Secular Franciscan Order June 2018 Newsletter

 

“We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven. We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others.” Earlier Exhortation… Francis of Assisi – The Saint – Vol 1 – Page 42



June 2, 2018 Fraternity Meeting was held in The Outback at St. Jerome Catholic Church. It was beautifully done and most thought provoking. We began with our Opening Prayer. Joseph Swonke, OFS led us in the Office. Martha Restrepo, OFS prayerfully read the Candle lighting remembering past, present & future Fraternity. Dustin Greenwood shared an excerpt from “The Simple Way” by Fr. Murray Bodo, OFM followed by a short meditation which opened up an insightful discussion. We then had a mini-teaching by Dora Freeman, OFS on The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, enhancing the discussion with thoughts from “Pick More Daisies” – Ongoing Formation for Secular Franciscans by Lester Bach, OFM, Cap

Two things are necessary to be a true Franciscan:

1) The Gospels

2) Community

Personal sharing’s along with lots of discussion followed. In this Jubilee Year of celebrating 40 years of our Rule we will be covering our Rule in its entirety. It was all so interesting that we only had time to talk about Our first and second Rule.

The floor was opened up for personal sharing on our recent retreat in Louisiana. It was interesting to hear what others gleaned from their time with other Fraternities.

World Refugee Day is coming on June 20, 2018. There are multiple opportunities for us to be witnesses to the Gospel.

Michael spoke with Louise Zwick @ Casa Juan Diego and found out they have many ongoing needs. Our Fraternity agreed to donate by creating bags of goods consisting of toiletries, socks underwear and flip flops for the numerous refugees who cross their doorstep. More information to come on creation and distribution of the bags as we plan to do this quarterly. Michael will share at Regional and perhaps others will participate.

Our closing meditation was a beautiful Prayer and Intentions taken from CRS and USCCB for World Refugee Day 2018 that fit perfectly with our Franciscan charism to help the poor. Our closing prayer was from our Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order. We adjourned to enjoy delicious goodies provided by generous members. Bon appétit – YUM!

PAX ET BONUM

*Franciscan Special Forces*

*By Dustin Greenwood, OSF*

*As a former United States Marine, I often like to relate things to the military. Recently I compared the Secular Franciscan Order to that of the military special forces. Much like the fallen physical world we live in, always in some sort of wartime conflict, we are also continually in a spiritual battle against the forces of evil. To combat that, there is the Church Militant, those faithful on Earth striving to follow the orders of our Commanding Officer, Jesus Christ. Among the military, there are different branches, each specializing in a certain aspect of warfare. Within these branches, there are elite personnel who make up the special forces. Our branch is that of the Franciscans, we specialize in combating the forces of evil at the root; through humility & simplicity. The visible head of this branch are the first & second orders, the friars & nuns. They are clearly visible to the forces of evil, as well as to those ensnared by the world who have not yet realized the war that rages around them. The friars & the nuns are solid spiritual warriors who do much good, but are often limited to specific areas of operations. While the friars & the nuns are extremely effective in their areas of operations, often freeing those ensnared by the world & pushing back the forces of evil through prayer & good works, they sometimes frighten those who are unaware of the ongoing battle through their military garb or habits. The Franciscan response is the Secular Franciscan Order, the special forces of the Franciscans. There is no limit to our area of operations. We swiftly spread through every aspect of the warzone, infiltrating behind enemy lines & just like the military special force, we blend in. Our Secular habit is our Tau necklace, still mistaken for jewelry by the world, blending in more easily but still wearing a sign of our loyalty & commitment to Christ through St. Francis of Assisi. The rest of our garb is normal everyday attire of those we are seeking to rescue. This allows us to reach any ensnared individual in any aspect of life, young or old, at work or at play. Our area of operations is the front line, where our Commanding Officer, Jesus Christ, served & fell & conquered death. Our weapons are love & joy. We build relationships & lift up the fallen; & we are good at what we do!*



 To enjoy God there is an eternity given to us, but to perform some service for God and to do some good for our brethren, the time for that is very short

Venerable Antonio Margil

Franciscan Missionary 1657-1726

I just returned from the Regional Executive Council meeting and as always it is going to take several days to process it in its entirety. Fortunately minutes were taken so if I miss anything I will insure you get it at our next gathering. We did not have a Regional Council meeting this time since most of us were just together at the retreat in May.

 Some very exciting news that Cherryle shared was that NAFRA has sent to her the final paperwork to have signed which will Canonically establish the emerging fraternity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. She will sign it representing the region, Brother Juniper will have the Provincial of the OFM Region sign it, and the final signature will be for Cardinal DiNardo to sign. The Bishop will be invited to say the Mass of Canonical Establishment. This is the Korean Fraternity that meets at St. Andrew Kim just down the street from us on Bingle. Let us keep them in our prayers that the Holy Spirit continue to animate them.

As we know Formation is the number one priority of our Order. The Regional Formation Director along with other selected professed members who applied will be meeting in Kansas City this summer for the Formation Visioning Workshop. The guest speaker will be Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR whom many of us had the opportunity to hear him on March 24th at the Charismatic center and is known for his Wild Goose series on the Holy Spirit.

You may have heard or read that the OFM provinces (6 out of 7) just voted to become one. This is a significant and historical vote. Currently our Region has fraternities in 3 different provinces. Some sad news was announced though. Brother Juniper will no longer be our Regional Spiritual Assistant. He will remain as the Provincial Delegate and has appointed Brother Bob Barrett OFM to take over as Regional Spiritual Assistant. Thank you Brother Juniper for all you have done and will continue to do!

Highlights and accomplishments of this past year were reviewed including our new Regional Newsletter, the Formation workshops that have been shared with all the local formation directors either in person or via PowerPoint, and a soon to be revised Regional Handbook that will be on the website.

It would not be appropriate to put in too many details about a subject we spent a couple of hours discussing. However, It was comforting to know that when parts of our family are doing things that are not healthy for the whole there are other family members praying and engaging in dialogue in order to reach a resolution rather than reacting and dictating.

 Just as the angels have a hierarchy, we too have a hierarchy.

Article 22 of our General Constitution states we should “be in the forefront….………should take clear positions whenever human dignity is attacked by any form of oppression or .indifference……….interventions are always inspired by Christian love. We are not to pick and choose according to partisan politics.

Our Franciscan charism is Gospel driven, not politically motivated. When Pope St. John 23, a Secular Franciscan, opened Vatican 2 he stated it was time to let some fresh air into the Church. Vatican 2 opened more than 50 years ago. This year is a Jubilee year for us as we are celebrating 40 years of our current Rule. We are still unwrapping what all this means. .While on his deathbed, Pope Saint John 23 joked he had his bags packed and was ready to go. He dictated this final message for his beloved Church:

Now more than ever, certainly more than in past centuries, our intention is to serve people as such and not only Catholics, to defend above all and everywhere the rights of the human person…it is not the Gospel that changes; it is we who begin to understand it better…..The moment has come when we must recognize the signs of the times, seize the opportunity, and look far abroad.”

Peace

michael



***Next Meeting: July 7th, 2018 in the Outback @ St. Jerome Catholic Church beginning 10:00 a.m. Remember to bring your toiletries for Casa Juan Diego. Gallon sized Ziploc bags will be provided for packing your toiletries.***

Early Birds: An opportunity to join together in The Holy Mass in the day chapel @ St. Jerome beginning 8:15 a.m.

Candidates and Inquirers Formation begins @ 9:00 a.m. in the Outback

 **Fiesta Franciscana** is again happening and it will be October 13, 2018 at the San Jose Mission (different spot than last year). Registration forms, etc. are not available yet....but mark your calendars for October

13th. It would be fun to all stay in the same hotel. Several of us have reserved a room at Embassy Suites by Hilton. 7610 South New Braunfels, San Antonio, TX 78235. (210) 534-1000. Present pricing: $173 with 2 queen beds. Cancellations can be made if something else more affordable or closer to the retreat site is found.

Booking now with a refundable deposit will guarantee we can all stay in the same place!

For those unable to make the road trip to San Antonio, David Schubert, OFS is involved in an organization **RESULTS Educational Fund** that is hosting a fundraiser

***“The Seeds of Hope Benefit Dinner”.***

WHEN: Friday, October 12th, 2018

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Junior League, 1811 Briar Oaks Ln., Houston, TX 77027

COST: $150.00

Stay tuned as there will be a future online website to sign up to attend or just make a donation of your abilities. RESULTS is a movement of passionate, committed everyday people using their voices to influence political decisions that will bring an end to poverty.

St. Thomas More Fraternity is hosting a “Franciscan Retreat Day” Saturday, November 17th, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Houston. FREE OF CHARGE

Topic: From Gospel to Life within the Franciscan Charism

Retreat Master: Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR from Pennsylvania.

For more info on Fr. Tickerhoof, go to: http://www.franciscanstor.org/btickerhoofBIO/

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**Saint Bernardine of Siena**

**Saint of the Day for May 20 (September 8, 1380 – May 20, 1444)**

[https://www.franciscanmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SODMay20.mp3](http://email.franciscanmedia.org/e1t/c/%2AW3-5sQT2LSW0LW3FXTWg9hV9_b0/%2AW4rjV501HN-8SW6Z3cjp2lQXMl0/5/f18dQhb0S1Xm6_rzZBV1vjkk1FZMtdV83mZw1k96L3W2fSP086BjPywW1Wcp5g12mbkfW29Ttcf6SgF-qW6DxDyl2R1GxpW2Yts7V4wFPLyW6Bz5jV2MYtqHW63WsPG7hJ8z5W7VwgQT8CQMW9W18gLm31FQlS7V1m8z01wY0pKVN3tK21FSBk2W6Nc7T25F1x6KW66SrLn4MY_sjW2JjDxj5cmZTbN363sv4m1VVhW1H1Jyb5-gl8PW2dXLyv67-zy_W8x7xfw6N2VzTW97Rp8j88lxLSN2D9QxBwXNvDM-kbPVyz7QZW7GJW975C7d43Vydrk_2sw0NPW1JwFYc46fp65W4Qxqht8NcBjWW7mXsPS1Y-nzzVwqmCg48fpmBW1b9XvG4w3TxcW1s11Q33f9qTtW3b8X0F1p-MzRW6Xrsjh8nHdC7W36WDXD307NzyW688pFm2FWTTxW6jbwbz712s6HW61Dbm-4TJNq3W1Gq7505_VJg9W8rcxYW3P2jD3W2BsW781f5_0vW4DvFNk4pJh_DW8_mzQr8b366sW860ftF6_l67WW2kWGRw1M2TRjVYDHNm9h99nWf6S5rjy02)

FOR MORE INFORMATON check out Franciscan Media!

 **Saint Bernardine of Siena’s Story**

 Most of the saints suffer great personal opposition, even persecution. Bernardine, by contrast, seems more like a human dynamo who simply took on the needs of the world. He was the greatest preacher of his time, journeying across Italy, calming strife-torn cities, attacking the paganism he found rampant, attracting crowds of 30,000, following St. Francis of Assisi’s admonition to preach about “vice and virtue, punishment and glory.” Compared with Saint Paul by the pope, Bernardine had a keen intuition of the needs of the time, along with solid holiness and boundless energy and joy. He accomplished all this despite having a very weak and hoarse voice, miraculously improved later because of his devotion to Mary. When he was 20, the plague was at its height in his hometown of Siena. Sometimes as many as 20 people died in one day at the hospital. Bernardine offered to run the hospital and, with the help of other young men, nursed patients there for four months. He escaped the plague, but was so exhausted that a fever confined him for several months. He spent another year caring for a beloved aunt whose parents had died when he was a child, and at her death began to fast and pray to know God’s will for him. At 22, he entered the Franciscan Order and was ordained two years later. For almost a dozen years he lived in solitude and prayer, but his gifts ultimately caused him to be sent to preach. He always traveled on foot, sometimes speaking for hours in one place, and then doing the same in another town. Especially known for his devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, Bernardine devised a symbol—IHS, the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek—in Gothic letters on a blazing sun. This was to displace the superstitious symbols of the day, as well as the insignia of factions: for example, Guelphs and Ghibellines. The devotion spread, and the symbol began to appear in churches, homes and public buildings. Opposition arose from those who thought it a dangerous innovation. Three attempts were made to have the pope take action against him, but Bernardine’s holiness, orthodoxy, and intelligence were evidence of his faithfulness. General of the Friars of the Strict Observance, a branch of the Franciscan Order, Bernardine strongly emphasized scholarship and further study of theology and canon law. When he started there were 300 friars in the community; when he died there were 4,000. He returned to preaching the last two years of his life, dying while traveling.

**Reflection**

Another dynamic saint once said, “…I will not be a burden, for I want not what is yours, but you…. I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your sakes” (2 Corinthians 12:14). There is danger that we see only the whirlwind of activity in the Bernardines of faith—taking care of the sick, preaching, studying, administering, always driving—and forget the source of their energy. We should not say that Bernardine could have been a great contemplative if he had had the chance. He had the chance, every day, and he took it.

**Saint Bernardine of Siena is the Patron Saint of:** Advertising \* Gambling \* Italy \* Public relations