



## Newsletter

February 2021

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

As I write this message, I just returned from a retreat at King’s House in Buffalo MN. The theme this year’s was “A Listening Heart”. Due to Covid, there were only 10 retreatants, but that didn’t stop the dedicated staff from giving a powerful experience. One of the presenters described how “We become what we listen to.” He emphasized the importance of listening to God’s Word, and not to that inner critical voice that often pulls us down. He also described some signs that we are listening that I thought I would share: 1) Am I becoming a more loving person, 2) Living in community with others, and 3) Listening to the poor. This retreat topic was really timely for me because I had been thinking about listening for some time, especially in light of the riots last year and the lack of listening between our political parties. Listening is a gift that our world really needs. At the retreat, we were reminded of this with a few quotes: “We must become a listening Church” (Archbishop Hebda) and “We must become Apostles of listening” (Pope Francis to the Bishops). Let’s pray for each other that we can all “Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in us” and be “Quick to hear and slow to speak” (James 1:21). —Franz

### 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
- 19 ST CONRAD OF PIACENZA

Conrad was born in the late 13th century to a wealthy noble family in northern Italy. He grew, married, and lived a normal aristocratic life. He lost it all after an incident where he was responsible for a damaging fire. Conrad joined a community of Franciscan Third Order hermits where he embraced a life of austerity. He developed among the people a reputation for holiness, and rich and poor alike sought out his prayers and miraculous healings.

Conrad died in 1351 and canonized in 1625.

### This month’s Fraternity Gathering

February 21, 2021, 12:30 p.m. – Snacks and Gathering

Holy Family Catholic Church, social hall  
2430 West 3<sup>rd</sup> 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. Opening prayer – Barb
2. LotH – Franz
3. Gospel sharing – Bob
4. Ongoing Formation – Jane: Reflection 21 in *Live Like Francis*.
5. Discussion – possible Lenten retreat next month.
6. Fratelli Tutti update by Jane and Bob.
7. Business
  - a. Approve minutes, assign ministries
  - b. Treasurer reports, bills, receipts
  - c. Formation report
  - d. JPIC report
8. Vocation and closing prayers

Next month’s meeting: March 21, 2021.  
Ongoing formation – TBD

### Wisdom from Solanus Casey

- ❖ Let us pray for one another’s conversion, for no one is fully converted here on this side of heaven.
- ❖ The sacrament of baptism divinely infuses into the soul the triune virtues of faith, hope, and charity, making it a candidate for the life of eternal glory.
- ❖ Gratitude is one of the very surest indications of intelligence, and atheism is the blackest ingratitude possible.

## Gospel Reading: 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Mark 1:12-15

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

## FORMATION

The Regional Formation Team has set up quarterly formation workshops for formators this year. The first one will be February 27, 2021 via Zoom. The theme for this session is, "Formation 101: Back to the Basics." I am looking forward to attending this workshop.

A second quarterly Formation Zoom meeting is planned for May 22, 2021.

By the way, the Regional Formation Team consists of Mona Wolney OFS, Regional Formation Director, Kathy Taormina OFS, Regional Spiritual Assistant, Cindy Gunsolly OFS, Sue Wolney OFS, and Margret Schrader OFS.



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## Faith Matters: Reflections from your Spiritual Assistant

It shouldn't surprise anyone that Catholic social teaching has something to say about work and the rights of workers. After all, it was the terrible economic and social conditions that existed for workers at the end of the 19th century which directly led Pope Leo XIII to formulate this new body of teaching. The industrial revolution was in full swing, and workers labored long hours for low pay, and very little dignity or power to control their lives. The world seemed ready to be torn apart by two competing and merciless economic systems: Marxism and free market capitalism.

Since then we have seen the supposed triumph of capitalism in much of the world. It has led to tremendous economic growth and great wealth for many. We have also seen its dark side: empty materialism, a growing gap between rich and poor, rampant destruction of our natural resources, and a feeling among workers that they are like cogs in a big machine, quickly to be discarded when their usefulness is past.

Without dignity or a deeper sense of the value of work, it is easy for people to see their job as a necessary evil—a way to earn the money they need, but offering little in the way of personal fulfillment or hope. How many times have you heard people complain for years about their job, or seen co-workers simply going through the motions of doing their work without enthusiasm? Perhaps this describes your own experience of work, past or present.

Catholic social teaching insists that work is a good that should be available to all people. When we work, we cooperate with God in transforming the world and ourselves, making both better. As the American bishops said in *Economic Justice for All*,

"All work has a threefold moral significance. First, it is a principal way that people exercise the distinctive human capacity for self-expression and self-realization. Second, it is the ordinary way for human beings to fulfill their material needs. Finally, work enables people to contribute to the well-being of the larger community. Work is not only for one's self. It is for one's family, for the nation, and indeed for the benefit of the entire human family."

Pope John Paul II reiterated this later when he stated, "All work should be judged by the measure of dignity given to the person who carries it out" (*On Human Work*, #6).

For work to have this significance, both workers and employers need to cooperate to make workplaces healthier and just, and to ensure that the rights of workers are protected. Workers have a duty to give their employers “a full days’ work for a full days’ pay.” In exchange, workers have a right to a living wage “which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner” (*Mother and Teacher*, #71).

Workers also have a right to participate in the decisions which affect their work. “The Church fully supports the right of workers to form unions or other associations to secure their rights to fair wages and working conditions. This is a specific application of the more general right to associate” (*Economic Justice for All*, #104). In turn, governments have an obligation to ensure that these groups have legal protection for their efforts, that all who are able to work can find employment, and that each worker receives a just wage.

As a tiny Franciscan community, we are not in a position to determine how employers, employees, and government relate to each other. Like Francis we can, however, witness to a better way, one that promotes the dignity of work for all. We can pray that just conditions in the workplace come about. And we can inform ourselves about Catholic social teaching and, through our vote, encourage leaders who will act with justice. Even in his day, when poverty, near slave like working conditions, and social deprivation had most workers doubting their own value, Francis greeted all people—including the lowliest of the workers—with the same words, “Buongiorno, buona gente” (“Good day, good people”).  
—Bob

### **ODDS ‘N’ ENDS**

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



Please remember Mike Polson in your prayers. February 14 is the eighth anniversary of his death.



By the time you read this we will be almost into the season of Lent. It is a time of more focused prayer, fasting (including, traditionally, giving things up), and almsgiving. Might I suggest that instead of the usual abstinence such as candy or other vices, we focus on giving up things like gossip, harsh judgment, envy, indifference to the needs of others, etc.



Traditionally we hold a fraternity retreat during Lent. For all practical purposes this means holding the retreat during next month’s meeting, since by April we will be in the Easter season. Please come to our February gathering with your ideas about a fraternity retreat, and possible themes for one.  
—Bob

A little boy was listening to a long and excessively boring sermon in church. Suddenly the red sanctuary lamp caught his eye. Tugging his father's sleeve, he said, "Daddy, when the light turns green can we go?"

After the Baptism of his baby brother in church, little Johnny sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That priest said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys."



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## Excerpts from *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)

2. This saint of fraternal love, simplicity and joy, who inspired me to write the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, prompts me once more to devote this new Encyclical to fraternity and social friendship. Francis felt himself a brother to the sun, the sea and the wind, yet he knew that he was even closer to those of his own flesh. Wherever he went, he sowed seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters.

77. Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us, for that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment. Like the chance traveler in the parable, we need only have a pure and simple desire to be a people, a community, constant and tireless in the effort to include, integrate and lift up the fallen. . .

94. Love, then, is more than just a series of benevolent actions. Those actions have their source in a union increasingly directed towards others, considering them of value, worthy, pleasing and beautiful apart from their physical or moral appearances. Our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives. Only by cultivating this way of relating to one another will we make possible a social friendship that excludes no one and a fraternity that is open to all.

123. Business activity is essentially "a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world".[101] God encourages us to develop the talents he gave us, and he has made our universe one of immense potential. In God's plan, each individual is called to promote his or her own development,[102] and this includes finding the best economic and technological means of multiplying goods and increasing wealth. Business abilities, which are a gift from God, should always be clearly directed to the development of others and to eliminating poverty, especially through the creation of diversified work opportunities. . .

203. Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns. Based on their identity and experience, others have a contribution to make, and it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a more fruitful public debate. When individuals or groups are consistent in their thinking, defend their values and convictions, and develop their arguments, this surely benefits society. Yet, this can only occur to the extent that there is genuine dialogue and openness to others. Indeed, "in a true spirit of dialogue, we grow in our ability to grasp the significance of what others say and do, even if we cannot accept it as our own conviction. In this way, it becomes possible to be frank and open about our beliefs, while continuing to discuss, to seek points of contact, and above all, to work and struggle together".[197] Public discussion, if it truly makes room for everyone and does not manipulate or conceal information, is a constant stimulus to a better grasp of the truth, or at least its more effective expression. . .

230. Working to overcome our divisions without losing our identity as individuals presumes that a basic sense of belonging is present in everyone. Indeed, "society benefits when each person and social group feels truly at home. In a family, parents, grandparents and children all feel at home; no one is excluded. If someone has a problem, even a serious one, even if he brought it upon himself, the rest of the family comes to his assistance; they support him. His problems are theirs... In families, everyone contributes to the common purpose; everyone works for the common good, not denying each person's individuality but encouraging and supporting it. They may quarrel, but there is something that does not change: the family bond. Family disputes are always resolved afterwards. The joys and sorrows of each of its members are felt by all. That is what it means to be a family! If only we could view our political opponents or neighbors in the same way that we view our children or our spouse, mother or father! How good would this be! . . .

254. I ask God "to prepare our hearts to encounter our brothers and sisters, so that we may overcome our differences rooted in political thinking, language, culture and religion. Let us ask him to anoint our whole being with the balm of his mercy, which heals the injuries caused by mistakes, misunderstandings and disputes. And let us ask him for the grace to send us forth, in humility and meekness, along the demanding but enriching path of seeking peace".[236]