



Our Lady of the Rosary  
Secular Franciscan Fraternity  
Williamsburg, Virginia



2024

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## Message from our Minister ...

We are moving into February and I hope the temperatures will moderate a little from what we had in January. How are your New Year's resolutions going? For me, I'll be looking to make new resolutions as we enter Lent on February 14th (sorry St. Valentine).

Donna presented a terrific formation this past month on Mark 1:14-20 which was a great lead-in to the question 'What are we leaving behind in our nets this Lent?' That is something I reflected on over the last several weeks and hope every one of you has done the same. She amazes me with her creativity and her ability to source the net bags. Providing each of us a net bag to hold the list(s) of what we hope to leave behind this Lent, was a wonderful visual for us to take home.

I'm also going to talk about Lent, but from a slightly different point of view. Last year I read an article in America Magazine by Joe Laramie, SJ. The title of the article was 'What should I give up for Lent?' is the wrong question to start with. The title caught my attention, and so I read the article and learned to look at the whole process of giving something up for Lent from a more holistic perspective.

To give a little background, Fr. Joe Laramie is a Jesuit, and his formation was grounded in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. At several times in the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius asks the person to "pray for a grace." So, here we are asking God for something, and the question is, "What grace do I want and why do I need it? This takes honesty, humility and deep reflection. With God's help, it requires us to look into deep into our heart.

After asking God for a grace, then I need to ask God, "What grace do you want to give this me Lent?" It may be the same grace as I asked for, but it might be something different. What practices does God want me to embrace in order that I may open my heart and my life to this grace?

In Lent there are three traditional spiritual practices are prayer, fasting, and alms. What does God want me to do in order to receive this grace that God is giving me? Too often, without self- reflection, we quickly decide to "do something for Lent" without knowing which grace we are seeking. Instead of a quick decision, bring it to prayer.

Fr. Joe suggests if you have a Lenten practice in mind, bring it to prayer.

"Three times, ask the question, 'Why?' and answer with 'because.' This Lent, ask yourself: What grace am I seeking? What grace does God want to give me? After meditating on those questions, it will be clear "what I should do for Lent."

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For example:

“Jesus, I’m thinking of watching less TV this Lent, and here’s why...?” Maybe I recognize I’m wasting too much time and not putting time into important relationships including you, God.

“Jesus, this Lent I want to take more time deepening these relationships. I want to this because...”

“Jesus, good relationships are critically important to my life, and maybe I’m neglecting to spend the time to tend to them. I want to do this because you call me to love God and my family.”

Notice the movement from cutting out some TV time to loving God and family. The Lenten practice of cutting out TV now has a sense of mission based in faith. By cutting out TV you would have more time to interact with family and more time for prayer.

It’s a process, not a thoughtless decision. It can apply to cutting out chocolate or alcohol or visiting the sick. How does my Lenten practice bring me closer to God? Pray on it.

Pace e bene,

Peg

## Thank you to Peg for a Wonderful Advent Retreat!



## The cross of Jesus is a profound act of love

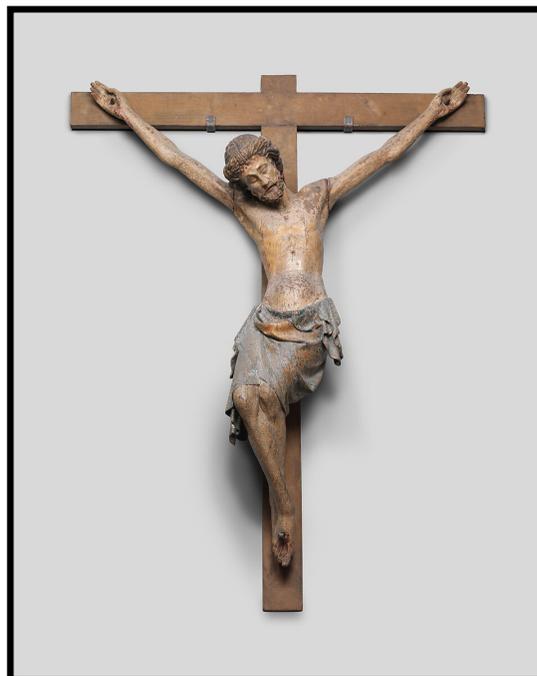
One morning, six years ago, my oldest granddaughter was two and the youngest was an infant. After Mass, we decided to go up to the large crucifix at the front of Saint Bede Church to say “hi” to Jesus. I remember the little two-year-old asking me why Jesus was up there with his arms out. My answer was that Jesus loves us and wants us to come to him. But why does he look sad up there, she asked. I told her because he wants us to love him, too. So she turned around and put her back to the wood base of the cross and put her arms out, looked up at him, and smiled. The memory still makes me smile.

In the book *Simply Bonaventure*, by Ilia Delio, in the chapter on the Imitation of Christ, Bonaventure speaks of this divine love.

“Who of us can live each day hoping to die with Jesus on the cross? Who desires to be ‘transfixed’ to the cross? In our contemporary culture, which can be appropriately described as ‘analgesic’ (relief from pain), we make every effort to avoid pain and suffering – whether physical, psychological, or emotional. Not that we should advocate pain and suffering, no less seek it out. The question is, how do we live life in the most fulfilling way in the midst of a suffering world? How do we, who are created for happiness and peace, live immersed in a world shot through with sin? Bonaventure’s answer is that the God of compassionate love, who has loved us in and through our suffering humanity, offers us an example on the cross, an example of poverty and humility that enables us to turn totally to God and to live in compassionate love. The imitation of Christ, especially Christ crucified, is not about embracing pain and suffering; it is about where the center of our lives is located, how receptive we are to God’s love and, in turn, how we share love with others. The example of Christ crucified shows that we are not to cling to anything but God and thus to place our absolute trust in God alone. The last word, as Bonaventure indicates, is not the cross of suffering but the victory of love which the suffering and death of Jesus Christ wins for us.”

Lent begins on Valentine’s Day this year, the holiday of “love.” Valentine hearts can be seen in every establishment. Let us take this opportunity to focus on the cross instead – the symbol of the greatest love ever known to humanity.

Pax e bonum



# The Pope's Monthly Intentions

FEBRUARY



## FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

### Birthdays

Chris Wells — February 3

### Anniversary of Profession

None in February

### Meetings

Next Fraternity Meeting—February 18 at 1:15pm (social gathering from 12:30-1:15)



## Local Women's Retreat Opportunity!

### Women's Surrender Retreat

February 16-17, 2024  
Saint Clare of Assisi Retreat Center  
Hampton, Virginia

**February 16**  
Check-in 5-5:45pm  
Dinner - 6pm  
Retreat - 7pm to 10pm

**February 17**  
Breakfast – 7:30am  
Retreat – 8:30am to 5pm  
Concludes with  
Vigil Mass at Saint Clare  
Cost - \$75

# The Science and Significance of Eucharistic Miracles



This presentation by Steve Hemler, President of the Catholic Apologetics Institute of North America (CAINA), highlights the importance of the Holy Eucharist and the amazing findings of *scientific studies* of Eucharistic miracles, where consecrated hosts transformed into real human flesh and blood!

**Thursday, Feb. 15, 6:30 pm**

**St. Joan of Arc Worship Space**

St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, 315 Harris Grove Ln, Yorktown, VA

***Everyone welcome!***

Lenten formation opportunity at

St. Joan of Arc

Thursday, February 15th at 6:30 pm.

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**LENTEN SEVEN DAY PERPETUAL ADORATION**

at St. Joan of Arc

Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>

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## Meeting dates for 2024

The dates are normally the third Sunday of the month. We start with a social time at 12:30. The door to the Walsh room opens automatically at 12:30.

**Do not enter the building until the door automatically unlocks even if staff or clergy will let you in. Entering early could negate our agreement with St. Bede.**

January 21st

February 18th

March 17th

April 21st

May 26th

June 23rd (change due to Father's Day)

July 21st

August 18th

September 15th

October 20th

November 17th

December 15th

