Visitation Report:  St Clare, Ave Maria

I arrived early on Sunday morning, and after finding a parking space on the opposite side of the town center, I was able to go in and spend some time in prayer, and get some coffee prior to the meeting time.   I was warmly greeted by each member of the fraternity and once everyone had gathered the meeting commenced.

They have 24 active members and 3 inquirers.   Present were 2 of the inquirers the 3rd was not present as I understand she had discerned out of formation.

There was some struggle initially with the Zoom part of the meeting, due to technical difficulties (no access to the WIFI password and local cell signal was less than optimal) This is not a criticism but just a statement of fact. This is normative in most of the communities I have visited that attempt a hybrid experience.

This community appears to have a strong communal prayer life. They use a Binder of prayers as part of their meeting as well as Mid-Day prayer. (As their meeting is in the afternoon)

They appear to have a strong formation process both initial and ongoing which is beneficial to all its members. In the meeting the Minister asked the members to review the reading from the office, and then relate that to the rule. From the reaction, there were only a couple of people who prepared for that item.

There appears to be no lack of participation in the discussions while I was present and all the members appear to be active and engaged.

The Fraternity appears to be very active in their involvement in both group apostolates and individual apostolates that feed into the Franciscan Charism.

Like many Fraternities, Ave Maria is working to try to get its members to fully understand and live out their vocations.

All In all, this is a vibrant, and well-balanced fraternity.

All of the Binders were checked, were complete and thorough and were signed.  The one item that was not present was a financial audit which the Minister advised should be forthcoming.

The Pastoral Visitor, RSA Brother Lombardo, OFM Cap.  will be submitting his own report.

In a final note, I wanted to mention how over-joyed I was with one visitor to the fraternity who was the son of one of the inquirers.  He was present for the entire meeting and spent the time in the meeting pacing the floor and intermittently interjecting statements about what was going on in the meeting.  To spite the struggles this young man was having and what the world might have considered intrusive or disturbing, this community welcomed him allowed him to speak and interacted with him, making him feel welcomed and valued as a child of God.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Banschbach, OFS

Regional Councilor