

Padre Pio Fraternity

March 2024

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

the little flowers of Padre Pio Fraternity

Minister's Memo

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS, *Minister*

How is your Lent going?

Forty days is a long time. Focusing more on prayer has its positive elements, but the fasting can be a bummer when you enjoy dessert as much as I do. I can't wait until Easter when I can sink my teeth into some marshmallow Peeps.

On a serious level, I hope that Lent helps you experience more strongly the peace and love of God. Sometimes I imagine God rolling his eyes as I pray for mercy and grace, hearing Him say, "I forgave you even before sinned."

This Lent I'm trying to follow the advice of Pope Francis who said in a recent talk, "This is a good Lenten resolution: cultivate a welcoming outlook, become 'seekers of light,' seekers of light in both prayer and in people.'

I like that. We know Jesus prayed while in the desert. He knew that He was our salvation, and that His future included suffering and death. I believe that Jesus was a "seeker of light" in humanity. I hope that while He was on earth He saw the God-given light in the men and women he met along the way.

Blessed John Duns Scotus tells us that Jesus would have assumed a human nature even if man had not sinned. Because man sinned, Jesus came as Redeemer of the human race, but he also was the king of creation.

That is good news. God gave us the beautiful light of our souls that continues to shine despite our weaknesses. Jesus sought that light.

We can find it, too. As Pope Francis says, Lent is a good time to look for its brightness.

Fraternity Council

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Our website: ofscentralnc.org

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

Apostolates

JPIC & Newsletter: Rachel Bongiorno , OFS

Oak City Cares:

MaryLou Holloway, OFS & Mary Cockrill, OFS

On-going Formation Team:

Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

Prayer Requests:

Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS

CPO & Fraternity Library: Maureen Copan, OFS

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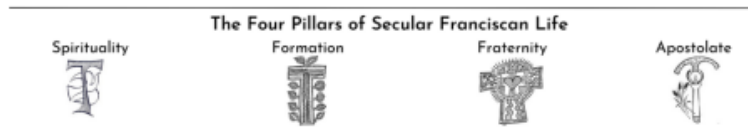
Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Hospitality:

Maureen McFadden, OFS & Alma Hammer, OFS

Sunshine: Frank Peluso, OFS & Laurie Wilburn, OFS

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.



Never let our Seraphic Father St. Francis depart from your mind, who so beautifully knew how to reproduce in himself the God-man. -Padre Pio

Traditional Franciscan Calendar March – Month of St. Joseph

1. Bl. Jean Kearney
2. St. Agnes de Prague
3. Bl. Innocent de Berzo
4. Bl. Martyrs of the Franciscan
1st Order of Gondar (Ethiopia)
5. St. Jean-Joseph de la Croix
6. St. Colette of Corbie
7. Bl. Christophe de Milan
8. St. Jean de Dieu
9. St. Frances of Rome
10. St. Catherine of Bologna
11. Bl. Jean-Baptise de Fabriano
12. Bl. Louis Orione
13. Bl. Agnello de Pise
14. St. Catherine de Genes
15. Bl. Louis de Casoria
16. Bl. Torello de Poppi
17. Bl. Marc de Montegallo
18. St. Salvator de'Horta
19. Saint Joseph
20. Bl. Hippolyte Galentini
21. Bl Amedee IX de Savoie
22. St. Beinvenu d'Osimo
23. Bl. Jeremie Lambertenghi
24. Bl. Catherine de Suede
25. Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed
Virgin Mary
26. Blessed Didacus Joseph of Cadiz
27. Bl. Joseph-Sebastien Pelczar
28. St. Jean de Capistran
29. Bl. Jeanne-Marie de Maille
30. St. Pierre Regalat
31. St. Leonard Murialdo

The Pope's Prayer Intentions for March

For the new martyrs

We pray that those who risk their lives
for the Gospel in various parts of the
world inflame the Church with their
courage and missionary enthusiasm.



03.05 Char Witosky, OFS

03.11 Stacy Lewis

03.12 Suzie Nelson, OFS

03.15 Dave Shick, OFS

03.24 Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

Save the dates:

March 15 Immaculate Conception is receiving
a relic of Saint Oscar Romero, details TBD

March 22 Our Fraternity is sponsoring the
Stations of the Cross at Saint Francis Parish

May 11-13 Retreat at St. Francis Springs

Aug. 9-11 Annual Regional Gathering (ARG) at
Retreat Center, Black Mountain, NC.

Apostolate feeding the hungry at Oak City
Cares: **March 23, April 27,**
May 25, June 22, July 27, Aug. 24, Sept. 28,
Nov. 23, and Dec. 28.

Consider adding 2:30 p.m. on the fourth
Saturday of each month as a
recurring event in your calendar.

Did you know?

By Frank Peluso, OFS

Did you know that some of us have their own personal way of saying the Our Father such as St. Francis did? I certainly do and it usually goes like this:

My Father, my loving Daddy who loves me more than I deserve. You live in that awesome place we call heaven and no words in our vocabulary can describe its love, compassion, and peace. We cherish and love your most Holy Name and call upon it most frequently asking for help. May your kingdom of justice and harmony come to us who long for it. And may your Holy Will be obeyed on earth as it is in heaven, particularly by me.

I thank you most heartily for giving us yourself daily; also, you give us what we need not what we want. Because we often want things that are not good for us. Please help us to provide for others who need our help. Pardon me for my many mistakes in life for which I am sorry, Help me to correct them. And I ask you to forgive others for whom I think do wrong to me. Let me not fall into temptation but deliver me from the evil designs of this world. I ask this in the name of your beloved Son, Jesus who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

Amen

(After this month I will not be writing this column. If you have any suggestions or ideas for the newsletter, please send them to Rachel.)

A New Way to be Human

The love of God is an unconditional love, and only that love can empower us to live together without violence. When we know that God loves us deeply and will always go on loving us, whoever we are and whatever we do, it becomes possible to expect no more of our fellow men and women than they are able to give, to forgive them generously when they have offended us, and always to respond to their hostility with love. By doing so we make visible a new way of being human and a new way of responding to our world problems.



Navigating your personal desert; finding Franciscan hope in Lent 2024

by Travis Bongiorno, OFS

Lent is a time to grow closer to our Lord as we walk with him in the desert. Throughout our lives as Secular Franciscans, we find trials of the flesh, the spirit and the world. Our charism provides us with hope that is filled with true and perfect joy where we are challenged to live out our Franciscan spirituality in every way. Our sense of fraternity with our brothers and sisters serves as a reminder of the support that God provides us when we learn to lean on this hope and trust in Him.

Discussion Questions

1. What has your experience of Lent been like throughout your life? In what ways do you find that Franciscan spirituality helps you grow your faith during Lent each year?
2. Jesus entered the desert to prepare himself for his public ministry, trusting and abandoning Himself to the will of the Father. In doing this, He found the strength to live out the mission for which He was born. Why is it essential to have a strong prayer life to rely on God in undertaking difficult tasks, missions, and journeys?
3. Reflect on Rule #19 of our Order below. Despite the efforts of the Devil, Jesus maintained interior peace throughout the trials he undertook, knowing He would have to face a chaotic world in his public ministry. We see a world today that lacks interior peace. How can we be Franciscan messengers of peace and joy to those around us, both in our personal and public lives? What opportunities do we have in our vocation as peacekeepers to become servant leaders?

Rule 19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace, which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.

The Franciscan Crown Rosary

The Franciscan rosary, or as it is properly called, The Franciscan Crown, dates to the early part of the 15th century. At that time a young man who found spiritual joy in weaving a crown of wild flowers for a beautiful statue of Mary decided to enter the Franciscan Order. After entering the community, however, he was saddened when he no longer found the time to gather flowers for his personal devotion. One evening, while feeling tempted to abandon his vocation, he received a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mother encouraged the young novice to persevere by reminding him of the joyfulness of the Franciscan spirit. She also instructed him to meditate daily on seven joyful events from her own life as a new form of the rosary. Instead of a crown of flowers, the novice would now weave a crown of prayers. Before long, many other Franciscans began to pray the Crown and soon it spread to the entire Order, becoming officially established in 1422. In addition to developing this Marian devotion, the Franciscans are credited with adding the final words to the Hail Mary, Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. In 1263, Saint Bonaventure, Minister General of the Order, encouraged liturgical devotion honoring the mystery of the Visitation. Saint Bonaventure also popularized the daily triple recitation of the Angelus, which it is believed Saint Francis initiated after visiting the Holy Land. Francis was deeply impressed by the Muslim practice of stopping to pray several times a day, and desired to Christianize this pious custom. A Franciscan pope, Sixtus IV (1471-1485), introduced the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the feast of Saint Joseph as husband of Mary. He also issued the first papal pronouncement encouraging the rosary as an invaluable instrument of personal and societal conversion.

Excerpt Source: secularfranciscanusa.org

The Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin/*During Lent Franciscans pray the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary instead of the Seven Joys*

1. The Annunciation/*The Prophecy of Simeon*
2. The Visitation/*The Flight to Egypt*
3. The Birth of Christ/*The Loss of the Child Jesus for three days*
4. Adoration of the Magi/*Mary meets Jesus carrying the cross*
5. Finding of the Child Jesus/*The Crucifixion of Jesus*
6. Meeting Christ after the Resurrection/*The Body of Jesus is taken down from the cross and placed in the arms of Mary*
7. The Assumption and Crowning/*The Body of Jesus is placed in the tomb*

