

February 2017

"The Canticle"

Divine Mercy Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order, Vero Beach,
Florida
www.dmf-ofs.org

▫ **Regular Meeting: Sunday, February 12, 2017, at 2:00pm**, in the **South 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 17 presented by Ed & Donna.
- 2:50 Refreshments and Break
- 3:10 Franciscan Crown Rosary
- 3:35 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayers and Dismissal

▫ **Council Meeting**, Sat. February 18, 2017, at 9am,
See Fred for details.

▫ **Refreshment Committee:**

*Snacks. Etc.: Food—Joanne Giordano & Donna Haro
Drinks—John Matthews*

▫ **Remember in your prayers:** Fred Schaeffer, Ed O'Connor, Marie Fee, Pat Riordan, Stanley Widing, Deacon Blake, and all Franciscans who cannot come to the meeting.

▫ **Anniversaries:** None

▫ **2017 Fair Share is \$55.00. Please give to Treasurer in February or March.**

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. Vacant
2. Jack Reddy, OFS
3. Vacant



From the Minister's Desk: Ash Wednesday falls on March 1 this year. As "brothers and sisters of penance" we are called to prepare ourselves for the penitential season of Lent in a special way. A priest once told me that the human condition involves so much hardship, pain and suffering that we don't have to go looking for special works of penance. Perhaps I misinterpreted him, but, the more that I think about his remark, the more I believe he was wrong. Certainly it is true that we all have problems, sickness, suffering, etc. in life but the call to penance must go far beyond dealing in a practical way with these things. As I struggle to live a Gospel-based life and meditate upon the holiness to which we are all called, it seems to me that the great saints of our Order and of our Church have sanctified penance (in their daily hardships and trials) seeing it as something beautiful to give to God in atonement for their own sins and for those of the whole world. Indeed, St. Francis sought out ways to tame his body and its incessant wants. While, at the end of his life, St. Francis warned his followers against the drastic penances he had performed, his attitude toward penance can be emulated by seeing it as a privilege only the living can enjoy. Whether we are fasting or feasting, let your life be filled with joy!!

The love of God is all-powerful

God loves us as individuals... that shows us some of the power of God. He knows us each by name! In Holy Scripture, we read: " Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations." We are His chosen, and His soul delights in us! [Isa 42:1]

And also: "The LORD said to Moses, "This request, too, which you have just made, I will carry out, because you have found favor with me and you are my intimate friend." [Exodus 33:17]

In the New Testament, we find the following words: "And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother." [Mat 12:49-50]

The relationship of those who do the will of the Lord's Heavenly Father, is an intimate relationship. Moses was favored by the Lord, so the Lord deemed him an intimate friend, and similarly, people who really try to observe God's law, are intimate friends.

People say that they are all sinners, and there is no question that all of us are. Original sin took care of that burden. But if we are sorry for our misdeeds, God will forgive us. In frequent reconciliation, we gain in holiness along the way of life, and we too, will become intimate friends with Him. God is all-powerful, and there is no limit to his mercy and forgiveness. If we continue to strive to improve, to sin less and less as time goes on, we too will grow in intimacy with Jesus.

If we falter once in a while, that is OK - our Lord will give us the grace to get up and continue on our journey. We are so special to Him that He does not want to lose us and thus will protect us and the friendship and brotherhood we share with Him and through Him with each other.

If we fail Him daily and we are not careful in our relationship with Him, or perhaps even seek to stray away from Him, then we can damage our friendship. He will still love us, but we will not love Him. And so, when we come to the end of our days, if we do not reach that time in a State of Grace, and we fail to do something about that, then we are in danger of losing our immortal soul. It must not come to that. Our Lord forgave us for crucifying Him, or for being a part of that action, and in order to redeem us, He died for us. For each one of us. Do not let Him down. Repent. There is less time than you think. Repent, and sin no more.

God is all powerful, and He can punish people. We hope that we will continually grow in our relationship with God and with the Father, and we will grow as long as we remain an intensely loyal Eucharistic people. The strength of the Catholic Church is Jesus Himself, and people who believe and act accordingly - we have Jesus in our midst, in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Make Him welcome in our Heart and Soul. Make sure He has a place there, forever.

F. Schaeffer, ofs 7/9/2009 rev. 2017 to fit to one page.