

# St. Clare Fraternity

# NEWSLETTER

May 2020

Our Council: Arlene Stewart, Minister Tom Brown, Vice Minister Katie  
Roberts, Formation Director Maryanne Sheofsky, Secretary Anne  
Pennsy, Treasurer Victoria Snyder,  
Councilor Brother Mike Tripka, TOR, Spiritual Assistant

## Minister's Message

According to a pious legend, one day St. Francis of Assisi had a vision in which he saw his friars trying to reach Christ by a ladder that was red and very steep. After climbing a few rungs, they would suddenly fall back. Our Lord then showed St. Francis another ladder, white and much less steep, at whose summit appeared the Blessed Virgin, and He said to Francis: "Advise your sons to go by the ladder of My Mother."

Among those devotions rich in Franciscan, and especially Capuchin Franciscan, traditions to the Virgin Mother of God. St. Francis of Assisi was among the greatest Marian devotees in the history of the Church and according to the Second Vita of Thomas of Celano, had a love for her that was beyond words. "inexpressible," he writes of Francis' love for the Blessed Virgin, "for it was she who made the Lord of majesty our brother." St. Francis chose her as the patroness and Queen of the Friars Minor and exhorted his Friars to always possess a true and living devotion to the Mother of God. This loving devotion is imbued in his famous Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

*Hail, holy Lady, most holy Queen, Mary, Mother of God, ever Virgin. You were chosen by the Most High Father in Heaven, consecrated by Him, with His most Holy Beloved Son and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. On you descended and still remains all the fullness of grace and every good.*

*Hail, His Palace. Hail, His Robe. Hail, His Handmaid. Hail, His Mother. And Hail, all holy Virtues, who by grace and inspiration of the Holy Spirit are poured into the hearts of the faithful so that from their faithless state, they may be made faithful servants of God through you. Amen*

In imitation of their holy founder, the Capuchins have promoted and popularized Marian devotion throughout the Church in the last four centuries. Indeed, it was due in large part of the writings of the Franciscan theologian, Blessed John Duns Scotus, that led the Church to proclaim the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

All the Capuchin saints, from ST. Conrad of Parzham to St. Pio of Pietrelcina, have had a strong and fervent devotion to the Blessed Virgin and she has been integral to their Franciscan spirituality. Promoting devotion to her has been incorporated into the Capuchin Constitutions:

*Let us, venerate, especially through liturgical worship and the rosary the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, conceived without sin, daughter and handmaid of the Father, mother of the Son, and spouse of the Holy Spirit. Let us especially promote devotions to her among the people.*

In 1910 St. Pope Pius X exhorted the followers of St. Francis: “Beloved sons, you will preserve holiness of life, joined with purity and integrity of doctrine if you cultivate a fervent devotion to the Queen of your Order, the Immaculate Mother of God, for the omnipotent God wished us to have all things through her who is the Mirror of Justice and Seat of Wisdom.”

## From our Formation Director

In “Praying the Secular Franciscan Rule”, it is recommended that we read Scripture and our Rule daily and reflect on it using the Lectio Divina method. On page 16, this method is summarized.

- A. Choose a place and time.
- B. “Choose a paragraph from our Rule.”
- C. ” Let the awareness that you’re in God’s presence calmly sink in and remain with you throughout.”
- D. “Then start to pray using the Lectio Divina approach: 1. Read and reread slowly. 2. Reflect. 3. Respond. 4. Receive (Resolve). “When you’re done, don’t forget to thank God for whatever He’s given you in this prayer, even if you’re not aware of His gifts. He blesses us for just trying. One of His best gifts may be your firm decision to make a definite resolution or resolve to improve in that very specific area of our Holy Rule.”

God bless you in your efforts to be a better Franciscan. If we can only do this once per week, I’m sure we will benefit from that.

## OFS National & Regional News

**Summer Seminar “Called to Act With Justice”  
July 9-12,2020 Canceled due to Covid-19**

# St. Clare Fraternity News

Since we have not had our regular meetings due to the COVID-19 quarantine we have no news to report. We do, however, have people who have asked for our prayers.

Please keep the following requests in your prayers: Jean Roberts, Patty Uzzo, Bill Hough, Annette Lorenzo, and the personal intentions of our Fraternity Brothers and Sisters.

We offer our sincere sympathy and prayers to Mary Nelson upon the passing of her mother.

**Happy May Birthday to: May 3 Guy Savasta**

## Franciscan Holy Days

May 9	St. Catherine of Bologna	May 11	St. Ignatius of Laconi
May 12	St. Leopold Mandic	May 16	St. Margaret of Cortona
May 17	St. Paschal Baylon	May 18	St. Felix of Cantalice
May 20	St. Bernadine of Siena	May 23	St. Crispin of Viterbo
May 24	Dedication of Basicilica of St. Francis		
May 28	St. Mariana of Jesus De Paredes	May 30	St. Ferdinand, King
May 31	St. Camila Baptista Varano		

## The Marian Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Since May is the month of Mary, I thought I would try to find a connection between Our Blessed Mother and St. Francis. I found the following article online and am posting part of it to this newsletter. *(For the entire post please go to: <https://tomperna.org/2016/10/03/mondays-with-mary-the-marian-prayer-of-saint-francis-of-assisi/>)*

Like many of the saints before him, and many of the saints after him, St. Francis of Assisi had a great devotion and love for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Three specific roles of the Blessed Virgin Mary that St. Francis focused on were – Mother, [Advocate](#), and Queen.

Through the writings of St. Bonaventure, one of the great Franciscan theologians and the [Seraphic Doctor](#), he says that St. Francis believes the following about Mary as Mother:

*“He loved with an unspeakable affection the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, forasmuch as that She had made the Lord of glory our Brother, and through Her we have obtained mercy” (Leg. Mai. IX, 3). For who can make the Lord our Brother if She not also be our Mother?*

In regard to Mary as Queen, St. Francis believes,

*“When the man of God beheld it thus abandoned, by reason of the ardent devotion that he had toward the Sovereign Lady of the world, he took abode there, that he might diligently labor to repair it.” (Leg. Mai II, 8)*

And lastly, St. Francis thinks the following about Mary as Advocate,

*“In Her, after Christ, he put his chief trust, making Her his own patron and that of his Brethren...and in Her honor he fasted most devoutly from the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul unto the Feast of the Assumption.” (Leg, Mai, IX, 3). Now, Francis, the servant of God, abiding at the church of the Virgin Mother of God, with continuous sighing besought Her that had conceived the Word full of grace and truth that She would deign to become his Advocate (Leg. Mai. III, 1)*

All three of these roles are seen clearly in the Wedding Feast of Cana, where Mary speaks to the servants and tells them to do whatever Jesus asks them to do. In the Gospel of John, this first miracle is the borderline of all discipleship. Since the Apostles followed the Lord Jesus Christ and engaged in the apostolic life, which he taught them and was given to them on Pentecost, so would St. Francis follow the Lord, because he saw himself as a servant and disciple of Jesus Christ...

**Our Lady as Mother, Queen, and Advocate...Pray for Us.**

**Saint Francis of Assisi...Pray for Us.**