

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

Plans for the Spring Gathering in Little Falls proceeded this last month with the distribution of our flyer and registration form. Keith will soon be receiving forms and payment in the mail. Our next step is to develop the schedule for the day. Thank you all for supporting this significant event for our fraternity.

I have been reading some excerpts from a book by Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap titled “The Spirituality of Mother Teresa”. He writes, “Jesus rose up to heaven, but his feet remained on earth, because the feet of Christ are the poor, whom Jesus said we would always have with us. The Eucharist, Mother Teresa reminds us, allows everyone to renew the connection between our response to Christ’s Sitio (thirst) and our availability to the poor – between Communion with the real Body and communion with his mystical body.” I never thought of service to the poor as a “communion with his mystical body” but that makes sense given Saul’s encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, and other passages in the Gospel. We have both the Real Presence in the Eucharist alongside the presence of Jesus in his mystical body. There is a lot to reflect upon here and the connections are real and profound. Seeing Jesus in both the real body and mystical body is a challenge for us that with Grace and humility will come in God’s time. Fr Cantalamessa ends one of his reflections with the following which is a good message for us today: “Renew your zeal to quench his thirst under the species of bread and in the sorrowful semblance of the poorest of the poor.” —Franz

This month’s Fraternity Gathering

February 16, 2020, 12:30 p.m. – Pot luck and gathering.

Holy Family Catholic Church, social hall
2430 West 3rd St., Duluth
Park in the parish office parking lot
(west side)

Agenda:

1. Opening prayer – Keith
2. LotH – Barb
3. Gospel sharing – Kathy
4. Ongoing Formation – Bob: Models of the Church, Part 2
5. Business
 - a. Approve minutes, assign ministries
 - b. Treasurer reports, bills, receipts
 - c. Formation report
 - d. JPIC report
6. Vocation and closing prayers

Next month’s meeting: March 15, 2020.

Lenten Retreat: “Living Our Franciscan Witness to Peace”

Gospel Reading, 6th Sunday of Ordinary Time: Mt 5:20-22A, 27-28, 33-34A, 37

Jesus said to his disciples: “I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *you shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.* But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

“You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

“Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.* But I say to you, do not swear at all. Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.”

SPEED BUMP

by Dave Coverly



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Faith Matters: Reflections from your Spiritual Assistant

It can be difficult in these tumultuous times to avoid getting caught up in the political squabbles, the controversies in the Church, or even conflicts within our own families. It seems as though everywhere I turn there are tribalistic calls to join one faction or another in the fight against perceived enemies. What is a Franciscan to do in the midst of this? We'll get a chance to reflect on this in our fraternity retreat next month but I'd like to ground us first of all in our Rule.

Article 19 begins, "Mindful that they are bearers of peace. . ." Bearers of peace. What an interesting and lovely turn of phrase. It immediately brought to mind Mary, who is known, among other titles, as the God-bearer. What does it mean to be a bearer of something? In Mary's case it meant carrying the Christ Child within her, cherishing him, protecting him, nurturing him, bringing him to life.

Can this be a model for us "peace bearers" who follow in the footsteps of Jesus and Francis? How do we carry peace within us as we go about our days? In what ways do we cherish peace as something of great worth? How do we protect and nurture peace, which is as fragile in a world that seems bent on strife as Jesus was in the womb? And lastly, how do we bring peace to life in our thoughts, in our words, and in our actions when doing so can entail pain and risk?

We are blessed to have many examples throughout history to inform and inspire our efforts. Foremost among these is Jesus who lived peace and refused to be caught up in the cause of the Zealots. And of course, there is St. Francis who tried to stop a war by preaching peace to both armies and reached out to the enemy. And then there was Franz Jaegerstaetter, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Maximilian Kolbe who gave their lives in the cause of peace during World War II. Here in America we have Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King as models of peace and nonviolence. How are you called to be a bearer of peace?

—Bob

ODDS 'N' ENDS

REMINDER: Please bring your "Whatsit" scoresheet with you to the fraternity gathering.

Diocesan Men's Conference
February 29 9:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Marshall School, Duluth



—Bob

Franciscan Saints/Blesseds of the Month

4 ST JOSEPH OF LEONISSA

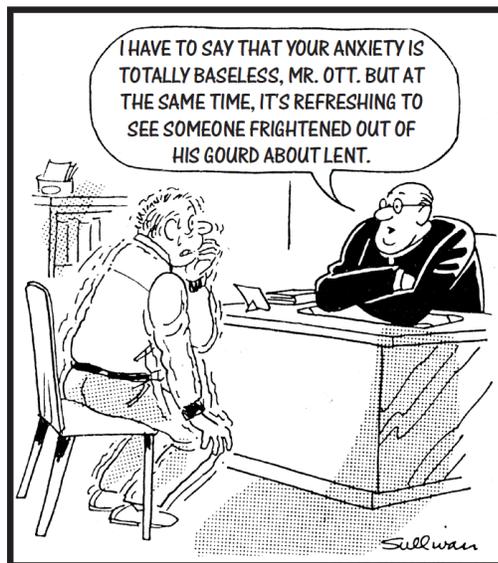
6 STS PETER BAPTIST, PAUL MIKI,
AND COMPANIONS

7 ST COLLETTE

St Colette was born in 1381 in a Benedictine Abbey where her father worked as a carpenter. After her parents died, Colette sought to follow God in several orders, eventually settling on the Poor Clares. Through a series of visions, she came to believe that she was called to reform the Order and return it to its original ideals of absolute poverty. Colette eventually established 18 convents of the reformed Poor Clare Order, called Colettines, during her lifetime. She was canonized in 1807. Colette is the patron saint of expectant mothers and sick children.

9 BL MOTHER MARIA THERESIA
BONZEL

19 ST CONRAD OF PIACENZA



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Newsletter edited by Bob

“A city set upon a mountain cannot be hidden”

The readings for Sunday Feb. 9th, the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, are good ones for those of us who try and witness the Gospel Values in the Marketplace. In fact the Gospel is one that has been used by our founding Fathers and Sisters at the establishment of Plymouth Colony. Since I am from the area of that foundation I recognize words that were often repeated by various mayors, governors, and Church Leaders in the Greater Boston area.

The words were used time after time to encourage speaking truth to Power and to engagement in political thought and agendas. It speaks about a different vision that has a foundation on the Word of God and the moving of God’s Spirit among those who have accepted the Gospel.

I think of these words again and again whenever there is a moment for believers to stand and point to the moral foundations that our nation was built from. We see the value of these words when the faith community stands with those who feel they have no voice in the public forum. We also see how at times these words are used by people with different agendas. It is then that we realize how important it is to speak the truth to power and how our involvement in the public forum is so important.

My prayer and hope is that this righteous stand is one that does not exclude, but embraces “the other.” Our countries’ history, especially from that historical fact of a city on a hill, has at times excluded the “other.” The ‘other’ being the natives already living on the land that our ancestors arrived in. The ‘other’ being those who have sought refuge and safety for their families, but do not have documents and are looked at as trying to take something from those who are already here. The ‘other’ as someone of a different race, creed, or belief.

In the first reading from Isaiah, we see that only when we take action can the Glory of God be seen in our midst. Only when we embrace the ‘other’, feed the hungry, give comfort to the affected, can the Light rise from us in the darkness. Only when we think “Yes we can”, will the Spirit of God be free to move and work among us in power.

Let us all pray that we will see the Light of God in what we say and what we do.

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap.

FAN Board Vice President



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Wisdom from Solanus Casey

- ❖ Let us prepare for our final moment on earth by patient suffering, prayer, and the sacraments; then we will receive with joyful countenance the final call of the Divine Lover, the Bridegroom of our souls, and gently pass into eternity.
- ❖ How wonderful the ways of the good God when we foster confidence in Him by leaving something that seems important for Him to take care of.
- ❖ This poor sinner Solanus, who more than anyone else gives me the most trouble. I consider it a mercy that we need examine one conscience only!
- ❖ We worry and fret about tomorrow as though our dear Lord had never spoken a word about His divine providence, or proved His loving solicitude for each of us a thousand times a day.

Here's a Lenten reflection I wrote 15 years ago for the staff of my last hospital (with a little updating):

There are few words in the English language I dislike more than the word "discipline." From my childhood I have always been somewhat of a free spirit, so discipline is not something that comes naturally to me. Of course, I'm also a parent, so I've spent most of their growing up years teaching my children the value of discipline. And as a minister I know that a certain discipline is the key to spiritual growth.

Discipline comes from the Latin root word "discere," meaning "to learn" or "come to know." Contrary to most people's beliefs, it is not the same as punishment and it does not simply mean making someone else do what we want them to. It refers to what I do, not what someone else does to me. True discipline comes from within; I am self-directed to do what is right.

Discere is also the root for the word disciple. To be a disciple means to voluntarily take on and integrate into your life the lessons of your teacher or master. Every faith system has its own disciplines and there is a remarkable amount of overlap among them. For example, nearly every religion on earth has its own version of what is commonly called the Golden Rule.

The season of Lent, which begins February 26th this year, is meant to be a time for Christians to more fully come to know and live out the teachings of Jesus. Christians practice spiritual discipline during Lent in order to create good habits which will carry them throughout the year.

There are four main spiritual disciplines that traditionally make up the Lenten journey:

PRAYER at its core is simply opening ourselves up to God's presence. It can be done through formal prayers or quiet reflection. We "waste time" with God in the same way we spend unstructured time with those we love. Combined with reading scripture or worshipping with your faith community prayer can be a powerful way to learn how to more fully live out God's call in our lives.

REPENTANCE helps us to get in touch with and change those things in our lives which keep us from fully living, loving and serving others as God would have us do. Do we need to reconcile ourselves to God? Have we done something to another for which we need to seek forgiveness? Is it a time to forgive someone who has hurt us? Repentance calls us to honestly face the wrongs we have done and to heal broken relationships.

SELF DENIAL reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God to be received in gratitude. By fasting from food we can be sensitized to the hunger suffered by so many. By "giving up" comforts that we normally take for granted we can experience in a small way the poverty experienced by half the people in the world. We can also begin to heal our lives and our environment from the disease of "affluenza" which is so much a part of our American way of life. As the saying goes, "we should live simply so that others can simply live."

CHARITY or almsgiving is our way of thanking God for all that we have received and sharing our gifts with those less fortunate. It's not just about giving money. Charity also involves giving of ourselves through volunteer service to build a better world, whether that is through our local churches or organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Lakeland Sharing Foundation or area food pantries.

May God richly bless and nurture you during your Lenten journey.

—Bob

