

## “THE FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS”

THE POPE ST. JOHN XXIII  
SECULAR FRANCISCAN  
FRATERNITY



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Our MINISTER’S MUSINGS - by Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS

### What Does Jesus Wish Us to Do?



I have often prayed about what Jesus is asking me to do with my life. The answer is not always clear to me, but I do believe that He points me to opportunities. If you are like me, we often look for those areas of service where we feel like we belong and are comfortable. As I have come to know St. Francis of Assisi better, I know he challenges me to get out of my comfort zones and to explore situations which really upset me and cause me to say, “that’s not for me – no way!” I often laugh when I think of St. Francis of Assisi and the leper. Can you imagine going to the leper and kissing him as horrible as he smelt with his dingy frightening appearance! What an act of incredible compassion and love. As our former Minister Ron Van Nest said to me once, **we need to**

**ask – “Who are the leper(s) in our life?”**

**I** try to answer God’s call to serve. I have things that I do that are truly life giving to me – teach in Sacrament Program in Religious Education, serve as a Eucharistic Minister, companion for our dear Franciscan fraternity sister Kathy Duffy, member of Gabriel Network and prepare monthly dinners at a recovery house to name a few. I truly love these ministries, but I have lately been asking God to challenge me to find my lepers! In the silence of Eucharistic Adoration, I ask of Him, “Show me and direct me where you want me to be - not necessarily where I want to be!” I pray that as we all serve, we challenge ourselves to seek the uncomfortable and to listen to the voice of God leading us!!!

*We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen away, and to bring home those who have lost their way. Many who seem to us to be children of the Devil will still become Christ’s disciples.*

**St. Francis of Assisi**

## Seeds of Faith - by Nina Teti, OFS



When I began Catholic elementary school, religion was taught from the Baltimore Catechism. Questions and Answers were memorized. **First Lesson:** Who is God? Why did God create us? Let me recall from memory. **God created us to know Him, love Him, and to serve Him in this world and be happy with Him in the next!** That was a long, long time ago (not so bad if I say so myself!) Memorization, and looking back and ahead - maybe that needs to be implemented again, today! Your thoughts?

I taught Religious Ed (CCD) for 12 years +, and RCIA, after Vatican II. Back then, in order for my children to get a religious education, I had to volunteer and teach in my home until a new parish was established, and **I answered that call!** We had satellite classes until the church was built. **I guess that was service!** I fell in love with knowing God through scripture, prayerfully loving him more and more, and my service spiraled into many directions, knowing now, I did not do it alone! The **Holy Spirit was guiding me and a voice from the heavens led me to embrace the SECULAR FRANCISCANS!** Now, my home is my sanctuary and I pray perpetually and continue to strive to be a model to my children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and this year, 2024, three more great-grandchildren, and those I encounter in this journey. So, when you **LOVE, SERVICE COMES WITHOUT KNOWING YOU ARE SERVING...GOD IS LOVE!**

## Caring for Creation – by Chris Gordon, OFS



### Bees and Trees

For more than 20 years, we have been hearing stories of the Honeybee colony collapse. In the latest survey, we've added nearly 1,000,000 colonies in the last five years. Native to Europe and brought to this country, Honeybees colonies are used by farmers to pollinate their crops. Almonds, followed by blueberries, apples, cherries and cranberries, are some of the main crops pollinated by honeybees. So maybe we've turned a corner. **I'll take good news where it can be found!**

### So, what can you do?

Plant a White Oak tree - they support over 550 insect species. Be careful about using pesticides, particularly mosquito sprays. Plant more native flowers (you may have to ask) to provide a food source for all our native insects and the wildlife that they support all season long.

**May the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon you!**

## Being Present

by

*Marie Waleryszak, OFS*



I can hardly believe that it's been (?) 3 years since I was asked if I could help with our Franciscan sister Kathy.

She had suffered a series of medical conditions that affected her mobility and her memory. Her husband and family really wanted her to stay at home, but quickly realized that they would need help. They hired caregivers for the afternoons, but needed someone to sit with her a couple mornings a week so her husband could work. I wanted to help so I said “yes”, ...so after morning mass every Tuesday I **bring her communion and stay a few hours until the caregiver comes**. In the beginning I'd play the mass for

her on my iPad and she would follow along and we would say the responses and prayers. Sometimes we listened to music, looked at art books, did puzzles, or watched movies. She especially liked looking at family photo albums. Weather permitting, we ventured outside with the wheelchair. I tried doing some simple physical therapy exercises, but I quickly found out she had her own ideas on what she didn't want to do!

As you can imagine, she has slowly become less mobile, her short-term memory is not good, and she rarely speaks whole sentences. Her diabetes has limited what she can eat, she has lost weight, and has become frail in front of my eyes. To make matters worse, she unfortunately fell and broke her hip. Kathy is a fighter, and she has a lot of people praying for her, so it was no surprise she came back home after surgery, rehab, and PT.

Kathy's days now are pretty much routine. Her husband does all her morning care, and most of her meals. We watch a lot of morning tv. It seems easier, but what you don't see on the surface are the difficult moments, struggles, and frustrations! The countless Dr. Appointments, medication mix ups, and insurance nightmares, and the paperwork and bills! Did I mention a broken water heater, her husband's biking accident, a trip to the ER (or 2) and a kitchen repair project?

Kathy falls asleep a lot now, but I still get a glimmer of her sense of humor, and, yes, her stubbornness! I especially love her one-liners that she directs to me when I ask her a stupid question!

Her family is so very grateful for all we do, **but truly I'm the grateful one!** I am constantly amazed and humbled by Kathy's brave struggles, and her family's caring and love that I have had the privilege to witness. I know in my heart that Kathy doesn't know my name, and probably will not remember my visits, but I will continue to keep my Tuesday mornings free for my sister **Kathy** as long as she needs me!



## FRANCISCAN FEATURE



### [HE WOULD GIVE AWAY THE TUNIC HE WAS WEARING TO HELP THE POOR]

Once when he was traveling through a certain region preaching, two brothers from France happened to meet him. From this they enjoyed great consolation. Finally, out of the great devotion they had toward him, for the love of God they asked for his tunic. As soon as he heard “The love of God,” he immediately took off his tunic, remaining naked for almost an hour.

For it was blessed Francis’s custom when someone said to him “for the love of God, give me your tunic or cord,” or anything else that he had, he would immediately give it to them out of reverence for that Lord who is called Love. Furthermore he would be greatly displeased, and would reprimand the brothers when he heard them invoking the love of God needlessly. For he would say: “The love of God is so very exalted that it should be mentioned with great reverence rarely and only in dire necessity.” Then one of the brothers took off his tunic and gave it to him.

Very often he endured great need and hardship when he gave away his tunic or a part of it to someone, because he could not quickly find or have another one made. This was true especially since he always wished to have and to wear a poor tunic made of bits and pieces, and occasionally he wanted it patched on inside and out. Because he rarely, if ever, wanted to have or wear a tunic made from new cloth, but would acquire one worn by a brother for a long time, and sometimes he would even accept one part of his tunic from one brother and the rest from another. But, because of his many illnesses and the cold, he would occasionally patch it on the inside with new cloth.

He held and observed this kind of poverty in his clothing until the year when he returned to the Lord. For a few days before his death, because he was suffering from dropsy, he was almost completely dehydrated and weakened by many of the other sicknesses he had, the brothers made several tunics for him, so that they could change his tunic night and day as was necessary.

(Francis of Assisi Early Documents – The Founder – Vol. II: “The Assisi Compilation” p 194)

## Holy Hour – by *Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*

Our ongoing Formation Program for the month of February was a Franciscan Holy Hour. On February 7, our Fraternity sister, Elizabeth Brownlee, modeled the program after a weekly Thursday Holy Hour that is held in the Chapel at Holy Family Church. The Holy Hour consisted of the Exposition of the Holy Eucharist, recitation of the rosary with intentions, readings, meditation time and music. Many members were actively involved in specific aspects of the program. Fraternity members described the experience as joyful, peaceful and a welcomed quiet prayerful hour.



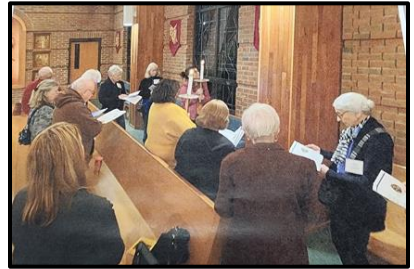
## Soup and Bread – by *Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*

Pope St. John XXIII Secular Franciscan Fraternity sponsored Lenten Soup and Bread at Holy Family Church on Friday evening, February 28. Members who volunteered helped to serve the parish community prior to the recitation of the Stations of the Cross. Our Fraternity Newsletter was on the table for the parish members to read about us. It was a great night of service and fellowship!



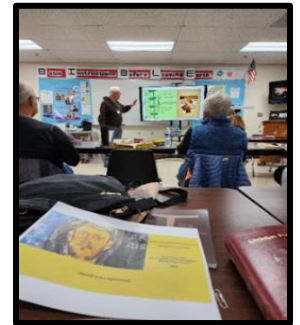
## Stations of the Cross – by *Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*

Our Ongoing Formation Program for the month of March, held on March 6, was the recitation of the Stations of the Cross in the main church of Holy Family Parish. The book utilized was *Cross Examinations, Stations for the Cross* by James E. Adams. This version of the Stations of the Cross is contemporary and beautiful! We professed from station to station with lighted candles, and many members participated by reading an individual station. It was an enlightening and moving experience for the group.



## JPIC Talk – by *Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*

Our Ongoing Formation Program for the month of April, held on April 3, was a JPIC (Justice, Peace, Integrity and Creation) talk and discussion, led by Gilbert Donahue, OFS, St. Margaret of Cortona Regional JPIC Animator. He focused his talk on “promoting justice” as a Secular Franciscan. He spoke about what St. Francis thought about justice, what justice means, how St. Francis worked on the margins exhibiting Franciscan values, and where we need today to serve those who have serious needs to be addressed. It was a terrific and enlightening presentation that stimulated open discussion and dialogue. Lots of “food for thought” for action on our part!



## Wine and Cheese – by *Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*

Pope St. John XXIII Secular Franciscan Fraternity sponsored Wine and Cheese after the 5 PM Mass on April 6. It was a time to gather in community and fellowship and to have fun. It was a joyful night for all who attended!



**Formation Forum** – by *Jeanne Catrow, OFS, Formation Director*

Francis loved the Virgin Mary greatly and composed the **“Praises to the Virgin Mary”** in her honor!



**“Praise the holy Lady, The most holy Queen, Mary, only Mother of God.  
She is forever Virgin, Heavenly chosen of the Father,  
And consecrated by the beloved Son with the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete.  
They three descended in you, and remaining there still,  
For grace’s fullness and every goodness.  
Praise God’s Palace. Praise God’s Tabernacle. Praise God’s Robe.  
Praise God’s Servant. Praise God’s Mother!”**

**M**ay we always hold our dear Mother Mary in our hearts as we go through our Formation – both Initial and Ongoing.


**W**e continue our studies with 3 Inquirers: Genevieve DiUlio, Sonia Balboni, and Jean Schaefer. They are a true asset to our fraternity and the Spirit has blessed us well. The Inquirers meet on the second Wednesday of each month. Please pray for their Discernment as they journey toward Candidacy. They will likely celebrate their Rites of Admission this summer.

**O**ur Candidates, Barbara Henry, Shawn Dickey, Elizabeth Brownlee, and Michael O’Rourke, remain a gift to our Fraternity with their devotion and prayerfulness. This group provides support to each other in our discussions, and consistently shares their spirituality and their call to the Franciscan life with each other. Please pray for them as they move toward Profession early next year.

**T**he Candidates continue their apostolate to the Riva Recovery House by providing a dinner on the second Monday of each month. They provide dinner and dessert to 16 men, and it has been well received by the people there. Many thanks to the Candidates who faithfully serve this community. Anyone may join them – contact Jeanne Catrow for information. The Candidates meet on the third Wednesday of each month and truly appreciate your prayers and support as they continue their journey.

**M**ark your calendars for our **Chapter of Mats** in Adamstown, Maryland on the weekend of **September 6-8, 2024**. This is not only of spiritual importance, but a great time to meet members across our region and have a really good social time!

## Professional Anniversaries

Jeanne Catrow	May 8, 1979		Laura Benso	November 17, 2018
John Cobis	June 12, 2005		Mary Rohde	November 17, 2018
Kathy Brady	September 17, 2016		Chris Gordon	February 1, 2020
Kathy Duffy	September 17, 2016		Ann Marie Pessagno	February 1, 2020
Judy Hool	September 17, 2016		Nina Teti	February 1, 2020
Sandy Horvath	September 17, 2016		Eugene (Duke) Jones	February 26, 2022
David Littleton	September 17, 2016		Joe O'Dea	February 26, 2022
John Treichel	September 17, 2016		Theresa Tucker	February 26, 2022
Ron Van Nest	September 17, 2016		Penny (Joyce) Jones	May 13, 2023
Marie Waleryszak	September 17, 2016		Patricia Sullivan	May 13, 2023

## Best Wishes

David Littleton	June 4		Genevieve DiUlio	September 1
Theresa Tucker	July 12		Barbara Henry	September 7
Patricia Sullivan	July 27		Chris Gordon	September 14
Kathy Brady	July 28		Mary Rohde	September 14
Sandy Horvath	July 29		Laura Benso	September 16
Penny Jones	August 7		Shawn Dickey	September 20
			Michael O'Rourke	September 26

## Save The Dates

6/21/24 – 6/23/24	Regional Formation Retreat: <b>The Franciscan Way of Servant Leadership to Guide and Animate</b>	Washington Retreat House Washington, D.C.	
8/10/24	Rite of Admission for Inquirers	Holy Family Catholic Church Davidsonville, MD	7 PM – 9 PM
8/10/24	Saturday Franciscan Fraternity Meeting with Father Patrick Monahan: <b>Defending Our Faith Through Walking in the Footsteps of St. Francis</b>	Holy Family Catholic Church Davidsonville, MD	12:30 PM
September 6 – September 8, 2024	<u>Chapter of Mats</u> (retreat)	Claggett Center Adamstown, MD	

### Treasury Tidbits – April 2024 - by *Judy Hool, OFS, Treasurer*

December 31, 2023 Ending Balance:	\$6,460.91
<b>January – April 2024 Deposits:</b>	<b>\$3,985.00</b>
<b>January – April 2024 Withdrawals:</b>	<b>\$1,780.25</b>
April 30, 2024 Ending Balance:	<b>\$8,665.66</b>

Thank you for your generous donations. Our Fraternity will carefully and prayerfully manage the charitable contributions to serve our community.

**Pax et bonum!**

**Attention:** If you are interested in learning more about Secular Franciscans and our Franciscan ministry of living out the Gospel in our daily secular lives, or attending any of our monthly Secular Franciscan Fraternity meetings to learn more about us here at Holy Family Catholic Church, please contact our **Minister**, Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS ([ampessagno@yahoo.com](mailto:ampessagno@yahoo.com)) or our **Vice Minister**, Joe O'Dea, OFS ([remaincalmtoday@yahoo.com](mailto:remaincalmtoday@yahoo.com)). All are welcome!



