



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

We are nearing the end of the year that most people want to forget. It’s a good time to think about the silver lining. As a country, I think we had become puffed up with pride and the pandemic has been a great humbling experience. Not as great as we thought, and then the race riots came to show us more about a disease that has been around for many years. Our country’s great visions of “progress” took a beating this year. Being beat up by a physical and moral disease, has caused many people to think, a good thing, and perhaps part of the silver lining. We have been hearing about the end times in the daily mass readings and now about the great precursor, John the Baptist. With more darkness around us, both physical and moral, the message of John the Baptist is more relevant than ever. “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.” A call to repentance and conversion from a great ascetic man who lived in the wilderness. I hope we can all find ways to “make straight his paths”. What does that mean for you? What needs to change in you? The silver lining may be that we are not made for this world, it is not our true home, but we need to respond to God’s will in the vocation we happen to be in. May God bless our fraternity with peace, unity and conversion of life in the year to come. —Franz

This month’s Fraternity Gathering

December 20, 2020, 12:30 p.m. – Cookies and Gathering

Holy Family Catholic Church, social hall

2430 West 3rd St., Duluth

Park in the west parking lot

NOTE: This is the tentative plan. A decision on whether we gather in person or remotely will be made closer to the date. You will be notified by phone or email if the in-person gathering is cancelled.

Agenda:

1. Blessing of the Creche –Franz
2. Opening prayer – Barb
3. LotH – Jane
4. Gospel sharing – Darlene
5. Ongoing Formation – Franz: Reflection 31 in *Live Like Francis*.
6. Business
 - a. Approve minutes, assign ministries
 - b. Treasurer reports, bills, receipts
 - c. Formation report
 - d. JPIC report
7. Vocation and closing prayers

Next month’s meeting: January 17, 2021.

Ongoing formation – TBD

Guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health for community gatherings:

- Ask participants to review this screening survey: Have you had any of the following symptoms that you cannot attribute to another health condition?

◆ Fever or feeling feverish?	◆ A new sore throat?
◆ Chills?	◆ New muscle aches?
◆ A new cough?	◆ New headache?
◆ Shortness of breath?	◆ New loss of smell or taste?
- Strongly encourage all persons to wear masks
- Maintain at least six feet between people who do not live in the same household.
- Provide tissues for proper cough/sneeze etiquette, trash receptacles and hand sanitizer.
- Encourage participants to regularly wash and/or sanitize their hands.
- Routinely clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, restrooms, common areas, etc.
- Refrain from singing or chanting.



Gospel Reading: 4th Sunday of Advent, LK 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"

And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Then the angel departed from her.

Franciscan Saints/Blesseds of the Month

8 IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

12 OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

15 BL MARY FRANCES SCHERVIER

Frances Schervier was born in 1819 into a wealthy family in Aachen, Germany. When her mother and sisters died of disease, Frances at age 13 took over homemaking responsibility for her father. She branched out to caring for the poor and sick of the city. Later she and four female friends joined the Franciscan Third Order.

After the death of Frances' father, the five women established in 1845 a religious community, the Poor Sisters of St. Francis, and Frances was chosen as superior. The sisters ministered to the poor, sick, prostitutes, and prisoners of Aachen. Eventually an American branch was established whose sisters served as nurses in the Civil War. Later they founded hospitals and other ministries. Frances was beatified in 1974.

Faith Matters: Reflections from your Spiritual Assistant

The holiday season is in full force by now for most of us. Even in the midst of the Covid pandemic it can be a time of great joy and excitement. Obviously, it is a stressful time as we anticipate hoped-for family gatherings and gift giving, and all the high expectations that we often place on these. And for those of us who lost loved ones or do not have family to celebrate with, the holiday season often reminds us of our loss and loneliness.

Fortunately, we are in the midst of that great liturgical season, Advent, that invites us to slow down, take time for prayer and reflection, and prepare our hearts and spirits to welcome the Christ child. Advent often stands in stark contrast to the commercialization of Christmas, though the two do not have to be mutually exclusive.

During this season take time to enjoy both the shopping and the loved ones you shop for. Set reasonable expectations for yourself, financially and otherwise. Take advantage of online or in-person church services, especially those revolving around the special Advent readings (e.g. the "O Antiphons" of the week before Christmas). Remember, too, those whose hearts are troubled or grieve for loved ones they have lost. In all you do try to recapture the feelings of joy and expectation most of us left behind in childhood.

Have a blessed and fruitful Advent and a Merry Christmas. —Bob

ODDS 'N' ENDS

Please continue prayers for the selection of a new bishop for the Diocese of Duluth.



Remember to bring your Damiano donations to our December fraternity gathering if we are able to meet in person.

If the decision is made to meet remotely, please drop off you donations when able to Jane. She will get them to Damiano.

—Bob