

Minister's Reflection

Since my duty for the February meeting is to lead the ongoing formation with the topic of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I have been thinking about Mary and our Franciscan charism. We know that our Rule states: "express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently." The opening line to this part of the Rule also points out Mary's great humility. Because Mary shared her Son's poverty, I think this solidified her place in St Francis's personal devotion to her. So, the question we must ask ourselves, is how am I to imitate Mary, in both her self-giving and prayer? In order to imitate someone, we must get to know them first. We can break open the scriptures to find her, both the old and new testament. In particular, the Magnificat and the Annunciation can be prayed with and meditated on. The Church also gives us devotions to help draw close to her, the rosary, Marian consecration, the Immaculate Heart, devotion to her many titles. Through all of these avenues, we can grow close to her and know her qualities and virtues. Art can also assist here. I personally have a number of pictures, icons and statues of Mary to pray with and remind me of her as I ramble around my house. If time allows after my presentation on the Little Office, maybe we can share how we each draw close and imitate Our Lady.

A good quote from St Augustine:

"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like." —Franz

Gospel Reading, Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time: Lk 6:17, 20-26

Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way."

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

Reminder that our next Damiano meal service is Saturday, March 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Please let me know if you can make it. Thank you.

From Pope Francis after his trip to Abu Dhabi: "For the first time, a Pope went to the Arabian peninsula. And Providence wanted it to be a Pope by the name of Francis, 800 years after the visit of St. Francis of Assisi to the sultan al-Malik al-Kamil. I often thought of Saint Francis during this journey: he helped me to keep the Gospel, the love of Jesus Christ in my heart, while I was living the various moments of the visit; in my heart there was the Gospel of Christ, prayer to the Father for all his children, especially for the poorest, for the victims of injustices, wars, misery ...; prayer because the dialogue between Christianity and Islam is a decisive factor for peace in today's world."

—Jane

This month's Fraternity Gathering

February 17, 2019, 12:30 p.m. – Pot luck and gathering

Holy Family Catholic Church, lower level
2430 West 3rd St., Duluth
Park in the lower (gravel) parking lot

Agenda:

1. Opening Prayer: Barb
2. Liturgy of the Hours: Bob
3. Gospel sharing: Darlene
4. Ongoing formation: Franz, Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary
5. Retreat ideas
6. Spring retreat in Little Falls
7. Business:
 - a) Stewardship prayer and collection
 - b) Approve January minutes
 - c) Finance report, payments, approvals
 - d) Approve 2018 Annual Report
 - e) Approve 2018 Financial Report
 - f) Update on visitation/election
 - g) Formation and JPIC reports
 - h) Other?
8. Vocations and closing prayers

Next month's meeting: March 17, 2019.

Retreat: Topic TBD

Franciscan Saints/Blesseds of the Month

- 4 ST JOSEPH OF LEONISSA
- 6 STS PETER BAPTIST, PAUL MIKI, AND COMPANIONS
- 7 ST COLLETTE
- 9 BL MOTHER MARIA THERESIA BONZEL

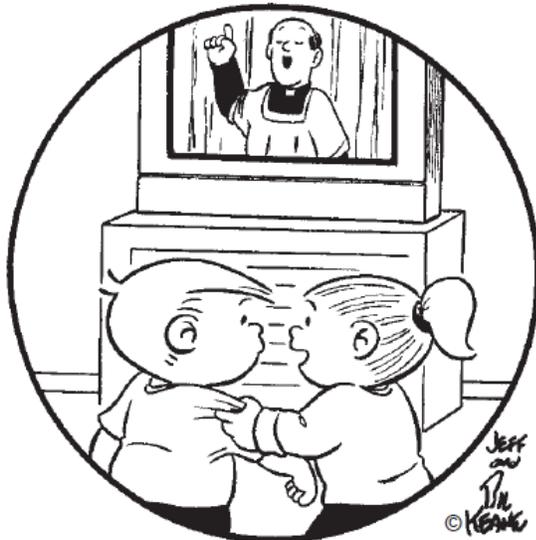
Regina Bonzel was born on 17 September 1830. Her mother sent her to study at the Ursulines in Cologne and it was there that her vocation matured. She entered the Third Order of Saint Francis in 1850. She took the name of "Maria Theresia".

In 1859, Maria and two other women founded a monastic community to care for orphans, neglected children and the sick. They later received formal approval as the Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

The first missionaries to America arrived in Lafayette, Indiana, in 1875 and began their work of caring for the sick. The congregation grew and the Sisters were able to open many new hospitals and schools. Bonzel died on February 6, 1905.

- 19 ST CONRAD OF PIACENZA

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Hear that? People in heaven have ever-laughing life."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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ODDS 'N' ENDS

Diocese of Duluth Men of Faith Catholic Conference

Saturday March 19, 2019 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Marshall School
1215 Rice Lake Road
Duluth, MN 55811

Guest Speaker: Paul George

He is the author of *Rethink Happiness: Dare to Embrace God and Experience True Joy*. Paul also hosts a weekly national radio show and podcast, *The Paul George Show*. He has a master's degree in theology from the University of Dallas. Paul resides in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Our Regional Spiritual Director, Kathy Taormina, is recruiting professed Secular Franciscans for the next Spiritual Assistants class starting this summer. It is a two-year program leading to commissioning as a Spiritual Assistant. Please consider whether God is calling you to this ministry. —Bob

Faith Matters: Reflections from your Spiritual Assistant

Article 4: The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.

It should come as no surprise to us that the first article of “The Way of Life” section of the Rule drives us to the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Christians we are gospel people and, as Franciscans, living the gospel life is our special calling. In fact, the first Rule of the Franciscan Order was basically a collection of scripture passages which Francis assembled into the Franciscan Way of Life.

Of course, we don't read scripture as Francis did. His was a very different time when literacy was rare and copies of the Bible were even rarer. Only the very rich could afford them. Francis primarily heard the gospels read at Mass and, without much formal education, tended to take it pretty literally.

The Catholic understanding of scripture has changed a lot since then. As the Pontifical Biblical Commission stated in 1993,

“Catholic exegesis . . . recognizes that one of the aspects of biblical texts is that they are the work of human authors, who employed both their own capacities for expression and the means which their age and social context put at their disposal. Consequently Catholic exegesis freely makes use of the scientific methods and approaches which allow a better grasp of the meaning of texts in their linguistic, literary, sociocultural, religious and historical contexts, while explaining them as well through studying their sources and attending to the personality of each author.”

As Catholics we don't read scripture literally but employ all the tools at our disposal to more fully understand the richness and truth of the text. Or in other words, you can take scripture literally or you can take it seriously, but you can't do both.

And of course, as Franciscans we don't read scripture in isolation from the events of our lives. That's the “gospel to life and life to the gospel” part. We see all facets of creation as imbued with God's presence and our relationships with them as opportunities to demonstrate God's love. Nothing—not our politics, not our social structures, not our environment, not the least among us—is beyond the reach of the gospel. This was the model given us by Francis, who lived with the lepers, contemplated God's presence in all things and dined with the Sultan. May Christ be the inspiration and center of our lives as well.

—Bob

Wisdom from Fr. Solanus

What a marvelously different society we'd have here, and what an ideal world to live in, if we'd all keep in mind the assurance of Jesus: “What you have done to the least of My brethren, you have done to me.”

God could have founded the Church and left it under the supervision of angels that have no human faults and weaknesses. But who can doubt that as it stands today, consisting of and under poor sinners—successors of ignorant fishermen—the Church is a more outstanding miracle than in any other way?

We do well to remember how very short, after all, it is till our suffering and our time of merit, too, will be over. Let us offer everything, therefore, to the divine Spouse of our souls, that He may accept it as helping Him to save immortal souls—our own included.

