

FEBRUARY 2014

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"The Canticle"

Divine Mercy Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order, Vero Beach, Florida

Regular Meeting: Sunday, February 9, 2014, at 2:00pm, in the South Room of the Christian Living Center, St. Helen Church. Council Meeting to follow.

Agenda and Schedule - Regular Meeting

- 2:00 Opening Prayer, Reports, Old/New Business
- 2:20 Blessing of Donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:25 Talk on Humility, by Fred Schaeffer
- 2:45 Life of Franciscan Saints, by Ed O'Donnell
- 3:00 Refreshments and Break
- 3:20 Franciscan Crown Rosary
- 3:40 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayer and Dismissal
- 4:15 Council Meeting

Refreshment Committee: Snacks: Sarah Hardy and Helen Caldarone

Remember in your prayers: Virginia Davis, Fred Schaeffer, Marie Fee, Susan Solloway, Pat Riordan, Fr. Tom Murphy OFM, Stanley Widing, Layle Smith, and all professed Franciscans in our Florida region who are ill, as well as those members of our Fraternity who cannot attend our meetings regularly.

Anniversaries: February - None

Day of Recollection: March 7, 2014. St. Lucie Church.

From the Minister's Desk:

The joy of our lives is the complete possession of God and Francis is he who guides us along the path. The path is narrow and rough. It is covered with sharp stones. As we follow this path, we know joy and fulfillment. We are not alone. Jesus walks along the path with us and His presence helps to overcome the sharpness of the stones. May our lives be filled with the joy of God.

Fraternity Officers (eff. 01/13/2013 -Three year term)	
Minister:	Peggy Rysdyke, OFS
Vice-Minister:	Susan Solloway, OFS
Secretary:	Donna Haro, OFS
Treasurer:	Sarah Hardy, OFS
Formation Dir.:	Fred Schaeffer, OFS
Councillors-at-Large: Adele Lamour, OFS, Helen Caldarone, OFS Ed O'Donnell, OFS	
Spir. Assisitant:	Rev.Mr. Richard Blake, OFS (when available)

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What the New Year, 2014, can be for us.

by Fred Schaeffer, OFS

Our Pastor Emeritus, Msgr. Irvine Nugent, who helps out at St. Helen Parish even though he is retired, says it so well: "What Resolution? Resolutions don't work. Just DO IT!" The good Monsignor is entirely correct, at least in my own experience. Then why do I want to write about it? Well, there are several important resolutions, and one of those is what we think about and what we see with our eyes, hear with our ears and speak with our mouths.

Many of us say rather strongly that we love Jesus Christ, and that we devote our lives to His works. We are involved in our local parish, and so are our friends. They are perhaps priests, deacons, lay people and certainly, also, Franciscans, Carmelites, Dominicans, Augustinians and members of other institutes. For anyone who prays daily, who thinks of Jesus and Mary when arising and several times during the day, we have a special responsibility. That responsibility is to keep our senses pure. To keep our minds open to God.

We desire to live each moment of the day with Jesus. But this relationship breaks down on our part when we see a movie on television that has sexual content or bad language. Sometimes we cannot help it, but when these parts come up do we have the love for God to turn it off? Jesus and Mary are with each of us... they would be royally offended by seeing the stuff which is offensive, and hearing offensive language, too. So a good New Year's resolution would be to carefully select movies we want to watch, books we want to read, etc. Also, we need to be vigilant what we say. If what we say offends God, then just don't think or say it. Let it go. I'll bet that 90% of what we have to say is pretty unimportant anyway... we chatter on about "she did that" or "he did this," and all that sort of talk.

What we have to say to God, to Jesus and Mary - yes, that's important. He loves to hear from us. So does Mary. And don't forget our Seraphic Father, Saint Francis of Assisi. Pray to him often... for intercession that we may remain true and tried Franciscans and spread the Gospel to one and all. That's why at our Profession, we are given a copy of the New Testament... we are to spread the Word of God... we tell the world through our example and behavior what Jesus Christ is all about in a very Franciscan way. That's why our fraternity here in Vero Beach has 18 professed members... they did not respond to advertisements and brochures, although they may have heard of us through this website, but they came and observed us at meetings for a couple of months, prayed about it, followed the call of the Holy Spirit, and they are still here, now Inquirers, Candidates, and God rejoices when they ask to be professed as Secular Franciscans.

The year 2014 can be a year when peace could be reached...if everyone prays for peace. But how is peace even possible, when there isn't peace in our own land. Yes, you heard me right. Many are at war with God by not following His commandments. There are many people who would rather abort a pregnancy than have a child...a child that is a gift from God, and a human being from the moment of conception. The moment of conception is when the egg and the sperm join. What once was considered taboo, and what was considered and still is adultery is now, in the 21st Century going on unabatedly, on a daily basis. And many do it "because everyone does it," they say. The hope is that the year 2014 will be a year of turnaround in these areas, and it can be when we pray for that to happen! Don't make resolutions to pray, just DO IT! Right now!

In my twenties, in 1960, I sought to join the Capuchins, a branch of the Franciscan Order. One of the first subjects that our Novice-Master, Fr. Donatus Goetz, OFM Cap., told us about was to be conscious of our senses. To guard our senses, to protect our inner life with Jesus from temptation brought on by failure to guard what we look at (sight), listen to (hear), say (speak), smell, and feel (touch). Satan uses our senses to get us into trou-

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ble when he feels like doing so, and especially, when we are weak. And, with what's going on today in this world gives him more of a foothold and our inner agony is prolonged. For some of us, who try hard to remain chaste and pure because we love Jesus, and we love our brother and sister as we do ourselves, heaven on earth has already begun. But by the same token, those people who are not chaste and very impure (worse yet, they cannot admit that they are wrong because they no longer know what is good and what is evil) their remaining time on this planet unalterably leads to that place of total absence of love, which we call "hell." But you still have a chance to reverse all this. Pray to God for forgiveness. He will tell you what to do. We will also pray for you, that you may find the way out of that dark road you are on. Jesus became man to redeem us, that means you too. The Word of God was made flesh. He died on the Cross for our sins, and if we live according to His Word, then we shall be with Him, with His Father and the Holy Spirit, for all eternity.

What I was told in the Capuchin Novitiate in 1960, was repeated over and over again in my later years. The Church buildings may change, go from Gothic structures to modern buildings, built to seat more people, but the basic rules of Catholicism never change. Sin is still sin, even though many no longer recognize certain actions as sin because "everyone does it." What is sin and what is not, is not something popularized by the people. The Ten Commandments are still what we follow as Christians...even though man does his very best to remove the Tablets from public view... those actions do not make the Ten Commandments go away. People who love God still use the Ten Commandments as a Rule of Life. They always will.

If you were Roman Catholic years ago, and you've "drifted away from the Sacraments," use the year 2014 to come back. We welcome you with open arms. Better you should be back and love Jesus, Mary and the Angels and the Saints, than if you go your own way, away from Jesus. We will help you get back. You must have a resolve to change your life, not all at once, but little by little. None of us becomes saints overnight. It takes a lifetime, as long as there is daily progress. The reward is immeasurable. Spending eternity with Jesus, Mary, the Angels and Saints (everyone in heaven is a Saint) is a reward worth working for. How does one do this? Simply by repenting daily, and sinning no more. And if you still sin, then work at it, to get offensive behavior out of your system. Strive to love God more and more every day. That is how we can use this new year. The year 2014 can be your year to come back to Jesus. I'll make a resolution, and this one I will keep. I'll just DO IT - what I'm going to do is pray every day for all people who love God but who cannot find their way back. I'll pray that a helping hand will bring you closer to Almighty God. And you, people I am praying for, you can help me, too. Pray that I will have the strength of will, on a daily basis, to get on my exercise bike to exercise - I need to slim down to preserve my health. Let us continue to pray for one another... there is much to gain. May the Lord bless you and keep you, shine His face on you, and make you well again!

Fred Schaeffer, SFO
January 28, 2014

