

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
St. Charles Fraternity
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March/April 2024

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Established on or before 2/9/1936	Last elections: 10/17/2021	Last fraternal visit: 11/19/2023	Last pastoral visit: 11/20/2022

Ongoing Formation
Fratelli Tutti.
 The questions for reflection are on page 3 of this newsletter.

Please pray for: Jackie Didier, Sandy Kiraly, and Joyce Wesner; also for the repose of the souls of Rita Carboni, who died on January 21, and Marjorie Uth, the mother of Barb Braley, who died on February 10.

From the Catechism (*for Fratelli Tutti, chapter 7, question 3*)
2309 The strict conditions for legitimate defense by military force require rigorous consideration. the gravity of such a decision makes it subject to rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy. At one and the same time:

- the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;
- all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;
- there must be serious prospects of success;
- the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. the power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition.

These are the traditional elements enumerated in what is called the "just war" doctrine. The evaluation of these conditions for moral legitimacy belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good.

May the Lord give you peace!

One of the themes in *Fratelli Tutti*, the encyclical by Pope Francis, is the common good.

The common good is a broad manifestation of love, that is to will the good of another. This “another” is not confined to just one other person; it can be extended to every person in the world.

“But I don’t know people in the Middle East or Europe or South America,” we might be tempted to say. However, based on our definition, we can still love them by willing their good. Is not praying for an end to hunger or war or political oppression or grief willing the good of those who suffer from these things?

Pope Francis offers other concrete means to achieve the common good: dialogue, consensus, a culture of encounter that excludes no one, kindness, truth, forgiveness, peace, and justice. Do these options sound familiar? To us as Secular Franciscans, they absolutely should! Most of these words appear in our Rule and General Constitutions. This might be a good time to re-read the Rule, especially chapter 2.

It might also be a good time to reflect on these not just in general terms, but to our life in fraternity as well. Is dialogue truly present, or is “my” opinion the only one that matters? Do we truly encounter everyone in our fraternity, or just our favorite people? Are all our words and actions kind to others? Have we truly forgiven someone in our fraternity who has upset us somehow? You get the idea. In fact, since this is Lent, it is an ideal time to look honestly at these questions and make any changes that need to be made.

All of these require a spirit of generosity. Think of Jesus during his last few hours. He gave us the new covenant and the priesthood during the Last Supper. At his arrest, he ordered his disciples to put away their swords and healed the man whose ear had been cut off (Luke 22:49-51). He promised salvation to one of those who was being crucified along with him (Luke 23:39-43.) He gave Mary and John to each other just moments before his death (John 19:26-27). Are we so generous? This is always a hard question and reminds of us of our continual need for conversion.

To put this in perspective, however, each person’s conversion can lead to a generous response for the common good: of our families, our parishes, our fraternity and our Order, and the whole world.

Peace and all good!

***Fratelli Tutti* Questions for Reflection**

Chapter 6: Dialogue and Friendship in Society

Questions

1. Define: *dialogue*. Why is dialogue described as our “common ground”? (FT, 198) What is the difference between dialogue and “parallel monologues”? (FT, 200) How do creative differences come into play in an effective dialogue? What connections do you make between dialogue and the first 2 Franciscan Values (respect the unique dignity of each person and nurture a trustful, prayerful community)? How might the internet help/hinder dialogue, encounter, and solidarity?
2. At the risk of sounding like Pontius Pilate, what is *truth*? Define: *morality*, *moralism* and *relativism*. How might you defend the existence of objective truth to someone who doesn’t believe it exists? What connections do you make between truth/morality and articles 13b and 15 of our Rule?
3. Pope Francis describes culture as a people’s desires, interests, and its way of life (FT, 216). How would you describe our American culture? Our Catholic culture? Our Franciscan culture? Do any of these meet the Pope’s description of a “culture of encounter”? How/how not? How might we as Secular Franciscans be able to foster a “culture of encounter” where it does not currently exist? How does kindness enter this picture? What connections do you make to article 14 of our Rule?

Chapter 7: Paths of Renewed Encounter

Questions

1. Pope Francis describes the need for both peace and healing. How are these two things related to each other? Pope Francis also addresses the need for a “penitential memory.” What does he mean by this?
2. Define/describe *forgiveness*. Does forgiveness mean that past offenses, even horrific ones, should be forgotten? Why/why not? Apply your answers to both in individual and societal contexts. What do you see as the process of going from offense to reconciliation? Which article(s) of our Rule would you apply in this process?
3. Read article 2309 of the *Catechism* (see page 1). Do you believe that war can ever be justified? Can you give an example of a “just war”? How is/was it just based on article 2309? Can you give an example of a “unjust war”? How is/was it unjust based on article 2309? Pope Francis asserts that “every war leaves our world worse than it was before” (FT, 261). Do you agree with this? Why/why not? After reading this section of the encyclical and the article from the Catechism, has your understanding of war changed? How so/how not?
4. In 1995, Pope St. John Paul II stated unequivocally that the death penalty should be universally banished. What might be the difference between judicial punishment and judicial revenge? Reread the quote from St. Augustine (FT, 265). What connections can we make between this quote and our earlier discussions on penitential memory and forgiveness? Have you ever considered a life sentence to be a “secret death penalty”? How might it be so or not be so? How does our response to the death penalty, and even prison conditions, relate to article 15 of our Rule?

MARCH FRATERNITY GATHERING

Date: March 17, 2024 **Time:** 1:30 p.m.
Place: St. Vincent de Paul CC
 Spiritual Center, Room C, door 3
 1502 E. Wallen Rd., Fort Wayne
Formation: *Fratelli Tutti*, chapter 6
Food: snacks to share
Liturgy of the Hours:
5th Sunday of Lent
 Pages 366 & 712; Hymn: #85
 Tune: *Take Up Your Cross*
Homebound: John 11

APRIL FRATERNITY GATHERING

Date: April 21, 2024 **Time:** 1:30 p.m.
Place: St. Mary's School teachers
 Lounge, 232 N. Main St., Avilla
Formation: *Fratelli Tutti*, chapter 7
Food: snacks to share
Liturgy of the Hours:
4th Sunday of Easter
 Pages 500 & 931; Hymn: #121
Homebound: Acts 3:1-4:4

BIRTHDAYS

Jackie Didier 3/4
Patti Webster 3/21
Sandy Kiraly 4/19

PROFESSION ANNIVERSARIES

None in March

4/15/2018 *David Frank*
 4/18/2021 *Andrea Martin*
Patti Webster

ST. CHARLES FRATERNITY 2024 BUDGET

1	Women's Care Center	\$300	
2	Franciscan Center	\$500	
3	Amazon Relief	\$300	
4	Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (missions)	\$300	
5	Annual Fair Share (18 x \$35)*	\$630	
6	Website domain fee	\$24	85
7	Website annual fee for Wix.com platform	\$155	
8	Total	\$2209	85

*The Fair Share amount was raised \$3/member based on the Active/Active Excused members on the national database for the calendar year 2023. This is a \$2/member increase of the national \$5/member increase that will be effective in 2025 + a \$1/member regional increase. These increases were deemed necessary as there have been no Fair Share increases in approximately a decade.