



*Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph*

# THE ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

Fraternity #101 Volume 22 Issue 02 February 2019

## NATIONAL MINISTER MESSAGE

### SEE CHRIST! BE CHRIST! GOING FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO THE GOSPEL.

What happens when we open the Gospels? For one thing, it can transform us. That is the power of God's Word. I'd like to share a story about what happened when I opened the Gospel one day — but perhaps it's more a story of about conversion, and how we are re-made as the Spirit moves in our lives.

Early this year, I became fascinated by the fact that June 24, the date on which our OFS Rule was approved, is the same date on which we celebrate the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. I began to think of many interesting connections between St. John the Baptist and our Secular Franciscan Rule, and even with St. Francis himself. We know that Francis was given the name John at his baptism, and that he always celebrated the feast of St. John the Baptist in a special way. Perhaps Francis had a devotion to John the Baptist? I could imagine St. Francis reading the Gospel accounts of John the Baptist and being inspired. After all, when you think of John the Baptist you think of repentance, austerity, and one who heralded Christ. Sounds like Francis to me! I was intrigued and decided that this connection between John the Baptist and St. Francis would be an interesting subject for an article in the *TAU-USA*.

The day came to write my article. After my morning prayer, I picked up my Bible and began to read everything I could find about John the Baptist. Hours passed as I studied Bible

commentaries, learning more about the Gospel stories of John's birth, his preaching in the wilderness, his baptism of the Lord and Jesus's own testimony about him. I pondered John's life, his call, and his heart for Christ. There was so much here that connected with our Franciscan way of life! I sat back in wonder. How would I ever capture all of this in a brief newsletter article?

I set my writing aside and searched for an image of John the Baptist to put with my article. This painting here, caught my eye, for it echoed all I



*The Holy Children with a Shell*

had contemplated that day. Here we see John who, from his birth, was devoted to God's will — a bold messenger, radically committed to the preaching of repentance, a herald of

the coming Kingdom — one to whom Christ was everything. **(Continued to page 2)**

## NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

**FEBRUARY FRATERNITY GATHERING HOMEWORK:** Read and reflect on session entitled "**Conversion Times Thee**" (pages 29 - 33. Be prepared to respond to "**Reflection Questions**" (page 33).

**NEWLY PROFESSED AT ESPIRITO SANTO FRATERNITY:** Pray for **Mayra Garcia** and **Heralio Madrid** who were newly professed on February 17, 2019.

**BLANCHE STEPHENS, OFS 100TH BIRTHDAY:** Please send your birthday wishes to her at: 800 Caminisito, Roswell, NM 88203.

**(Continued from page 1)**

Here, too, is Christ, the Incarnate, the Light shining in the darkness, reaching out to John to share with him the water of Life, inviting him to glory. John humbly bows and drinks, his gaze upon the Lamb. Christ's gaze upon John is one of tender love and compassion. There is so much symbolism in this beautiful painting, but what captivated me was what I cherished from my reflections that day: **It's all about a relationship with Christ!** John the Baptist had this relationship — certainly Francis did, too. I quickly imagined Francis of Assisi taking John's place in this painting. That was easy to do. As I saw Francis there, I thought of his words, **"We are spouses, when by the Holy Spirit the faithful soul is united with our Lord Jesus Christ."** I could feel the intimacy between them. I then dared to go a step further and I placed myself there. I bowed humbly as Jesus reached out to me, offering life-giving water. I drank and my heart was filled with a renewed desire to conform my life to that of Christ's. I offered a prayer of thanks for this contemplative moment. I realized at that moment that my day was no longer about writing an article, **it was about an encounter with Christ in the Gospel.** The Holy Spirit had led me to what I needed that day — not to write an article, but to spend time in prayerful reflection on the Scriptures.

**What happens when we open the Gospels? We are transformed.**

Some time ago, our sister **Mary Bitner** shared a memorable quote that speaks to the heart of this:

*Whenever we come together to listen to the Word of God, what we are seeking at bottom is not mental information or moral instruction or even a sentimental influence that will make us "feel" the presence and goodness of God. **What we seek with all our soul, rather, is the possibility of opening ourselves up in prayer to God's transforming action.** Whether we are fully conscious of it or not, in other words, we desire to*

*a change of life, a conversion from what we presently are to a more precise embodiment of the likeness of Christ at the center of our being, radiating out from us through all our thoughts, words, and actions.*

*This is why the life of contemplation is the boldest adventuresome of undertakings, for what could be more radical, more truly earth-shattering, than the willingness to be dismantled and created anew, not once or twice in a lifetime, but day after day? "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." (2 Cor 5:17) But being created in this sense is not a passive work. **Our "clay" is the spiritual stuff of our will and freedom and thoughts and feelings and desires, and all these have to be surrendered every day anew to God's power.** We cannot become new creations without actively participating in our remaking by the Holy Spirit.*

As this quote points out, this is not a passive work. We are blessed to have a Rule that calls us to this bold undertaking of contemplation — a Rule that calls us to devote ourselves to the Gospel and to seek to encounter with Christ. We also have a theme for this year which can help us as we go from Gospel to life, and life to the Gospel — **"See Christ! Be Christ!"**

These four words truly sum it all up! **Let us open our eyes to see Christ** — to contemplate Christ — in the Gospel, in the Eucharist, in our brothers and sisters, and in all the ways he is present in our world. **Let us then surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit within us, committing ourselves to ongoing daily conversion so we might be Christ in our world.**

*"But when the kindness and generous love of God our Savior appeared not because of any righteous deeds we had done, but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life."*  
**(Titus 3:1-7)**

## MOTHER MARY ANGELA LETTER

December 2, 2018



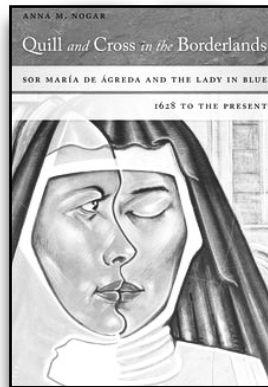
On this first Sunday of Advent, your Poor Clare sisters pray that bountiful graces of this holy season may encourage your hearts and deepen your intimacy with Jesus, whose Nativity that we celebrate. Our Father St Francis himself leads us into this blessed season, which

was so dear to the hearts of our seraphic founders. On November 29, the Order honors all the saints of the Franciscan family. The date was selected for this special liturgical celebration because it is the anniversary of the promulgation of the papal bull authorizing Francis' 1223 Rule for his friars (the "Regula Bullata"). It was likely during the same visit to Rome, when he submitted the legislative text for papal approval, that Francis requested and received the Pope's permission for his unique commemoration of Christmas at Greccio, as recounted in the December issue of the Fraternity newsletter.

The painting by Pedro Subercaseaux Errázuriz depicting the crèche at Greccio captures the unforgettable scene with rare beauty. Many thanks for including it in your recent mailing. Subercaseaux executed a series of fifty watercolor paintings presenting the entire life of St. Francis, which he meticulously researched in preparation for his task. The experience inspired the artist so deeply that he chose to embrace religious life, though not as a Franciscan. He instead devoted himself more fully to contemplation and liturgical prayer as a Benedictine monk. May the inspiration of St. Francis' example transform your lives as well! We will be praying for your families, your loved ones and your parish communities with grateful devotion during this Advent and Christmastide. Gratefully, in our coming King,

*Mother Mary Angela, PCC (abbess)*

## "Quill and Cross in the Borderlands"



A distinguished UNM Associate Professor of Southwest Studies **Anna Nogar** has recently published this historical book on the literary importance of **María de Ágreda de Jesus**, known as the legendary "**Lady in Blue**" of the U.S.

Southwest. Many Secular Franciscans who are devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary may have been introduced to the multi-volume tome entitled "**Mystical City of God**" that was written by Sor María de Ágreda about the life and history of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"The 'Lady in Blue' has been attributed to a miraculous bilocation **appearing to indigenous peoples in New Mexico while in her Spanish cloister**. Her spiritual writings influenced Spanish missionary practices for decades. Thanks to Professor Nogar's clear style and ground breaking research, this book provides **a fascinating account of how one nun's writings influenced the course of the Spanish colonial project even as she became a legend in the Americas never crossing the Atlantic.**" (Review by John Moran Gonzales, University of Texas at Austin)

For Franciscans, both **Duns Scotus** accompanied by **María de Ágreda de Jesus** played prominent roles in **championing the Immaculate Conception theology**. She was declared Venerable by Pope Clement X in less than 10 years after her death. Although the process of beatification was opened in 1673, it has not as yet been completed. The process for her beatification has been reopened in 2015.

*Quill and Cross in the Borderlands* is published by the University of Notre Dame.

## February/March SAF Calendar

Feb 3	Candidacy Class	Rena's Home	1:00-3:00 pm
Feb 12	Scrutiny Class	Rena's Home	3:30-5:00 pm
Feb 24	Candidacy Class	ABP*	12:30-2:00pm
Feb 24	<b>FRATERNITY GATHERING (ABP*)</b> <b>2:00-5:00pm</b> <b>(St. Felix Pantry: Donate canned goods, crackers, granola and other snack bars, beans, peanut butter, etc</b>		
Mar 3	Candidacy Class	Rena's Home	1:00-3:00 pm
Mar 9	Council Meeting	ABP*	9:00-12:00pm
Mar 24	Candidacy Class	ABP*	12:30-2:00pm
Mar 24	<b>FRATERNITY GATHERING (ABP*)</b> <b>2:00-5:00pm</b> <b>(St. Martin's Hope Works: Donate travel size shampoo, soap, deodorant, women's tampons, etc</b>		

ABP: "A Becoming Place"

## Hospitality Assignments

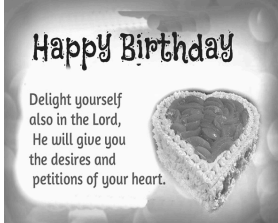
DATE	GROUP	VOLUNTEERS
Feb 24	3	Victor & Rena, Mary Lou, Connie, Frances
Mar 24	4	Marilyn, Israela, Luciana, Gerry, Laura & Tony
Apr 28	1	Ernestine, Connie Jo, Tommie, Gina, Clare, Bill

SFO National theme for 2019 is

**"SEE CHRIST!  
BE CHRIST!"**



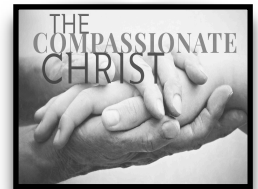
## BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS:

	Joanne Elfers	Feb 3
	Lydia Wroten	Feb 19
	Ed Dzienis	Feb 24
	Anna Benavidez	Feb-28

## WE PRAY FOR:

Marilyn Migliarini, Marge Armijo, Margaret Martinez, Maria Lucero and Pedro Padilla (Frances' mother and nephew), Ernestine Sedillo, Tommie Page and her daughters (Nanette and Stephanie). Jeannette Feldman, Connie Jo Martinez, Elizabeth Chavez, Barbara Heilman, Art and Erma Lente, Eva Bevington, John and Nancy Fishel, Linda and her family, Kevin, Derek Kolb, Cheryl Thomas (Br. Gordon's sister), Clare Domenici and Karen Fellner's sister.

**For the repose of the souls of:** Winifred Klimka, Cidro Gallegos (Rena's brother), Dorothy Swanson, Minnie Vasquez (Espiritu Santo), Wilfred Otero, Arturo Olivas, Sen. Pete Domenici (Clare's father), and Harry (Connie Jo Martinez's husband).



## PRAYER TO THE HOLY FAMILY

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love, to you we turn with trust.

**Holy Family of Nazareth,**  
grant that our families too  
may be places of communion and prayer,  
authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic  
Churches.

**Holy Family of Nazareth,**  
may families never again experience violence, rejection  
and division: may all who have been hurt or scandalized  
find ready comfort and healing.

**Holy Family of Nazareth,**  
may the approaching Synod of  
Bishops make us once more  
mindful of the sacredness and  
inviolability of the family, and its  
beauty in God's plan.



Jesus, Mary and Joseph,  
graciously hear our prayer.

Amen.

## THE PSALMS AS CHRISTIAN PRAYER

Those of us in Scrutiny training are so grateful to **Rena Xuereb, SAF Formation Director**, for including this article in our Liturgy of the Hours training! The following excerpts from the article **“The Psalms as Christian Prayer”** written by **Edward T. Oakes, S.J.** will certainly help to renew our “fundamental purpose” for praying the Psalms that are at the very “heart” of the **Liturgy of the Hours**.

“Second only to the great Eucharistic Prayer itself, the Psalms stand at the center of the church’s corporate act of worship. **Almost from the beginning, the Psalms have symbolized and incarnated the soul of the church’s relationship to God.** The New Testament itself, as the Fathers well knew and has been confirmed in modern times by the patient labors of Scripture scholars, is saturated with the Psalms. The Evangelists, especially, drew on the Psalms, casting whole tracts of the life of Jesus — but primarily His passion — in terms of these vivid prayers.

Moreover, so heart-rending, so searching, so honest are these prayers that they have also served as the mainstay and support for individual Christians as well, outside their moments of corporate worship. Martyrs and prisoners throughout church history have sought time and again to be consoled in their cells with the Psalter as their lone companion, finding its piercing prayers the very soul of their own experience.

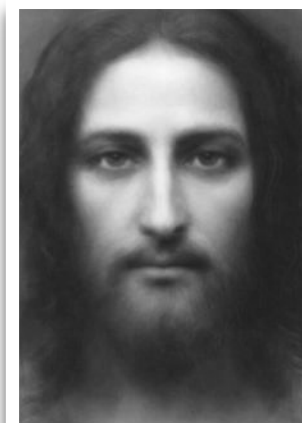
When we pray the Psalms, even in our most personal moments and even with the most personal and private of the Psalms, **we are praying in solidarity with the whole company of God’s elected community** at the call of Abraham. We are who we are today as church primarily because of what God has done for us as a community in history. And to rely on God

when history is itself so turbulent is to live the most wrenching of lives, tossed about by the winds not of our choosing and beyond our control. We are, whether we are aware of it or not, as vulnerable to history as the ancient Israelites once were, and **our praying the Psalms is an expression and admission of this vulnerability.**

I fear that when Christians shy away from the Psalms because they find the expressions of emotions in them so startling, they will lose something far more precious than they realize. With the Psalms as their daily companion, they will not be able to kid themselves about the depth of their own feelings or the purity of their own motives. But more importantly **they will come to see how much their vulnerability as fleshly beings is woven into the very mercies of God.**

In ‘The Testimony of Conscience’ (one of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*), **Cardinal Newman** discusses that we Christians fear being fully open with God and dare not profess in God’s sight that they will serve Him. They dare not pray to Him. They dare not ask Him to disclose to them their secret faults. They dare not come to an ordinance in which God meets them face to face.

**The Psalms are that ordinance. They are that road to complete access and openness to God. They are that gift to the church for people who are reluctant to pray and who feel themselves unskilled in its seemingly forbidding ways.** They are that ordinance in which — thanks to the unparalleled honesty of the Israelite Psalmist — **we can meet God face to face.”**



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We are the *Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis*  
(The Secular Franciscan Order) in the  
United States of America.  
We live our vocation in  
our Lady of Guadalupe,  
Empress of the Americas Region.  
Our Franciscan Community is the St.  
Anthony Fraternity in Albuquerque, NM.

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:** We, the fraternity of St. Anthony, inspired by the vision of St. Francis, commit ourselves to the Gospel as our Way of Life: "Going from Gospel to Life and from Life to Gospel." We believe that we are called to fraternity to share a life of joy and peace as well as to draw our inspiration from the cross of Jesus as Francis did. We believe that we are called to be renewed continually through the celebration of the Eucharist and to go forth to rebuild the Church through our witness.