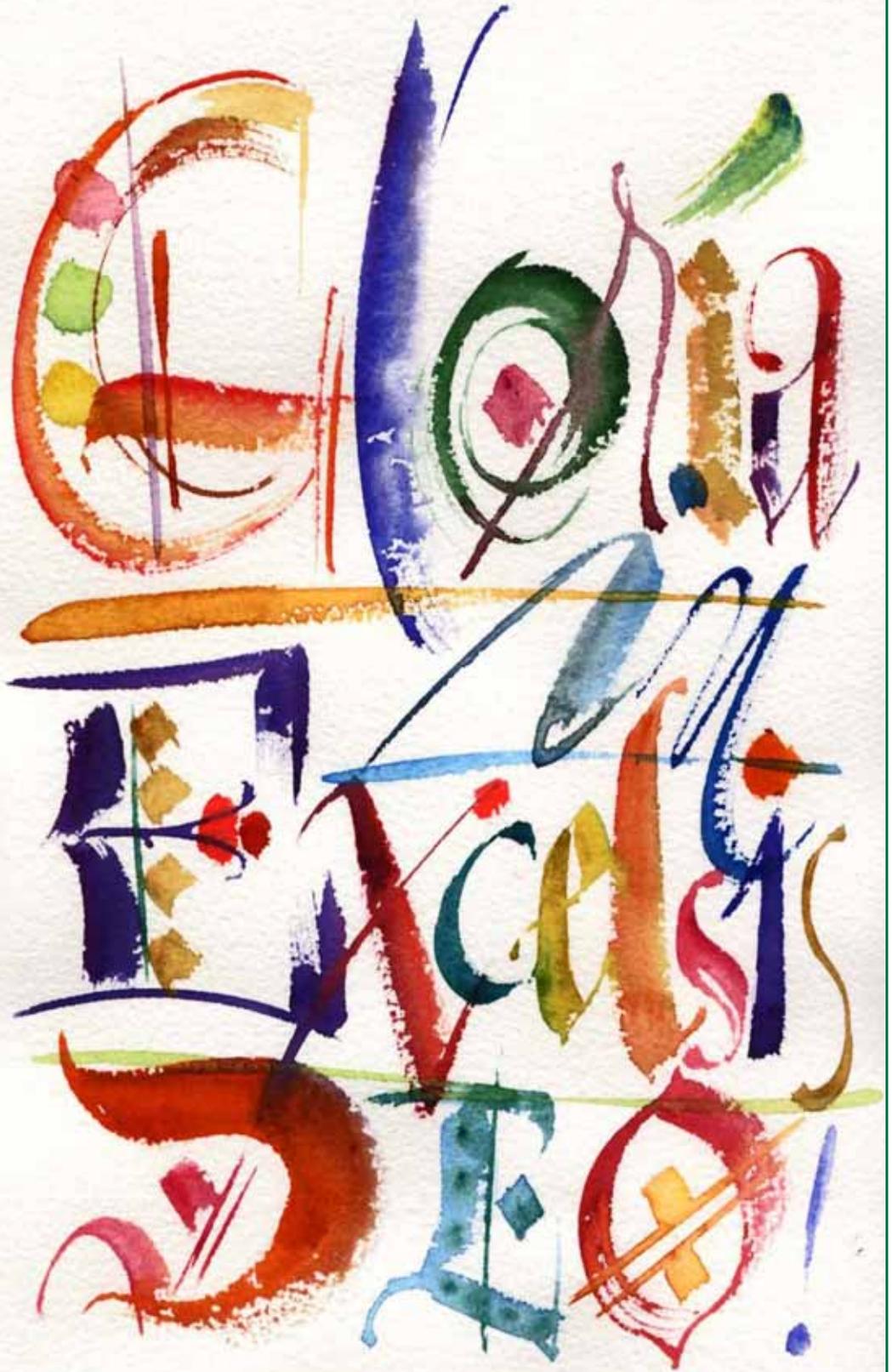




VOL. 71, NO. 12
DECEMBER 2011

THE POWELL

ST. BONAVENTURE SECULAR FRANCISCANS ✦ DETROIT, MICHIGAN



Friedrich Peter, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. Color Calligraphy

Visit our website: <http://www.sfofbonaventure-detroit.org>

MINISTER'S LETTER

My dear brothers and sisters,

May the Lord grant you peace!

PROFESSION

Congratulations to **Joe and Laura Sopian**, who on Sunday, November 20th, publicly affirmed their permanent commitment to live the Gospel way of life after the manner of St. Francis, and to being active participants in our Secular Franciscan fraternity.

I am grateful to the formation team (**John and Janet, Br. Pat, Mary, Frank, Sylvia, Bev and Chuck**) for guiding Joe and Laura through the formation process, to **John Bodell** for planning an outstanding profession retreat for Joe, Laura and the leadership team on November 19th, and for providing us with a delicious lunch, to **Br. Pat** for preparing the profession Mass booklets and for an inspirational homily, to **Teresa Westbrook-Lienert** and **Tony Lienert** for handling the arrangements for the reception following the Mass, and to everyone who assisted with the set up and clean up for the reception.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT & SOCIAL

A few years ago our Fraternity volunteered to provide a social following the Christmas Concert of the Solanus Casey Center. That tradition will continue this year on Sunday, December 18th at 1:30 p.m. Please call Teresa Westbrook-Lienert to inform her of what finger food items you plan to bring to this event.

FAIR SHARE & POVERELLO COSTS

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who paid their part of our Fair Share and Poverello costs. If you have not done so yet, please do so as soon as possible.

ADVENT REFLECTION

Advent is the most countercultural season for us as followers of Christ. The secular world in which we live views this time of year as the countdown to a winter “holiday” – often with no reference to the birth of Jesus — , the time to focus everyone’s energy on outward trappings such as lights, music, cards, parades, etc. People’s daily “to do” list increases with the extra responsibilities of decorating, shopping, cooking, making travel arrangements to visit family, holiday parties, etc., etc. Calendars fill up quickly with a multitude of obligations and festivities. The hectic pace of life becomes even more frantic and there never seems to be enough hours in the day to get everything done.

Yet it remains true that Jesus *is* the reason for the season, and in the midst of all of this busy-ness, the Gospel calls us to be watchful, alert, still, silent, and to slow down. In the Gospel message for the first week of Advent, we are told: **“Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come”** (Mk 13:32). In this Gospel passage, our Lord refers to his glorious Second Coming. These words can also be applied to our lives today to be watchful and alert to the ways in which the Spirit of the living God is present and active in our world today. Let us keep awake in this sacred season, looking and listening for God’s presence among us often in the most unexpected persons, places and events.

During this sacred season of Advent, let us commit ourselves to making time for silence and stillness to prepare our hearts to experience anew the celebration of the greatest gift of all — the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May we create time in our busy schedules for quiet reflection to examine our lives to see where we have fallen short in our attempts to live the Gospel message and to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with our God and with one another. During our times of silence and stillness, let us actively listen to God and allow his grace to

transform our hearts. Who knows what wonderful messages and graces God wants to share with us?

The Advent season is a privileged time — God’s gift to us. It’s a sacred time to reconcile ourselves to God and to each other, to prepare our hearts to experience anew the birth of Christ, and to remember what really matters, not the thrill of some highly commercialized holiday, but the gifts of faith in God, family, friends and the power of love.

ADVENT PRAYER

by Henri J.M Nouwen

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do, seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things, look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways, long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy, seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Amen.

Remember to pray daily for vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order.

May this Advent season bring you closer to the Christ Child who dwells within us and who lives among us.

Your sister in Ss. Francis and Clare,
maryann

From the Friars' Choir



**Life is like a roller coaster.
It has its ups and downs,
but it's your choice to scream
or enjoy the ride.**



- 6 ---- Mary Saber
- 7 ---- Mary Ann Kristensen
- 11 ---- Ralph Mason
- 12 ---- Irene Mecha
- 13 ---- Veronica Yuhase
- 17 ---- Helen Wardowski
Hank Forys
- 20 ---- Chuck Sapien
- 24 ---- Joseph Pierce
- 25 ---- Patricia Meldrum
- 29 ---- Lorna Brock
- 31 ---- Sylvia Snigier

A note of appreciation

We want to acknowledge and thank the young ladies from the **St. Clare Society** – our partners at Regina H.S. – who shared in our celebration on October 3rd by greeting people as they arrived and distributing the worship aids. We also owe a great debt of gratitude to **Loretta Chmielarczyk**, **Joe Boland** and **Theresa Westbrook-Lienert** for offering to help **Connie Musial** with baking the scones again this year for the Transitus, making it an occasion not only for nourishing our spirits, but also our bodies – an extra special treat!



Deceased:

George Ertzbischoff († Oct. 20, 2011), uncle of Julia

Members needing prayers:

Wilhelmina Adkins	Rose Longo
Peter Aluzzo	Ilene Manning
Kay Balas	Joseph Marra
Gertrude Beattie	Sophie Martin
Mary Lou Catino	Maria McNally
Rocco Cesaro	Mabel Michaels
Mary Gillen	Barbara Pardington
Natalie Grabowski & Family	Eleanor Pulido
James Heymes	Rosie Patin
Caroline Hojna	Bob Peckham
Anna May Jezak	Terry Pfaendtner
Donna Marie Johnston	Joseph Pierce
Beverly & Louis Joseph	Eleanore Pulido
Mary Klein	Mary Saber
Lorraine Korte	Francis Scallion
Jerry & Helen Koslowski	Alice Vier
Mary LaBudie	Helen Wardowski
Les and Josie Lafata	Joseph Wisk
Frank & Rosalie Liccardello	Steve & Ronnie Yuhase
Tony Lienert	

Relatives needing prayers:

Theresa Brannigan, daughter-in-law of Marguerite
 Br. Mike Gaffney, OFM Cap
 Ted and Judy Hojna
 William Pierce Hunter, great-grandson of Mary Hebert
 Denise Joseph, daughter of Beverly & Louis
 Esther Mae Kelly, wife of Charles
 Br. Tom Kroll, OFM Cap
 Fred LaChance, brother of Donna Marie Johnston
 Albert P. Long, Sr., husband of Patricia
 Albert P. Long, Jr., son of Patricia
 Jerome & Tristan Manning, grandsons of Ilene
 Rosemary Marson, sister of Ralph

Steven Matusin
 Janet Nassen
 Jean Nozewski, wife of Thomas
 Teresa Poole, mother of Mary
 Lori Roberts, cousin of Julia Ertzbischoff-Donohue
 Family of Joanne Schumacher
 Victoria Snigier, mother of Sylvia
 Chester Wisk, brother of Joe

Those serving in the Armed Forces:

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

Please help to keep our list up-to-date. Call:

Jo Marie Nardi at 586-978-2335



**Emma
6 years old**

Shortly before her fourth birthday, Emma began experiencing difficulty breathing. A CT scan revealed devastating news: there was a mass invading Emma's throat and chest. The mass had collapsed her windpipe and was on the verge of collapsing the main artery to her brain. Without a minute to spare, Emma was put on a ventilator and air lifted to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

At St. Jude, a biopsy revealed that Emma suffered from acute lymphoblastic lymphoma. She immediately started chemotherapy on a two-and-a-half year treatment plan. Her treatment also includes physical and occupational therapies.

Emma's family is grateful for the support of St. Jude donors. "What gets me through this is the relief of financial burden," said Emma's mom. "The people who are supporting St. Jude are helping to save lives." Emma responded well to treatment and her cancer is in remission. Emma likes to dress up in her princess crown and glass slippers, and loves to build things out of wood using her own miniature tools.



Celebrating Joe and Laura Sapien



Joe Sapien was born in Detroit on June 5, 1950. His parents, Phyllis and Charles Sapien, were born in Malta and are deceased. Joe's stepmother, Margie Sapien, lives in Melvindale. Joe has a sister, Gloria Renko, who lives in Livonia, and a brother, Chuck, who lives in Trenton. Joe attended Melvindale High School, Henry Ford Community College and the Center for Creative Studies. He received on-the-job training for his career at Clay Modeling in the Design Center of the Ford Motor Company. His previous skilled tradesman job was as a sheet metal model maker. Joe worked for the Ford Motor Company for 31½ years, was retired for 2½ years, and was recently called back to the Design Center as of July 2011, for at least a 3-year contract. Joe missed working and is delighted to be back working at Ford. Joe is a very

artistically talented man who can make, fix or repair just about anything, which is very helpful when you own a home.

Laura was born on March 11, 1956 to Joan and Edward Hadden. Her mother was born in England and her father in Scotland. Both are deceased. Joe and Laura are both first generation Americans. Laura's siblings include: Elaine Loughead of Metamora, Dale Hadden of Dearborn, Linda Cain of Grand Blanc, and Diane Stempel of Livonia. Laura graduated from Edsel Ford High School in Dearborn and earned bachelor's degrees in accounting (1990) and in business (2000) from Madonna University. Laura has been employed as a cosmetologist, pharmacist's assistant, accountant for Dearborn Federal Credit Union, and retail assistant manager at Somerset Collection in Troy. She currently works for Greenpath, a non-profit organization in Farmington Hills that helps clients with an assortment of debt issues. She is currently taking bankruptcy calls (from all 50 states) to furnish the certification for clients to file for bankruptcy. Unlike her husband Joe, Laura is not a "cradle Catholic". She was confirmed at Sacred Heart Parish in Dearborn a few years ago.

Joe and Laura were married on June 10, 1978 at St. Conrad's Church in Melvindale. Their current parish, St. Maurice in Livonia, expects to merge with St. Genevieve Parish in Livonia. Joe and Laura are members of the St. Vincent DePaul Society, Eucharistic ministers and participate in Bible Study classes at St. Priscilla in Livonia. Joe also serves as a member of the Parish Council at St. Maurice. Prior to returning to work a few months ago, Joe served as an adult acolyte, sacristan and minister of the Eucharist to the homebound and to Catholics in a nursing home. Laura served as the CSA secretary at St. Maurice's for the past two years. She has also been assisting Gene Snyders with balancing accounts and helps out at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen on the second Friday of each month.

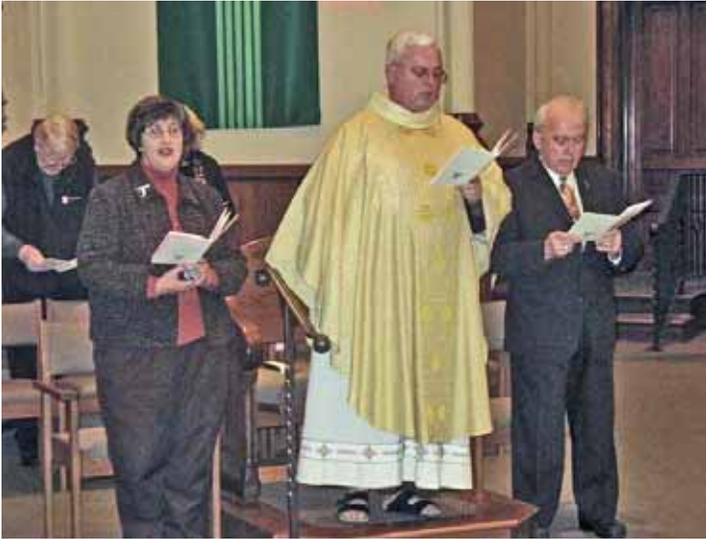
Over the years, Joe and Laura learned about the Secular Franciscan Order from Joe's brother and sister-in-law, **Chuck and Bev Sapien**, members of our SFO Fraternity. What sparked their interest in joining the SFO was their attendance at Chuck's Profession. They were very impressed with everyone they met and talked with. Joe and Laura feel that being a member of the Secular Franciscan Order is both a huge challenge and a refuge, growth and support. They know they are at the beginning of a journey that will last the rest of their lives.

Joe and Laura enjoy taking their 16-pound terrier (Shanny) into the woods for a walk or for a bike ride (they put Shanny into a cart). They love calling him their "terrierist" as he will not back down from any other dog, no matter how big. Joe and Laura have 11 great nieces and nephews and another due in April 2012.

We love you, Joe and Laura!



Profession 2011





Homily on the Feast of Christ the King, Profession 2011

by Br. Pat McSherry, OFM Cap

It's interesting to note how on this feast of Christ the King the main image in the readings is not a king, but a shepherd. The first reading picks up from a previous passage – the Parable of the Shepherds – spoken by the Prophet Ezekiel [34:1ff] which says:

The Lord God says: “Prophesy against the shepherds. Say to them: ‘Woe to the shepherds who have been pasturing themselves! Aren’t shepherds supposed to pasture the flock? You drank your fill, you wore warm clothes, you slaughtered sheep and made a feast of them, but you failed the flock. You did not strengthen the weak or heal the sick or bind up the injured. You did not bring back the stray or seek the lost, but ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and became food for all the wild beasts. They were scattered and wandered all over. No one looked after them or searched for them.’”

Today's reading [Ez 34:11f] picks up the theme and continues:

“Therefore, thus says the Lord: ‘I myself will shepherd them. I will pasture them. I will seek out the lost, bring back the stray, bind up the wounds of the injured, I will heal the sick and I will judge between one sheep and another.’”

It's important to note that in the face of shepherds – leaders and systems – that were rotten to the core, the Lord does not come as a knight in shining armor. Angry as he is with those who are corrupt, the King of glory does not come with a grand display of his power and might. In fact, he does just the opposite. In St. Paul's letter to the Philippians [2:5f] we read that Christ put aside his power and glory, he emptied himself, and walked this earth as one like us. And in the same passage Paul tells us: “Your attitude should be the same as Christ's.”

But that's not the end of the story. In case you haven't noticed, there are still lambs and goats out there. When the Lord walked among us he recognized that there are individuals who prey off others and victimize the innocent and the vulnerable. Jesus spoke up and condemned them harshly. But his main concern, his all-consuming focus, were the sheep. And he never lost sight of that.

There was a great deal of corruption in St. Francis' day as well. That corruption led many people to say: “Let's go back to simply living the gospel.” Many of them, disheartened by what they saw around them left the church. Their decision, although regrettable, is understandable. St. Francis chose a different path for himself. He made no excuses for the corruption; he didn't turn a blind eye to it, but he didn't make it his focus either.

If we allow ourselves to become consumed by the evil around us – and it does exist – we won't have the time, the heart or the energy to focus on, what Jesus calls: “the one thing necessary” [Lk 10:42]. It's like alcoholism or drug abuse in a family. At the beginning, the alcoholic is sick with the disease, but eventually – when it becomes the focus of the time and energy of the family –, the disease takes control of the entire family and puts it on a downward spiral.

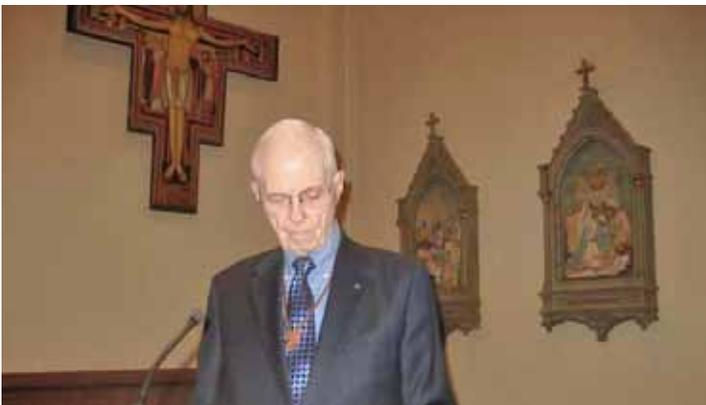
Now, if Jesus and Francis knew the evils of their times, what concrete choices did they make so as “not to be conquered by evil” [see Rm 12:21]? Simply put, they focused on the needs of others...the needs of the sheep. They fed the hungry, gave the thirsty something to drink, made people feel at home, clothed the naked, cured the sick and released prisoners. They embraced lepers. They knocked down the walls that divided people. They became pathfinders, bridge-builders and peace-makers. That's where they put their energy.

Focusing on evil saps our energy; building “grace upon grace” [Jn 1:16] renews our energy and empowers us to serve all the more. Today's Gospel reminds us that *that* becomes the critical issue as we stand before God.

The question is not can you pick out the goats in this picture? The question is: Are *you* a sheep or a goat? How do I know? By what I do. Am I engaging or withdrawing? Am I consumed by evil – my own or others' – or am I focused on salvation?

The judgment scene in today's Gospel is a very sobering reminder that if we're on a downward spiral now, it will not end at death. And if we're on an upward spiral – supported by like-minded people – the upward spiral will continue to its heavenly destination.

Laura and Joe, you know the world in which we live. You know the scandals rocking today's church. I can assure you that every branch of the Franciscan Family is comprised of both sheep and goats. Nonetheless, I invite you to make a lifelong commitment to take your place within this fraternity. Following in the footsteps of St. Francis, *be* authentic followers of the Gospel, in word and in deed: doers, and not hearers only [Jas 1:22], so that one day you, too, will hear the words: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father" [Mt 25:34].



Webpage Note

Our webpage is back up and running.

Soup Kitchen Volunteers

Because of the number of seasonal volunteers, no help will be needed at the Meldrum Kitchen in December 2011.

Please note:

Our e-mail address has changed:

SFODetroit@gmail.com



**Come,
Lord Jesus!**

DECEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 ADVENT 2 Pss. Wk. II	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 ADVENT 3 Pss. Wk. III	12	13	14	15	16	17 Fraternity Council 1:30
18 ADVENT 4 Pss. Wk. IV SFO GATHERING Formation: Noon CONCERT: 1:30 PM	19	20	21	22	23 Bl. Luchesio: 7:30 PM	24
25 CHRISTMAS Pss. Proper	26	27	28	29	30	31

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Vice Minister

Teresa Westbrook-Lienert

Treasurer pro tem

Eugene Snyders

Secretary

Patricia Meldrum

Initial Formation

John Bodell

Councillors-at-Large:

Stephen Haycox

Tony Lienert

Beverly Sapien

Chuck Sapien

Spiritual Assistant:

Br. Patrick McSherry

APPOINTMENTS

Infirmarian:

Jo Marie Nardi

Continuing Formation Commission:

Chuck & Bev Sapien (chairs)

Christian Service Commission:

(call for information)

Hospitality Commission:

Teresa Westbrook-Lienert

& Tony Lienert (chairs)

Vocations Ministry Commission:

To be announced (chair)

Eucharistic Mission Band (EMB):

To be announced

MAKING FRATERNITY HAPPEN

The entire St. Bonaventure Secular Franciscan Fraternity gathers on the Third Sunday of every month. For more information, contact:

Chuck & Bev Sapien

In addition to our monthly Fraternity gathering, some members also gather in small groups:

Fr. Solanus Cell (2nd Friday, 7:30 pm):

Mary Ann and Hugh Montpetit

Bl. Luchesio Cell (4th Friday, 7:30 pm):

Connie Musial

FRATERNITY MINISTRY OUTREACH:

Meldrum Soup Kitchen

Usually on the 2nd Friday of each month.

&

Healing Service Social

(call for information)

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

Only God can turn
a **MESS** into a
message, a **TEST** into a
testimony, a **TRIAL** into
a triumph, a **VICTIM**
into a victory.

St. Bonaventure
Secular Franciscan Fraternity
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