

Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity

April, 2023

"Listen, Discern, and Go Forth"

Volume 11, Issue 1



Our Regional Prayer

Holy Virgin Mary, there is no one like you born in the world among women: Daughter and Handmaid of the most high, sovereign King, the heavenly Father, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for us with St. Michael the archangel and with all the powers of the heavens and with all the saints together with your most holy beloved Son, Lord and Teacher.



During the next four years, our Order, all three branches, has been called to look at significant events in the life of St. Francis in order that we might (1) Look to the Future, and (2) Deepen our Franciscan Identity and Charism, In his Easter Letter to the Order of Friars Minor, our Brother and Minister General, Fr. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, wrote the following:

"Celebrating Easter means not turning our gaze away from human reality in its contradictory bright and dark aspects: the desire to love and to generate full life together with wars, the suffering of the common home, earthquakes, wounds to dialogue and fraternity between people, groups, nations, families, in our Church itself and also in our Fraternity.

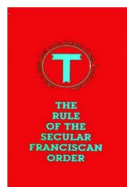
How can we fail to recognize the Easter that erupts from these "underworlds" since the grace of the Risen One makes all things new and enables us to remain even in the face of the scandal of evil, which often seems to win out?

In this **Centenary of the Rule**, a covenant of life, we enthusiastically welcome the call to witness the hope of the Gospel with life and word in the "underworld" and the cracks of light of this difficult time, always loved by God.

In Greccio, Francis listened to the Gospel again, as he wanted to see with others the hardship and poverty in which the Son of God was born. The one who remained with us in the meagre appearance of bread. **The spirit of the Gospel is of the little ones and the poor**, free from temptations of power and possessions, enabled to build with patience, and, together with others, oases of fraternity and hope. Here we learn to listen and walk together with many. Here is an Easter path for us today so that the treasure of the Gospel lived as brothers and sisters may permeate this time afflicted by so much violence and longing for true peace.

All this becomes possible if we recognise that we live in an age in which we are **walking as "spiritual seekers"**, believers in the Crucified and Risen One and inflamed by the fire of Easter on the world's paths."

Your brother and servant,
Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM



What We have Promised

"They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialog of apostolic effectiveness and creativity. **(RULE, Art 6)."**

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Cindy Pilot, OFS: Regional Minister
 Rich Cain, OFS: Regional Vice-Minister
 Margaret Foust, OFS: Regional Secretary:
 Susan Solloway, OFS: Regional Treasurer:
 Barb Braley, OFS: Regional Formation
 Director
 Regional Councilors: Ulma Flores, OFS,
 Chris Bercaw, OFS, Ted Boczkowski, OFS

Regional Spiritual Assistants:
 Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF
 Kathleen White, OFS

Jack Hill, OFS: Appointed JPIC



April Profession Anniversaries
 Blessings to each one of you!

04/03/11	Tricia Bugajski	Holy Family
04/06/18	Linda Gorrell	St Rose of Viterbo
04/07/19	Elizabeth Mendez	St Michael the Archangel
04/07/01	Sharon Marmalejo	Our Lady of Lourdes
04/07/01	Angela Vargas	Our Lady of Lourdes
04/15/12	Jan Kaylor	St Michael the Archangel
04/15/12	Toby Stark	St Michael the Archangel
04/15/18	David Frank	St Charles
04/16/16	Alysson Braatz	Our Lady of Lourdes
04/16/16	Linda Bundy	Our Lady of Lourdes
04/16/16	Cindy Varenkamp	Our Lady of Lourdes
04/17/05	Dick Lowden	Holy Family
04/17/21	Arthur Singleton	Immaculate Conception
04/18/89	Dorothy West	St Anthony
04/18/21	Andrea Martin	St Charles
04/18/21	Patti Webster	St Charles
04/20/02	Fr. David Huemmer	Lady Clare
04/20/02	Margaret Kline	Lady Clare
04/20/02	Lori Schwartz	Lady Clare
04/21/76	Susan Solloway	Holy Family
04/21/96	Diane Losiniecki	Our Lady of Lourdes
04/22/12	Sharon Blunk	Sacred Heart
04/22/12	John Rudnick	Sacred Heart
04/22/12	Kathy Saucedo	Sacred Heart
04/24/05	Bill Duffy	Holy Family
04/25/97	Dorothea Affini	St Mary of the Angels
04/26/03	Ann Klimczak	Our Lady of Lourdes
04/27/13	Maria Szczepanski	Little Portion
04/28/07	Linda Chidalek	St Boniface

March Profession Anniversaries
 Blessings to each one of you!

03/06/77	Betty Price	St Boniface
03/15/81	Robert Goodman	St Boniface
03/15/89	Pauline Creutzburg	Little Portion
03/15/89	David Dieringer	Little Portion
03/17/85	Jon Cooper	Holy Family
03/17/18	Joseph Martinez	St Mary of the Angels
03/17/18	Gloria Walker	Our Lady of Lourdes
03/18/81	George Foster	Holy Family
03/18/01	Beth Freistroffer	Holy Family
03/19/07	Jim Fuchs	Immaculate Conception
03/20/94	Mary Mitchell	St Mary of the Angels
03/20/94	Barbara Wicinski	St Mary of the Angels
03/24/91	Joanna Polanski	St Mary of the Angels
03/25/14	Luann Bartlett	St Anthony
03/25/14	Lory Lee	St Anthony
03/25/14	Jake Marhoefer	St Anthony
03/25/14	Melinda Marhoefer	St Anthony
03/27/11	Judy Johnson	St Michael the Archangel
03/28/83	Joseph Stetzel	People of Peace
03/31/90	John Biegel	Our Lady of Lourdes





Quo Vadis and Forks:

A Reflection by Barb Bralley, OFS Regional Formation Director

During Lent this year at St. Peter's in Fort Wayne, Father Patrick has been asking us, "Quo vadis?" This question comes from the story of an encounter between St. Peter and Jesus on the road. Peter asked Jesus where he was going, quo vadis, and Jesus answered that he was on his way to be crucified again. Peter understood that this meant he was taking the wrong road and had to change course.

This morning (Easter), Father told us that each time we had these "quo vadis" moments, they were like forks in the road. These forks also included the people we encountered. The annoying coworker was a fork. One of our children who was crying was a fork. Losing a job was a fork. Being asked to do something was a fork. You get the idea.

St. Francis had many forks in his road. "Who can give you more, the master or the servant" was a fork. Encountering the leper on the road was a fork. "Rebuild my Church" was a fork. "The Lord gave me brothers" was a fork. "Should I preach or should I stay behind monastic walls in a life of prayer" was a fork.

Each of us has had many forks in our Franciscan roads, too.
Should I become a Secular Franciscan was a fork.
Should I make a permanent profession was a fork.
Should I go to this month's fraternity gathering is a fork.
Would you be willing to be nominated for a Council office for our fraternity at our upcoming elections is a fork.



Quo vadis? Where are we to go?

Father told us in his homily this morning that he had seen one of the WWJD bracelets over the course of the Triduum, but it had more letters on it. It added the letters HWLF, which meant "He Would Love First." "Let the children come to me" was a fork where Jesus loved first. The centurion who begged Jesus to heal his servant but was not worthy that Jesus come under his roof was a fork where Jesus loved first and healed the servant. Knowing what was going to happen to Him in Jerusalem that last time was a fork where Jesus loved first and went anyway for our sakes.

Do we love first as Jesus did — that annoying coworker? the crying child? the loss of a job? or being asked to do something, even serving in a Council office?

Quo vadis? Where are you going? And within the "bonds of fraternity" (Ritual, page 24), quo vadis? Where are we going? It's a good question to ask as we celebrate the 8th centenary of the Rule of 1223. We know where we've been, and we know where we are now, but where are we going? Quo vadis? Will the "same old, same old" be the answer? Or are we at the fork when we have to ask ourselves if it just might be time to take a fresh look at where we need to go. Is that scary? Yes! Does it take us out of our comfort zones? Absolutely!

What would Jesus do? He would love first. Jesus' love took Him to Calvary where He gave up what was in the past for the sake of our future.

What about each of us and our fraternities? How do we love first like Jesus did? Quo vadis?

Peace and all good! Paz y bien!

From Baptism to Profession to always saying "I do"



As I celebrated the Easter Triduum this year I was grateful to sponsor a woman who joined us in the fullness of

faith. It was a privilege to be her godmother as she was baptized, and her sponsor as she was confirmed. We were blessed with good weather for the Easter fire, with no breeze to threaten the Paschal Candle Light. The 9pm Vigil was completed by 12:45am, and I went home exhausted, but had a hard time falling asleep.

As I lay there sleepless, my thoughts were repeating the baptismal promises and remembering how they fit in so beautifully with our Profession (*Ritual*, pg. 23).

Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children? I do.

Do you reject the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin? I do.

Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness? I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth? I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? I do.

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven our sins. May God also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Renewing our baptismal promises during the Easter Season is always a blessing, but recalling our Profession should be as much of a blessing. One fraternity (since deactivated, due to attrition) used to follow each opening prayer at fraternity gatherings with the words of Profession. Every month!

Having been professed now for over 36 years, I barely remember my Profession. I look at the picture of those professed that day, and I wonder where they are and if they

Are still active in the Order. We have lost touch.

Whenever I attend an event at the St Joseph Retreat and Conference Center in Tipton and I enter the chapel, I say to myself, "I was professed here in 1987." I remember the friar, Fr. Martin Wolter, OFM, though I don't remember the ceremony. I am grateful that I may often read the words of Profession from the *Ritual* so that I can review what I promised on that day. And I can say, with conviction, every time – **I DO.**

Reflection from Kathleen White, OFS, Regional Spiritual Assistant



"I DO"



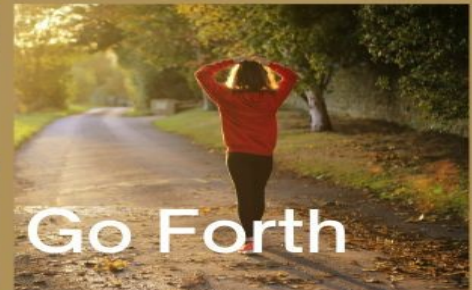
Secular Franciscan Order - USA



Listen



Discern



Go Forth

2022-2025 OFS-USA Theme

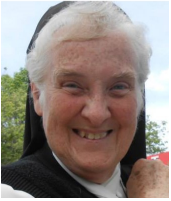


Celebrating the "CENTENARIOS"

In our last couple of newsletters, we've spoken of the "Centenario" announced by the six ministers of the "Conference of the Franciscan Family" on January 1, 2022. They gave us a framework by which each region and/or fraternity could enter into the commemoration of the 800th anniversaries of the Later Rule in 2023, Christmas at Greccio in 2023, the Stigmata in 2024, and the Canticle of the Creatures in 2025. We will try from time to time, to update you on the specifics —dates, times, and places, of how Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity will celebrate these events as the information becomes available. Presently we know the following:

	<p>2023</p> <p>CELEBRATING THE RULE OF 1223 and OUR RULES: Gospel Life</p> <p>UNITY DAY: August 12, 2023 St. Joan of Arc, Kokomo, IN Fr. Steven McMichael, OFM Conv</p> 
	<p>GRECCIO/INCARNATION:</p> <p>University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, IN Contacts: Sr. Anita Holzmer, OFS Sunday, December 3, 2023 @ 1:00 p.m. Eucharistic Celebration/Luncheon/Greccio</p>
	<p>2024</p> <p>"STIGMATA/ CROSS"</p> <p>St. John, IN, Shrine of the Passion Reflection/Celebrant: Fr. Michael Surufka, OFM Contacts: Ted Boczkowski, OFS, and NW Fraternities</p> 
	<p>2025</p> <p>"CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES"</p> <p>Contacts: Helen Burke, OFS, Jack Hill, OFS and Indianapolis Fraternities</p>
	<p>2026</p> <p>"EASTER OF ST. FRANCIS (Transitus)" <i>"Praised be my Lord through Sister Death"</i></p> <p>UNITY DAY: August 8, 2026 St. Joan of Arc, Kokomo Fr. Jerome Schroeder, OFM Cap Contact: Immaculate Conception Fraternity, St. Charles</p> 
<p>Purposes of Centenaries</p>	<p>T</p> <p>(1) Gaze to the Future (2) Deepening our Franciscan Identity and Charism</p>

Gifts to our Franciscan Family



The upcoming celebrations of the various centenaries over the next few years in our Franciscan family are becoming more and more exciting both here in Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity, and throughout the world in all three forms of Franciscan presence.

Our gratitude goes out to all those in the Fort Wayne area, the Valparaiso, St. John area, and Cedar Lake area, and the Indianapolis area who have accepted the challenge of preparing celebrations which will give all of us an opportunity to celebrate as a regional family these powerful and very significant events in the life of our brother, St. Francis of Assisi.

All of these occasions will be an opportunity to (1) Look to the Future, and to (2) Deepen our Franciscan Identity and Charism. And it will take place with the companionship of other members of the Franciscan Order —First Order Friars, Second Order, and all branches of the Third Order.

Don't be shy about volunteering your presence and assistance to Sr. Anita Holzmer, OFS, in Fort Wayne (260.399.7999), Ted Boczkowski, OFS, in St. John (219.558.8036), and Jack Hill, OFS (317.253.9677), and Helen Burke, OFS (317.658.2516), in Indianapolis. If it's only to distribute flyers, sing in a choir, bake cookies, or just be present — all those are gifts of fraternity to your brothers and sisters.



A FRANCISCAN RETREAT

Above and beyond our regional celebrations, you are also invited to consider attending a Franciscan Weekend Retreat to be held at the Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality in

Mount St. Francis, Indiana.

The retreat will be held from December 29– 31, 2023, and is open to all members of the Franciscan family — Friars, Sisters, Seculars, Poor Clares —the whole family praying together!



The Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality is a lovely, wooded area in southern Indiana, complete with lake and areas for walking in beautiful surroundings suitable for prayer and reflection. You can check it out at: <https://mountsaintfrancis.org/our-mission> It doesn't seem possible to resist this lovely setting.

You will be given more information about cost and registration as soon as it becomes available, but you might want to pencil the dates into your planner already. If you have questions, please contact me at 574.259.5427 or send an email to: agnes.marie.regan@gmail.com



"Once, on a holy **Easter Sunday**, while [Francis] was staying **at a hermitage** that was so far from any houses that he could not conveniently go begging, he begged alms from the brothers, like **a pilgrim and beggar**, mindful of him who *that day* appeared in the guise *of a pilgrim* to his disciples travelling on the road to Emmaus.

When he had humbly received it,
he taught them with sacred eloquence
to continually celebrate the Lord's Passover,
in poverty of spirit
that is,
his passing *from this world to the Father*,
passing through the desert of the world
like *pilgrims and strangers*
and, like true Hebrews.
And because,
when begging alms,
he was motivated
not by greed for profit but by liberty of spirit,
God, *the Father of the poor*,
seemed to have a special care for him."

A Franciscan Family Tradition

During the Easter Vigil, our Catholic tradition is to renew our Baptismal promises. I don't know about you, but I always feel my spine tingle as we all recommit ourselves with our enthusiastic "I do" statements on that holy occasion.

But as the Franciscan Order, it is also a tradition on April 16 for us to renew the promises we made at our Profession. Hopefully, we do that with just as much enthusiasm and gusto as we recommit ourselves to walk toward Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare.

Tradition says that the first Rule of Life of the Order of Friars Minor, called the Primitive Rule, was approved on April 16, 1209, by Pope Innocent III. Since then, Franciscans have marked this as the date on which the Order was founded, it is also the date on which Franciscans of all three orders throughout the world renew their vows.

For Secular Franciscans, this renewal (found on page 30 of the **RITUAL**) can be done as a fraternity at your monthly Gathering, or if you are unable to attend for a serious reason, you can prayerfully do this in your home prayer corner.

Sister Death has taken home . .
 . may they rest in
 the love and peace
 of the Lord



KATHRYN CLARK, OFS
Lady Clare Fraternity

SARAH BELISLE, OFS
 Son and Daughter in Law
Immaculate Conception Fraternity

"God didn't Promise Us a Rose Garden"



Reflection by Christina Popiela, OFS, Formation Director of Our Lady of Lourdes Fraternity, Cedar Lake

This month's message is from the book "We Were With St. Francis". The book has stories about Francis that come from those who were with him and knew him.

This section starts with a saying from Francis, "The rule and life of the Lesser Brothers is like a little last hour flock." The Son has asked his heavenly Father for it, saying "Father, I would like you to form and give me a new and humble people in this last hour. Let them be different in humility and poverty from any that ever existed before, and may they be content in having only me." The Father answered, "My Son, what you have asked has been done."

That was the reason that Francis had them called the Lesser Brothers. They are the

people that The Son asked of His Father. Jesus says "Do not fear, little flock. It has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom." And in Luke and Matthew Jesus says, "I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me." So the Lord revealed to Francis the coming of the Order of the Lesser Brothers (Fratrum Minorum) into the Church.

I am not familiar with the founding of other Orders, but we must remember that the founding of the Franciscan order was a direct request from God to Francis. For Jesus spoke to him and gave him the task to rebuild the Church. The tools that Francis uses are humility and poverty. These virtues lead us to the possession of Christ.

Our decision to become a Franciscan is not just some good idea that we had but it is a calling, a vocation. We are called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. What does this mean? Think of Jesus, the very Son of God. Yet he took on the garments of humility and poverty. He walked among the people, he was one of them. He did not dress in expensive clothes. He was born in a barn. He did not live in a

palace. He called common working men to follow him. He preached a message of the love of God. He did not promise riches but instead, salvation.

How do we take on humility and poverty? Do we always want to be in charge, or congratulated for what we do? Or are we quietly working in the background helping others and not drawing attention to ourselves? Are we happy with what we have or do we always want more?

In the end, are we that promised people that Francis was hoping for? Are we different in taking on poverty and humility? Is the possession of Jesus our life's goal? Will Francis recognize us in the next life as one of his followers? Let us pray with Francis as he prayed in the little chapel of San Damiano:

"Great and glorious God, and You Lord Jesus, I pray you shed abroad your light in the darkness of my mind. Be found in me. Lord, so that in all things I may act only in accordance with your holy will."

From ASHES to EASTER: A True Story from Virginia Aniston, OFS

In my utopia, Easter is a day of sunshine, new growth, and warmth. Mother Earth awakens from her hibernation. Her hues of greens and purples and yellows, her fragrances of roses and lilacs and grasses saturate my being with the essence and hope of spring.

Easter is my season of spiritual rebirth. The growth of nature arouses my spirit. The promise of resurrection excites and refreshes my soul. For Jesus, my brother, has risen. And, as he has done, so will I.

That Easter, some years ago, resembled my ideal. The sun shone in a cloudless sky and warmed our beings. Sparrows chirped as a breeze whispered through the leaves of a nearby oak. A robin's nest, tucked within the shelter of a pine bush, revealed the open beaks of a new generation. That Easter gave no foreboding of the death that would befall our parish. That Easter gave no hint of the blessing that would rise from that death. That Easter, life would rise from ashes—Resurrection from Ash Wednesday.

As was our custom on holidays, we spent this Easter with my husband's family. The smell of barbecuing hamburgers triggered rumbles in my stomach as I watched my own fledglings pretending to be Reggie Jackson or Jose Conseco. Sitting on the deck, ignoring the hint of a sunburn on my legs, I joined in the family conversations.

Periodically, I glanced at the desserts--my favorite part of a celebration. However, as all days must, this perfect one approached its end. We returned home refreshingly tired.

After putting our little ones to bed, my husband and I retired for the night, looking forward to a rare opportunity to sleep late the next morning. As I entered the world of unreality, I gave little thought to the numerous alarms that sounded in the distance--

whispering a quick prayer that God would help whoever was in trouble.

Easter Monday morning, the telephone interrupted my dreams at seven o'clock. A neighbor's news struck deep in my gut. The countless alarms that I had heard around midnight had summoned firefighters to a five-alarm fire in town. Our historic church, built in 1833, had suffered at the hands of an arsonist.

I fumbled to hang up the phone and sat in bed, staring at the wall. Disbelief and shock paralyzed me. Soon anger welled within. How could anyone deliberately set fire to such a relic--and especially on Easter Sunday? It seemed as if the fire had been planned for our liturgical day of hope so as to hurt more deeply.

No longer able to sleep, we visited our wounded friend--hoping for only minor injuries. As we arrived on the scene, volunteer firefighters, weary from their all-night ordeal, kept watch for the last remaining sparks.

Our eyes dared a glance at the church. How devastating! The front third, which housed the sanctuary and several irreplaceable works of art, was a picture of ashen wood. Blackened roof beams stood exposed--charred and naked against the morning sky.

The heart of our church was a dismal picture of destruction. The sanctuary had been nearly gutted and the first five or six rows of pews were no longer functional. Both altars--remnants of two diverse eras--were ruined. High on the front wall, a stained glass window depicting symbols of our religious heritage, had been blown out.

Fortunately, the remainder of the

picturesque windows were intact. Most of the statues had also survived, except for the crucifix, which had lost the head of Christ.

It seemed as if the aspects of the church receiving the most damage represented the essence of our religion. And the rich architecture of this building had escaped with the smoke into the nocturnal atmosphere. It was sad--the apparent death of our church on the evening of Easter, our celebration of life.

Several parishioners had arrived before we did. The looks on their faces mirrored the hurt inside. Our dreams had been destroyed with our church. We could only stand and stare--and remember.

Those who could hold their tears in check recalled the baptisms of their children, the marriages of nieces and nephews, and yesterday's Easter celebration, so full of hope.

We pictured the first grade student's portrayal of the birth of Jesus last Christmas and Mary's embarrassment as her veil fell off during her attempt to stand. On Palm Sunday, the high schoolers had treated the congregation to a rendition of "I Will Follow Him" that rivaled Whoopie's "Sister Act" performance. Not quite, but we parents thought so.

My memory was kind to me. I thanked God for memories. And I thanked Him that memories cannot be destroyed as easily as a church building.

My gaze strayed toward the grave-stones that dotted the church grounds. Oh, the memories that lay beneath those stones. The history of a parish was encased within these graves--more than a century and a half of its ancestry. Some of the graveyard's residents had been alive for the last fire that afflicted



our church. That fire was not as damaging.

My eyes drifted, once again, to my wounded friend. How sad! How sad! The only thought I could muster. This destruction seemed like the end--the end of our dreams, the end of our future, the end of an era. The recovery into the next era would be lengthy --painfully so. Only one more glimpse could we bear before we headed home.

During the tedious years of rebuilding, we held our liturgies in the parish hall. The hall, I discovered later, was the original one-room school house. It needed a little remodeling, but functioned quite well as a makeshift church. Despite the somewhat crowded conditions, the atmosphere was rejuvenating and encouraged a spirit of community that had not been evident in the church. The hall had the flavor of a neighborhood meeting place. It was refreshing to greet friends I hadn't seen in a week to find out how Christy did in the last track meet or if Mike passed his midterms in college or how Marie enjoyed her new daughter. I pictured the apostles as they entered the Upper Room to share the Last Supper, exchanging news of their wives and antics of their children.

This step toward fellowship seemed to be a nudge from God to move our parish forward, to move our parish toward becoming a family. But I also sensed that God knew that change would not be easy for those parishioners reared in a more traditional era.

They could not be forced into this new-fangled way of thinking. God seemed sensitive to the needs of these traditionalists. Bit-by-bit, He introduced relics from our burned church into the hall. One Sunday, as I entered the hall, my eyes beheld our marble baptismal font, which was as old as the

church. It had been rescued from the ruins and cleansed of its ashy coat. It seemed a sign that God would combine the old with the new, so as to gently lead His people forward. The font symbolized the beginning of life and the security of history. The sight of the old had joined with the vision of the future--a sign of life amidst a scene of death.

Although nearly lost in the excitement, a single Easter lily also graced our sanctuary. We learned that the lily had been found--alive--among the rubble of the fire that had destroyed our church. We had discovered life amid the ashes--life amid death.

Our parish hall was a surrogate church for three long years. During that time, we began to find a community in these humble surroundings. We began to realize that our Church was the people --not the building. We began to discover that our Church--the people--had not died in the fire. Our building may have burned, but our Church had not.

The shell that housed Jesus' spirit lay dead in the tomb for three days. But that shell joined with his spirit and rose for us on Easter Sunday. The shell of our church building lay dead for three years. On Easter Sunday, three years after the fire, it rose from death and welcomed its spirit--its community--newly resurrected, within its walls. Although hidden from our grieving community that bleak Easter Monday, there was hope in an ashen silhouette against the early dawn sky. There was life emerging amid the ashes.



Three Pillars of Lent

But as Brothers and Sisters of Penance, how might we live out these values throughout the year?

PRAYER: Prayer is conversation with God. It is essential for fasting and almsgiving because prayer gives us the strength to fast. Pope Francis said, "Lent is a privileged time for prayer." In prayer, we draw closer in relationship with God. Relationship with God makes us grateful for the blessings we have received. Prayer is the cornerstone of our Lenten journey and is vital to all of our actions in life.

Scripture References for Prayer: Zephaniah 3:17; Joel 2:1-16; John 16: 33; Philippians 3: 10-11

PENANCE: Fasting and abstinence are old traditions in Judeo-Christian history and early Lenten practice. Found in the Scriptures, they offer a way of growing closer to God. Pope Francis reminds us, "Fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security and, as a consequence, benefits someone else..."

Scripture References for Fasting: Joel 2: 12-14; Isaiah 58: 6-7; Matthew 6: 16-18; Mark 1: 12-15

ALMSGIVING: Almsgiving (giving) is a response to God, one that we can come to through prayer and fasting. It is a way to live out our gratitude for all that God has given us, reflecting the realization that we are the Body of Christ, responsible for each other. Justice, mercy, and charity are integral elements of our baptism that call us to be disciples of Jesus.

Scripture References for Almsgiving: Leviticus 19: 9-10; Proverbs 19: 17; Luke 19: 1-10; Romans 15: 25-28

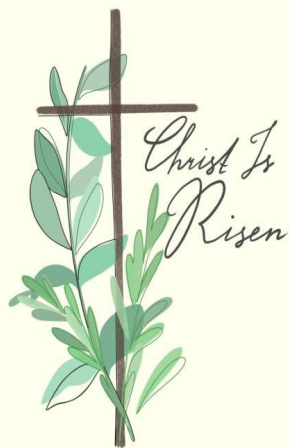
News and Views from Around our Region

St Mary of the Angels Secular Franciscan Fraternity

does a soup kitchen every Saturday from 11:30am to 1:00 pm with prep beginning at 10:00 am. They serve out of two locations: St Ann Church at 6022 West 25th Ave in Black Oak/Gary and the old St Mark's Church at 505 W. Ridge Road, Gary, Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity are next door. They also supply meals, on Saturday, to the women and children staying with the Sisters, Brothers Keepers and the Gary bus stop among others. You can serve and/or sponsor a meal. If you live in the area and would like to help serve, we are willing to reimburse those who are willing to make a meal as long as we get receipts. Contact Ted Boczkowski, OFS (708) 217-0590 for more information.

Our Lady of Lourdes Fraternity

will be collecting baby items for Women's Care Centers at our Day of Reflection March 18th. Please bring baby items (diapers, onesies, bibs, etc.). Sizes from preemie to toddler. Contact Kathy Dominguez, OFS (219) 484-9042 for more information.

**Come and See Event at St. Mary of the Angels**

A table displaying Franciscan items and a warm invitation to a COME AND SEE about Secular Franciscan life greeted parishioners in the narthex of St. John Evangelist Church on Sunday morning. Also present, warm and welcoming members of the Fraternity.



Of those attending the COME AND SEE event at St. Mary of the Angels in St. John, eight persons said they were interested and another five said they wanted further information. Come, Holy Spirit, lead and guide these good folks to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis!

**St. Michael the Archangel / St. Charles**

Lent is here! It's our 40-day opportunity to turn away from selfishness/sin and turn to our merciful God and His people in need so we can celebrate Jesus rising in our hearts at Easter. As you discern your Lenten practices this year, please consider doing the H2O Project Challenge.

This year the H2O Project will partner with Catholic Relief Services to provide clean water to the earthquake victims in Syria and Turkey. As of February 28, over 47,000 people have died and over 9 million people have been affected (injured, loss of homes and all personal belongings, no food, hypothermia).

Our Franciscan vocation calls us to alleviate the sufferings of our brothers and sisters wherever and however we can. Accepting the H2O Project Challenge (much more than just donating the money – see

below) puts us in solidarity/mindfulness of those who are suffering now.

How does it work?

1. Decide – really decide – to make water your only beverage for 2 weeks during Lent (Feb. 22 and April 9). OK, coffee drinkers: limit your coffee intake and don't buy the expensive brands.
2. Save the money you would have spent on coffee, soft drinks, energy drinks, alcoholic beverages, etc.



International Website:

www.ciofs.org

National Website:

www.secularfranciscansusa.org

Regional Website:

www.olirf-ofs.org

To join OUR LADY OF INDIANA list-serve send a blank email to:
olirf+subscribe@googlegroups.com

Follow us on Facebook

"We, the Secular Franciscans of Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity, are called by virtue of Baptism and Confirmation to holiness. We are committed by our Profession to living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in our time according to the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi for the rebuilding of the Church.

With the help of Mary our Advocate, Protectress, and Patroness, we will foster prayer, vital fraternities, and communication. We will provide direction, support and resources to local fraternities for understanding and implementing the Rule, the General Constitutions, and the National Statutes of the Secular Franciscan Order, and our Regional Fraternity Guidelines."

Dates to Remember

2023



June 10: REC

June 13: Feast of St. Anthony of Padua

August 2: Solemnity of St. Mary of the Angels

August 12: Unity Day: Kokomo: Celebration of the First Centenario: "The Rule of 1223" (see page 3 for details).

September 9: Formation Team Workshop

October 3: Transitus of St. Francis

October 4: Solemnity of our Holy Father, St. Francis

October 8: REC

November 11: Chapter of Mats: Kokomo

December 3, 2023: Celebration of Second Centenario: Greccio at the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne (see page 3 for details) All Franciscans in Indiana are invited to attend.

December 29—31: "Greccio": Franciscan Weekend Retreat at Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center in Mt. St. Francis, IN. More information to follow

"You can have flaws, be anxious and even be angry, but do not forget that your life is the greatest enterprise in the world. Only you can stop it from failing. You are appreciated, admired and loved by so many. Remember that being happy is not having a sky without storm, a road without accidents, a job without effort, a relationship without disappointments.

"To be happy is to stop feeling like a victim and become the author of your own fate." It's walking through deserts, but being able to find an oasis deep in the soul. It's thanking God every morning for the miracle of life. It's kissing your children, cuddling your parents, having poetic moments with your friends, even when they hurt us.

"Being happy is letting the creature that lives in each of us live, free, joyful and simple. You have the maturity to be able to say: "I've made mistakes". It's having the courage to say I'm sorry. It's having the sense to say "I need you". Is having the ability to say "I love you". May your life become a garden of opportunities for happiness... that in spring you may be a lover of joy and in winter a lover of all good things. "And when you make a mistake, start over. Because only then will you be in love with life. You'll discover that being happy isn't having a perfect life. But use tears to irrigate tolerance. Use your defeats to train your patience.

"Use your mistakes with the serenity of the sculptor. Use pain to ture into pleasure. Use obstacles to open the windows of intelligence. Never give up ... Above all never give up on the people that love you. Never give up on being happy, because life is an incredible spectacle."

—Pope Francis

