

▫ **Regular Meeting: Sunday, November 13, 2016, at 2:00pm, in the North Room** of the Christian Living Center, St. Helen Church.

▫ **Agenda and Schedule - Regular Meeting**

- 2:00 Opening Prayer, Reports, Old & New Business
- 2:15 Blessing of Donations to the Food Pantry
- 2:20 OFS Rule 15 - Ed O'Donnell & Donna Haro.
- 2:45 All Souls candlelight ceremony for our deceased members.
- 2:55 Refreshments and Break
- 3:10 Franciscan Crown Rosary
- 3:35 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayers and Dismissal

▫ **Council Meeting, Sat. November 19, at 9am, St. John of the Cross.** (Officers & Councilors only. Questions, see Fred)

▫ **Refreshment Committee: Drinks: Virginia Davis; Food: Donna & Fred**

▫ **Remember in your prayers:** Fred Schaeffer, Marie Fee, Ann Davis, Pat Riordan, Stanley Widing, Deacon Blake, and all .

▫ **Anniversaries:** Professed in November: Adele Lamour, OFS (11-26-2006) *Note: Adele in process of transfer to Padre Pio Fraternity. Let's pray for her;* Jack Reddy, OFS (11-13-2010); Virginia Davis, OFS (11-19-2011)

Fraternity Officers/Council Members
(exp. 3 years from Jan. 10, 2016)

Minister: Fred Schaeffer, OFS
Vice-Minister: Helen Caldarone, OFS
Secretary: Jean McGovern, OFS
Treasurer: Gene Caldarone, OFS
Formation Director: Donna Haro, OFS
Councilors-at-large:
1. Edward O'Donnell, OFS
2. Jack Reddy, OFS
3. Vacant



Quiet moments with Jesus

◆ Dusk settled over the gardens. Birds swarmed toward their nightly roost. I slowly walked along the paths, oblivious to other people, meditating on the Evening Chant of Vespers. It was quiet and Jesus walked with me. He was in my thoughts. The beauty of the moment touched me.

◆ On another occasion, I was sitting in a Cathedral. This also was a quiet time. The sounds of the great organ slowly accelerated into a mighty crescendo, and as slowly as it had begun, the Fugue came to a soft and mesmerizing end. Quiet regained, I was alone with God.

◆ One cold January, on retreat at the Trappist Monastery in Kentucky, Gethsemane, we were encouraged to get some fresh air into our lungs. Packed up in a parka, hat and gloves, I walked outside, toward the nearest farm entrance on the other side. A thermometer attached to a barn read 5 degrees (F.), but that only bothered me for a little while. It had snowed the night before and there was a pristine white covering the world around me. Slowly, I prayed the Our Father, with full attention. Jesus was with me, and I felt the cold no more.

◆ A similar scene also comes to mind. In the Netherlands, when I was about 10 or 11, I took long bicycle rides on days off. I remember being somewhere south of town in the fields. It had snowed that morning, and there was a mist over the fields that stretched very far. Then I heard a lonely bell, and indeed, a small steeple was visible... the bells rang at the Consecration of Holy Mass - a wonderful custom. I knew Jesus was with us, as He was with me in the Spiritual Communion I whispered.

◆ Experiencing a touch of God is often associated with a moment of beauty. Seeing a very elderly person deep in prayer, kneeling erect, not slouching, that too is a moment of beauty. The beauty was that this soul knew Jesus.

◆ Then again, children playing in the garden, totally unaware of anything that went on beyond their patch of green. The beauty of true love of God only as a child can love a parent. God is a parent, too.

◆ The memory of daily Eucharistic Adoration, is a moment of beauty. In my monastic years, sitting quietly in front of Jesus, listening to my Master, as He was present in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, the Real Presence... truly a touch of God. A moment of holiness. A moment of quiet, of devotion, of total concentration on He who is beauty itself.

◆ I long for quiet time with Jesus. So hard to find. You sit in Church and invariably someone comes over to share his or her day. That's OK, they are lonely too, but the moment of quiet is gone. Charity toward others is more important than my quiet moment. There will be another time. I hope it is soon.

◆ There are various Franciscan practices of withdrawing from the hustle and bustle of the day. Old, and particularly traditional friaries used to have small houses on the property, hermitages. If we wanted to get away, we'd overnight in one of those places. It was like a mini-retreat. The particular ones I was thinking of had heat, but there were others that did not. Sometimes "roughing it" for a quiet evening with God can be a very beautiful time, but if it is too cold, it becomes a distraction. But Franciscans turn right around and offer these times of distraction for a worthy cause. No time with God is wasted. He is always with us.

◆ As young children we're taught to say our prayers before going to bed. You kneel in front of your bed and you tell God you love Him, thank you Lord for the beautiful day, and hey Lord, please help Mom and Dad. Do we still pray like that now that we're 50, 60 or older? Well, errr... no. Either we do not pray before going to bed, or we pray Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours (particularly as Franciscans) half asleep already... We should have done this a bit earlier. The prayer of an obedient child is worth 100% more than our decrepit attempt at prayer, yet Jesus loves us equally. Another moment of beauty.

- ◆ The elderly priest, obviously arthritic, kneels for a long time, at the altar, adoring Jesus Christ at the conclusion of the prayers of the Consecration. The pain on the priests face is replaced by a glow of prayerful attention. That's a very big moment of beauty.
- ◆ A priest in the confessional, who is partially disabled due to a stroke, with great difficulty, arises to stand before me, place his hands on my head to give me absolution. That's a gesture that goes further than words and in that, there is much beauty.
- ◆ A toddler still in his mother's arms, in church, gazes around and when he sees someone, gives that person a most holy and innocent smile. Even though the child does not know the receiver of his moment of joy, his smile is a reflection of Jesus Himself.

Be at peace my friend, make time for Jesus so He can visit with you, too.

Fred Schaeffer, ofs
Nov. 2007

Advent begins Sunday, November 27 (Evening Prayer I).

Advent is the time to let the light of the world shine in. It is a time of hope, of expectation as we watch the Christmas story unfold. During Advent we're introduced to a Woman, Mary, and to the Angel Gabriel who greets her with the words: "Hail, full of Grace! The Lord is with you." And Mary replied at the end of Angel Gabriel's message "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your Word." Mary was humble and obedient to God's Will.

As we experience with great hope the First Sunday of Advent and listen to the Gospel, we find that the focus is on the Second Coming of Jesus. The Gospel commands us to be vigilant because no one knows when the Second Coming will take place except God. This is like our death—death comes as a thief in the night. So we hope for the coming of Christ, we hope to spend eternity with God and we should use Advent to prepare. While it is true that the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is only required if a mortal sin has been committed, the Sacrament has an immense spiritual value. It is a vast source of grace and since we don't know when death comes, let us always be in the State of Grace. The Blessed Virgin Mary at Medjugorje recommends that we go to confession once a month. During Advent it is certainly recommended to go to Confession as a suitable preparation for the Birth of Christ.

A daily or weekly examination of conscience will lead to a more meaningful reconciliation experience when one could identify trends in our life and behavior which can stand improvement. Then, also try to attend daily Holy Mass during this time of preparation and maybe try to make that a permanent part of your morning.

Do something meaningful for your family to remind them of the Advent season. Acquire an Advent wreath with four candles and light one each Sunday morning. Have a member of the family read a little prayer as the candle is being lit. Pray for the integrity of your family, for health, for anything that needs prayer. The old adage "Families who pray together, stay together," is true. Make prayer a regular occurrence in your family with your children (single people can join a prayer group or pray alone.) Prayer is a conversation with God!

In Advent frequently pray the Rosary asking Mary our Mother to ask Jesus, her Son, to bless you and your family and to prepare you for the coming of the Lord, the Messiah. As Advent turns into Christmas, you'll want to take your family to Midnight Mass and watch the drama unfold in the Readings and Gospel that are read, and in your heart as you take it all in. We wish you a very special and blessed Advent season.