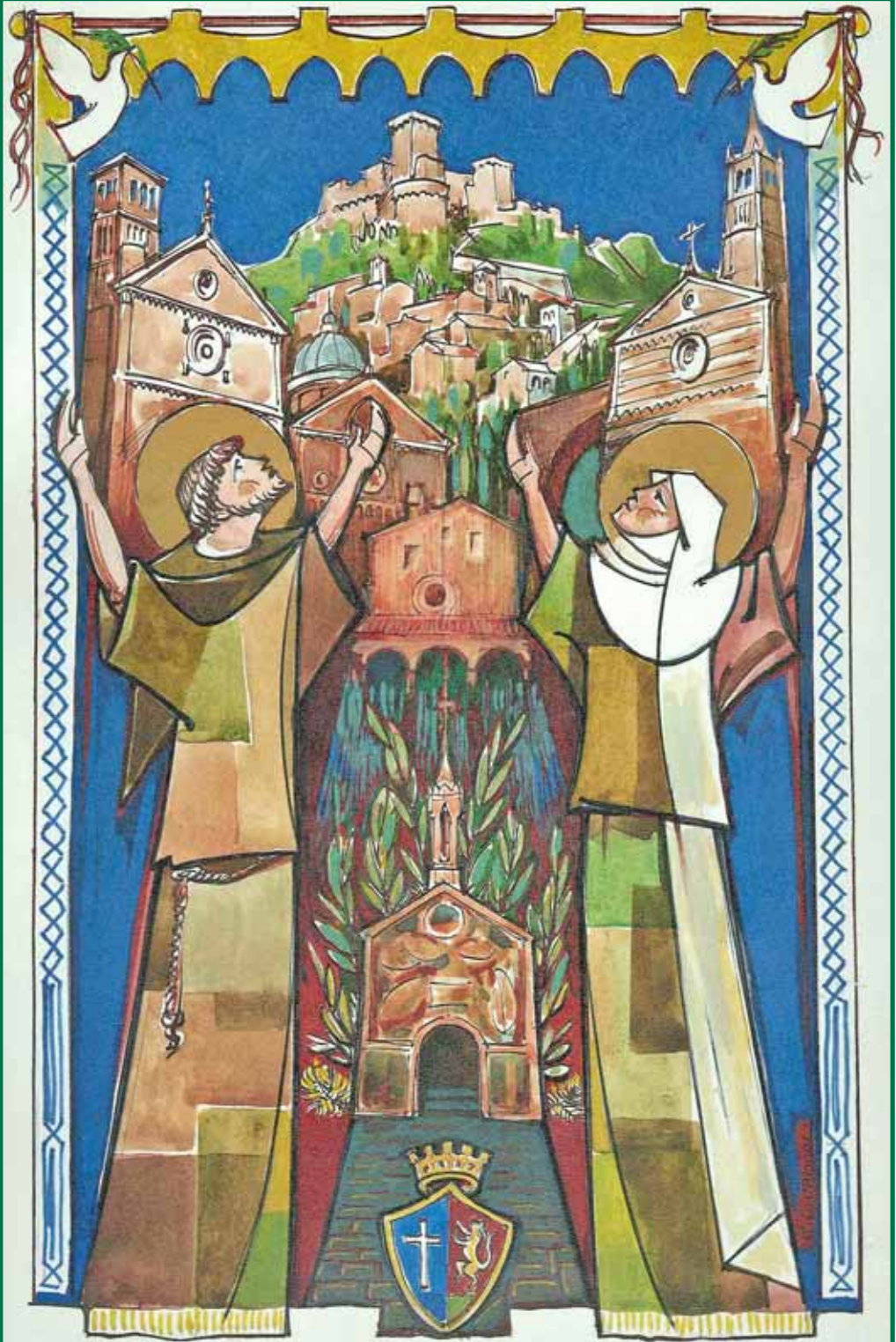


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VOL. 70, NO. 3  
MARCH 2010

# THE DOVERFIELD

ST. BONAVENTURE SECULAR FRANCISCANS ✦ DETROIT, MICHIGAN



## *The Pride of Assisi*

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# MINISTER'S LETTER

My dear brothers and sisters,

I recently received an e-mail newsletter from the *National Catholic Reporter* which contained a Lenten reflection by Joyce Rupp. Her reflection touched my heart and I wanted to share it with you.

## COME AND STAY AT MY HOUSE TODAY

Jesus, this Lent I am yearning to wear a Zacchaeus heart. I am wanting to hear you call my name just as you did his. I am anxious to know that you are inviting yourself to my home. I am humbled, amazed, excited and astounded, just as he was.

But that is where the desire to wear a Zacchaeus heart stops, because I know what happens when you visit someone's house. Conversations occur. Choices are presented. Changes happen. That's because you look for more than dust when you come to visit, and you talk about things more vital than the weather. You move into the heart's dimension. You gaze deeply. You don't just dwell. You interact. You activate. You dwell so lovingly that the truth cannot be resisted.

This Lent help me to welcome you and yearn for your love. Give me a Zacchaeus heart that turns around and sees the truth. I need the gaze of your love to remind me of my truest self. I, too, need the strong call to make amends and start anew. Hurry, Jesus, come and stay at my house today.

– from *Out of the Ordinary: Prayers, Poems, and Reflections for Every Season* by Joyce Rupp

Due to space limitations, I can't include the entire story here, but I hope you will take the time to read and reflect on Luke 19:1-10, the story of Zacchaeus' personal experience with Jesus and the transforming power of God's grace. This is what our Lenten journey is all about: taking time to pause from your normal routine, to experience anew God's forgiveness and loving care for you, and to allow the Spirit of God to change your heart. Just as Jesus called Zacchaeus by name, the Spirit of the living God desires to do the same with you today. The Spirit of God calls you by your name and yearns to spend time with you, to share his special message of love for you, and to transform you into a new creation. Zacchaeus opened his heart to God and, in turn, God's grace, love and mercy transformed him into a whole new creation. God desires the same for you. Be open to the promptings of the Spirit within you, calling you to go deeper, and to be transformed and made whole again.

During this Lenten season, I pray that all of us will experience a conversion of heart and a deeper relationship with the God of love and mercy. Go deeper!

Your sister in St. Francis,  
Maryann



**Ryan Smith**  
6 years old  
(ALL)

Ryan's mother, Valencia, noticed her son become increasingly tired and lethargic. She also noticed two little knots on his neck. When he had a nosebleed that would not stop, she took him to the doctor immediately. A specialist ran blood tests. The results were devastating. Ryan suffered from acute lymphoblastic leukemia, the most common form of childhood cancer. "I'm an optimistic person," Valencia said. "But at that moment, I thought Ryan was going to die. I didn't know there were types of cancer that are curable."

Doctors referred the family to St. Jude's, where Ryan began a two-and-a-half year chemotherapy treatment plan. He has responded well to treatment. "I didn't know anything about childhood cancer before this happened," Valencia said. "Now I know St. Jude is a place of hope. They're saving lives at St. Jude; they're curing kids."

Ryan is an affectionate child who loves his older brother and sister. He participated in homebound school and likes to play the Wii® and video games.

# Brothers and Sisters

Greetings from sunny Florida! I want to thank everyone for your prayers for my son, **Ed**, while he was in Afghanistan. Please continue your prayerful support as he adjusts to life at home and returns to his job at Western University on the first of March.

**Gene Snyders'** knee replacement surgery went very well. Plans are to have his hip replaced in May. Please keep him in your prayers.

**Mary Hebert's** son-in-law (my cousin), Steve Guyot, suffered a fatal heart attack on Valentine's Day. Please remember Mary and the entire family.

As you know, **John Bodell** and a team of doctors and nurses usually go to Haiti to offer their medical expertise to the poor there. This year, because of the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, John will be going to Chinandega, Nicaragua from March 6 to March 13. He has put together a team of 15 people, including student doctors. Meanwhile, **Janet Bodell** will be attending a Hospice and Palliative Care Symposium in Boston, and hopes to share information on current trends with Trenton Towers (a Senior Living Co-op) by request of **Mary Hebert**, who lives there. Janet's topic will be "The Many Faces of Hospice: A Ray of Hope for You!" So, keep them both in your prayers.



At the left is a picture of the Franciscan Coat of Arms which is comprised of the TAU cross with the crossed arms of Jesus and Francis. These hand-carved wooden TAUs come with a soft woven cord. Their craftsman, **Wayne Westcott**, is willing to make them for anyone at a cost of \$15 each. His address is 18 Euclid St., Plymouth, MI 02360 and he can be reached at (508) 746-8498. He will only take individual orders.

Mary Ann Montpetit reports that Br. Pat gave an inspiring and thoughtful talk at our February gathering about Franciscan spirituality — what it is and what it is not. It was a breath of fresh air in our understanding of our vocation and eye-opening with a different slant. The response was warm and enthusiastic by both long-time members and newcomers. Many asked Br. Pat to publish it and so I would urge you to read it elsewhere in this Poverello and give it some thought. We especially liked the fact that there is such openness by Franciscans to embrace people of all walks of life and conditions, and to allow the Holy Spirit to move where he will. As St. Francis told us: He [Francis] did what he was called to do, now we must find what it is we are called to do. Thank you, Brother Pat. By the way, did you notice how many new faces were present, including those in our initial formation program and others who are interested in the SFO? Please feel free to invite people to come to our gatherings as an initial step in getting to know us better.

The Fr. Solanus cell group met last month at the home of **Paul and Mary Ann Bourgeau**. We began by praying the Liturgy of the Hours together and then discussed the readings for the following Sunday. It was a lively discussion on the Beatitudes from the Gospel of St. Luke. Jim Heymes pointed out how much our Cell group has meant over many years providing inspiration and a strong sense of community as we have shared so much of our lives and the Franciscan point of view. We agreed that our continuity and support of our spiritual values has made a lasting impression on our children and grandchildren without preaching but simply by being faithful to meeting on a regular basis and trying to follow Franciscan spirituality. We are grateful to God for our SFO vocations and countless blessing.

The **Heymes'** daughter, **Therese**, has recovered from 4<sup>th</sup> stage cancer and has stated that she feels the hand of God was at work in her healing. Praise God and his divine mercy.

Our spiritual lives are not being neglected here in Florida. There are so many Catholic churches in the vicinity of Ft. Myers that it's easy to attend daily Mass. A mission was held last week at St. Cecelia Church and another one this week at Our Lady of Light Church.

Send news items about our members to **Faye Kluk Boland at:**  
(tel) 586-939-3342 or (e-mail) [Boland14@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Boland14@sbcglobal.net)



Congratulations to **Lisa Bartnik**, the daughter of long-time (now deceased) members of our Fraternity, **Leo and Mary Bartnik**, on the occasion of her recent marriage to **Hugh Cairns**. A family photo, taken during the festivities is above on the left.

Joe and I won't be at the March Day of Reflection, so please think of us and pray for us as we will remember you in our prayers. **The Day of Reflection will begin at 11 a.m. Everyone is reminded to bring a bag lunch and that there is NO Mass that day.** The topic will be on Appreciative Inquiry and led by Capuchin **Fr. John Celichowski**. You'll find the insights really helpful, and the speaker a blessing. So, make sure to be there. Bring a friend, even.

God bless and keep you in his care!

Faye Kluk Boland

## *In Memoriam*

A Memorial Service celebrating the life of Mary Hebert's son-in-law, Steve Guyot, will be held at the Flat Rock Community Center, located at One Maguire St., Flat Rock, MI 48134 on Saturday, March 20, 2010, at 12 Noon. A brunch will follow. An RSVP is not necessary, but would be greatly appreciated. For information, please call 734-379-1450, or call Mary Tyrna at 313-292-5455.

## Rule Reflection for March Article 17

In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives, in particular, should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

**Scripture:** Proverbs 31:10-31; Sirach 3:1-16; 26:1-4; 30:1-6; 42:9-14; Matthew 12:46-50; John 19:26-27; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5; Ephesians 6:1-4

**Personal Reflection:**

How are you cultivating the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for life? What more could you do?

**Shared Reflection:**

What concrete steps could our Fraternity take to cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for life?

## Mark Your Calendars

- March 7 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
March 12 ..... Christian Service at the Meldrum Soup Kitchen (10:30 am - 1 pm)  
March 21 ..... SFO Day of Reflection (everyone at 11:00 a.m., bring a bag lunch, NO Mass)  
April 4 ..... Easter Sunday  
April 9 ..... Christian Service at the Meldrum Soup Kitchen (10:30 am - 1 pm)  
April 11 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
April 18 ..... SFO Jubilarian Mass (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)  
May 2 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
May 16 ..... Third Sunday gathering (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)  
June 6 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
June 13 ..... Third Sunday gathering (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)  
June 26 ..... SFO Mass for Our Deceased (10:00 a.m.)  
July 11 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
July 18 ..... SFO Picnic (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)  
August 1 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
August 15 ..... Third Sunday gathering (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)  
September 12 ... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
September 19 ... SFO Day of Reflection (everyone at 11:00 a.m., bring a bag lunch)  
October 3 ..... Leadership Council meeting (3:30 p.m.)  
October 3 ..... Transitus (7:00 p.m. in the Monastery chapel)  
October 10 ..... Solanus Casey Concert (time to be announced)  
October 17 ..... Third Sunday gathering (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)  
October 23 ..... SFO Mass for All Deceased Franciscans (10:00 a.m.)  
November 7 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
November 21 ... SFO Profession Mass (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)  
December 5 ..... Leadership Council meeting (2:30 p.m.)  
December 19 .... Christmas Concert (Formation at noon, everyone at 1:30 p.m.)

### Reminder

Our March Third Sunday Gathering is a Day of Reflection.

It will begin at 11:00 A.M.

There is NO Mass.

Please bring a bag lunch and a dish to pass.

Our speaker will be Fr. John Celichowski, OFM Cap, Provincial Minister

Topic: Appreciative Inquiry

# Vocation: Being Chosen

by Janet Bodell, Vocation Minister

“Lord...may all who have been *chosen* by your Son  
always abound in works of faith, hope and love in your service”

– from the Psalm Prayer of Psalm 92 in the Liturgy of the Hours, Saturday Morning Prayer, Week IV

In number 39 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. The Second Vatican Council focused on the universal call to holiness in the Church. It stated:

...In the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification”.  
...This holiness of the Church is ...manifested, in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful; it is expressed in many ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity, thus causing the edification of others; in a very special way this (holiness) appears in the practice of the counsels, customarily called “evangelical”. This practice of the counsels, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, undertaken by many Christians, either privately or in a Church-approved condition or state of life, gives and must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of this same holiness.

That description fits our calling to the SFO: under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, through our Profession of the Gospel way of life, we give to the world an outstanding witness and example of the Church’s holiness.

Being called means being *chosen* by God to be holy. The Church-approved way in which we pursue that goal is through our Secular Franciscan way of life.

Being chosen by God is no small matter. First and foremost, it is a great gift [grace] and a privilege. It also comes with a great responsibility — to remain **faithful**, to keep **vigilant** and to be **committed**. Our SFO Rule (art. 1) reminds us that we “are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. The same Lord chooses us each day to be faithful and to be put to use in his service.

The Prophet Isaiah tells us: “This is what the Lord — the One who created you... who formed you — says: “...I have called you by name; you are mine.” Sometimes, especially after many years of being professed, it is easy to begin to take our calling for granted. We can become complacent and lose conscious awareness of who it was who has called us by name. We may forget the gift and privilege that is ours and forget to thank the Lord daily for choosing each one of us personally. Only with God’s continued grace can we ever hope to remain **faithful**, and to remain in his service.

Being **vigilant** means remaining awake and watchful in our daily living of the Rule, not only “on guard” for things that can throw us off the Gospel track, but more importantly, “wide awake,” seeking positive opportunities for our own growth and for the growth of our fraternity. For instance, someone you know right now may be a serious Christian searching for more. He or she might not know what that “more” could be. That desire itself may be the sign of a calling from God which is just waiting for your personal encouragement and invitation. So don’t hesitate to invite others to “come and see.”

Lastly, **commitment** cements our sense that we belong to God, not primarily by our own choice, but because he has chosen and called us by name. God hasn’t chosen us to be “Detroit’s best kept secret.” It’s so easy to remain invisible. But we are called to be visible ... to “give in our world ... outstanding witness and example ... of holiness.”

We **are** chosen. May we abound in works of faith, hope and love in God’s service!

**Mass for our Secular Franciscan Deceased**  
**Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM in the Friars’ Choir**  
**Social to follow**

# Franciscan Saints of March

- March 2 .... St. Agnes of Bohemia [Prague] (1205-1282) Poor Clare, virgin  
Bl. Peter of France, Franciscan friar  
**SG Maria Luigia De Nicola (1790-1829) Secular Franciscan, Founder of the Solitary Alcantarine Sisters**  
Ven. Benedict Bacci of Poggibonsi (1591-1659) Franciscan friar
- March 3 .... Bl. Liberatus Weiss and Companions, "The Franciscan Martyrs of Ethiopia" (-1716)  
Bl. Benedict of Mugello (-c. 1270) Franciscan friar
- March 4 .... Bl. Sylvester of Assisi (- 1240) Franciscan priest, Companion of St. Francis
- March 5 .... St. John Joseph Calosirto of the Cross (1654-1734) Franciscan priest  
Bl. Hugh (Mariano Panziera) of Prato (- 1330) Franciscan friar  
Bl. Polidoro Orsini, Franciscan friar (-1454)
- March 6 .... **SG Mary Frances Streitel (1844-1911) Third Order religious, Founder**
- March 9 .... **St. Frances of Rome (1384-1440) Secular Franciscan, Benedictine Oblate, Religious**  
St. Catharine Vigni of Bologna (1413-1463) Virgin, Poor Clare  
SG Mary Clare Damato (1909-1948) Poor Clare
- March 11 .. Bl. Christopher Macassoli of Milan (- 1485) Franciscan friar  
Bl. John Baptist Righi of Fabriano (1469-1539) Franciscan hermit
- March 12 .. **Bl. Angela Salawa (- 1922) Secular Franciscan**  
Bl. Bernard Scarlatti of Florence (- 1497) Franciscan friar  
**Bl. Luigi Orione (1872-1940) priest, Secular Franciscan, Founder of the Sons of Divine Providence and the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity**
- March 13 .. Bl. Agnello of Pisa (1194-1230) Franciscan priest
- March 14 .. Transfer of the Remains of St. Bonaventure (1490)
- March 15 .. Bl. Paul of Prato (-1241) Franciscan friar  
Bl. Bartholomew of Colle Val d'Elsa (-1478) Franciscan priest
- March 16 .. Bl. Torello of Poppi (1202-1282) Hermit  
St. Benedetta of Assisi (- 1260) early Poor Clare, succeeded St. Clare as abbess of San Damiano
- March 17 .. Bl. Michael Alberti (- 1246) Franciscan priest  
Ven. Seraphin Riminucci of Pietrarubbia (1875-1960) Capuchin
- March 18 .. St. Salvator of Horta (1520-1567) Franciscan friar
- March 20 .. **Bl. Hippolytus Galantini (1565-1619) Franciscan Third Order, founder**  
Bl. Andrew of Piano (-1290) Franciscan friar  
Bl. John Buralli of Parma (1209-1289) Franciscan friar, priest  
Bl. Mark of Montegallo (1425-1496) spouse, Franciscan friar
- March 22 .. Bl. Benvenute Scotivoli of Osimo (-1282) Franciscan Bishop
- March 23 .. **St. Catherine of Genoa (1447-1510) Secular Franciscan, Spouse**
- March 24 .. Bl. Louis Palmentieri of Casoria (1814-1885) Franciscan priest, Founder of the Bigi Brothers and Sisters
- March 25 .. **Bl. Mary Rose Flesch (1826-1906) Founder of the Institute of Franciscan Sisters of St. Mary of the Angels**  
Bl. Andrew Lorenzo (-1562) Franciscan friar
- March 27 .. Bl. Andrew of Siena (-1255) Franciscan friar  
Bl. Pellegrino of Falerone (-1233) Franciscan friar
- March 28 .. **Bl. Joan Mary de Maillé (1331-1414) Secular Franciscan recluse, Spouse**
- March 29 .. Bl. Anthony of S. Giovanni Valdarno (-1481) Franciscan priest
- March 30 .. St. Peter Regalado (1390-1456) Franciscan priest  
**Bl. Mary Restituta Kafka (1894-1943) religious of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity of Vienna, martyr**
- March 31 .. Bl. Sylvester of Radicondoli (-1450) Franciscan priest



**Deceased Members:**

Jack Kinsella [husband of Madge] (†13 Jan. 2010)

**Deceased Relatives:**

Steve Guyot, son-in-law of Mary Hebert

**Members needing prayers:**

Wilhelmina Adkins	Maryann Kummer
Peter Aluzzo	Les and Josie Lafata
Jan Atkinson	Tony Lienert
Kay Balas	Janice Litch
Gertrude Beattie	Rose Longo
Evelyn Bishop	Ilene Manning
Janet & John Bodell	Joseph Marra
Rocco Cesaro	Sophie Martin
Loretta Chmielarczyk	Maria McNally
Julia Erzbischoff-Donahue	Genevieve Ochenkowski
Clara Falzone	Rosie Patin
Wesley Faust	Dolores & Bob Peckham
Marie Fontanive	Theresa Pfaendtner
Mary Gillen	Joseph Pierce
Natalie Grabowski	Valerie Ridley
James Heymes	Mary Saber
Caroline Hojna	Gene Snyders
Anna May Jezak	Alice Vier
Donna Marie Johnston	Helen Wardowski
Denise Joseph	Joseph Wisk
Mary Klein	Stephen Yuhase

**Relatives needing prayers:**

Susan Arcznski, cousin of the Atkinsons  
 Mary Ann Avery, niece of Lorraine Korte  
 Avian, great nephew of the Atkinsons  
 Angel Bettin and Donna Mitchell,  
     daughters of Caroline Hojna  
 Melanie Bruss, niece of Dan and Jan Atkinson  
 Angelina and Joey Daleo,  
     daughter-in-law & son of Josie and Les Lafata

Lucy Devus  
 Rose Dreissen, wife of Joseph  
 Duane Duchene, father of Clare Falzone  
 Barbara Erzbischoff, mother of Julia E-Donahue  
 Beverly & Mike Falzone, parents of Clara  
 Sylvia Rosales-Fike  
 Karen Fitzpatrick, daughter of Mary Klein  
 Stefan Florescu, husband of Caroline  
 Bob Fontanive, husband of Marie  
 Leo Frangos, nephew of Donna Marie Johnston  
 Doreen Gerwollis, daughter of Sophie Martin  
 Billy Gerwollis, son-in-law of Sophie Martin  
 John Gold, husband of Rose  
 Judy Hojna, Caroline's sister-in-law  
 Ted Hojna, husband of Caroline  
 Esther Mae Kelly, wife of Charles  
 Fred LaChance, brother of Donna Marie Johnston  
 Manning Family, especially Bill, son of Ilene  
 Melanie McAleer, sister of Alice Vier  
 Charlie McCaay & Family of Ilene Manning  
 John McCaay, 5-yr-old with brain cancer  
 Marilyn Nichols, daughter of Anthony Brodeur  
 Jean Nozewski, wife of Thomas  
 Teresa Poole, mother of Mary  
 Simone Robinson, mother of Joanne Schumacher  
 Amy Schumacher, daughter of Joanne  
 Bob Stevenson, son-in-law of John and Janet Bodell  
 Dan Tyrna, grandson of Mary Hebert  
 Frances Wicks, wife of former National Minister, Bill  
 Chester Wisk, brother of Joe

**Those serving in the Armed Forces:**

Andrew Arcznski	Thomas Greenia
Christopher Beattie	John Marra III
James Anthony Brannigan	Joseph Marra, Jr.
Thomas Chmielarczyk	Gerard Williams

**Memorials:**

Charles Adam Greene, by Jo Marie Nardi

**We ask, however, that you pray for ALL who have asked for our prayers.**

Help keep our list up-to-date,  
 to remove or add names, call:  
**Jo Marie Nardi at 586-978-2335**



# Franciscan Spirituality

by Br. Pat McSherry, OFM Cap

## Introductory Remarks

I was asked to make a presentation on “Franciscan spirituality”. But before we can talk about “Franciscan” spirituality, we have to ask ourselves what is spirituality. And before we can talk about spirituality, we have to ask ourselves what is the human person. If we don’t ask those more fundamental questions, we are bound to talk about Franciscan spirituality only in terms of appearances rather than substance, external expressions rather than the interior life, and we’d run the risk of having a view of St. Francis that is about as real as the plastic statue of him some of you have in your front yards.

There are a few cautions we have to make before beginning in earnest.

- First, we have to remind ourselves that spirituality is not the same thing as, and cannot be equated with, prayer or devotion(s). So, but from the start, I need to tell you that I have not been asked to talk about the Franciscan Crown Rosary, or the Franciscan Stations of the Cross, or praying the Liturgy of the Hours, etc.
- Second, we need to be aware that there can be a tendency for a certain triumphalism to creep into how people speak about their patron saints. Sometimes religious people play a sort of “one-up-manship” with each other when it comes to their prized saints.

For example, as we all know, Francis had what could be called “a wild youth”. Generally, we don’t want to dwell too long on the details or inferences. When Francis was canonized, the friars included proper texts for his feast in their breviary. Focusing on Francis’ conversion, the antiphons recalled his wild youth and the inferences were veiled, but clear. When the Dominicans created proper texts for their favorite saint, St. Dominic, they accented what they considered his most prized virtue – chastity/purity. It was obvious to the Franciscans that they could not make the same boast about Francis and were somewhat embarrassed. In response, that edition of the Franciscan breviary was retired to a shelf in a locked vault and a new edition replaced the old one in which they cleaned up the texts to reflect Francis’ catholicity and poverty.

- I also have to tell you that there is no commonly-accepted definition of “spirituality”. At one end of the

spectrum, some people believe that spirituality has no necessary connection to God or to religion. At the other end of the spectrum, some people automatically assume – almost without any critical thought at all – that every religious founder and tradition must have its own unique, nicely delineated spirituality. Then, in order to fit into their pre-conceived notions, they do damage by pigeon-holing or oversimplifying the life or charism of the founder. I prefer to share with you a description of spirituality, rather than a definition, and some images that I think have much to offer.

- Lastly, I invite you to suspend – momentarily – everything you’ve ever heard about Franciscan Spirituality. I’m not asking you to give anything up, but just to hold them in suspension so that you can hear what I have to say. Otherwise while I’m sharing with you your mind will be half listening and half judging – how does what he is saying stack up against what I was told? You will need to judge the worthwhileness of what I have to say, but you can do that later. If you only half listen, your mind and heart will be elsewhere and you will listen but not hear.

## What is a human being? (see Ps. 8:4)

In his 1955 book, *The Phenomenon of Man*, the French Jesuit philosopher, Teilhard de Chardin, wrote: **“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but spiritual beings having a human experience.”** That thought, I think, speaks directly to the question of who we are.

Let’s go back to Genesis, the story of creation. God formed the earthling from the earth/soil. Into the earthling’s nostrils God breathes and it comes to life [Gen 2:7]. That “breath of life that comes from God”, in Hebrew, is the **ruah elohim** - in English, “the spirit of God”.

The breath of life, the energy force, the spirit of God is at the core of our being; without it we could not exist. It is what “makes us live and move and have our being” [see Acts 17:28]. The breath of God is a sharing in God’s own life. That breath, that spirit, is God’s DNA, as it were; it is what makes us God’s children [see Acts 17:28]. It is the reality that stands behind the phrase “made in God’s image and likeness [Gen 1:27]. We are, then,

spiritual beings at our core. We don't only *have* a relationship with God and with others, we *are* related to God and to all other human beings.

And we can go one step further. The Hebrew Scriptures [i.e., the Old Testament] tell us that humans are not the only life form that have spirit [ruah] or soul [nefesh]. Everything that exists can only exist with God's energy source and life force – God's spirit – to bring it to birth (see William Chomsky's opus *Hebrew: The Eternal Language*, first published in 1957). And because everything that exists shares one common source of life (i.e., God's spirit), the universe is a network of relationships. We, humans, are related to all creation. That's why St. Francis related to all creation as "brother or sister" – e.g., Brother Sun, Sister Moon. It was not just "cute" – it was who Francis really thought they were to him. Francis did not mean it as a mere title, or as an allegory.

I wouldn't want you to think that this particular notion of God's holy spirit – the breath of life – is only found in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is what the Church continues to believe today. As one example, look at Eucharistic Prayer III. There we find the prayer: "All life, all holiness comes from you... by the working of the Holy Spirit." Not too impressive [in English] until you go back to the Latin text which states: "Spiritus Sancti operante virtute, vivificas et sanctificas universa" – literally, "by virtue of the action of the Holy Spirit (God's breath), you give life and sanctify all things [i.e., the universe]." There are numerous other examples.

As the story of creation unfolds, sin enters the world and the relational harmony between God, humans and creation – that "network of relationships" becomes strained. Instead of breathing in deeply the breath of God, – Jeremiah the Prophet asks: "When will you stop panting after other gods? But you say, 'Save your breath. I'm in love with these foreign gods, and I can't stop loving them now!'" (Jer. 2:25 - NLT). Humans begin panting after other gods. They tell God, the breath of life, "save your breath".

I'd like to stay with the breathing imagery for a moment to describe sin. The most pervasive effect of sin is that it [sin] diminishes our oxygen supply. Sin leaves us gasping for breath. It makes us less fully alive.

Sin is a spiritual respiratory disorder. It is a spiritual low oxygen level causing "shortness of breath". When we breath in the spirit (i.e., the breath) of God, our whole being comes more fully alive, stays alert and energized,

and functions well. "In him [God] we live and move and have our being" [see Acts 17:28]. If our oxygen supply is diminished, however, we suffer mild to severe complications, not excluding death. Short of death, we become disoriented. Our ability to relate to God, to ourselves, to other people, and to creation is compromised. Spiritual respiratory problems are a true disease, i.e., dis-ease: they make us feel uneasy – ill at ease – with God, with ourselves, with others, and with everything around us. What causes sin? The most common cause of most all respiratory disorders – including spiritual ones – is pollution. People are breathing in harmful pollutants instead of breathing in deeply the breath – the spirit – of God.

## Spirituality

If sin is a spiritual respiratory disorder, spirituality is oxygen therapy for the soul. Its immediate effect is to improve our general health and well-being. I want to hasten to add, though, that the therapeutic effects of spirituality are not just felt "in your soul". They effect the entire human person as a whole and all our relationships – with God, ourselves, others and all creation.

What we call "conversion" happens as a first step – when we are no longer short of breath and gasping for air. On-going conversion is a matter of keeping a spiritual regimen that helps you to breathe easier; one that increases your divine oxygen level. It brings about integration in ourselves, and results in a state of security with a sense of worthwhile purpose in life.

## One-dimensional Spirituality

I'd like to pause to connect a few dots. There are some things that pass themselves off as spirituality which really are not the genuine item. I'd like to mention just a few of them. Generally, they all fall into the category of "one-dimensional spirituality".

I'm sure we all know people – maybe even ourselves until this moment – who have an exclusively vertical spirituality. They wrongly believe that spirituality involves a personal devotion or relationship to God divorced from concern for humankind. That way of thinking reflects a spiritual disconnect – with themselves, with other people, and with all creation. It involves an overriding focus on myself in relation to God, at the expense of love for others. Some symptoms of this spiritual disconnect are,

for example, fundamentalists of whatever faith who are racist or sexist, those who hate in the name of God, so-called believers who are indifferent toward the environment.

Another variant of a one-dimensional spirituality is a lack of a healthy connectedness to our personal self. Symptoms can appear in either of two directions: (1) self-hatred and low self-esteem, or (2) self-centeredness; egoism, a sense of superiority, a preoccupation with ourselves at the expense of others. Remember the second part of the Great Commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). One aspect of genuine or holistic spirituality is a healthy connectedness with our inner self. Whenever a disconnect is involved, you’re not dealing with “the real McCoy”.

Another form of one-dimensional spirituality focuses only on the horizontal realm, with no reference to God. Spirituality is not simply a matter of getting in touch with your feelings or your connections to other people. Spirituality involves more than just getting more in tune with your so-called “true inner self”. While various aspects of self-help can be very healthy and growth-producing, don’t be fooled by any quick fix, trendy, fast-food form of spirituality. Some people go through self-help books like others go through diet plans.

Authentic spirituality involves drawing life – breath – from God, which in turn affects how we relate to ourselves, to others and to all creation. If you settle for anything less, you’re cheating yourself.

## Franciscan Spirituality

Now, finally, we get to the hub of today’s discussion — Franciscan Spirituality. Let’s first look at Francis’ personal spirituality. Francis did not appear out of nowhere. He was the product of his age. There were many movements before him in which Christians simply wanted to live the Gospel, where Christians wanted to get back to the “apostolic life” of the early Church. These movements were often given impetus by the bad example of the hierarchy, clergy and religious. Francis inherited that line of thought, except that it wasn’t particularly in reaction to Church abuses. What were the elements inherited from these other movements, and how were they expressed in Francis’ life?

1) These were mostly groups of lay people, and so there was an emphasis on the common, ordinary people. Francis chose humility and minority and closeness to

ordinary people. Francis also established a classless society: the fraternity where privileges were refused, all were equal, and all were called to serve rather than be served.

2) These groups accepted the Gospel at its face value and as a way of life to be lived. Their approach was simple: listen to the Gospel and then do it – live it. Francis speaks about living the Gospel “without gloss” [sine glossa]. “Let good action follow knowledge” (Admonition VII).

3) Following the Gospel injunction, these groups chose to embrace (rather than to just suffer) poverty. If you remember, at the start of Francis’ new lifestyle, he and his first two companions looked for guidance by going to the book of Gospels, “breaking the word” three times and finds: (1) “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Mt. 19:21). (2) “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me’” (Mt 16:24). (3) “And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics” (Lk 9:3). Francis’ response is an immediate: “This is what I want.” Francis encouraged people to live without grasping [sine proprio].

4) These other groups of hard-working, ordinary people believed in honest work. Francis and his early companions continued to go to work; they kept their day jobs. They could have any type of job as long as it was honest work. Work was another sign of giving your all to God, holding nothing back for yourself.

5) These other Christian groups believed that the Gospel was not static. They believed in the Holy Spirit as a force that continues in the world. They took delight in knowing that the Holy Spirit blows where he will and does mighty things in every individual and in the group (see Acts 2:1-4). Francis also refers to the centrality of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the fraternity, e.g., Francis calls the Holy Spirit the true general minister of the Order; he tells Br. Leo to act in accord with however the Spirit moves him; and Francis tells the ministers to obey when an individual claims to be inspired or moved by the Holy Spirit to go to the missions, etc. Francis often prays “to have the Spirit of the Lord and his holy way of working.” For him, the Spirit enables us to live the Gospel with great joy.

6) Like the community in the Acts of the Apostles, these other movements tended to share everything in common: “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need” (Acts 2:44-45). For Francis, not only was everything held in common, but both individuals and the fraternity itself refused ownership over anything and they practiced an immediacy of response to the needs of others (see how many times Celano mentions scenes where someone lacks proper clothing, and he directs a friar to give up his cloak).

When we look for the personal experiences in Francis’ life that shaped his spirituality we immediately think of:

- Francis rejecting his earthly father to depend totally on God as his father.
- His encounter with the leper which had a great leveling effect on his relationships with others.
- His experience before the San Damiano cross in which he experienced the depth of God’s love for him and the self-emptying love [kenosis] of the Father in Christ.
- His experience of creatures as reflections of the Creator. This is far more than just “talking to the birds”. For Francis, all life is sacramental, i.e., everything points to God.

Finally, we have to ask pointedly: Is there a Franciscan Spirituality – something *unique* to Franciscans? Many people – scholars much more learned than I – will tell you yes. I, however, am not sure that I share their opinion. Why?

First, if we look to the Collect [the Prayer] the Church prescribes for the feast of All Franciscan Saints, this is what it says: “Eternal God, you were pleased to make your Church illustrious through the *varied splendor* of the saints of the Seraphic Order.” It is true

that most other religious Orders and traditions are tied to specific forms of spirituality, prayer and ministry, the Dominicans, for example, who are all joined by the search for truth and then preaching and teaching it, or Jesuits’ detailed style making a retreat, etc. Franciscans have always taken pride in our varied – or better yet, variegated splendor. Under the wide Franciscan umbrella we find everything from hermits to missionaries, philosophers and theologians to janitors, religious to lay, scholars and illiterate, contemplatives to social activists.

Second, the core of our spirituality and lifestyle – whether we’re talking about the First or Second or Third Order, religious or lay – has always been just simply to “live the gospel”. In classical texts, Franciscan authors use the term “conformity” – to Christ. In a very real sense, we followers of St. Francis are not called to be or to imitate Francis, we are called to imitate Christ. And when we follow Christ, heeding the inspiration and movement of the Spirit in each one of us, it is then that we are following in the footsteps of Francis because, inspired by the Spirit, he sought to imitate Christ.

Isn’t Franciscanism, then, just being a good Christian?, some of you will ask. Yes! Exactly!! We are not a race of “super Christians” – we are otherwise ordinary people who take seriously our baptismal call to live the Gospel. And we Franciscans don’t feel a need to stand apart from others.

Third, Francis himself did not suggest that we be like him or do what he did. He was convinced of the primacy of the Holy Spirit – the breath of God – to work within and among us.

So I’ll close my talk with his words, spoken shortly before his death:

**I have done what was mine to do;  
may Christ teach you what you are to do.**

— *The Second Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano  
see Habig, ed., p. 534.



**March 2 ..... Barbara Sokol**  
**March 13 ..... Joseph Henn**  
**March 27 ..... Maryann Kummer**  
**March 31 ..... Charlotte Heymes**



## Celebrating Claire Johnson



Claire was born on August 28, 1941 in Windsor because her mother's doctor medical practice was located there. She is the oldest child of Steve and Veronica Yuhase, and has a sister and two brothers. The family lived on Detroit's east side where Claire attended the first to third grades at Assumption Grotto and made

her first Holy Communion there. After the third grade, she transferred to Guardian Angels in Detroit. After graduating from Dominican High School in 1959, she attended Siena Heights College for a year and a half. At age 36, she enrolled at Wayne County Community College and graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree in Occupational Therapy Assisting.

While in college, Claire worked at Montgomery Wards (at Gratiot and Seven Mile) and at Crowley's in Macomb Mall. When she left Siena Heights, she began working at St. Joseph Home for the Aged. She also worked as a receptionist and dental assistant for two dentists — and was with one of them for 13½ years. She left these jobs to return to college. Upon graduating from Wayne County Community College, Claire was employed at various nursing homes, including the Jewish Home for the Aged (2 years), Fraser Villa Nursing Home (9 years), and the Evangelical Home in Port Huron (9 months). She also worked in home health care for two different companies. She worked as a lunch mom at St. Joan of Arc and at Nino Salvaggio Food and Vegetable Market.

On August 27, 2005, Claire married Gary Johnson at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church. Gary met Claire and her friend, Kay Baylis, at our fraternity gatherings. Gary would get their names mixed up. Kay told Gary to go hug Claire and he did so. They began to talk more and more at the meetings. Gary told her that he attended daily Mass at St. Angela. Soon afterward, Claire began attending the same Mass. After Mass, they would go out for a cup of coffee and the rest is history.

Claire's parents are Secular Franciscans. Claire would often accompany them to the fraternity gatherings and that's how Claire became interested in joining the SFO. Her parents are still living and are permanently excused members of our fraternity.

Claire has ministered as a volunteer group leader at Recovery International for 21 years and as a cutter for the Eucharistic Mission Band for 5 years. She and Gary are members of St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church and Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church (the former St. Gertrude and St. Germain Parishes). Her hobbies including reading, classical music, walking, practicing the piano, taking pictures, collecting Statehood quarters and some stamps, and is a language enthusiast, interested in words and various languages.

Claire said that being a Secular Franciscan keeps her focused on her spiritual life. She thinks of the Secular Franciscans as her second family.

We love you, Claire!




## From the Friars' Choir

**Don't compare your life to others,  
you have no idea  
what their journey involves.**

# MARCH 2010



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 LENT 3 Pss Wk 3 SFO COUNCIL: 2:30 PM	8	9 St. Joan of Arc: 1 PM	10	11	12 MELDRUM KITCHEN 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM	13
14 LENT 4 Pss Wk 4 Daylight Savings Begins: Spring forward	15	16	17 	18 EMB Board: 10 AM	19	20 Spring begins
21 LENT 5 Pss Wk 1 DAY OF REFLECTION ALL: 11 AM Bag Lunch NO Mass	22	23	24	25 Annunciation	26 Bl. Luchesio: 7:30 PM  Interfaith Justice & Peace Meeting	27
28 PALM SUNDAY Pss Wk 1	29	30	31			

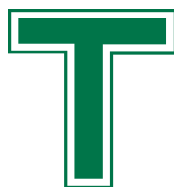
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Maryann Kummer

### Vice Minister

Teresa Westbrook-Lienert

### Treasurer pro tem

Eugene Snyders

### Secretary

Patricia Meldrum

### Initial Formation

John Bodell

### Councillors-at-Large:

Stephen Haycox

Tony Lienert

Patricia Munafo

Beverly Sapien

Chuck Sapien

### Spiritual Assistant:

Br. Patrick McSherry ..... (313) 579-2100, x. 141

### APPOINTMENTS

#### Infirmarians:

Jo Marie Nardi

Sylvia Stanik

#### Continuing Formation Commission:

Chuck & Bev Sapien (chairs)

#### Christian Service Commission:

Patricia Munafo (chair)

#### Hospitality Commission:

Teresa Westbrook-Lienert

& Tony Lienert (chairs)

#### Vocations Ministry Commission:

Janet Bodell (chair)

#### Eucharistic Mission Band (EMB):

To be announced

### MEETING CONTACTS

(for Locations and Times of Meetings)

#### Fr. Solanus Cell (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday, 7:30 pm):

Faye Boland

#### St. Joan of Arc Satellite (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 1 pm):

Frank Liccardello

#### Third Sunday General SFO Meeting:

Chuck & Bev Sapien

#### Bl. Luchesio Cell (4<sup>th</sup> Friday, 7:30 pm):

Connie Musial

### FRATERNITY MINISTRY OUTREACH:

Meldrum Soup Kitchen

Usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month.

&

Healing Service Social

Patricia Munafo (contact)

### OTHER SFO-AFFILIATED GROUPS:

#### Interfaith Justice & Peace Group:

Jo Marie Nardi

*The Poverello* is published by the  
St. Bonaventure Secular Franciscan Fraternity  
1780 Mt. Elliott St.

Detroit, Michigan 48207

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URL: sfostbonaventure-detroit.org

editor: Br. Pat McSherry, OFM Cap.

Deadline for articles and news items is 3:30 PM  
on the Third Sunday of each month.



**Happy St.Patrick's Day !**

St. Bonaventure  
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