



NEWSLETTER
APRIL-JUNE 2015

From the Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

God Bless you in the joyous time of the Easter season! May our Risen Lord continue to grant you peace, now and the throughout the year. Let's continue to pray for our departed sister, Maryann Fitzpatrick OFS, and for the intentions of our fraternity members and their families.

This Lenten season has been a busy one. We started 2015 with a successful visitation with Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR and Jeanne Swaynos, OFS. Not surprisingly, we received positive and supportive reviews and was deemed a "strong" fraternity! Thanks especially to the entire Council -- for their efforts and time spent filling out paperwork, staying late for meetings, and working as a team.

Then we welcomed Marie Coady, Maria Victor, and Ralph Castellano as Candidates into our fraternity. We love you and are proud of you! We will continue to support you throughout your journey towards profession.

Finally, we held our Seder celebration with lots of prayer and singing. Thanks especially to Sharon McHugh, OFS for her tireless efforts, support and help. Sharon, you are an angel! Thanks also to David Koehler and Maria Victor for their great reading, and to Jake Taylor! We also filled many "Blessing Bags" for St. Vincent de Paul. We really can do great things when we work together.

This month, we will continue this year's two goals of "Outreach" and "JPIC," or community giving. Carmelo Meletiche, a member of St. Pat's, will talk to us on April 15th about how we can assist him in his feeding ministry. Assisting Carmelo would be part of our focus on "Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation," in keeping with our goal of helping the poor.

Lastly, the Annual Regional Five Franciscan Martyrs' meeting will take place on May 15-17 at the San Pedro Retreat Center in Winter Park. The theme is "Be the Joyful Face of God." Please consider attending and registering. I sent forms through email, but more are available on the FFMR website.

God bless!

Theresa

Celebrations

Anniversaries

Mary Skok (April 28, 2012)

Dorothy T. Smith (April 28, 2012)

Rite of Admission

On February 18, 2015, three new Candidates were accepted into the St. Michael Fraternity of Secular Franciscans!

- **Maria Victor**
- **Ralph Castellano**
- **Marie Coady**



“The Lord has called us to live the gospel way of life in fraternity, as He showed it to Francis of Assisi. He brings us together today to receive those who, moved by the Holy Spirit, have asked to be admitted into the Secular Franciscan Order and want to begin their time of formation, which will culminate in their profession or permanent commitment to the gospel life. We will now renew our faith in the holy Spirit and call on Him: May He give us the grace to encourage and sustain their proper formation and to walk with them to attain their goal.”

-- Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order

Seder Meal

On March 18, our fraternity shared a Seder meal! Prayers, settings and food were lovingly prepared by our sister Sharon McHugh. Maria Victor and Dave Koehler led the service as Commentator and Leader.



“The central theme of the Passover is redemption. For us, Passover means not only the physical exodus from Egypt, but our spiritual passing over from the bondage of sin as well.”

Afterwards 27 “blessing bags” of food were made for Hands of Hope, supported by our sisters Maria and Anna Nicotra. Hands of Hope is a joint project by St. Patrick and Sacred Heart parishes, that cooks for and feeds the homeless every Saturday afternoon near St. Peter Claver church.



Five Franciscan Martyrs Region

The Gifts of Waiting by Jeane Swaynos

(condensed from the Winter 2015 Newsletter)

We live in a world where we have been taught not to wait and the faster things move, the better they are. Everything is given to us instantly and we have little experience in handling things that take time. Whether you are waiting for a bus, or in traffic, or waiting for the diagnosis of a loved one, we are forced to reframe our lives and learn how to wait.



In December Father Giles gave a talk on the gifts of WAITING, based on the book *The Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting*, by Holly Whitcomb. Think about how Franciscan spirituality is embedded in waiting. **The following are the seven gifts of Waiting:**

Patience: Waiting teaches us to live life in small increments.

Loss of Control: Waiting offers us a chance to let go.

Living in the Present: Waiting teaches us to dwell fully where we are now.

Compassion: Waiting offers opportunities for compassion – both to give and receive.

Gratitude: Waiting teaches us to value the small things.

Humility: Waiting is a spiritual opening to recognize our powerlessness and God's grace.

Trust In God: Waiting teaches us to live in trust. We loosen our grasp and trust in God.

The secret of waiting is having Faith that the seed was planted and Hope that it will grow.



FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

June 7

“Let everyone be struck with fear!”

“Let the whole earth tremble, and let the heavens exult when Christ the Son of the Living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest!”

“O wonderful loftiness and stupendous dignity!”

“O Sublime humility! O humble sublimity!”

“The Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under an ordinary piece of bread!”

“Brothers, look at the humility of God, and pour out your hearts before Him!”

“Humble yourselves that you may be exalted by Him! Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He who gives totally to you may receive you totally!”

-- St. Francis (from A Letter to the Entire Order)

Discipleship

St. Patrick Homebound Ministry

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and feed Thee, or thirsty and give Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe Thee? And when did we see Thee sick or in prison and visit Thee?’”

“And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.'”

(Matthew 25: 37-40)

Commission: To care for the faithful who through illness or infirmity are unable to take their accustomed place in the Eucharistic community.

- Brings the Eucharist as Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
- Administers Blessed Oils
- Prays with the sick and conducts prayer services
- Represents Christ and manifests faith and charity on behalf of St. Patrick Church

The twelve Ministers on the roster serve the needy both in their homes, hospitals and nursing homes.

There is an opportunity here for the St. Michael Fraternity to provide fellowship, counsel and love to the homebound on a quarterly basis by supporting special ministry activities.



Family Focus on Maria



Born Maria Sanchez in Miami on September 22, 1962. Her family fled Cuba to escape Castro and she speaks fluent Spanish.

A Realtor with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services.

Married to Louis Victor for 18 years, who passed away in 2012.

She has one daughter, Gabriella, who's 20.

Maria is a cradle Catholic who was called by God to move to Tampa ten years ago. A member of St. Patrick church, she is a:

- Lay Eucharistic Minister
- Sacristan
- on the Council of Catholic Women (Circle 7)
- Leader of the St. Patrick Homebound Ministry
- She became interested in Secular Franciscans because Buzz was a close friend to her late husband, and through interaction with St. Michael members participating in the Homebound Ministry.



Divine Mercy Sunday

“I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day, the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain the complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet.” (Saint Faustina Diary 699)

“I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy.” (Saint Faustina Diary 1109)

On April 30, 2000, the Sunday after Easter was officially designated as the Sunday of Divine Mercy.

On April 22, 2001, Saint Pope John Paul II emphasized its message in the context of Easter:

“Jesus said to Sr. Faustina one day: ‘**Humanity will never find peace until it turns with trust to Divine Mercy.**’ Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift that the Church receives from the risen Christ and offers to humanity.”

Prayer

Through Saint Faustina, Jesus gave us the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Divine Mercy Novena. He also gave us these two prayers, that are optional at the beginning and the end of the Chaplet.

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us. (Repeat three times) O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in You!

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion — inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.

Seasonal: Easter

“The angel said to the women, ‘Don’t be afraid. I know that you’re looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen, just as He said!’”

“‘Come and see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him. Now I have told you.’”

“So the women hurried from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell His disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. **‘Greetings,’** He said. They came to Him, clasped His feet and worshiped Him. Then He said, **‘Don’t be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee! There they will see Me.’**”

(Matthew 28: 5-10)



“Galilee is the place where <the disciples> were first called, where everything began! To return to Galilee means to re-read everything on the basis of the cross and its victory, fearlessly: DO NOT BE AFRAID.”

“‘To go to Galilee’ means something beautiful: it means rediscovering our baptism as a living fountain-head, drawing new energy from the sources of our faith and our Christian experience.”

“In this sense, returning to Galilee means treasuring in my heart the living memory of that call, when Jesus passed my way, gazed at me with mercy, and asked we to follow Him. To return there means reviving the memory of that moment when His eyes met mine, the moment when He made me realize that He loved me.”

“The Gospel is very clear: we need to go back there, to see Jesus risen, and to become witnesses of His Resurrection. It is

returning to our first love in order to receive the fire which Jesus has kindled in the world and to bring that fire to all people, to the very ends of the earth.”

“Go back to Galilee, without fear!”

-- Pope Francis

Mary Our Mother

Mary Help of Christians

May 24

Saint John Chrysostom was the first person to use this Marian title in year 345. Saint Don Bosco also propagated Marian devotion under this title.

Mary Help of Christians is also associated with the defense of Christian Europe during the Middle Ages. In 1572, the Islamic Ottoman Empire attempted to invade Christian Europe. Saint Pope Pius V called for Christians to defend the continent and asked them to pray to Mary in order *to help the Christians*.

The enemy was routed at Lepanto after five hours of struggle, while the Holy Father knelt praying before a picture of Our Blessed Lady. The Blessed Virgin then appeared to him and said that, at that very hour, the enemy had been defeated. Saint Pope Pius V ordained that the invocation "Help of Christians" be added to the Litany of Loreto.

When Napoleon Bonaparte took the Papal States, he had Pope Pius VII imprisoned for five years (1808-1813). After Napoleon was exiled, the Holy Father returned to Rome. In thanksgiving, he ordained May 24 as the feast of "Mary Help of Christians."



"God, who made the sun, also made the moon.
The moon does not take away from the
brilliance of the sun. All its light is reflected
from the sun. The Blessed Mother reflects
her divine Son; without Him, she is nothing.
With Him, she is the Mother of men."
Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

What Does Love Look Like?

It has hands to help others.
It has feet to hurry to the poor and needy.
It has eyes to see misery and want.
It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men.
That is what love looks like.

-- St. Augustine



Reflection



On March 4-8, our sister Michelle Taylor journeyed to the “Last Frontier” and experienced the beauty, serenity and adventure of Alaska. This TAPS retreat included snowshoeing, dog sledding and skiing, and also the opening ceremonies and start of the famous Iditarod race!

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) provides compassion to all those grieving the death of a loved one who served in our Armed Forces. They give comfort and hope at no cost to surviving families and loved ones.

“Although I loved the adventures, the most meaningful part of the retreat was forming new friendships with other military widows. Even without Alaska, it would have been so inspiring to meet these women and see how they are rebuilding their lives.”

“One of my favorite poems ends, ‘Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?’ (Mary Oliver, The Summer Day) The wild beauty of Alaska, the impossible challenge of the Iditarod, the adventurousness of the women I met—all of these left me with a renewed sense of life’s possibilities.”

