

The Franciscan Joy

St. Peter Fraternity 168 John F. Kennedy Blvd. Somerset
NJ 08873

Visit our website : <http://sfosomersetnj.sfousa.org/>



From the Minister's Desk.

From the Minister's Desk: May, 2015

Peace and All Good,

I had a wonderful experience in church Sunday, May 5th... Not that going to Mass is not wonderful because it is. However, there are times it gets routine. On May 5th our parish began the first of the First Holy Communion Masses. Instead of one big First Communion class with all the children making it at once, our parish does 6-7 children at each Sunday Mass during the month of May. The look of joy and expectation on the faces of the children at the 10:30 Mass gave me a sense of renewal. I was looking at the Mass and the Holy Eucharist with new eyes – the eyes of an 8 year old.

Father Nick's homily was aimed at the children. They didn't get all his jokes, but they smiled up at him anyway – grateful for the attention. They got the stand around the altar, next to Father Nick and really feel like they were at the Table. The smiles continued. They received Communion first, with their families, before anyone else in the church. And the smiles continued. They were still smiling as they recessed out of the church with Fr. Nick and stood next to him in the breezeway to be congratulated by everyone who came out. I would even guess the smiles continued all the way home.



Mary Frances Reavy, OFS
Minister

mfreavey@gmail.com

Evelyn Lehr, OFS
Vice Minister

Joe McKenna, OFS
Secretary

jmck4@earthlink.net

Sal Bonfiglio, OFS
Treasurer

salbonfiglio@comcast.net

Penny Gleeson, OFS
Formation

pennygleeson@yahoo.com

Debra Kubeck, OFS
Councilor

kubeckl@optonline.net

Sr. Valenta Akalski, CSSF
Spiritual Assistant

sunshinevalie@aol.com

Rule 21 The ministers' and councilors' task to lead is temporary. The brothers and sisters, rejecting all ambition, should show love for the fraternity with a spirit of service, prepared both to accept and to relinquish the office.

Article 32, Constitution-of-the-SFO

I too was smiling on my way home – I had a wonderful experience in church. I saw the smiles of God on the faces of his children. During this month of May – as we get closer to summer – I hope you, too, see the smiles of God. Maybe on the faces of his little children.

Mary-Frances Reavey of

Profiles of Joy

Ed Johnson's profession on April 18, 2015



Fr. Paolo Fedrigoni IMC & Ed



Mary Frances, Evelyn, Darryl, Ed



Bernardita & Ed

Reflection by Ed Johnson

Reflecting on my Franciscan formation is something that is rather difficult to put into words. I suspect that spiritual experiences are often this way.

I still see myself as a very unlikely Franciscan. That I have entered the order at all is probably a true testament to the power of the Holy Spirit.

I say I'm an unlikely Franciscan because my life experience has been in fields that are definitely far removed from the culture of our order. In fact, it would be hard to find fields more involved with the secular world, then those that I was involved in.

I initially worked as a newspaper man, but most of my professional life was spent as either a soldier or police investigator.

As an infantry officer, I was trained to accomplish my missions by the efficient application of lethal force. Thankfully, I was never called upon to serve in combat. But combat was the purpose I was trained for.

Afterwards, my career was in law enforcement. The majority of that time was spent investigating violent crimes and working to apprehend those who perpetrated those crimes. It was a job that repeatedly showed the worst people have to offer. Without going into vivid detail, 17 years on the homicide detail drove home the realization that evil exists in the world and made it seem that God was far away.

This background had a profound effect on my life and my faith.

I never doubted the reality of God, but I think I was at best a nominal Catholic, and probably a lukewarm one at that. It would be accurate to say that I knew of Jesus, but did not know him. I subscribed to the maxim “God favors the side with the most artillery.”

In a sense, my formation began before I applied to our order. It came with a recognition that I was traveling in the wrong direction. How I came to that conclusion I'm at a loss to explain. But part of it was a recognition that the force of law was not an adequate tool for solving our world's needs or problems. Having come to that realization, I quietly returned to our church and its sacraments.

For reason I still can't explain, I became interested in St. Francis. I began reading a very secular account of his life entitled “The Reluctant Saint.” Although it questioned aspects of the Francis story, particularly his receipt of the stigmata, it also presented a picture of a truly devout and good man. A man of nonviolence, charity and true faith. He was also presented as someone who didn't start out that way. In short, Francis seemed real to me. I followed that book by reading Chesterton's “St. Francis of Assisi.” This presented Francis from another perspective.

Still not quite understanding all of it, I did an Internet search about Francis and Franciscans. It brought me to the OFS and to a meeting of St. Peter's Fraternity. I initially attended more out of curiosity than a commitment to join. But after reading the materials from that meeting, I decided I needed to know more about this order, and shortly thereafter, I decided to begin the formation process, still not sure if I would ultimately commit to our order.

Some folks come to spiritual awareness in a blinding flash, similar to St. Paul. For me it has been an almost glacial process. While I have no reservations about the profession I will make, I still have questions as to whether or not I am deserving of admission to our order. It's hard not to question one's suitability when you look at the standards exemplified by so many in our order's long history.

I can answer affirmatively because of time spent before the Blessed Sacrament and reflections on materials we discussed in some of our formation sessions. In particular, our discussions on St. Peter, the apostle who so often fell short of the mark and yet ultimately rose to the occasion.

To me, the lesson was clear. God calls us to serve despite, or maybe because of, our imperfections.

As someone noted: “The apostles were all far from perfect, and yet they were chosen by Jesus himself.” After the Lord's crucifixion, these unlikely candidates would ultimately perform heroically.

So as I make my profession, I look forward to my service as a Franciscan, knowing that it is not the completion of a mission, but another step in a continuing conversion and a quest to better understand the Lord in the ways we can serve him.

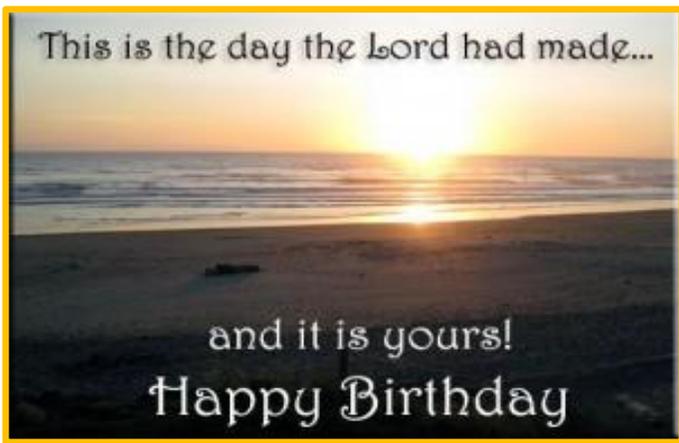
On Going Formation

As formation director, I am constantly searching for information to bring to the fraternity. There is a thirst to revisit my own profession and the early days of my Franciscan life. The official document used in our regional formation is entitled “For Up Until Now” loving known as the FUN Manual. On May 16, I will attend the training sessions given by the region and I am looking forward to learning from other fraternities as we share our thoughts on this document. Here is a section from the FUN Manual about St. Francis and his journey. You may recall seeing drawings on a map depicting A “lifeline: Awakening; Enlightenment; Brotherhood and Ministry / Mission. As you read Awakening, the first of 4 installments, I hope you will experience and revisit your own “lifeline” to profession.

Awakening

- Born in 1182 to upper middle class parents and baptized “John”.
- As a young man - leader of his peers, venturesome, valiant, genial, gentle, joyful, generous, chivalrous, daring and original - he sings songs of the troubadours.
- Early desire to be a soldier - a knight!
- Becomes a soldier and then a prisoner of war in Perugia for a year.
- His spirits remain high during prison but he returns home in ill health.

- Restless, yearning and anxious; he struggles and becomes melancholy. Friends and parties are not quite the same as before.
- Becomes aware of poverty – especially as he turns away a beggar in his father’s shop – he feels much remorse for this.
- He sets out once again on the field of battle and has a dream of a castle that is adorned with shields of honor. He hears a voice asking, “Who can do more for you, the lord or the vassal?” Francis asks what he should do, and he was told to go home. His dream lost, he again loses vitality and grows sad.
- Finds himself drawn to a leper –overcoming his dread he kisses this leper.
Victory over self! What was once bitter is now sweet!
- Finds his thoughts turning to the poor Christ, and begins to see clearly the poverty that is around him.
- His friends wonder if he is in love because he seems so distracted. He realizes that his bride is Lady Poverty. He is excited for there could be no bride that would demand more sacrifice.
- Seeking strength he makes a pilgrimage to Rome. At St. Peter’s in Rome he is horrified at the small offerings that people left there. He remembers the beggar in his father’s shop, begging “for the love of God”.
- He trades clothes with a beggar outside St. Peter’s in Rome.
- He returns to Assisi, prays and waits for guidance. He is about 23-24 years old.



Brother Ed Johnson- May 29

Brother Sal Bonfiglio June 19

Sister Penny Gleeson June 20

Franciscan Crown (Or Seraphic Rosary.)

A [Rosary](#) consisting of seven decades in commemoration of the seven joys of the Blessed Virgin (the Annunciation, Visitation, Birth of our Lord, Adoration of the [Magi](#), Finding of the Child [Jesus](#) in the Temple, the [Resurrection of Our Lord](#), and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and her Coronation in [heaven](#)), in use among the members of the three orders of St. Francis.

The Franciscan Crown dates back to the year 1422. [Wadding](#) tells us that a young [novice](#) who had that year been received into the [Franciscan Order](#) had, previous to his reception, been accustomed to adorn a [statue](#) of the [Blessed Virgin](#) with a wreath of fresh and beautiful flowers as a mark of his [piety](#) and devotion. Not being able to continue this practice in the [novitiate](#), he decided to return to

the world. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him and prevented him from carrying out his purpose. She then instructed him how, by reciting daily a [rosary](#) of seven decades in [honour](#) of her seven joys, he might weave a crown that would be more pleasing to her than the material wreath of flowers he had been wont to place on her [statue](#). From that time the practice of reciting the crown of the sevenjoys became general in the order.

The manner of reciting the [Franciscan](#) Rosary is as follows: The [Apostles' Creed](#), the [Our Father](#), and three [Hail Marys](#) having been said as usual, the mystery to be meditated upon is introduced after the word *Jesus* of the first [Hail Mary](#) of each decade, thus: "Jesus, whom thou didst joyfully conceive", "[Jesus](#), whom thou didst joyfully carry to Elizabeth", and so on for the remaining five decades, which are given in most manuals of [Franciscan](#) devotion. At the end of the seventh decade two [Hail Marys](#) are added to complete the number of years (72) that the Blessed Virgin is said to have lived on earth.

There are other ways of reciting the Crown but the one given seems to be in more general use. The plenary [Indulgence](#) attached to the recitation of the Franciscan Crown, and applicable to the dead, may be gained as often as the crown is recited.

It is not required that the beads be [blessed](#), or in fact that beads be used at all, since the [Indulgence](#) is not attached to the material [rosary](#), but to the recitation of the [prayers](#) as such. In 1905 [Pope Pius X](#), in response to the petition of

the Procurator General of the [Friars Minor](#), enriched the Franciscan Crown with several new [Indulgences](#) that may be gained by all the [faithful](#). Those who assist at a public recitation of the Franciscan Crown participate in all the [Indulgences](#) attached to the Seraphic Rosary that are gained by the members of the [Franciscan Order](#). It is required, however, that beads be used and that they be [blessed](#) by a [priest](#) having the proper faculties. A translation of the pontifical [Brief](#) is given in "St. Anthony's Almanac" for 1909.

Catholic Encyclopedia

From internet May 11, 2015

<http://www.shrinesf.org/rosary.html>

Visit our website home page. Look under Our Fraternity tab to find more information on the saints.

<http://sfosomersetnj.sfousa.org/>

"By your profession you are the light of Christ in the world. Your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father."

Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order



May – Month of the Holy Virgin Mary



June – Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

*Windows located in the
IHM Convent, Somerville, NJ*