



"I have done what is mine to do; may Christ teach you yours!" —Francis of Assisi

## Minister's Reflection

In the fall issue of the Tau, there is an article on Peacemaking by David Foster, OSB. I read it with interest because of the great need I see in our country and world for peacemakers. There are some valuable insights from this short article that I would like to highlight for this month where we welcome the Prince of Peace.

First, the article points out that while Jesus used forthright words and actions, his way of peacemaking involved a path of solidarity with people who cannot help themselves. "Peacemaking depends not on an assertion of rights, but on acceptance of solidarity..." As Franciscans, we have this charism of peacemaking and associating with the poor, sharing their lot out of solidarity and love. There is a component of "being" with people, not avoiding them, or only praying for them.

Second, the article points to friendship as a way to build peace. If we look at how we nurture friendships, we can apply the same to others with whom we don't agree and are at enmity with. For instance, keeping the lines of communication open, dialogue with respect, spending time with them, giving of ourselves in little ways without any expectations of a return.

Lastly, David Foster says in a number of places, "Peacemaking means restraint in asserting oneself..." We know that bludgeoning someone over the head with the truth is not an effective way to peace or change, yet that is often what comes of asserting oneself. When things are said that we know is untrue or inaccurate, we must seek to find something that will bring light. Our response could be to just listen, or acknowledge some point of agreement, or acknowledge we don't agree but that we care about them. A gentle response that will hopefully bring the light of Christ into someone's life.

I encourage you to read this short article and reflect on how you can be a better peacemaker in your circles of influence. May the Prince of Peace be our guide and strength in bringing peace to our world.

—Franz

### **JPIC – (Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation)**

Last reminder for items for Damiano:

- Winter coats
- hats and gloves
- boots.
- Socks & underwear, especially men's
- Household items
- Toiletry items

Remember that we are serving at Damiano on January 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. We'll need to get volunteers at the Christmas party. Thank you —Jane

### **This month's Fraternity Gathering**

**December 16, 2018, 12:30 p.m. – Pot luck and gathering**

**Bob and Jane's house**

**1829 E 9<sup>th</sup> St. (Just a block from Sarah's Table)  
Duluth**

Agenda:

1. Opening Prayer: Bob
2. Blessing of the Creche: Franz
3. Sharing of prayer partners
4. Gathering of gifts for Damiano
5. Volunteers for serving at Damiano in January
6. Video

Next month's meeting: January 19, 2018.

January meeting ministries:

Opening prayer: Darlene

LotH: Franz

Gospel sharing: Barb

Ongoing formation: Keith – Reflection 10 from *Live Like Francis*

## Faith Matters: Reflections from your Spiritual Assistant

Happy New Year! No, I haven't lost my marbles or turned the wrong page on my calendar. I'm speaking of the church year, which began on the First Sunday of Advent; December 2nd this calendar year. Advent is my favorite time of the liturgical year. The readings speak of hope and promise. They call us to make room in our hearts for Christ come into our world, past, present and future.

This was an important time of year for Francis as well. In his day Advent/Christmas didn't carry the significance it has for us today, even setting aside the commercialism. Christmas was an important religious observance for the Church but not as important as its primary feasts of Good Friday and Easter. However, for Francis the Incarnation held a place of great esteem. Therefore Christmas, the celebration of Jesus' birth, and Advent, the season of preparation, were very important to him.

Francis' great insight was that the mystery of the Incarnation and God's gift of intimacy through Jesus could be made accessible to all the people, most of whom were illiterate. He accomplished this through the very concrete means of the living Nativity scene which Francis first staged during Advent in the cave outside Greccio.

No longer did God seem distant and inaccessible. He could be seen, heard, touched, and even caressed as the little baby in the manger. The sounds and smells of the animals added to the sensation that the townspeople themselves were present at the birth of the Messiah. Imagine yourself in that scene from 800 years. Now bring that to today. How do you today participate in a real way in the Incarnation? How do you this Advent season create space in your heart, your life, your relationships for Christ to enter in?

—Bob

### Franciscan Action Network (FAN)

FAN, of which we as Secular Franciscans are members, is celebrating 10 years of serving as *"a collective Franciscan voice seeking to transform United States public policy related to peace making, care for creation, poverty, and human rights"* (from the FAN web site).

The Franciscan Action Network tries to help political, religious and other civic communities reflect upon key issues of the day affecting all Americans and respond to them in ways flowing from the Gospel or, as we would say, bring the Gospel to life and life to the Gospel. Its work is akin to what the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops does in the name of the Church in the U.S. FAN is our voice on the national stage.

In recent weeks FAN has been advocating for the human rights of immigrants at the border and speaking out against proposals to weaken environmental protections.



### Wisdom from Fr. Solanus

- ❖ If we look at things in the light of faith, the worst—as the world considers things—will turn out [to be] our victory.
- ❖ Perhaps there is no more beautiful example of confidence in God than that of Mary—God's living tabernacle—and St. Joseph seeking an abode wherein to give us salvation.
- ❖ Rightly ordered charity is that I should never forget that the primary purpose of my creation and existence as a rational creature is to recognize and know, to appreciate and love—with an intelligent, personal, and grateful love—my God, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Sanctifier.

### ODDS 'N' ENDS

At its last meeting the fraternity council decided to use the coming year to focus the "Faith Matters" reflections on articles of our Rule in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Rule.

Margi Florence, our Regional Formation Director, noted in a recent email that she attended a recent conference where Fr. Dan Crosby, a Capuchin Friar who had lived with Solanus Casey, presented four conferences using the legacy of Fr. Solanus to talk about Franciscan humility. Nice to hear that Fr. Solanus is still making an impact.

—Bob