



"FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO GOSPEL"

ST. CLARE FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

St. Clare Fraternity, Stafford Springs, CT

January 2024

MAY GOD GIVE YOU PEACE!

Scenes from Fraternity Life



Father John celebrating Mass prior to his wonderful Advent reflection.

"O Come Let Us Adore Him"

Creche Service



**"What does it
matter
where we go?
Wherever
we go
won't we be
serving God
there?"**

Blessed Solanus Casey

FRATERNITY LIFE

Monthly Gatherings:

Fraternity Gathering
Saturday, January 27, 2024
10:00 a.m.—St. Edward Parish Center

Fraternity Gathering
Saturday, February 24, 2024
10:00 a.m.—St. Edward Parish Center

Please remember our Common Fund



St. Clare of Assisi, Patroness of our Fraternity

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:

860-559-8078

zofiafitzgerald@yahoo.com

POPE FRANCIS'

INTENTIONS

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.

February 2024

For the Terminally Ill

Let us pray that the sick who are in the final stages of life, and their families, receive the necessary medical and human care and accompaniment.

OFS INTENTIONS

January 2024

For the elective Chapter of the national fraternities of India, Bahrain, and Korea.

February 2024

For the elective Chapter of the fraternities of Switzerland (French speaking), Bulgaria, Greece and Latakia.

Thoughts from your minister:

Peace and all good,

I want to share this prayer which I found in the December 2023 issue of the *Magnificat*.

Loving Father, as we gaze into the manger upon the human face of your Son, we experience the hope of the restoration of our own innocence. Enable us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, for he is our Lord, now and forever. Amen.

Love and Peace,

Zofia



Creche Service ~ January 14, 2024

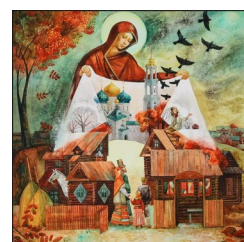


Father John's retreat for us ~

December 16, 2023

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

Mary, Queen of Peace, Pray for Us.



FRATERNITY MATTERS

FAIR SHARE A reminder that our Fair Share contributions will be due to the Regional Fraternity by the end of March 2024. Fair Share supports the work of both the Region and the National Fraternity. Each fraternity is responsible for contributing \$35 per professed member. Our fraternity asks that each member make this contribution. If this is a concern for you, please contact any council member.

FEAST DAYS

*January 16—Berard & Companions
(Marion)*

January 23—Marianne Cope (Pat)

*January 29—Servant of God Brother
Juniper*

*January 30—Hyacinth of Mariscotti
(Barbara)*

*February 8—Blessed Jacoba
Settesoli*

WE PRAY FOR:

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

*Healing for fraternity members Ma-
rie, Nancy R., Nancy L., DeDe ,
Rich, Lynn, Greta , Anne, Marion,
Carolyn, Pat, Charlotte, Mabel , Al-
bert*

*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, Guy,
Koren*

*Neighbors who are struggling, the
success of the Capital campaign at
St. Edward, patience, those who
have lost loved ones*

*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.*

FORMATION

2024—Time to Examine our Love and Commitment

Several weeks ago we sent along a Formation Friday article from December 29, 2023, that challenges us to take "Time to Examine our Love and Commitment". The January 5, 2024 Formation Friday included below focuses on Prayer.

Taking Stock 2024 Our Lives of Prayer as Secular Franciscans

"As Minister General of a large Order, St. Bonaventure provided, among other things, spiritual direction for those seeking God. In a letter to Poor Clare nuns, he offered directives as to how we might enter into prayer by way of 'descent.'"

"The steps are summarized as follows:

- Return to yourself; Enter into your heart;
- Ponder what you were, are, should have been, called to be;
- What you are by nature;
- What you are through sin;
- What you should have been through effort;
- What you can still be through grace;
- Meditate in your heart;
- Let your spirit brood. (Are you resentful, angry, jealous?);
- Plow this field, work on yourself;
- Strive for freedom within, the freedom that leads to relationship with God, realizing that God will never force us to love him;
- Lack of self-knowledge and failure to appreciate one's own worth make for faulty judgment in all other matters;
- If you are not able to understand (and accept) your own self, you will not be able to understand (or accept) what is beyond you.

(continued on page 4)

Formation Friday, January 5, 2024

Diane Menditto

OUR RULE of LIFE

Chapter Two: The Way of Life

Article 11. Trusting the Father, Christ chose for Himself and His mother a poor and humble life, even though He valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children. Thus, in the spirit of the Beatitudes, and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

REFLECTION: What do I have too much of? What am I doing about it? What am I having trouble detaching myself from? Am I using my stuff wisely for God's service and glory, or for my own? Besides material possessions, what else do I need to detach myself from??

Taking Stock 2024 Our Lives of Prayer as Secular Franciscans (cont.)

The steps were quoted from St. Bonaventure, Perfectione vitae ad sorores (Perf. Vit.) 1.5 (VIII, 109). Engl. trans. Jose de Vinck, "On the Perfection of Life, addressed to Sisters," in The Works of Bonaventure, vol. 1, Mystical Opuscula (Paterson, N.J.: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1960), 214.

Quoted in: Delio, Ilia. Franciscan Prayer (Kindle Locations 613-616). Kindle Edition.

For our Prayer Journey as Secular Franciscans (*FUN Manual The rule of the SFO page 27 of 46*)

- We take as our “book” the poor and crucified Christ
- Our “inspiration” the writings of Francis, Clare, Bonaventure
- Our “guide” the Holy Spirit
- Our “model” Mary
- Our “core” the gospel
- Our “focus” the life of penance we profess to live
- Our “sustenance” the Eucharist, Sacraments and prayer.



Questions for discussion or to comment on in your journal

- How has your prayer life changed over the years?
- If you are a Secular Franciscan, how does your prayer reflect who you are as member (or candidate) of the Order?
- Does prayer influence how you live your life?
- Based on St. Bonaventure’s directives above, how can you strengthen your prayer life?

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

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.

It’s not too late! There’s still time to sign-up.

The Region is sponsoring two Zoom study groups for the next few months.

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

Started 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