



Our Lady of the Rosary
Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Williamsburg, Virginia



www.olrsfo.weebly.com

Message from our Minister ...

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Francis and Clare,

I hope everyone had a blessed Feast of St. Clare. Did you pray the Novena to St. Clare that I passed along? On the Feast of St. Clare, I went to the Poor Clares monastery to attend Mass. It's always a pleasure to go there and pray with the sisters. Fr. Russel Murray, OFM said Mass and after Mass, he touched a relic of St. Clare to the forehead all who attended. In the picture – sorry I wasn't able to get a better shot – you can see Fr. Russel holding the relic.

The Poor Clares also provided St. Clare's Bread. The story of the bread is that Pope Gregory IX visited St. Clare at San Damiano and remained for the meal which consisted only of a small loaf of bread and a cup of water for each nun. At the command of the Pope, St. Clare blessed the loaves and at once there appeared on each loaf the Sign of the Cross. It is customary to bless bread on the feast of St. Clare. The bread is highly valued as a sacramental by the faithful. Can you see the cross? They are very small loaves!



In September, we will be celebrating the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis. Joyfully it falls on the day of our meeting this year. To celebrate the day, the majority of our time together will consist of a reflection on St. Francis and the stigmata. We would also like expand the social into a pot luck that all can enjoy. It's been a long time since the feast day coincided with our meeting and I'm looking forward to celebrating it with the fraternity.

The Council has been discussing the importance and relevance of the Newsletter to the fraternity. What types of articles do you most appreciate? What do you want to see as we move forward? We've gotten very little feedback from you in the past, and we'd like to know that we are including – or not including – what would most interest you. I am asking everyone to send me an email letting me know what you think.

Sorry I missed the August meeting, but I'm looking forward to September.

Pace e bene,

Peg



Being Human as the Path to Spirituality

What is spirituality? When asked this question many people answer with God or Spirit, or something involving the soul, but spirituality involves much more than that. Spirituality begins with who we are – we are human. As Richard Rohr says: “God comes to us disguised as our lives.” It is by living our life that we discover who we are, what we are, and why we are.

We discover who we are through relationships and these relationships are woven throughout our lives. We all have lived multiple roles in our life. Depending on the person we interacting with, and what we are doing, our role can change. We can be mother, father, son, daughter, Franciscan, Catholic, co-worker, teacher, student, etc. Our ego/persona grows in light of the relationships that God puts in our lives.

When God created humans, he gave us logic, reason and freedom. With freedom we were given the capacity to love or to reject love. Because of freedom, our relationships can be messy. I don't know of anyone who hasn't experienced one, or several, or many messy relationships, but all our relationships, messy or not, are the gateway to God. We are not perfect, but God loves us unconditionally for who we are: flawed messy humans. God knows our failings, but as humans, he created us with a God-sized hole in our heart. It is when we listen to our deepest truest self that we are led to God and God's unconditional love.

Do you fully accept that you are human? Do you accept the wonder of being human? Do you accept the failings of being human? If you don't accept that you are human, you are rejecting God's love of you as he created you, in your humanity. Only God loves us for who we are – our true selves – unconditionally and always. Looking through the lens of Francis's life, Bonaventure tells us that humanity is responsible for the perfection of creation, and by this he meant that creation is to attain unity with God.

Think of the life of Francis. When he was younger, he was a son, a troubadour, a military man, a prisoner, and a leader of his small band of young men who liked to party. Not a sterling start to his life. It was only after God became the center of his life that he changed to become the man we know as St. Francis. Bonaventure tells us that the Stigmata of St. Francis signifies Francis's utter Christ-likeness because they represent the true image of Francis, perfectly restored by the grace of God and transformed by divine love.

It is our human desire to love God that fills our emptiness and that hole in our heart. Put God in your center, trust that he loves you unconditionally, and you will find God's peace and perfect joy.

Adoration Times

St. Bede (unless there is a conflict with a funeral) - Monday – 9:00 am to 10:00 am, Friday – After the 9:00 am Mass until 10:45 am

St. Jerome—1st Thursday – After the 8am Mass and continues until 7pm

Bethlehem Monastery of the Poor Clares—Every day but Saturday – After the 8:00 am Mass until 5:00 pm

Saint Joan of Arc— First Friday Adoration Begins after morning Mass and concludes with 3pm Chaplet of Divine Mercy followed with Benediction at 4pm.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel - Wednesday 5:00pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions

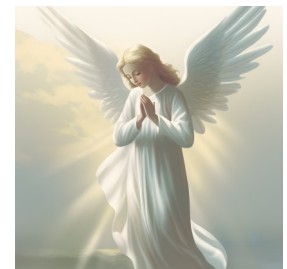


It is with great sadness, we learned that our sister Sandra passed away on Sunday, August 20, 2023 while sleeping. Please pray for the soul of Sandra as well as her beloved husband, Steven.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



*Rest in Peace
Sandra Link
August 20, 2023*



From the Director of Formation: Donna Kendall

For what are we most thankful?

A quote from Saint Francis reminds us of that for which we should be most grateful:

"Almighty, most high and supreme God, Father, holy and just, Lord, King of heaven and earth, we give you thanks for yourself."

In a meditation for Mass, Father Romano Guardini once wrote: "...in human relationships the feeling exists: 'I thank you, not for what you have done for me or for what you think of me, but for yourself, for existing.' Here love reaches a mysterious greatness. Actually, thanks for the existence of a loved one should be directed elsewhere: to his parents or to God. What seems folly - albeit beautiful folly - is, when applied to God, pure sense, for He exists of Himself. He is the 'I am' (Exod.3:14). Of all existences, His alone has 'merit' for it is the perfect expression of His love. For this love, man, shaken by God's glory, thanks Him."

Reflect on existence, being thankful for God's existence! We are often thankful for our closest loved ones but let's take a moment to reflect on feeling gratitude for the existence of God in our lives, for the existence of those whom he places in our lives, and for the existence of individual members of our own fraternity. God not only brought each of us into existence but he brought us all together in one spiritual family.

August's Formation



We then built on last month's formation: working in Franciscan community. Donna distributed the boxes we built last month, where we had written on the outside what we do throughout our community to serve. Donna then asked us to reflect on what we have done this past month with another Franciscans and to write that on a heart. What we do together holds us together in our fraternity. We then placed the heart inside each of our boxes, placed them together to show "our house", our fraternity working together.

The Pope's Monthly Intentions



September—For people living on the margins



We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance.

Upcoming Important Dates

Anniversary of Profession:

None this month

Birthdays

Paul Reardon — September 24

Next Fraternity Meeting—September 17 at 1:15pm (social gathering from 12:30-1:15)



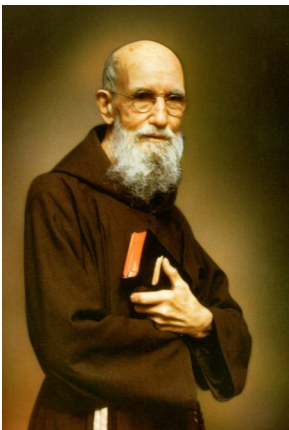
***** Save the Date *****

Saturday December 16, 2023

Advent Day of Reflection

St. Clare of Assisi Retreat Center, Hampton, VA

***** Save the Date *****



“We should ever be grateful for and love the vocation to which God has called us. This applies to every vocation because, after all, what a privilege it is to serve God, even in the least capacity!”

Blessed Solanus Casey