

"The Canticle"

March 2018

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



Regular Meeting:

*The next meeting is: Sunday, **March 11, 2018**, 2:00 - 4:00pm, at St. John of the Cross Church, Vero Beach, FL.*

Directions: Take Rt. 60 to 74th Avenue and turn (north) at the light. Go straight to 26th Street. The Church is at the northwest corner of 74th Ave. and 26th St. Can't miss it. *We should plan on doing the **Stations of the Cross** in the Main church which has the stained glass windows for that. Please park on the right (facing the church) or east side near the construction site. We're assembling in the choir room which can be reached either going through the chapel and entering the doors on the right in the back of the chapel.*

Agenda and Schedule

- 2.00 Opening, Reports, etc.
- 2:10 Formation Director (Donna):
The Passion of Jesus/Stations of the Cross
- 2:55 Break (*Due to Lent only water will be available*)
- 3:15 Franciscan Crown Rosary
- 3:40 Liturgy of the Hours
- 4:00 Closing Prayers and Dismissal

Fraternity Officers/Council Members (exp. Jan. 09, 2019)

Minister:	Fred Schaeffer, OFS
Vice-Minister:	Helen Caldarone, OFS
Secretary:	Jean McGovern, OFS
Treasurer:	Jack Reddy, OFS
Formation Director:	Donna Haro, OFS
Councilor-at-large:	Joanne Giordana, OFS

Refreshment Committee:

Jean McGovern, OFS

Council Meeting, Sat. *March 17, 2018*, 9 am, St. John of the Cross. (see Fred)

Remember in your prayers: Helen Caldarone, Fred Schaeffer, Ginny Davis, Ed O'Donnell, Marie Fee, Pat Riordan, Stanley Widing, Deacon Blake, and Franciscans unable to come to the meeting.

Anniversaries: March: Donna Haro, OFS 3/12

Minister's Message:

March 11, 2018. Fourth Sunday of Lent: John 3:14-21. See especially verse 16:

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. 21 But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God." (Continued p.2)

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"Today, the Church proclaims the truth that she never really condemned anyone, as now in Christ "there is no condemnation". It is in truth, we who condemn ourselves by our own sins, and on the final day if we have rejected God's Grace, rather than condemning us, will simply respect our choice to be apart from him. We, by our own faults, sever our personal union with Christ and the Church, are "excommunicated" - no longer able to receive Communion until first confessing our sins through the means entrusted by Christ to the Apostles in the Sacrament of Penance."

We condemn ourselves by our own sins, just as Adam and Eve condemned themselves by their disobedience from God's Command. The important distinction here is that Our Lord does not condemn us, but we do so, by our own actions. In today's Gospel, (John 3:14-21) see particularly verse 16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."* (See also Romans 8)

God saw that we, people, were struggling, and still are struggling every day, and rather than condemning us, he gives us yet another means to be with Him forever, He sent His Son, Jesus to redeem us so we may be saved. The Grace of this gift is there, it is ours, but to actually be with Him in Heaven we must not condemn ourselves by our sins - we should at least try to please Him. Fortunately, the Church has given us some help to make this Heavenly reward come to pass. The Church provides us with a huge resource in God's Word, priests, bishops to help us in our journey. Observe the Church's precept to confess sins at least once a year during the Lenten season. Preferably more often.

Sometimes, the Church seems overbearing. Many people just want to do their thing, serve God, follow the Ten Commandments, rather than all this Institutionalized religion - watch out ... in my experience, I wanted to do this once too ... such desires are the slippery slope we do not want to get onto. When people stop coming to church because they have better things to do, they say, everything goes downhill. Then we get such comments as "God understands me." Yes, you are right, He does ... but do you? We condemn ourselves by our own sins!

What seems the easier road becomes usually the harder one. A devout life, as a Catholic, with the Church, all its precepts, morality, etc., that is the better way. All Catholics are aware that the Church isn't perfect. Only God is perfect; people are not. So, please use what remains of this Lenten Season, and all the years to come to sort out your priorities, and just come back!

Laetare Sunday, the halfway point in Lent, is an occasion of joy (if we needed to fast as the early Christians did, then the joy was great - a one-day reprieve from Lent), and so the Liturgical color isn't purple but rose today, but nowadays purple has become more dark blue, and most priests do not use rose because it looks so like pink (which it really is not). Regardless which color, *Laetare* Sunday is cause for cautious optimism that the Salvation of Holy Week and Easter isn't far away.

*"The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul." (see Ps.23)*