



# "FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO GOSPEL"

## ST. CLARE FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

St. Clare Fraternity, Stafford Springs, CT

December 2023

**MAY GOD GIVE YOU PEACE!**

**MASS and an ADVENT REFLECTION**

**with FATHER JOHN**

**Saturday, December 16th—10:30 a.m. Mass,  
followed by Father John's reflection and  
lunch. Please invite family & friends!**

**CELEBRATE the 800th ANNIVERSARY  
OF GRECCIO!**

In addition to the Mass & Reflection, we have several fraternity gatherings and opportunities during this Advent & Christmas season. Please see details on page 4.



**"The Nativity scene  
is like a  
living Gospel  
rising up from  
the pages of  
Sacred Scripture."**

**Pope Francis**



### FRATERNITY LIFE

#### Monthly Gatherings:

**Christmas Creche Service  
& Christmas Gathering**

**Sunday, January 7, 2024**

**1:00 p.m.**

**St. Edward Church**

**Fraternity Gathering**

**Saturday, January 27, 2024**

**10:00 a.m.—St. Edward Parish Center**

**Please remember our Common Fund**

#### **OUR FRATERNITY COUNCIL:**

**Minister:** Zofia Fitzgerald, OFS

**Vice-Minister:** Diane Garabedian, OFS

**Secretary:** To be announced

**Treasurer:** Mabel Armelin, OFS

**Formation Director:** Nancy Rudek, OFS

**Councilors** Ray Kuehl, OFS

**Spiritual Assistant:**

Father John Koziol, OFM Conv

#### **CONTACT US:**

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**St. Clare of Assisi, Patroness of our Fraternity**

## POPE FRANCIS'

### INTENTIONS

December 2023

For persons with disabilities

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

January 2024

For The Gift Of Diversity In The Church

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit helps us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

### OFS INTENTIONS

December 2023

For the unity of the OFS and YouFra in the world.

*Thoughts from your minister:*

Peace and all good,

We await the coming of Jesus. As we put out our Advent wreathes, we are reminded that we are the light of the world, in a special way during this holy season of preparation.

Let's not wait until we light the second or third Advent candle to really let our light shine. God has given us the light to shine, so let's let it shine brightly, shining the way to the Holy Family in the weeks to come.

God loves it when we help one another. We are always asking Mary for her intercession, trusting that she will present our needs to God. As Mary journeys to Bethlehem, she depended on God's grace, and the help of others. Their light shined on her in her needs.

So...be the light for others!

Love and Peace,

Zofia



Continue to pray for peace in the Ukraine and the Holy Land.

Mary, Queen of Peace, Pray for Us.



## FRATERNITY MATTERS

As we enter into a New Year, and the promise that new beginnings hold, let us pray for an increase in vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order. Is there someone out there with a Franciscan heart that you can invite to "come and see"?

Let us also recommit ourselves to fraternity life, and the joy and support we find in our Franciscan family.

## FEAST DAYS

*December 12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe*

*December 25—Nativity of the Lord*

*January 1—Mary, Mother of God*

*January 3 - Holy Name of Jesus*

*January 8—Angela of Foligno*

*January 16—Berard & Companions*

## WE PRAY FOR:

*Vocations to all branches of the Franciscan family, especially to the vocation of priesthood.*

*Healing for fraternity members Marie, Nancy R., Nancy L., DeDe, Rich, Lynn, Greta, Anne, Marion, Carolyn, Pat, Charlotte, Mabel, Albert*

*Healing for : Father Jude, Brother Vincent, Brother Paschal, Ginny, Tom Stauffer, Ronald C., David D., Santo, Patty, Bob G., Gayle, Robert, Frank, Emily, Alison, Jan, Laraine D., Kirk, William, Harry, Bob*

*Claire, Koren, Ron S., Sherry Ann & Olivia, special intention, Paul & Amy, Thomas & Pamela S.; Patricia B.*

*For an end to the wars in Ukraine and the Holy Land*

*For an end to the gun violence in our country*

*For all migrants and refugees*

*Peace, healing and justice in our country and in the world*

*In thanksgiving for all the blessings we have received.*

*AMEN.*

## FORMATION

### 1223 Greccio Event

**Can it touch/inspire us Secular Franciscans in 2023 as much as it did the townspeople of Greccio in 1223?**

*Thank you to Terri Leone, OFS, member of the National Centenary Task Force for contributing this piece.*

Both Thomas of Celano & St. Bonaventure in their "Life of St. Francis" state that there were two major events in Jesus' life that greatly touched St. Francis' heart & influenced his life. They were Christ's Incarnation and His Passion/Death.

As you have probably heard or read by now, starting this year, 2023, the whole Franciscan Family is starting to commemorate a series of 8<sup>th</sup> Centenaries (800<sup>th</sup> anniversaries) of five important events in St. Francis' life: The Later Rule, 1223 Greccio Christmas, the Stigmata, "The Canticle of the Creatures" & St. Francis's "Last Easter"/death.

*{Before going further please read the "Greccio" story. Thomas of Celano's version may be found on our website at [https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Greccio-Christmas\\_Celano.pdf](https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Greccio-Christmas_Celano.pdf) }*

Were you surprised to read that St. Francis' inspiration included only an ox, an ass & a bed of straw? I was. It was St. Francis' intention to rekindle in his brothers & in the townspeople a deeper love for & understanding of God's *superabundant love for us & His immense humility* by willingly taking on a human body with its limitations without giving up His Divinity. Christ could have come as a powerful, mighty political leader or as an important religious leader. Instead, He chose to arrive as an innocent, loving, happy, totally dependent-on-others baby.

Celebrating the  
800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Greccio



*(continued on page 4)*

*Formation Friday, December 1, 2023*

*Diane Menditto*

## OUR RULE of LIFE

### Chapter Two: The Way of Life

**Article 10.** United themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed His will into the Father's hands, let them faithfully fulfill the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to Him even in difficulties and persecutions.

**REFLECTION:** During this Advent/Christmas season, we can become very aware of the difficulties in our lives and in the lives of those we love, and in our world. How do I faithfully fulfill my duties, to God and others?



### 1223 Greccio Event (cont.)



Not only that, but He chose to be born in an animal shelter, one of the lowest abodes there could be – just so He could make Himself available to all people & all of creation. **This was His nursery and first home. *Would you have chosen such a home for yourself or your children?*** Jesus willingly assumed a human nature so that He could be “the Word (of God) made flesh Who lived among us;” He was “the Light of the World” to show each of us how our Father/Creator wants us to live.

#### Questions for discussion with a partner, in fraternity, or in your journal:

- +Have you thought of yourself as a “home” for Jesus? What would your life look like if you did/do?
- +Have you thought of yourself as carrying Jesus with you wherever you go? With whomever? Having Him share your conversations & activities?
- +How would these activities change if you did?

**ADVENT CHALLENGE:** Picture yourself in the empty stable waiting for the arrival of Mary and Joseph, and, eventually, Jesus. See if you can describe the anticipation you feel. See if you can describe the feeling St. Francis had that moved him to share the moment of Incarnation with everyone.

*Formation Friday is the work product of the National Formation Commission of the Secular Franciscan Order-USA.*

## FRATERNITY ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVENTS

### Saturday, December 16, 2023—Advent Mass & Reflection with Father John

Mass beginning at 10:30 a.m. in St. Edward Church, followed by a reflection by Father John on the Gift and the Challenge of the Incarnation. Lunch to follow. Please invite family and friends.

### Weekend of December 16/17—Distribute Birdseed after Mass

### Living Nativity Events—A great way to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of Greccio!

Sunday, December 17—St. Paul Church, Kensington, CT 4:00 p.m., St. Stanislaus Basilica—TBA

### Sunday, January 7, 2024—Fraternity Creche Service

Our Creche Service will begin at 1:00 p.m. in St. Edward Church, followed by a pot luck luncheon. Please invite your family and friends!

And coming in January: The Region will be sponsoring two Zoom study groups :

[“On Care for Our Common Home” - Exploring Pope Francis’ \*Laudato Si\*](#)

Starting January 9, 2024—2nd Tuesdays of the month- 6:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

[“Saints and Social Justice” - Exploring Catholic Social Teaching through the Lives of the Saints](#)

Starting January 26, 2024—4th Fridays of the month- 6:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

*Registration and more information available on our Regional Website, or contact Corinne*