



"FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO GOSPEL"

ST. CLARE FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

St. Clare Fraternity, Stafford Springs, CT

March 2024

MAY GOD GIVE YOU PEACE!

OUR HELP IS NEEDED

We will need help putting the Blessing Bags together on Monday, March 25th beginning at 10:00 a.m. This has been a parish-wide program, that has been supported by our fraternity's donations. Putting the bags together requires a community effort, please join us!



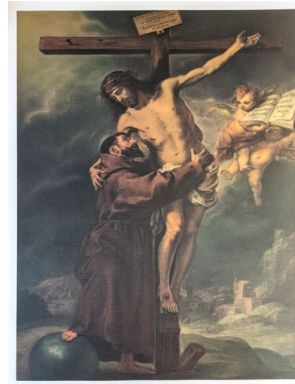
FRATERNITY LIFE

Monthly Gatherings:

Fraternity Gathering
Saturday, March 23, 2024
10:00 a.m.—St. Edward Parish Center

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Please remember our Common Fund



**"My book
is the
crucifix.
I have only
to raise my
eyes to
learn
gentleness and
humility."**

**St. Conrad of Parzham
Capuchin Friar**

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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zofiafitzgerald@yahoo.com

St. Clare of Assisi, Patroness of our Fraternity

POPE FRANCIS'

INTENTIONS

March 2024

For the New Martyrs

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

April 2024

For the Role of Women

We pray that the dignity and immense value of women be recognized in every culture, and for the end of discrimination that they experience in different parts of the world.

OFS INTENTIONS

March 2024

For world peace and reconciliation and care for the environment.

April 2024

For the elective Chapter of Nigeria and the CIOFS Presidency meeting. For the fraternal and pastoral visit of the national fraternity of Togo.

Thoughts from your minister:

Peace and all good,

As I reflect on this Lenten season, I see it as time given to us that is too precious to waste. As Jesus spent time with the disciples, he taught them how to be good leaders, and good friends. He taught them how to love. After his death and resurrection, the apostles continued to spread that love.

During Lent, we look at Jesus' life, and are challenged to show the love Jesus taught us to others.

I wish all of you a blessed Easter.

Zofia



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

March 19—Saint Joseph

March 25—Feast of the Annunciation

March 28—Catherine of Genoa

March 31—Easter Sunday—The Resurrection of the Lord

April 3—Benedict the Moor (Sandy)

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, Ginny, Tom Stauffer, Ronald C., David D., Patty, Bob G., Gayle, Robert, Frank, Emily, Alison, Jan, Laraine D., Kirk, William, Harry, Bob, Guy, Koren, Rich, John, Mary, Rich G.

Neighbors who are struggling, 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

The San Damiano Crucifix

Should we talk about Christ Crucified as we enter the Easter Season?

*Excerpts from a reflection by +Deacon Tom Bello, OFS,
Former National Minister*



Should we talk about Christ Crucified as we enter the Easter Season? Absolutely! Without Christ dying on the Cross, we would still be locked in our sins. Without Christ's Crucifixion, there would be no Resurrection!

Why the San Damiano Crucifix? Well, why not? The same Crucifix that spoke to Saint Francis can still speak to his followers if only we will look and listen.

This is not a Crucifixion of the Dead, but a Crucifixion of the Living. The Crucified Christ on this Crucifix bleeds, but is not dead; bleeds, but is not dead. Jesus lives. Yes, He has been "lifted up," "hypsoun" in Greek, which the scholars tell us can be both "lifted up" for the Crucifixion and "lifted up" for the Ascension AND we see both depicted as Jesus ascends into heaven at the top of the Cross to take "His seat at the right of the throne of God." "And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself" (John 12:32 NAB rev).

Thus, this Crucifixion teaches the Incarnation. Jesus bleeds: Jesus is truly human. Jesus lives; Jesus cannot be killed; Jesus ascends into Heaven to sit at the right hand of God: Jesus is truly God.

Further, this is no Crucifixion of a Solitary Christ: no, Jesus hangs in solidarity with many. his Crucifixion shows us Community, Fraternity. Jesus is literally surrounded on His Cross by witnesses: at His feet, by His sides, at his outstretched arms and above His head.

(cont. on page 4)

OUR RULE of LIFE

Chapter Two: The Way of Life

Article 13. As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

REFLECTION: What features of Jesus does God the Father see in me? What features of Jesus do I look for, see, love - in others? How do I fail to see the features of Jesus in the poor? Marginalized? Anyone I consider "other"?

The San Damiano Crucifix

Should we talk about Christ Crucified as we enter the Easter Season? (cont.)

None of these figures looks particularly sad. Again, this is a Christ living; a Christ Who has defeated death. His arms stretch over the empty black tomb, and his blood gives life to all "the crowd of witnesses" around Him. Indeed, these figures, human and angelic, seem to be marveling over and discussing about the great Mystery of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

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Perhaps this is where we should be in this Easter Season: focused on this great Mystery and its influence on our lives. Do we keep our eyes fixed only on Christ or are we easily distracted? Christ can never die, but do we kill Christ in our own hearts when we sin mortally? How can we draw closer to Christ this Easter Season as we meditate upon and pray to the same Christ on the same Crucifix that spoke to our Spiritual Father St. Francis?

Let us pray for one another in words similar to those St. Francis prayed:

Our Father, all-powerful and all-loving, cast Your light into the darkness of all our hearts. Grant to all of us right faith, firm hope, and perfect charity with unfailing gentleness and generosity, and above all, with profound humility, wisdom and perception, so that we may accomplish what is truly Your Holy Will. Amen.

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

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, April 20, 2024

**Blessed Solanus Casey
Regional Assembly,
St. Pius X, Middletown,
CT**



Our theme:

**800th Anniversary of the Stigmata of St.
Francis and**

Life in Fraternity

**A great way to gather with our brothers
and sisters!!**

Reflections on The Cross of San Damiano

By Patrick McNamara, OFM, Cap.

I look to the Cross, I gaze upon its figure,

I wait, I listen, I hope.

Will you speak, will you move, will I be moved.

Will you once again touch the heart of one who seeks.

Of one who questions, of one who seems so lost.

Will you embrace the soul, as you did that of Francis.

Will you take it to Yourself.

Will you give it peace, give it comfort, give it love

This soul waits, listens, prays for such grace.

This soul seeks the Love from the Lover.

It wavers. It stumbles. It falls.

Your gaze looks down, embraces all.

Takes all, Loves All. Your Grace heals, accepts.

Again you respond, Again you Love.

Again you speak to a searching and troubled heart. I turn.

I continue the journey. I continue in Hope.

I too have heard you Speak.