

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

St. Charles Fraternity

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Mid-March – mid-April 2022

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Established on or before 2/9/1936

Last Elections: 10/17/2021

Last Fraternal Visit: 11/17/2017

Last Pastoral Visit: 7/15/2018

Love Your Commitment
in 2022

- Love my fraternity
- Love the Rule
- Love Scripture
- Love conversion



From the Rule

7. United by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance” and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel calls “conversion.” Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.

On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and the source of grace.

10. United themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed His will into the Father’s hands, let them faithfully fulfill the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to Him even in difficulties and persecutions.

19a. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.

19b. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.

22. The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

23d. Members who find themselves in particular difficulties should discuss their problems with the council in fraternal dialogue.

Please note that Teri Q. has graciously volunteered to serve as our Secretary. Her contact information is in the Council contact box on this page.

**FROM OUR SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT:
OUR RULE SPEAKS TO US ABOUT JUSTICE, PEACE
AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION**

Recently we were asked to choose one person from our fraternity to be responsible for the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation aspect of our fraternity. There always seems to be some confusion about what to do with this new-fangled thing that we are being asked to consider. After all, Francis never designated someone to do this among his early followers. But what would he do today? St. Francis was designated as patron of the environment by Pope Saint John Paul II. And the Secular Franciscan Rule contains so much that bears on this. Our world is radically different from the one Francis and Clare inhabited; they weren't concerned about the ozone layer, disposal of nuclear wastes or global warming. These things were not happening, but the Rule does give us direction. Consider the following articles. (*Excerpts only*)

Article 13: The Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ. This speaks volumes about race relations, care for the poor and a host of other concerns.

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. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith. Many of you have been deeply involved in the right to life movement. Others have other issues which they support. We all need to be aware of a breadth of issues even if we cannot give our time to them. And all need our prayers. Francis and Clare would be astounded at all the issues that have arisen in the 21st century. They would stand with us.

Article 18: Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High," and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship. Here is the basis of our call to preserve the "integrity of creation." It is not just honoring the beauty of creation but knowing what brings about the destruction of that creation in our own lives and that of our culture.

Article 19: Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Recently the Pope asked us to become a more synodal people; to meet in groups to discuss the most important issues for the Church at this time. This is a great way to dialogue and hopefully to bring peace among the factions that tend to split our church communities. but peace starts with us and in our families and fraternities. We can't broker peace in the Ukraine, but we must deal with the issues that divide us on a small scale.

So we now have a fraternity member designated as the JPIC point person, but that never removes our individual responsibility. Perhaps we could consider our call as part of our Lenten practice.

Prayer for the People of Ukraine

Almighty God, you guide all nations with your wisdom and strength. We pray that, as once you turned back the armies of Pharaoh when they pursued the Israelites, you would now turn back those who wage war against the people of Ukraine so that peace and justice may return to their land. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Questions for *Beatitudes, Eight Steps to Happiness* by Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap
Chapter 8**

1. In Matthew's Gospel, including in the Beatitudes, *righteousness* is defined as *moral conduct in conformity with God's will* (NAB, footnote for Matthew 3:15). Cantalamessa cross-references this Beatitude with Matthew 6:33 (page 114). This same footnote gives a different definition of righteousness: *the saving activity of God*. Cantalamessa then puts the idea of righteousness in the context of the martyrs. Are martyrs the only ones who are righteous? If not, how can we be righteous in each definition of the word? Which article(s) in our Rule apply here and how?

2. Do you agree with Cantalamessa's assessment on pages 115-118 of how Christians are persecuted, eg mass media (the "power of the air")? What do you see that is accepted as the norm, but opposes Church teaching? Read II Timothy 4:1-5, especially vss 3-4. How are these verses relevant? Read Matthew 4:8-9. How do these verses relate? Which article(s) of our Rule apply to this section of chapter 8 and why? What "marks" ostracize/marginalize people today? (See page 115) What can we, as Franciscans, do about it? How does the sign of baptism "mark" us? What does it mean?

3. Have you ever been persecuted to the point of moving away? Have you forgiven you persecutors? Forgiveness is a significant component in the life of one who truly loves. What is forgiveness? What is it not? How does this relate to articles 7 & 10 of our Rule? To Jesus' prayer of forgiveness during His Passion (What is your response to the Trappist prior's spiritual testament on page 121? How does his testament reveal the qualities of love, humility, and grace?

4. What do you think is the strongest criticism about the Church? About Christians? How do you answer these criticisms? Why do you think people leave a parish? The Church itself? Are these reasons similar to the criticisms above? Do these questions also apply to our Order and to our local fraternity? How might articles 19a, 22, and 23d apply here? Cantalamessa speaks of the eternal/eschatological application of the Beatitudes. Compare his explanation with article 19b of our Rule. What do you think about Unamuno's comment on "deserving" an afterlife (pages 129-130)? What is the difference about what a Christian and a non-Christian expect/hope for in an afterlife?

Articles of the Rule referred to in the questions can be found on page 1 of this newsletter.

Minutes of the St. Charles Fraternity meeting 2-20-2022 at 1:30 p.m. at St Mary's of Avilla School

There were 16 members present: Joyce Wesner, Joy Olry, Nancy Steinhofer, Barb Braley, Sr. Mary Govert, Teri Queitsch, Rich Cain, Deb Davis, Su Hohman, Ralph Stark, Karen Amstutz, Arlene Lewis, Vicki Marcellus-Smith, Carole Beiswanger, Sandra Kiraly, and Jackie Didier.

Minister Joyce opened with prayer.

Old business. 1) A reminder of the Lenten Reflection which will be held on Saturday, March 26, from 9:00-noon; Mass with celebrant Fr. Patrick Hake, who is also the speaker. 2) Rich Cain will also be giving a presentation on May 15, 2022. 3) Nancy read two cards sent to us, and handed out an article about Fr. Sheehan for the University of Saint Francis (USF with Song). Minutes were then passed.

New business. 1) Voted in favor of gathering twice in March: fraternity on Sunday, March 20, and the Lenten Reflection on Saturday, March 26; there were 2 abstentions.

Sr. Mary talked about Lent and the origins from the early Church. Penance and Ash Wednesday were covered also.

The read-out sheet from last month's meeting was discussed and shared.

Snacks and fellowship followed.

Chapter 7 from *Beatitudes: Eight Steps to Happiness* was led by Barb. There were a lot of reflections and shared thoughts all around.

Joyce closed with prayer.

Meeting was then closed with Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Teri Queitsch, OFS, Secretary

MARCH FRATERNITY GATHERING

Date: Mar. 20, 2022 **Time:** 1:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's School teachers lounge
232 N. Main St., Avilla

Sr. Mary's talk: TBD

Beatitudes book: Chapter 8

See questions on page 3

Liturgy of the Hours: Evening Prayer II

3rd Sunday of Lent

Pages 318 & 861

Hymn: #94, page 1546

Homebound: Psalm 22

PROFESSION ANNIVERSARIES

Marilyn Huhn 3/16/1997

BIRTHDAYS

Mary Smith 3/17

Charles Lothamer 3/18

Sr. Mary 4/14

From our Minister...

It would be appropriate to invite your spouse, a friend, a neighbor, definitely another Franciscan, someone who might be interested in becoming a Secular Franciscan, to our **Renewal of Commitment and Lenten Reflection on March 26th. 9:00am to noon. Please contact our members who do not have a way to get to St. Peter's Church and bring them with you.**

There is a ramp on the south side of the church (Dewald Street side) if you don't want to use the steps in front of the church.

Mass with Renewal of Commitment starts at 9:00am. Lenten Reflection from 10:00 to Noon.

There will be a short break between Mass and the Reflection for you to take care of your "necessities."

The restroom is at the back of the church through the double doors on the Mary's statue side of the church.

I hope every one of you will attend this important event.

*Joyce Wesner, OFS
Minister, St. Charles Fraternity*

LAST CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

May the Lord give you peace! **Nominations for the Regional Executive Council are open now through March 12.** Any professed member may nominate another professed member. It would be good if nominees had Council experience on the local level, especially for the office to which they are being nominated. Nominations are for Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director and 3 Councilors. All nominations should be emailed to Barb Braley at bbraley345@gmail.com by March 12.

Do you know of someone in our fraternity who is sick, homebound, has gone into a nursing home, or is in the hospital? Please contact Vicki and she will send a card. Her contact information is on page 1 of this newsletter for the Prayer Tree.

The Fort Wayne cell is now meeting for prayer following the Thursday 11:00 a.m. Mass in the chapel at the University of St. Francis. Anyone is welcome to come.

Thought for this month: "May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, my Lord and my Redeemer." *Psalm 19:14*