This sacred place touches everyone very, very deeply. No wonder St. Francis produced one of most sublime writings here, his "Praises of God"!

Lest you think all we did was pray, we managed quite well to enjoy the cuisine of Italy—its vino, pasta, sweet pastries and Perugian chocolate . .

. and a lovely "happy hour" each afternoon enjoying memories of the day and each other's companionship.

What lies ahead? A question which, of course, only God can answer but He has been full of many surprises in the years of my life so I trust that He 's still got a few to shower my way. I pray that He may do the same for you, your family, and all your loved ones — both in His heavenly embrace and here on His beautifully created earth.

El Signore di dia pace!
Pace e bene!

Sr. Agnes Marie, OSF



Fraternity Council

Cyndi Pilot, OFS, Minister – 574-210-1224
Tim Martin, OFS, Vice Minister – 574-532-8916
Timothy Short, OFS, Formation Director- 574-298-8981
Monica Higginbotham, OFS, Treasurer – 574-262-3923
Ruthi Carrillo, OFS, Secretary – 574-303-7181
Agnes Marie Regan, OSF – Spiritual Assistant – 574-259-5427
Join us the third Saturday of each month for formation and fellowship at St. Francis Convent, 1515 Dragoon Trail, Mishawaka, Indiana (across from Marian High School)
For more information please contact any council member.
Immaculate Conception Fraternity – PO Box 132 –Mishawaka, IN 46546

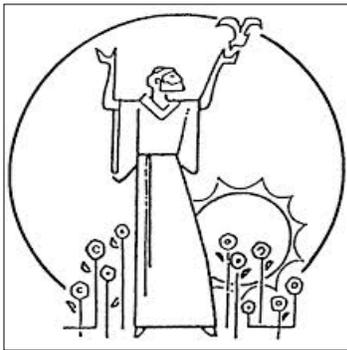
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I bring to you news of our sister, Emily Nowak, OFS, who has been embraced by Sister Death and taken home to her heavenly Father on December 13th. Let us feel great joy for her for now she is at last free of her confusion, pain, and lack of mobility and filled with the joy of eternal life. Let us also pray for those who mourn her loss in their lives. Emily Nowak recently moved from the home she shared with her best friend Flossie Banning to a nursing home in Beecher, Illinois. Please pray for the repose of Emily's soul and for Flossie who is mourning Emily's passing. Funeral arrangements are forthcoming.

We ask prayers for two of our sisters who recently had surgeries. Diane Kreager with a hip replacement and Cindy Gillis who had both knees replaced at the same time. Let us pray that they have uneventful recoveries and are quickly restored to their active lives.

Continued prayers for Miriam Martin, daughter of Diane and Tim Martin, who is recovering from an illness; and for Vee Thomas, Fred Kagel, Michael Korn, Elizabeth Topash and Henry Joseph.

—Cyndi Pilot— Minister



December Birthdays:

Melisa Schlunt— Dec 13
Deborah Feece— Dec 14
Irena Kozakiewicz— Dec 20
Cathy Catral— Dec 21
Randolph Thomas— Dec 30

December Professions:

Marge Hunkler— Dec 8, 1956
Ann Monhaut— Dec 30, 2011

discerning our call to action...

Tuesday mornings at the Life Center on Ironwood during the holidays, Mass will be at 8:00 am on Dec. 23rd; no Mass on Dec 24th or the 31st, and on January 6, Mass will be at 8:00 am. Adoration will follow all Masses. Contact Monica Higginbotham for more information.

Tuesday evenings we will gather at 6:30 pm in the Adoration Chapel at the convent with Sister Agnes Marie for Adoration.

Both of these discernment opportunities will be weekly events.

Franciscan Enrichment– December 2014

On Sunday afternoon, December 7, 2014, about 40 Franciscans, Sisters of St. Francis and members of Immaculate Conception Fraternity (and two lovely dogs -- Pierre and Ambrose) joined together for our monthly Franciscan Enrichment Gathering . Fr. Georges Massinelli, OFM, from St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi, led us in breaking open St. Francis's "Letter to a Minister" and his message on "Perfect Joy". We were gifted to spend the time together sharing God's working in our lives and having Fr. Georges lead us in seeing the intricacies of Francis's writings and their implications for our spiritual growth in Franciscan *minoritas* and accepting the crosses God offers each of us.

Andre Thangam, one of the members of our Orientation class, shared the following message which speaks accurately to one of the directions our discussion took. He thoughtfully shared it with us.

6 Years: Mom Knows Everything !

8 Years: Mom Knows A Lot !

12 Years: Mom Really Doesn't Know Everything !

14 Years: Mom Knows Nothing !

16 Years: Mom, What Mom !

18 Years: Mom Is Outdated !

25 Years: Maybe Mom Knows!

35 Years: Before Deciding, Let's Ask Mom!

45 Years: I Wonder What Mom Thinks!

75 Years: I Wish. Mom Was Here To Ask



St. Francis, pray for us

MONTHLY SCHEDULE FOR FRATERNITY MEETINGS

7:30 Auditorium doors open:

Getting to Know You

Bring some donut holes, pour yourself a nice steaming cup of coffee and enjoy some informal "getting to know you" camaraderie with your Franciscan Brothers and Sisters.

8:15 Formation in your usual meeting rooms

8:15 Ongoing Formation for the Professed in the Auditorium *

9:30 Assemble in the Main Chapel for Morning Prayer

9:40 Liturgy of the Hours: Morning Prayer

10:00 Eucharistic Celebration with Father Francis

•The Rite of Admission ceremony will be in the Chapel following Mass

•A Welcoming ceremony will take place in the Auditorium before refreshments

10:45 Community Social Gathering

11:15 Christmas in Greccio Program

11:30 Brief Business Meeting

12:30 Concluding Prayer and Dismissal

Franciscan Enrichment

January 4, 2015– 1:30pm-3:00pm
Auditorium

Sr. Marie Morgan, OSF

Franciscan Themes from
Our Holy Father, Pope
Francis



Living the Gospel life-Franciscan style

Track 1: Prayer in Support of Discernment

First, please let me remind you that you are invited to two opportunities to pray with your fraternity brothers and sisters. The first is on Tuesday mornings and takes place at the Life Center on Ironwood Circle. There is a Mass that starts at 7:30 AM and adoration follows. Second, Sister Agnes Marie is leading adoration at the convent in the Adoration Chapel from 6:30 to 7:30 PM on Tuesday nights. Turn out for these prayer sessions has not been what we have hoped for so far. Please, please, please consider coming to one or the other to pray in support of ministry discernment within the fraternity.

This prayer effort truly must be the basis for any success we might have in the other two

ministry tracks we are pursuing.

Track 2: Our Lady of the Road

In mid-November, Dan Kreager, Monica Higginbotham and I went and had dinner at the Catholic Worker House. As was mentioned in the initial update from the Dream Session, the Catholic Worker is the entity responsible for running and maintaining the Our Lady of the Road property and ministries. As we ate we got the chance to meet more of the volunteer staff and to hear more about how OLR works.

There are other ministries at OLR, but the one we are specifically interested in at the moment is the breakfast they serve on Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings. As most of you are aware, the Catholic Worker counts on volunteers to come in and do the preparing, serving and cleaning up for these meals. Sometimes the work is done on an ad hoc basis by a combination of whatever volunteers show up and the staff. However, there are specific days of the month that groups volunteer to host on an ongoing basis. It did not take much discussion for us to understand that committing to a given day once a month is a great fit for the fraternity. It also did take long for them to offer to help us arrange this.

Dan Kreager has been volunteering on Saturdays on a regular basis already. In order to get more familiar with what's required, I took my youngest son Aidan and we joined Dan the Saturday after attending dinner. It was a great experience. There was probably close to one hundred guests to serve. We arrived about 8:30 AM and Dan

showed us around a little. The doors had opened at 8 AM, and there was a group of ND students from Sorin Hall serving coffee and handling the cooking of scrambled eggs, bacon and toast. Some of the volunteers were simply sitting at the tables and talking with the guests, which is a vital part of the ministry. The staff from Catholic Worker was also busy handing out clothes, sundries, etc. that had been donated and helping people get laundry done, showers taken, etc. The actual breakfast service started at 9:30 AM. Plates were prepared in the kitchen and Aidan and I had the privilege of walking them out to the tables and serving the guests. Once the guests were served, the dishes started piling up, so we then got busy at the sink. Aidan had a baseball practice so we had to leave at about 10:15, but by this time the building was already beginning to thin out. It would seem that by 11 or so the work is done and everyone has moved on to the next part of their day.

At first, the Catholic Worker will supply the food and all we need do is show up. But they rely on donations for everything, so it would be a great help to them if we could, in short order, arrange to also supply the food for the specific day we commit to. I do not have details yet about just how much food that entails, or what the cost will be, but we will be working on that. It probably takes about a dozen volunteers to keep up with everything that needs to be done.

So in effect, what we will be committing to is basically twofold. First, we need to supply the volunteer manpower once a month to completely handle the preparation, distribution and clean-up of the

breakfast service. Second, we need to commit to the finances required to support the purchase of the food for that day.

The council is in agreement that this is essentially a no brainer for us to do. Dan Kreager has volunteered to head the committee that will be in charge of organizing our efforts. So, at this stage, we are looking for people to sign up for Dan's committee, and also to sign up to contribute dollars and to volunteer their time.

We attempted to arrange a Saturday as our day to commit. It took a while, but we were finally told that the Sorin Hall group took the last open Saturday. The two days that are currently open are Second Sunday and Fourth Sunday. As a council we think Fourth Sunday would be the best for us. This gives us the opportunity at our monthly fraternity meeting to make final arrangements for volunteers, etc.

So, we have tentatively told the Catholic Workers that we will take Fourth Sunday beginning in January assuming we have the volunteers to come. At the December fraternity meeting there will be a sign up board. Please pray over this between now and then and come back to us with questions, concerns and feedback. We will not worry about supplying food the first month or two, so the initial commitment is about whether or not you can spend one morning a month doing this service for the people in need in our community. Perhaps we can even arrange to attend Mass together afterward.

Be aware that the Catholic Workers will take whatever help they can get, whenever they can get it. If you want

to know more about what you are getting into, simply show up on any Friday, Saturday or Sunday morning, ask who the staff workers are, introduce yourself as a Franciscan, and chip in whenever its needed.

Even after we get started, you could still volunteer on any of these days if you find the Spirit is calling you to this.

It's a great thing to do!

Third Track: Community Centered Outreach

The last thing is to let you know that the housing idea remains in the works. We are still discovering and discerning and praying about this, so please specifically keep that effort in your prayers and feel free to forward ideas as the Spirit moves you.

Maybe as this Christmas season unfolds, you can join Mary and Joseph as they watch over Jesus in the manger. Read Luke, Chapter 2, and become a shepherd in the field, watching over your flock at night. Experience the angel as he comes and tells you the good news. Hear the heavenly host praise God and proclaim peace on earth. Then join the other shepherds as they hasten to Bethlehem to find the babe in the manger.

When you arrive at the manger, recognize that as Jesus entered the world he was homeless. Understand that the poverty of Jesus born homeless is the poverty that St. Francis of Assisi embraced as the basis for living a holy life. Remember, that you

you professed (or will profess) to follow St. Francis in this commitment to poverty. And then meditate on this third track, on this idea of providing housing to those in need.

How do the circumstances of Jesus' birth inform the ministry that the fraternity is attempting to discern and define?

This housing idea will take time to develop. The council needs your wisdom to help us be better leaders as this process unfolds. Please, do not be afraid to share whatever inspiration and grace that comes your way.

Conclusion:

The opportunities for prayer and now service at Our Lady of the Road have the Council excited. We hope they will be the basis for preparing the fraternity for bigger things to come. The meal with the Catholic Workers and the experience of serving at Our Lady of the Road has already shaped and informed how I am thinking about this third track. Hopefully it will do the same for you if you take the chance to become engaged.

There is no doubt that the Spirit is at work amongst us!

Please, please, please open your heart to His influence and pray on how best to get further involved.

Tim Short, OFS
Formation Director

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2014, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2015

- December 19, 2014: Meeting of Orientation Class with Sr. Agnes Marie
- December 20, 2014: Monthly Fraternity Meeting and Annual Christmas Celebration
- DECEMBER 25, 2014: SOLEMNITY OF THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**
- January 4, 2015: Franciscan Enrichment: Sr. Marie Morgan, OSF: Topic: "Franciscan Themes from Our Holy Father, Pope Francis"; Auditorium at 1:-30—3:00 p.m.
- January 8, 2015: Meeting of the Council at 6:00 p.m. in the St. Louis Parlor
- January 10, 2015: First Regional Study Day I: for SAs and Those attending for Enrichment : 10:00 a.m. at St. Joan of Arc, Kokomo
Speaker: Fr. Giles Zackowicz, OFM Conv.
Topic: "Masseo's Question 'Why is Everyone Running after You?' "
- January 16, 2015: Meeting of Orientation Class with Sr. Agnes Marie
- January 17, 2015: Monthly Fraternity Meeting in the Auditorium
"Rite of Welcoming" to Inquiry for Orientation Class: Deacon Jim Kitchens, Deb Jankowski, Andre Thangam, Jennifer Hunter, and Jeremy Hunter
- January 24, 2015: Council All Day Working Session: Morning Prayer/Mass 8:00 / Breakfast
Meet in St. Louis Parlor
- January 25, 2015: Serve Breakfast at Catholic Worker House: 7:00—11:00 a.m.
- February 1, 2015: Franciscan Enrichment:
- February 14, 2015: Regional Executive Council meetings in Kokomo
- February 21, 2015: Monthly Fraternity Meeting in the Auditorium:
4th Annual "Franciscan Family Gathering": Sisters, Friars, Secular Franciscans

There will be a Rite of Admission ceremony in the Chapel following Mass as well as a Welcoming ceremony in the Auditorium.