

Father Solanus Casey Fraternity | Duluth/Superior area

Newsletter

June 2022

"I have done what is mine to do; may Christ teach you yours!" —Francis of Assisi

I spent the first weekend of this month at King's House in Buffalo MN attending the Queen of Peace Regional Gathering. This year, we had a fraternal visitation from the National Council. I would like to utilize my message this month to share a few of the matters that were taken up at the meeting.

- 600 are registered for the Q in Phoenix this year
- We have 300 professed members in the QofP region and 30 in formation
- Personal invitations are reported to be the most effective way to recruit new members
- The top four positions at the National Executive Council are up for election this year
- A full regional gathering is planned for 9/24/22 in Bloomington MN
- Approved the 2023 Budget: Income \$27,250, Expense \$27,842, Net \$-592
- Refined local minister's duties document to include: checking email frequently, be present at the regional meeting, complete quarterly fraternity reports and write monthly articles.
- Ideas for fraternity apostolates: encourage priests with cards, supplies for a women's shelter
- Next year's regional meeting will be at the retreat center in Prior Lake
- Every fraternity should spend the January meeting reviewing and approving both the budget and the annual fraternity report.
- Mary Higgins conducted a JPIC survey. I gave them Darlene's phone number
- The regional council members highlighted a lot of resources available on the QofP website.
- Celebrated QofP Region's 30th year of establishment
- Questions for all members to ask: How can I serve the fraternity? Realize that we do not serve alone. All members support one another in their roles.

Reminder that we have elections coming in September and should be thinking about how best to put our individual gifts at the service of the fraternity. Ongoing formation this month will center on leadership and service.

—Franz

This month's Fraternity Gathering

June 19, 2022, 12:30 p.m. – Potluck and Gathering

**Holy Family Catholic Church, social hall
2430 West 3rd St., Duluth
Park in the west parking lot**

Agenda:

1. Opening prayer – Kathy
2. LotH – Barb
3. Gospel sharing – Jane
4. Ongoing formation – Bob: Claiming Our Gifts
5. Business
 - a. Approve minutes, assign ministries
 - b. Treasurer reports, bills, receipts
 - c. Formation report
 - d. JPIC report
6. Vocation and closing prayers

Next month's meeting: July 17, 2022.

Ongoing Formation: TBD



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Newsletter edited by Bob

Gospel Reading: The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Lk 9:11b-17

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured. As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people." Now the men there numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.

Faith Matters: Reflections from your Spiritual Assistant

In brother/sisterhood with all people and all of creation

Francis began many of his letters with the simple phrase of identification: "Brother Francis." Even though he was the founder and leader of his community, Francis saw himself always as a brother, inherently related to all men and women. This spirit of fraternitas wove its way through all that Francis practiced and taught. Today that same spirit animates and guides Secular Franciscans through the local fraternity.

When we talk about fraternity as a foundation of our charism or a value we uphold, our vision extends beyond our little group to other people, "especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ" (Art. 13). We are called to do what we can to contribute towards a civilization in which the dignity of the human person, shared responsibility, and love may be living realities. As it states in Article 15, "Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives." When our brothers and sisters are hurting, we should be ready with a helping hand and a voice that cries out for justice.

That kinship didn't stop with human beings. Francis also saw himself as a brother to animals, plants, and even the Earth itself. "Francis would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of "brother" or "sister," because he knew they shared with him the same beginning" (Bonaventure, *The Life of Blessed Francis*). Francis saw himself as brother to Creation, not master. How did he come to this?

Franciscan Saints/Blesseds of the Month

- 12 BL JOLENTA
- 13 ST ANTHONY OF PADUA
- 22 ST THOMAS MORE
- 30 BL RAYMOND LULL

Raymond Lull was born 1236 into a noble family of Majorca. He was an active presence at the royal court and lived the privileged life of a courtier. It was said he longed for something greater. He found it in the Third Order.

Raymond established a training school for missionaries going to Africa to convert Muslims. He became a prolific writer of philosophy and theology, particularly apologetics. Raymond himself embarked on several missionary trips, possibly dying as a result of one. Raymond Lull was beatified in 1847.



Latest round of blessing bags. We made fifty to distribute. It's the debut of our new banner as well. Photo by Darlene.

A dominant theology of the time was “the Great Chain of Being.” This model proposed a hierarchical framework that connected God to all of creation. Each step up the chain was closer to God. So, animals had more “Godstuff” than plants but less than humans. Thus, people were holier than animals and had a moral right to exploit them for the good of humanity. Water and earth had the lowest value of all. Likewise among people, there were divinely constituted ranks: nobles and the new merchant class were inherently more valued than peasants and the sick.

Francis upended this way of relating with his vision of radical and intimate brotherhood with the Risen Christ. All were equally his brothers and sister, regardless of rank. Francis consciously identified his followers with the “minores,” the lower social strata, of Assisi. It was told how he would relocate worms from the path so they wouldn’t be stepped on. Francis is described preaching to the birds and befriending animals. He wrote eloquently of Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Sister Water and Mother Earth. Following the example of Francis, Secular Franciscans today collaborate with efforts to fight pollution and to conserve all that is valuable in nature. We recognize that exploitation of Creation is directly related to exploitation of the poor, and a violation of our kinship relationship.

The reason that St. Francis preferred the title "brother" was simple: he truly meant that he saw himself as in relationship with all women, men, and even nonhuman creatures as part of God's one family of creation. It is about recognizing intrinsic familial ties with all people and creatures.

— Bob

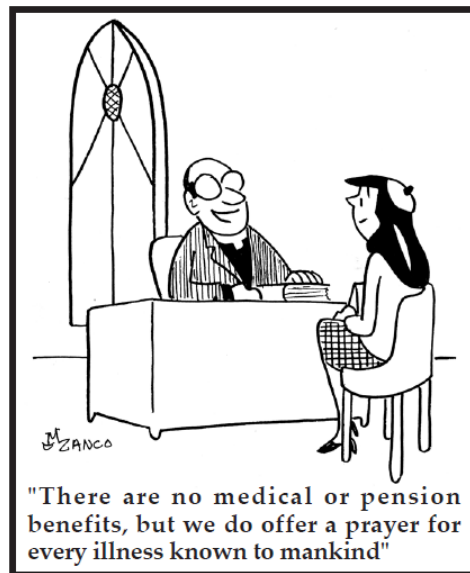
ODDS ‘N’ ENDS

In preparation for our ongoing formation, please review the attached gifts inventory sheet. You’ve seen it before, I know, but it is a good idea from time to time to reflect again on those God-given gifts we have in service to our fraternity, the Secular Franciscan Order, and the world at large.



I ran across this picture from a couple of years ago that I had neglected to publish in the newsletter. It is special because, due to Covid and other illness, we have not been all together very often for a long time. Darlene had brought her camera and tripod to this gathering, which gave us this wonderful image. Pax et Bonum!

—Bob



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Ready to serve in our new fraternity aprons.

Formation

From an early May edition of NAFRA's "Formation Friday":

What Makes Secular Franciscans Different from Other Catholics? (Part Two)

Over the next few weeks, we will look at five things about Secular Franciscans that set us apart. This week we look at **FRATERNITY**.

Our Fraternity Life—How can anyone be a Franciscan without fraternity? As much as St. Francis loved to find solitary places to pray, he always had friars nearby, and **he always returned to fraternity life**. He tells us, *"The Lord gave me brothers..."* (Testament)

Article 24 of our OFS Rule speaks of fraternity: *"To foster communion among members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups. It should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life of fraternity. This communion continues with deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them."*

*"Fraternity is...a call to build a community of love in harmony with all of God's children and all of God's creation to **reflect Love back to the God of Love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**"* (FUN Manual "Fraternity and Francis" by Tom Bello, OFS—former National Minister)

For most of us, our experience of fraternity comes at the local level. Although we find fraternity at the regional, national, and international levels, the local fraternity is the heartbeat of the Order. It is where we find **mutual support** in our faith. It is where **we learn to carry out the promises we made at profession**. Fraternity is like a **workshop** where we practice **universal kinship; patience; humility; simplicity; and acceptance of others**. **It is where we keep our vocation alive**. If fraternity life is well-lived, we will learn how to pray together and to work together to move the fraternity and the Church forward. We learn what it is to be a Franciscan by **how we listen to one another, accept those who are different** than we are, and by how we learn about the **Franciscan charism** together. Fraternity **nourishes our vocation** and helps us to bring the joy of knowing Christ to others both **inside** the fraternity and **outside** in our daily lives.

The structure and flow of our gatherings can help us to achieve what is outlined above. Belonging to a club or attending a business meeting is (or should be) a very different experience from participating in a fraternity gathering. In fraternity, we pray together with one another and with the whole church. We strengthen our vocation by learning about the Franciscan charism and the gospel during our ongoing formation sessions; and we experience conversion of heart as we interact with our brothers and sisters and reach out to others through our apostolates. Fraternity life is a gift!

For discussion or to answer in your journal

- +What is your favorite part of your local fraternity gathering? How does it strengthen your life as a Franciscan?
- + What suggestions would you make to your local council to make your monthly gatherings even better? Be sure to tell why this would be valuable and how you would get it done.
- +Thinking about positive experiences you have had of fraternity (remember, fraternity is not only the monthly gathering, but it is found wherever Franciscans gather), list two or three and try to say why they had a special impact on you.

—Jane