



ST. LOUIS FRATERNITY DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR FRATERNITY MINISTER

Sisters and Brothers,

I have been reading a book called “No Regrets” by Allen Hunt and Matthew Kelly. It is a fable about living your 4th quarter of life intentionally.

The main character has a dream about her death and discovers in the dream what maybe her kids think of her as a mother. This leads her to pursue answers to the dream and to basically have a second chance to look at her life. Sort of a rebirth.

I believe that is what the Advent and Christmas seasons are about. It gives us the opportunity to prepare not only for the coming of our Savior but to see where we can be born anew and grow closer to our Lord.

Sometimes I regret how I was as a husband and a father. I question if I was always there for them and if truly I showed I was invested in them.

It is easy to look back and have regrets but that doesn't get you anywhere. I can't relive the past. I only have today.

The book lays out 5 Keys to Living and Dying with No Regrets:

1. *Say yes to God.* God invites you into a wonderful Journey. When you say yes to God's invitation, you know where you are going.
2. *Focus on a Fourth Quarter Virtue.* Pursue one fourth quarter virtue God has specifically placed in you. Then watch it create blossoms in all areas of your life.
3. *Give It Away.* The more you give yourself away, the happier you'll be.
4. *Forgive Often.* Bitter and resentful is no way to live. And it's definitely no way to die. birth
5. *Be Open to Life.* Your fourth quarter can be more of a birthing than dying. Be open to what can be.

Peace, Love, and Joy of the Season,
Deacon John

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

The Christmas concert of the Rochester Symphony was especially meaningful this year because it was the final concert conducted by Jere Lantz who is retiring after 42 years of serving as its conductor. He had created the arrangements for a number of pieces which were filled with joy and uplifting sounds. My imagination was contrasting the poetic beautiful lyrics of Christmas carols with the physical reality of Jesus being born in a stable. Somehow the sanitized version of "Away in the Manger" doesn't tell the humility and poverty of the Son of God at His birth. S What is the message for us? Saint Francis captured the spirit of Christmas by kneeling at the crib in Greccio. Saint Bonaventure wrote of that night: "The man of God stands before the manger filled with piety, bathed in tears, and overcome with joy." How do we explain Francis' tears of joy? Did he feel the gratitude that Jesus came to live among us? Did Francis have the insight that being poor and simple was favored by Jesus?



There are so many questions to ponder this season. I desire to be more appreciative of Jesus' birth among the animals teaching us by example that physical comfort and possessions will never give us the joy we long for. May our Franciscan spirituality lead us to great joy this Christmas and always.

-Sister Ramona Miller



CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

December 17 – Deacon John

December 21 – Sister Ramona

PROFESSIONS

There are no Professions to celebrate this month.

OUR FRANCISCAN RULE (Discussion led by Sister Ramona)

Rule #21

“All the sisters and brothers zealously follow the poverty and humility of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Though rich beyond measure, He emptied himself for our sake and with the holy virgin, His mother, Mary, He chose poverty in this world. Let them be mindful that they should have only those goods of this world which, as the Apostle says, ‘Provide enough food and sufficient clothing; with these we are content.’ Let them particularly beware of money. And let them be happy to live among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the unwanted, the oppressed, and the destitute.”

FORMATION

Larry will lead us in discussion of Reflections 35 & 36 from Live Like Francis.

RECENT EVENTS

December 1 - Two of our members assisted Larry and his SMU students in serving a meal at the Dorothy Day House in Rochester. The following is a reflection written by Deana.

Greg Brunn and I served the Dorothy Day residents on December 1st. This was the beginning of one of the coldest months of the year. It was indeed cold that day. I was nervous to arrive. I have never been in what I have thought of as a homeless shelter. I was expecting a warehouse environment, instead it was an old beautiful home. It was warmly lit, with a Christmas tree in the living room and a few of the residents visiting with each other while they waited for supper.

When I arrived at the home around 5:30, I was welcomed by the staff. They made me feel very comfortable. I was shown the kitchen and visited with Greg until Larry arrived with the students and the food. The students spent the day in classes and studying, then taking their own time to come an hour away to feed strangers in need. Very inspiring.

The residents of Dorothy Day House were a collection of diverse people, but with the one thing in common. They were all hungry and homeless. They were grateful for the most basic of necessities. Food, warmth, caring. Some enjoyed the food and then left the room. Others stayed and visited with us.

For me it was very humbling to see first hand what it is like to be in true need. I saw the residents and knew in my heart that could have been me, could still be me. I have been blessed with people who have been able to help me up when I was at my lowest point. These people did not have that same blessing.

We celebrated our annual Franciscan Creche Service on December 10.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 25 – Merry Christmas

January 14, 2023 – Fraternity Meeting at Church of St. John the Evangelist
10:00 AM – 12 noon.

January 21, 2023 – Meet at St. Francis Church to attend 4:30 PM Mass together.
We will be available after Mass to speak with people and hand out brochures to anyone interested.

