

March 2017

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

- **Lenten Day of Recollection on March 3, 2017**, in the South Room and the Chapel- all interested parishioners are invited to call Helen Caldarone (772-794-2404) to reserve as space is limited.

**PROGRAM**

*Lenten Day of Recollection*

*Wednesday, March 3, 2017*

*St. Helen Church in the South Room and Chapel*

- 8:30 am Morning Mass in the Church
- 9:15 am South Room. Light breakfast
- 9:40 am South Room. Morning Prayer – Divine Office (short form)
- 9:55 am South Room. Talk and Power-Point Presentation by Deacon Don Battista on Penance and its various forms including prayer, fasting and almsgiving.
- 10:45 am Break
- 11:10 am South Room. Discussion on the Beatitudes as seen by the early church Fathers.
- 11:45 am South Room. Lunch and Social Time
- 12:50 pm Chapel. Spiritual Reading by St. Francis of Assisi's Letter to All the Faithful
- 1:10 pm Chapel. Talk by Fr. Kevin Nelson on the Scriptural Foundations of the Sacrament of Penance.
- 2:00 pm Confessions will be available following Fr. Nelson's talk.  
Thank you for attending. Have a truly blessed Lent and a joy-filled Easter.

- **Regular Meeting: Sunday, March 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 18 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

- **Refreshment Committee:**

*Snacks. Jean McGovern and Ed O'Donnell.*

*Drinks: Jack Reddy*

- **Council Meeting**, Sat. March 18, 2017, at 9am, St. John of the Cross  
See Fred for details.

Divine Mercy Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order, Vero Beach, Florida  
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March 2017—page 2

- **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:** Donna M. Haro, OFS 3/12/2000
- **2017 Fair Share is \$55.00. Please give to Treasurer in February or March.**

### Difficult moments, seek God

by Fred Schaeffer, ofs

Most people encounter difficulty during their lifetime. For many, difficulty happens daily, hourly, sometimes all the time. Some are able to separate themselves from the difficulties in life but most of us get emotionally involved with everything we do or that happens to us. Blessed are those who have such admirable self-control and detachment from suffering and other difficulties that they simply seek God in everything that happens to them. Emotions aren't bad, but uncontrolled emotions can be bothersome.

During my seminary training, I learned all about emotions. More than I wanted to, perhaps. I was taught that we all have emotions and that there are good emotions and bad emotions. In my experience with people and with myself, I must say that people really were wrapped up in their ordinary problems emotionally. Ordinary problems, daily living, becoming reactive to what other people say about us (they shouldn't be gossiping, but unfortunately they do), all sorts of things that if viewed with less emotion could make our lives simpler and happier. Difficult moments will pass if we do *not* attach ourselves to them emotionally. To put it quite bluntly, difficult moments will not bother us as much as long as we stop making mountains out of molehills, and put all difficulties at the foot of His Cross immediately, rather than dwelling on them.

Surely you've heard an angler (someone fishing) tell about that magnificent catch of 15 inches and so many pounds... and the next time the story is told the size of the fish becomes 20 inches, and so on. Or a story about our neighbor's brand new car that gets more expensive as the story grows older. These are little "power trips." Meant in good fun, no doubt, but they are peer pressure in a way. They pressure us to go one better... "One upping each other," is pointless and it bores me to death. Isn't that what we do with our difficulties and problems, too? Ever sit in the waiting room of a doctor's office... listen to the stories people are telling. Awful stories of suffering and sickness. And, invariably, someone will pipe up with a variation of one of these stories and it is worse.

Do these outward displays of emotion make our own difficulties better. No! Oh, sometimes when you hear about some other person's problems you think - thank God, I do not have his problem. And here we have a chance to pray for that other persons... but we don't because we think only of ourselves in those circumstances. When are we going to turn to God, when we're

finally on our deathbed? It is never too late to turn to God, but you will have fewer difficult moments with run-away emotions if you ask God to be a part of your life, your spiritual life, your every day, hour, minutes. Even every second of the day.

Quietism - what is that? Well, that's when you tell yourself that the Lord will take care of everything, and you just go on and do your thing without any active thought. Here's a more formal definition: "Quietism (Lat. quies, quietus, passivity) in the broadest sense is the doctrine which declares that man's highest perfection consists in a sort of psychical self-annihilation and a consequent absorption of the soul into the Divine Essence even during the present life. In the state of "quietude" the mind is wholly inactive; it no longer thinks or wills on its own account, but remains passive while God acts within it. Quietism is thus generally speaking a sort of false or exaggerated mysticism (q.v.), which under the guise of the loftiest spirituality contains erroneous notions which, if consistently followed, would prove fatal to morality."(Catholic Encyclopedia c.1908)

When people tell us to practice detachment, (e.g. detaching our emotions from a difficulty) we want to make sure that it doesn't become quietism. We want to make sure that detachment is for the right reasons, to love the Lord our God and our neighbor (that is, everyone everywhere, as St. Francis is such a great example of), and to actively (rather than passively) strive to offer up our difficulties for the intention of others. Detachment for the right reasons is a beautiful thing. It's not sticking your head in the sand, but it is a way, under God's watchful care, to control our emotions from going overboard on the little problems in life. But it takes lots of conversation with God, with Jesus, and with the Holy Spirit and with the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary whose life was lived in detachment from worldly things, including sin. Without daily prayer, a spiritual life that is deep and long-lasting, detachment can be impossible. But for people who pray daily, detachment is seeking God in difficult moments.

Then we come to quiet moments. In quiet moments which are helped by quieting our overactive imagination and emotions and by a firm and lasting belief in God, we may worship God. A quiet moment is sitting at this computer composing this spiritual reflection. Jesus and St. Francis make it possible for me to talk to you as I would to someone I know in town, or a friend, perhaps. I'm given a talent for writing, praise God. But when you examine all the teachings, essays and reflections found on this website, you'll find that they all point to God, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, to Mary, the Angels and Saints. And I praise God for His greatness and the love He has for all of us.

Let us all turn these difficult moments around into quiet moments. Take the overactive emotions out of the situation and the difficulty remains small, indeed. Offer such moments to God or suffer them quietly for the intention of another person's suffering... and your moments of difficulty will turn to the quiet moments where you will adore God for all this greatness, mercy and compassion. Amen.