



**NEWSLETTER**  
JANUARY-MARCH 2015

## *From the Minister*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope you had a blessed Christmas and New Year! May the newborn Jesus teach us to love more fully, forgive completely, and turn our attention to our relationship with Jesus!

This is a busy winter season for us! January 14<sup>th</sup> was our Tri-annual Regional Visitation. Your bright and smiling faces, joy, and hospitality to Jean Swaynos and Fr. Kevin were all greatly appreciated and very apparent. While the preparation was lots of work, it also provided us time to reflect on our fraternity's strengths and weaknesses.

Of course, our strengths include joyful, devoted followers of St. Francis who have formed a vibrant community in Tampa. But I think we need to "shake things up" a bit this year, and really consider an awesome JPIC project, in addition to supporting Maria and Anna's great work and our homebound ministry, headed by our own Maria Victor. Michelle brought up the possibility of "mini-JPIC" projects, and we will discuss this at our February meeting.

Our focus this year is "Outreach." We will seriously consider an "Outreach Weekend" later in the year. There will be an Interfaith Conference in Tampa on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, and also our annual Day of Reflection, which will be held in May this year. With everything going on in the world, these opportunities for prayer and reflection are very timely.

Very soon, we will also have the joyous opportunity to celebrate the entrance into Candidacy of Marie, Maria and Ralph. Congratulations!

Lastly, let's not forget our sister, MaryAnn Fitzpatrick OFS, who greeted our Lord on December 17<sup>th</sup>. God Bless MaryAnn! We will pray for her, and ask that she intercedes for us.

Love always,

Theresa

# Celebrations

## Anniversaries

Francis "Buzz" Bruno (February 11, 2006)  
Sharon McHugh (February 9, 2008)

Lucia Barrett (February 9, 2008)  
Jane Keehan (February 7, 2009)

***Marie-Therese and John (JD) Waddell 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! (December 12, 1964)***

## Passings

MaryAnn Fitzpatrick ( Professed February 7, 2009)



Sister MaryAnn joined Our Lord and St Francis on December 17. Born in New York, she moved to Florida in 1972. She was an Air Force nurse during the Vietnam War and later worked at Tampa General and Memorial Hospital. She was a champion swimmer and a great lover of animals.

"MaryAnn was a true Franciscan - when she saw you, she would ask about your pet before she asked about you! She had a child-like smile which reflected the sincerity of her heart. Her family was the community of St. Michael the Archangel and the Catholic Community of St. Patrick. She was raised in the Bronx and never lost that mindset, which enabled her to - at times - allow those around her to experience "perfect joy." No situation would stop her from loving those around her. Her ending words in any conversation were always, I'm praying for you twice a day by name! The last months she would be in prayer for two hours in the morning and the evening, holding a crucifix. Even though she was wounded and carried a few crosses, she tried to always be with the suffering Christ. When she wasn't being an intercessor she was praying for the Souls in Purgatory.

"Fr. Stan and I were there when they removed her life support. For twelve hours we prayed. I asked her three questions that evening: Do you see Jesus? Do you see the Blessed Mother? Do you see your mom? Each time, she shook her head Yes. And each time I said, What are you waiting for, you've already cleared out Purgatory!

"I am certain we have a new Saint on our side in the throne room. I use the crucifix she used in prayer. It's right next to the recliner. She was a friend, but also a spiritual mother.

John

## *Christmas in Heaven*

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below,  
With tiny lights like Heaven's stars, reflecting in the snow.  
The sight is so spectacular; please wipe away the tears,  
For I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear.  
But the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.  
I have no words to tell you, the joy their voices bring,  
For it's beyond description, to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me; I see the pain inside your heart,  
But I am not so far away, we really aren't apart.  
I sent you each a special gift, from my heavenly home above.  
I sent you each a memory of my undying love.

So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.  
Remember I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

# Five Franciscan Martyrs Region

## Regional Visitation

Fr. Kevin Quelly, TOR and Jeane Swaynos, OFS joined us at our monthly gathering on January 14.



## Francis, the Minimalist by Jeane Swaynos (excerpt from the Fall 2014 Newsletter)

The new word that I am coming across continually is “minimalist.” The desire to get rid of excess items that we no longer need and make more space in our lives: space for prayer, and space for a closer relationship with Christ. As Franciscans we are grooming ourselves to be minimalist, but it is not easy. We look at these items and are sure we will need 50 coffee cups and 15 serving dishes sometime in the future. We look at all our treasures and are sure our children will need them when we pass from this life. We constantly move these items, trip over them, clean them, and have them take up precious time. Many are paying for storage places to store these items because there is no more room in their homes.

I have secured a large empty box and placed it in the hallway where I constantly see it. Every day for the past month I put some items in the box. For example, if it is the first day of the month, I put in one item, the second day two items, and so on until the last day of the month and I put in 30 items. By the end of the month I should have accumulated close to 450 items. I will give the items to thrift stores that are supported by a charity, such as St. Vincent DePaul Society, Habitat for Humanity, or Salvation Army.

I think of how St Francis would deal with all the stuff in my house. What would he say when he could not fit in the guest room because of all the Christmas decorations? Webster defines clutter as “a number of things scattered and disordered.” I think St Francis would define clutter as “the scattering of things that keep you blinded to Christ’s loving desire to make you His.” Maybe I can get a taste of what St. Francis felt when he entered his father’s storage facility and saw the excess fabric, and I will hunger for more of that desire to give without fear. I have a long way to go, but as the box in the hallway fills I hope to also fill my spiritual hunger.



*“Oh, how much those men are to be valued who, in the spirit with which the widow gave up her two mites, have given up themselves! How their names sparkle! How rich their very ashes are! How they will count up in Heaven!”*

-- E.H. Chapin (contributed by Jane)

# Mary Our Mother

## “33 Days to Morning Glory” by Fr Gaitley MIC

In only 3 pages per day, Fr Gaitley presents Marian Consecration in a way that’s practical and insightful. The Marian spirit of St Louis de Montfort, St Maximilian Kolbe, and St. John Paul II are unveiled. Mary wants to lead us, today and always, to her Son.

### **Prayer of Marian Consecration**

I, a repentant sinner, renew and ratify today in your hands, Oh immaculate Mother, the vows of my baptism. I renounce Satan and resolve to follow Jesus Christ even more closely than before.

Mary, I give you my heart. Set it on fire with love for Jesus. Make it always attentive to His burning thirst for love and for souls. Keep my heart in your own most pure heart, that I may love Jesus and the members of His body with your own, perfect love.

Mary, I entrust myself totally to you: my body and soul, my goods both interior and exterior, and even the value of all my good actions. Please make of me, all I am and I have, whatever most pleases you.

Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for bringing the greatest possible glory to God. If I fall, please lead me back to Jesus. Wash me in the blood and water that flows from His pierced side and help me never to lose my trust in this fountain of love and mercy.

With you, oh Immaculate Mother, you who always does the will of God, I unite myself to the perfect consecration of Jesus as He offers Himself in the Spirit to the Father for the life of the world.  
Amen



*Our Lady of Lourdes  
feast day February 11*

## Family Focus on Diana



Born Diana Thornbury in Fort Wayne, Indiana on June 29, 1949.  
Married to James McKinney for 35 years, who passed away October 2003.  
She has two daughters, Natosha and Nichole.

Diana was baptized in 2009 and caught fire! At the St Paul parish, she is:  
- A Lay Eucharistic Minister      - A Catechist (4<sup>th</sup> grade CCD)  
- In the Respect Life Ministry      - On the Council of Catholic Women  
- Bereavement Ministry Coordinator and on the Deanery Support Group

She graduated from the Lay Ministry Institute in June last year and was appointed a Lay Ecclesial Minister by Bishop Lynch. She believes that God has called her to a Hospice Ministry, where she can minister to the dying.



## Ministries

Here are two sweeties born in the last 30 days, saved by Our Lord and the intervention of our Mother Mary, using the dedication of Jeanne Lewis and the St Stephen Respect Life Ministry! “We also remain hopeful as we witness, through the efforts of parish and diocesan ministries, those who experience a conversion of heart and come to treasure the unborn child.”

-- Catholic Bishops of Florida



### Prayer (contributed by Sandi)

- 1) Make the time
- 2) Have a special place
- 3) Have a plan, what to do
- 4) Have a Bible and a notebook
- 5) Pray to the Holy Spirit before opening either
- 6) Read Scripture first: when you read the Word, you put God's words in your mind rather than your own.
- 7) Pray! Praise, thanks, confession, petition

“When we fill our minds with the life of Christ as found in the Gospels, our life will become like Christ. If we fill our minds with the pure things of God found in Scripture, our life will be pure.”

-- John Michael Talbot

### Formation Corner

This is a nice reflection from Daniel P. Horan, OFM about how to hear God's call ... might be helpful as you think about your own Franciscan (or other) vocation:

[hearing-the-lord-discerning-the-call](#)

I especially like where he says that “The Call” is not often very clear and it's always in need of discernment. “The Call is more like a quiet unsettling feeling, an idea that gently appears on the horizon of our prayer, reflection or imagination. Or the arrival of a possibility that, perhaps at first seems far-fetched or odd, but nonetheless stays with you.”

Peace and good!

Michelle

### Reflection

Therefore, don't be anxious, saying What will we eat? or What will we drink? or What will we wear? The Gentiles seek all these things ... and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Then all these things will be yours as well. So don't be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the worries of the day be sufficient for the day. (Matt 6:31-34)

## **Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops**

(excerpt from January 5, 2015 statement)

How society understands marriage has great public significance. Because of this, redefining civil “marriage” to include two persons of the same sex will have far-reaching consequences in society. Such a change advances the notion that marriage is only about the affective gratification of consenting adults. Such a redefinition of marriage does nothing to safeguard a child’s right to a mother and father and to be raised in a stable family where his or her development and well-being is served to the greatest extent possible.

Marriage based on the complementarity of the sexes is the lifeblood of family, and family is the foundation of our society. The crisis that sadly the family is experiencing today will only be aggravated by imposing this redefinition of marriage. Society must rediscover the irreplaceable roles of both mother and father who bring unique gifts to the education and rearing of children.

## **Seasonal: Lent**

Lent reflects beautifully the Franciscan idea of continual conversion. From *The Life of Saint Francis* (Thomas Celano):

“Francis burned with a great desire to return to his earliest steps toward humility. Rejoicing in hope because of his boundless love, he planned to call his body back to its original servitude, although it had now reached its limit. He cut away completely the obstacle of all cares and silenced the noise of all concerns. When he had to relax this rigor because of illness, he used to say: ‘Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up until now we have done little or nothing.’ He did not consider that he had already attained his goal, but tireless in pursuit of holy newness, he constantly hoped to begin again.’

From *Franciscan Morning and Evening Prayer* (Franciscan Federation, Third Order Regular):

“Gracious God, nourish us with Your words and challenge us with Your grace. In this holy season of Lent, may we open our hearts and minds to You and receive Your holy will without reserve. Thus may we follow faithfully in the footprints of Jesus, our brother, who goes before us to our eternal home. We ask this in His name. Amen.”

