



# Pace e Bene Peace and Good

## Fireworks in Assisi

My pilgrim's fate in Assisi has had me lodged in a closet-sized room over a pizzeria, a room overlooking a nearby apartment with a door always slightly ajar to allow in-and-out entrance to a neighboring woman's five cats, to a room facing a stony wall with a dumpster! So when I walked into my room at the Windsor Savoia having a balcony overlooking the Spoleto Valley and its glorious beauties, I felt akin to having died and gone to Heaven, as the proverbial saying goes.

Though the double-shuttered window to the balcony made sleeping in a totally dark room so very pleasant, when I finished dressing one morning it seemed appropriate to open both sets of shutters to allow a few moments of meditative soaking in of the beauty of the sparkling city lights of the Valley below. And right in the center of this panorama, one can see the lovely lighted dome of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels hovering protectively over the Portiuncula — St. Francis's favorite place on earth.

As I took my first steps out onto the balcony, I wasn't prepared for the fantastic light show which the God of Heaven and Earth was conducting

behind the mountains surrounding the Spoleto Valley and the lower city of Assisi. Never ending flashes of lightning conducted a magnificent and powerful dance from one cloud to the next, from the easternmost sky to the western hills on which Perugia lies, and from north to south. Occasionally one could see in the distance a large shaft of forked lightning jump from a cloud to the earth or from one cloud to another. No humanly produced fireworks show could equal this display of God's power revealed in nature.

One couldn't help but think: this display in the skies over Assisi was much like what God's grace was doing within each of us pilgrims as we walked to and from the holy sanctuaries significant in the lives of St. Francis, St. Clare, and the early friars — Leo, Maseo, Bernardo, and their companions. At each site, God's graces and blessings were free to flash in our hearts and minds, to dance to and fro enlightening us as to what His call that day would bring to us, bringing to each one fresh insights as to how the "valleys" in our lives could be filled and the high places could be smoothed by the light of His loving presence. He who is the Light of the world *was dancing within us and drawing us ever closer to Himself and filling our hearts with the sparks of His love* — stronger and more powerful than any bolt of lightning.

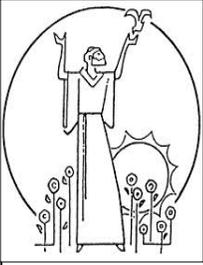
I felt compelled to pray for my pilgrim companions that they would be open to however God chose to "zap" them with a spark of His love and presence in this

very special place called Assisi; that they would respond with open hearts and minds to all that this lovely city close to Heaven was offering them; that the hills and valleys in their lives would be made smooth once again; that the inevitable storms in their lives and those of their loved ones would somehow find gentleness and peace once again.

By the time we prayed Morning Prayer and enjoyed a leisurely, Italian breakfast fit for a king, Mother Nature's display concluded with a gentle rain which gave way to a beautiful sunshine filled day. As we made our way up the hillside to the Basilica of St. Francis for celebrating the Eucharist we couldn't help but thank God for the peace of this place. What a way to start the day!

Sister Agnes Marie, OSF  
Spiritual Assistant





January Birthdays:

January Professions:

## Prayerfully Discerning our Call to Action...

Tuesday mornings at the Life Center on Ironwood, Mass will be at 8 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.

*“For Francis and Clare, prayer is to lead to a renewal of the “Incarnation;” God is to “take on flesh” anew in one’s life through the action of the Holy Spirit, and the birth of God in one’s life should shine before others, as a light to the world”.*

~ Iliia Delio, *Franciscan Prayer*



## 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



Keep Watching

Keep your eyes and ears ready for our Fraternity website. It’s presently under construction by

Diego Delgado

Secular Franciscan fraternities are being encourage to set up a website and we’re blest to have Diego’s expertise working for us.



## NEWS AND VIEWS

Continued prayers for Miriam Martin, daughter of Diane and Tim Martin, Vee Thomas, Fred Kagel, Michael Korn, Elizabeth Topash, and Henry Joseph.

Gratitude for the gift of new life comes from: Dan and Diane Kreager for their new granddaughter Charlotte, and to Kathy and Jim Fuchs OFS, for the birth of their new grandchild. Congratulations to both sets of grandparents!

Bill Schimitt, OFS, and the Knights of Columbus once again invited us to attend their annual Prayer March for life on January 25, 2015.

A generous list of volunteers have signed up to prepare breakfast for the homeless and needy at Our Lady of the Road on Sunday, January 25.

Six members of our Fraternity participate in the First Regional Study Day in Kokomo on January 10, 2015, where Fr. Giles Zachowicz, OFM, gave an inspiring answer to "Masseo's Question: Why is Everyone Running After You?"{

## Sandals on the Ground

At first, there was no need for sandals,  
His feet were lovingly wrapped in wool.  
The Lamb enveloped in a lambs garment,  
Majesty in littleness, vulnerable to the world.

The boy soon was given His first sandals,  
Sandals no one person was worthy to untie.  
But His mother and father gladly did,  
Sandals that kicked the dust from the Earth He had made.

Man-sized sandals took Him from plane and saw,  
Propelled by feet eager to give the Good News,  
Sandals, well-worn leather, covered in sweat and dirt,  
Bound around Him who unbound possession, disease, and sin.

His sandals sustained Him from sacramental supper,  
To a place where fallen olive leaves scented them,  
Where olives were to be gathered and pressed hard.  
Crimson-stained now, His sandals were no longer needed.

Feet once shod, all-His mission long,  
Now pierced, hammered, and fixed to wood.  
Where sandals once were, Life flowed out,  
His choice, abandon His sandals, allow Life to flow in.

His feet once wrapped in wool, now adorned with star-bright wounds,  
His wounds heal all other wounds.  
Sandals once His, now sized for us wait...  
Wait for us to put on.

Tim Martin, OSF 12/31/14

# Living the Gospel Life

*Franciscan- style*

## January 2015 Dream Session Update

Since the December fraternity meeting, several members of the fraternity have voiced concerns about the direction of the Third Track from the Dream Session and the possibility that the fraternity would choose to do a project in the neighborhood surrounding St. Stanislaus Church. The reservations about this area are well founded and justified and the council had by and large already been discussing them.

But even more basic than that, the council wants to make sure that everyone understands that no decisions have been made on this third track. Please reread the update on the third track from last month, included below.

This status has not changed and will not change for several months. The response to track two, the Sunday morning hosting project at Our Lady of the Road, was very positive at the December meeting with twenty-five people signing up to participate. The plan for the next several months is to solidify this track. We need to make sure we follow through on the commitment we have made to The Catholic Workers, which includes not only staffing for the fourth Sunday of every month, but also providing the food beginning in March.

Until we have built

enough momentum to be sure that we can sustain this effort, the Third Track will remain firmly in the dream phase. It's possible that an entirely new idea that has nothing to do with housing will become the third track. In a few months, assuming everything goes well with track two, then the council will formulate a formal process to seek further input related to the third track. Everyone will get a chance to participate to the fullest extent they wish to and nothing will be decided until a broad consensus has been established.

Between now and then, we are still encouraging you to pray over the possibilities and to forward input as the Spirit moves you.

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

### 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.

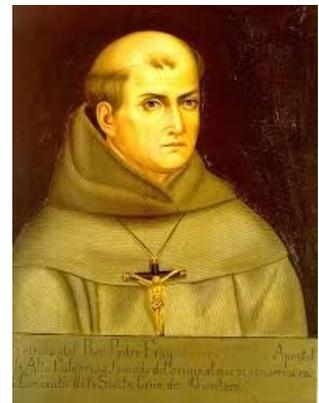
When you arrive at the manger recognize that as Jesus entered the world he was homeless. Understand that the poverty of Jesus born homeless is the poverty that St. Francis of Assisi embraced as the basis for living a holy life. Remember that you professed (or will profess) to follow St. Francis in this commitment to poverty. And then meditate on this third track, on this idea of providing housing to those in need.

—Timothy Short, OFS



“Now in September, God willing, I will canonize Junipero Serra in the United States. He was the evangelizer of the west in the United States...”

—Pope Francis



# CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH 2015

*This calendar is subject to change*

- 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 2, 2015: Meeting of the Council at 6:00 p.m. in the St. Louis Parlor
- February 9, 2015: Feast of Blessed Maria Theresia Bonzel, OSF, Foundress of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration
- 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**
- February 23, 2015: Serve Breakfast at Catholic Worker House: 7:00—11: 00 a.m.**
- March 5, 2015: Meeting of the Council at 6:00 p.m. in the St. Louis Parlor
- March 14, 2015: Regional Meeting for Formators St. Joan of Arc Parish Kokomo
- March 21, 2015: Monthly Fraternity Meeting in the Auditorium  
Annual Retreat: details TBA
- March 22, 2015: Serve Breakfast at Catholic Worker House: 7:00—11:00 a.m.**

## “Rite of Welcoming”

Deacon Jim Kitchens, Deb Jankowski, Andre Thangam, Jennifer Hunter, Jeremy Hunter, and Michael O’Connell