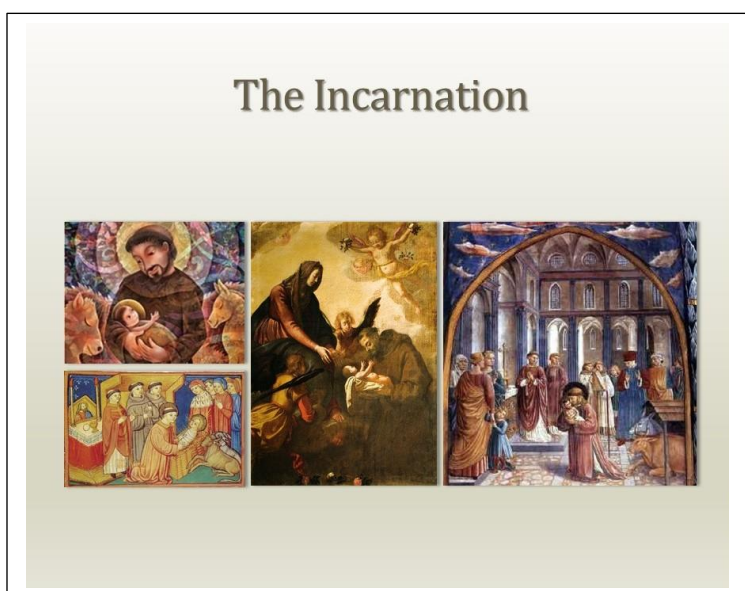


SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
St. Charles Fraternity
P.O. Box 12644 M.P.O., Fort Wayne, IN 46864
Website: stcharlesfrat.com
November/December 2023



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Formation Director: Rich C.	260.667.4631	richcain82@gmail.com	
Established on or before 2/9/1936	Last elections: 10/17/2021	Last fraternal visit: 11/19/2023	Last pastoral visit: 11/20/2022



Please pray for: Barb Balbo's husband, Jackie Didier, Sandy Kiraly, Joyce Wesner, and Vicki Marcellus-Smith.

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

CELEBRATION OF THE 8TH CENTENARY OF ST. FRANCIS AND CHRISTMAS AT GRECCIO

On December 3, Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity is sponsoring a Living Nativity celebration at the University of Saint Francis. This celebration will mark the 8th centenary of the midnight Christmas Mass at Greccio (see page 2). While this celebration will not include live animals, it is fitting that we celebrate this event. The schedule for the afternoon is as follows:

12:30 p.m.	Arrival (food for the fellowship time may be taken to the John & Toni Research Center)
1:00 p.m.	Mass celebrated by Fr. Jose Arroyo for the 1 st Sunday of Advent in the USF chapel (This Mass will fulfill the Sunday obligation.)
2:00 p.m.	Living Nativity presented in the USF chapel, followed by food & fellowship at the John & Toni Research Center

May the Lord give you peace!

Here's your Christmas tidbit for this year. Did you know that when we put out a creche, or nativity scene, at Christmas we are participating in a Franciscan tradition?

This year we celebrate the 8th centenary of St. Francis and the Christmas at Greccio. If you are unfamiliar with the story, here is the gist of it.

In 1223, St. Francis wanted people of Greccio to experience something real in the celebration of Christmas, so he asked a friend of his to provide a stable with straw, a manger, and live animals. In this way people could see the setting, smell the straw (and probably the animals, too!). They could place themselves there with the angels and the shepherds in adoration of the newborn Christ. In fact, the midnight Mass was celebrated there. As a deacon, St. Francis himself read the Gospel.

But there's more to this than a romantic image of a beautiful baby, adorable animals, the glow of candles, and the chanting of the liturgy.

In the Thomistic/Dominican tradition, God the Son became human because of the Fall. We owed God a debt that we could never repay, and only God could repay the debt that was owed. Hence, the Incarnation of God the Son.

In the Franciscan tradition, St. Bonaventure saw this idea as falling short of who God is. If we really believe what we read in I John 4, that God is love, then this must be the reason that the Son, the 2nd Person of the Holy Trinity, became a man: love. Thus, we see in our Christmas celebration the humility of God who came to be with us as one of us because he loves us. This love extends, then, all the way to the cross. The connection between the crib and the cross is the humility of God. In fact, it even extends to the Eucharist when Jesus comes to us in the form of bread.

In the words of St. Francis: *"Brothers [and sisters], look at the humility of God, and pour out your hearts before Him! Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He Who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally."* (from *A Letter to the Entire Order*, dated 1224)

Now here is a New Year's resolution worth making: to hold back nothing of ourselves for ourselves in order to be received by totally by God!

Many blessings to you and your families as you celebrate the wonder of Christ's nativity. Be safe if you travel.

Peace and all good!

Fratelli Tutti questions for reflection

Chapter 3

1. Reread the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). What would be the reaction to this story in a world that constantly sees the emergence and growth of social groups that cling to an identity that separates them from others? How would it affect those who organize themselves in a way that prevents others from joining them who they think would change their identity? For example, how might our fraternity welcome Hispanics who speak little to no English? How does this relate to article 13 of our Rule?
2. Pope Francis speaks at length about the inherent dignity of each person, which is the first Franciscan Value introduced in chapter 1: *reverence the unique dignity of each person*. In paragraphs 93 & 94, how is charity different than benevolence? How might this difference relate to the Parable of the Good Samaritan? To the story of Francis and the Leper? What connection(s) do you draw to reverencing the unique dignity of each person?
3. Reread & reflect on the quotes from St. John Chrysostom, Pope St. Gregory the Great, Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Francis (page 52, #119 & 120). How familiar are you with the Church's teaching on social justice? What is the difference between social justice and socialism/communism? What is the role of "created goods" in social justice? How do we see it reflected in the Parable of the Good Samaritan? How does this relate to article 11 of our Rule? Does this all mean that we are meant to give people "handouts"? What does it mean?
4. The final quote of chapter 3 mentions "interdependence" and "shared responsibility." Within our Franciscan family, we have similar ideas. Read articles 1, 2 & 26 of our Rule. What connections can you draw? What evidence do we have of "existential" interdependence and shared responsibility? What might we do to establish/improve those connections? Why do/should we have a Spiritual Assistant? Why is our fraternity bonded to a friar province? What is our bonded friar province? Do you know who our Provincial Spiritual Assistant is? Who our Regional Spiritual Assistants are? What is/are the purpose(s) of a Pastoral visit? (See General Constitutions, articles 92 & 95)

NOV. FRATERNITY GATHERING

Date: Nov. 19, 2023 **Time:** 1:30 p.m.

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

Triennial fraternal visit: Susan Solloway, Regional Treasurer, and Chris Bercaw, Regional Councilor, will be our visitors this year.

Formation: *Fratelli Tutti*, chapter 1

Food: snacks to share

Liturgy of the Hours:

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Pages 640 & 712; Hymn: #33

Homebound: Matthew 25:31-45

DEC. FRATERNITY GATHERING

Date: Dec. 10, 2023 **Time:** 1:30 p.m.

Place: St. Vincent de Paul CC Spiritual Center, Room B, entrance 1
1502 E. Wallen Rd., Fort Wayne

Christmas Party

Food: carry in; meat & drinks provided

Activities: to be announced

Liturgy of the Hours:

2nd Sunday of Advent

Pages 68 & 787; Hymn: #61

Homebound: John 1

PROFESSION ANNIVERSARIES

11/11/2007 *Katie Herendeen*

Vicki Marcellus-Smith

11/16/1997 *Marcylye Voigt*

11/21/1976 *Laura Hoffman*

11/22/2009 *Arlene Lewis*

BIRTHDAYS

Su Hohman 11/8

Joyce Wesner 11/16

Joy Olry 11/20

Joann Arendt 11/26

None in December

Do Las Vegas churches accept gambling chips?

This may come as a surprise to those of you not living in Las Vegas, but there are more Catholic churches than casinos. Not surprisingly, some worshipers at Sunday services will give casino chips rather than cash when the basket is passed. Since they get chips from many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings. The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan monastery for sorting and then the chips are taken to the casinos of origin and cashed in. This is done by chip monks.

This frivolity break is borrowed from the November issue of the Holy Family fraternity newsletter.