

Padre Pio Fraternity

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region
Secular Franciscan Order of
Central
North Carolina

the little flowers of Padre Pio Fraternity

Volume 11 Issue 3

March 2023

Minister's Memo



Source: Canva Images

“Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried.”

G.K. Chesterton, a biographer of St. Francis of Assisi, could have been describing our experience with metanoia in his famous quotation.

Lent is the perfect time for us to talk about the challenge of metanoia. Biblical writers used the term to convey the concept of repentance. The term takes us beyond simply saying ‘I’m sorry,’ to a spiritual conversion that results in a life change.

It means rewiring our priorities so they align to the thoughts and values revealed to us by God in the gospels. We are a Gospel people and live those holy words daily as Franciscans.

The process of metanoia is invisible at first, beginning inside us, causing us to change and think differently. Metanoia redirects our lives and changes our perspective, resulting in renewed behavior, a visible sign of our understanding.

As you can see, metanoia becomes not a one-time event, but a lifelong process. As we reflect on our lives and align our actions with the Gospel, we become pure of heart and give glory to our God.

I dare say that the road of metanoia during Lent is a journey that leads to making us an Easter people.

We will explore the concept of metanoia more deeply at our annual retreat March 10-12 at St. Francis Springs. I look forward to seeing you there.

Peace and love,
Sharon Winzeler, OFS, Minister

Lenten Season of Peace



Carolyn D. Townes, O.F.S.

Creator and Animator

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

It is that wondrous time of year again! Our Seraphic Father Francis said that for us, Lent is all year round. And for these six weeks, Holy Mother Church will share it with us!

As with most years, we enter into this holy season during a time of violence and unrest with more mass shootings. Let us lift up to the Lord all victims of violence and all those who mourn the loss of life and liberty due to violence. Let our prayers rise up like incense as they fall afresh on those of us who are prepared to mobilize and take action on gun violence and violence of any type.

Loving and gracious God, help us to reflect on what is ours to do, repent of what we have failed to do, and restore our broken relationships this Lenten season. We ask you to grant us listening hearts and wise discernment as we go forth to bring about peace and justice in this world you have bestowed upon us. In Jesus' name, we humbly and joyfully pray. Amen.

During Lent, we are asked to devote ourselves to doing three things: to seek the Lord in prayer and Scripture reading, to serve by giving alms, and to exercise self-control through fasting. I humbly invite us to faithfully and mindfully observe all three, to the best of our ability.

In your journey to being conformed to Christ, please find attached some goodies to assist you during these six weeks. Again, I include my Lenten Season of Peace for you and your fraternity members to mindfully fast and feast. I also include Lenten calendars and resources from the USCCB (also available in Spanish), Creation Justice Ministries, and the DC Interfaith

Power and Light, who have created a Creation Care calendar. I invite you to check out more Lenten resources from the USCCB and the ever-faithful Catholic Rice Bowl from Catholic Relief Services.

"... I was thirsty and you gave me drink..."

(Matthew 25:35)

Article 15 of our Holy Rule states: "Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith."

Our Holy Father exhorts: "Almsgiving, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us. And thus to rediscover the joy of God's plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness."

One such courageous initiative where we can give alms is our annual Lenten H2O Project, an international project to promote Christian solidarity, advocacy and financial support for poor communities who have no access to clean drinking water.

For two weeks in Lent, I invite you to abstain from drinking any beverage except water, and set aside any money normally spent on sodas and coffees. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters who do not have clean water to drink, we increase our connections, awareness and responsibility to poor communities and God's Creation. You can choose to give individually or collectively with your families, fraternities, or faith communities. Last year, your generous donations helped bring clean water to communities here in the US and abroad. On behalf of those communities, we thank you most kindly.

Please send all contributions to the H2O Lenten Project 2022, c/o Claudia Kauzlarich, 2007 Maverick Trail Harrisonville, MO 64701-1545. Make the check payable to OFS-USA; with H2O Project in the memo line. And thank you for your generous contributions. -Carolyn Townes, OFS

Source: SecularFranciscansUSA.org

Fraternity Council

Spiritual Assistant: Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM

Minister: Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Vice Minister: Dave Shick, OFS

Formation Director: Charlotte Witosky, OFS

Treasurer: Zubair Simonson, OFS

Secretary: Michael Hancock, OFS

Councilors:

Joan Monti, OFS

Jeanne Casciere, OFS

Chris Peffley, OFS

BSSF Region Minister: Ellen Ferrone, OFS

Area 3 Councilors:

Lee Cunningham, OFS &

Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, OFS

Our website: ofscentralinc.org

Facebook: Padre Pio Fraternity Secular Franciscan
Order of Central North Carolina

Apostolates

JPIC: Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

Website:

Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Oak City Cares:

Lee Cunningham, OFS & MaryLou Holloway, OFS

CPO & Fraternity Library: Maureen Copan, OFS

Hospitality:

Maureen McFadden, OFS & Alma Hammer, OFS

Prayer Requests:

Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS

Sunshine: Frank Peluso, OFS

Newsletter:

Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

Meditations by Padre Pio

Source: EWTN.com

Have patience in persevering ...

Have patience in persevering in the holy exercise of meditation and be contented to begin with small steps till you have legs to run, and better, wings to fly. Be contented to be obedient, which is never a small thing for a soul which has chosen God for its portion, and be resigned to be, for the present, a little bee in the nest which will soon become a large bee capable of making honey.



Source: Canva Images

We welcome those who would like to learn more about the Secular Franciscans. Join us for our monthly gatherings on the fourth Sunday of each month, beginning at 2:30 p.m. Location: Founders Room at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, North Carolina.

Did you know?

Did you know there are programs for professed members to become spiritual assistants. Deacon Phil and D.J. are currently in this program. The website of the Secular Franciscans USA states: “The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) has been actively involved in the training of Spiritual Assistants since it first published Life-Giving Union: A Correspondence Course to Prepare Spiritual Assistants in 1998. Life Giving Union was replaced in 2008 by Franciscan Family Connections, which was revised in 2011. Franciscan Family Connection is the basic text for the Spiritual Assistant Training Program regardless of which class format is used. The CNSA also publishes the Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the OFS. These Spiritual Assistance Training Program Guidelines are the result of the efforts of the Spiritual Assistance Development Task Force, in conjunction with the CNSA, though the Spiritual Assistants Training Program Survey taken of the regions of the National Fraternity in 2013, from participants at the Saint Francis University (Loretto, PA) Summer Seminar on Spiritual Assistance in 2014, and numerous CNSA spiritual assistant workshops throughout the country. They are the direct result of the our International’s Conference of General Spiritual and Pastoral Assistants’ (CAS) Formation Program For Spiritual Assistants Not Belonging To The First Order Or The TOR from which they are adapted. Gentle Reminders: Programs are always a “work in progress” – no two “classes” are identical, no two students are the same. Treat each class just as you would each new Initial Formation class. We all are unique individuals with our own learning styles, our own gifts, our own challenges, etc.

Programs must be flexible to meet the needs of each student. Class size should be limited in order to be able to know each student.

-Frank Peluso, OFS

Eye on the Inquirer



Source: Lee Cunningham, OFS

I was baptized Debra Ann and I took Elizabeth as my confirmation name. I went to Catholic school and thought I wanted to be a nun. Rick and I married 32 years ago. I have 5 children and 5 grandchildren. Rick and I like RVing, kyacking, hiking, birding and visiting our families in N.Y. and Florida. We spend time in adoration and I can feel a strong presence of our Lord. I am a eucharistic minister to the homebound, worked in a soup kitchen and was a religion teacher. I was an ultrasound technician until I retired. It confirmed my belief in pro-life where I saw and heard those 5 week old fetuses heart beating. Rick and I moved to Wake Forest 14 years ago. We love it here! I took accordion lessons for 3 years when I was a child. I heard about OFS over 25 years ago. The past 2 years I felt a strong calling and decided to go to orientation. It's the best thing I've done in my spiritual life. I'm learning to live gospel to life and life to gospel.

March 9, St. Catherine of Bologna, Abbess and Mystic, 1413-1463

St. Catherine was born of a noble family in Bologna and raised in luxury. Catherine received a wonderful education in reading, writing, singing and drawing. She excelled in painting, Latin and the viola.

In 1426, she entered the convent of Corpus Domini at Ferrara and became a Franciscan Tertiary. Catherine was determined to live a life of perfection, and was admired by her companions for her holiness. In 1432, Catherine and other young women of Ferrara founded a monastery of the Order of Poor Clares, an order founded by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi.

From an early age she had experienced visions of Jesus, “who would enter into her soul like radiant sunshine to establish there the profoundest peace.” But there were also demonic thoughts that sometimes plunged her into despair. Through constant prayer she vanquished such doubts, and one night during the Christmas vigil she was rewarded by an encounter with the Blessed Mother, who offered her the great privilege of holding her infant Son. “I leave you to picture the joy of this poor creature,” she wrote, “when she found herself holding the Son of the eternal Father in her arms.”

After some years, Catherine was directed to take charge of a convent of Poor Clares in Bologna. Her reputed gifts of healing and prophecy – as well as her deep kindness – attracted many novices. Whenever she had to correct a young sister, she would insist on sharing her punishment. When one of the novices was tempted to leave, Catherine pledged to take her place in purgatory until the end of time if only she would remain. (The novice stayed.) Catherine continued to paint and to write beautiful spiritual guides and poetry.

She wrote the Treatise on the 7 Spiritual Weapons Necessary for Spiritual Warfare. And her painting of St. Ursula remains on display in a Venice gallery.

During the Lenten season of 1463, she became seriously ill and died on March 9. Among her last instructions, she said, “If you would have all, you must give all.”

Apart from several books, Catherine left behind a number of hymns and paintings. She is honored as a patron of artists.

Pope Benedict described this humble saint as, “From the distance of so many centuries she is still very modern and speaks to our lives. She, like us, suffered temptations, she suffered the temptations of disbelief, of sensuality, of a difficult spiritual struggle. She felt forsaken by God, she found herself in the darkness of faith. Yet in all these situations she was always holding the Lord’s hand, she did not leave him, she did not abandon him. And walking hand in hand with the Lord, she walked on the right path and found the way of light.”

QUOTE: “It means little to wear a worn habit and walk with bowed head; to be truly humble one has to know how to bear humiliation. It is the touchstone of Christian discipleship.”

-Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS

Sources: Give Us This Day and Catholic Online



Source: catholicnewsworld.com



March Franciscan Calendar Month of St. Joseph

5th Char Witoski, OFS
12th Suzie Nelson, OFS
15th Dave Shick, OFS
21st Sr. Susanna Boylston, OSC
24th Sr. Annemarie Dudek, OSC
24th Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

1. Bl. Jean Kearney
2. St. Agnes de Prague
3. Bl. Innocent of Berzo
4. Bl. Martyrs of the Franciscan 1st Order of Gondar
5. St. John-Joseph of the Cross
6. St. Colette de Corbie
7. Bl. Christopher of Milan
8. St. Jean de Dieu
9. St. Frances of Rome
10. St. Catherine of Bologna
11. Bl. John Baptist Righi of Fabriano
12. Bl. Louis Orione
13. Bl. Agnellus of Pisa
14. St. Catherine of Genoa
15. Bl. Louis of Casoria
16. Bl. Torello of Poppi
17. Bl. Mark of Montegallo
18. St. Salvator of Horta
19. Saint Joseph, *Holy Day of Obligation*
20. Bl. Hippolyte Galentini
21. Bl. Amedee IX de Savoie
22. St. Benvenute of Osimo
23. Bl. Jeremy Lambertenghi
24. Bl. Catherine de Suede
25. Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Holy Day of Obligation*
26. Blessed Didacus Joseph of Cadiz
27. Bl. Joseph-Sebastien Pelczar
28. St. John of Capistrano
29. Bl. Jane Mary of Maille
30. St. Peter Regalado
31. St. Leonard Murialdo

Let us pray



Source: pixabay.com

Most High, glorious God
 enlighten the darkness of my heart.
 Give me true faith, certain hope and perfect
 charity, sense and knowledge that I may carry
 out Your Holy and true command.

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi to discern God's will

The Pope's Prayer Intentions for March

For victims of abuse

We pray for those who have suffered harm from
 members of the Church; may they find within the
 Church herself a concrete response to their pain
 and suffering.

Franciscans, Lent, & Penance

Franciscans are people of Penance in Love,
 Atoning for human sin with God above,
 In Lent, penitential acts are our way
 For our growth & the growth of all those we pray.

Lent is a time of humble self-reflection,
 Seeing sin, making reconciliation,
 Strengthening virtues, Working on your weakness,
 Loving more & Improving your Holiness.

Penance is done to grow in Love & atone,
 Prayerfully performed in groups or just alone,
 Sometimes niceties denied, acts of charity,
 Dedicated prayer, or tasks done most humbly.

Franciscans normally do acts of penance,
 Lent increases frequency of performance,
 Done for good of self & others lovingly,
 So all grow closer to God eternally.

ALLELUIA!

by Thomas Anthony Stobie, ofs.
 23 Feb 2023
 Permission to copy, share & publish granted.

Divine Mercy Sunday

"In a series of revelations to St. Maria Faustina Kowalska in the 1930s, our Lord called for a special feast day to be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. Today, we know that feast as Divine Mercy Sunday, named by Pope St. John Paul II at the canonization of St. Faustina on April 30, 2000.

The Lord expressed His will with regard to this feast in His very first revelation to St. Faustina. The most comprehensive revelation can be found in her Diary entry 699:

My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and a shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day are opened all the divine floodgates through which graces flow. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My mercy.

In all, St. Faustina recorded 14 revelations from Jesus concerning His desire for this feast.

Nevertheless, Divine Mercy Sunday is NOT a feast based solely on St. Faustina's revelations. Indeed, it is not primarily about St. Faustina — nor is it altogether a new feast. The Second Sunday of Easter was already a solemnity as the Octave Day of Easter[1]. The title "Divine Mercy Sunday" does, however, highlight the meaning of the day.



In 1931, our Lord appeared to St. Faustina in a vision. She saw Jesus clothed in a white garment with His right hand raised in blessing. His left hand was touching His garment in the area of the Heart, from where two large rays came forth, one red and the other pale. She gazed intently at the Lord in silence, her soul filled with awe, but also with great joy. Jesus said to her:

Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I Myself will defend it as My own glory (Diary, 47, 48). I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You (327). I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and [then] throughout the world (47)." **Learn more at theDivineMercy.org**

February Gathering

Padre Pio Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order Gathering Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023



Source: Anne Evangelista, OFS

Pictured: Guest speakers Laura Steed Lorino, Community Leader & Executive Director of L'Arche NC and Tatum Tricarico, a student at Duke Divinity and a Disability rights activist on Instagram (@blind_person_in_area)



Source: larchenc.org

Fraternity Announcements:

March 10-12- Annual retreat at St. Francis Springs.

We will have two visitors from the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region at our next meeting on **March 26**. You will be receiving an email from the Region within the next week. Please complete and return the questionnaire to the Region. It will be a big help to the visitors from our region. These visits occur every three years. Please make our visitors feel welcome.

Saturday, July 15- Permanent Profession will be held during an 11 a.m. Mass at St. Francis of Assisi of our candidates. Reception afterward. We want everyone in the fraternity to be present for this joyous occasion.
We will not have a fraternity meeting in July.

L'Arche North Carolina cultivates inclusive communities where people across the spectrum of intellectual and developmental disability identities live and flourish together.

At L'Arche, we find the sacred in our shared humanity and daily life, and seek to nurture the spiritualities of all people. All of us, whether or not we live with I/DD, desire a sense of belonging.

L'Arche North Carolina hosts inclusive programs friendships are formed, and every gift is celebrated. Our goal is to open a home where meals are shared and a sense of welcome and inclusion are lived out.

Volunteer

Share your gifts.

While we are on our way to opening our first community home, there is lots to be done, and we would love to have you as part of building the L'Arche North Carolina community. If you have a gift you'd like to share that isn't already on our list below, let us know. Are you good at design? Are you a former or current assistant? Are you a good listener? We would love to hear from you.

Visit their website for more information and to volunteer: larchenc.org