

Dear Brothers & Sisters



March 2015

Newsletter of the

Northwest Franciscan Community of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Palatine, Illinois

Secular Franciscan Order

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Submission deadline is the **last Tuesday** of each month.

For privacy, all personal addresses, phone numbers, email, prayer intentions, and (for non-council members) last names are removed from this web version.

From the Minister

Candidates are, literally, the future of our Order and are vital members of our family. As such, "it is essential that resources allow for dialogue and sharing between the Candidates and the Fraternity as well as among the Candidates themselves." (National Formation Commission, *The Secular Franciscan Formation Process*, "Part III: The Candidacy Phase")

As a way to show our appreciation for our Candidates, we're having a special session this month in place of our usual Ongoing Formation. Candidates will have the opportunity to share with us their "calls to become Franciscans" and ask the Professed brothers and sisters about their vocations, lived experiences as Professed members, and anything else that pertains to our Order. Inquirers are also welcome to sit in and learn more about our fraternity and Franciscan way of life.

■ **Annual Open House Next Month.** April is our annual Open House, and we distributed notices with our February newsletter for you to share with your parishes. We also sent event information to the "Community Calendar" on Relevant Radio (930 and 950 AM) and *The Catholic New World's* "Around the Archdiocese" section, so please let us know if you hear or see us mentioned! **T**

At This Month's Gathering ...

■ **No Ongoing Formation.** In place of our usual Ongoing Formation this month, we will have the special Candidates' Getting to Know You session. Please be aware that **all Professed** are to attend ongoing formation and our monthly gatherings. If, for whatever reason, you're unable to attend, you *must* call our Minister, Lisa.

■ **Lenten Liturgy & Social Time.** Everyone, please join us at 7:30 p.m. for our special Lenten liturgy (Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament) followed by a brief business meeting and social time. (remember to bring your own mugs). **T**

Our Apostolates

■ **Bingo.** Meets one night per month at 6:30 p.m. in St. Joseph's activity room. Everyone, please see the 2015 sign-up sheet at our gathering and pick one month for which to volunteer. For more information, call Sisters Kay or Mary Kay.

■ **Franciscan Outreach.** We collect items for delivery to the guests at Franciscan Outreach's Marquard Center. Call Sister Stephanie for more information.

■ **Prayer & Praise Ministry.** For our brothers and sisters unable to attend our gatherings due to poor health or transportation issues. For more information, or if you're ill or know of someone who's ill, please call our Infirmarian, Sister Jackie.

■ **Prayer Shawl Ministry.** We interweave prayers along with God's love, care, and warmth into the stitches as we knit or crochet shawls for others. For more information, contact Sisters Sue or Cyndy.

■ **Support (Money, Materials).** Quarterly donations from our Common Fund of any excess funds available *after* fraternity costs go to the following: Franciscan Missionary Union, Franciscan Outreach, Poor Clares (Palos Park, IL), Amazon Relief.

Next Monthly Gathering:

Monday, March 09, 2015

St. Joseph's Home
80 W. Northwest Hwy., Palatine

6:30 p.m.: Professed brothers and sisters and Candidates, please arrive at this time. Inquirers are welcome to observe.

7:30 p.m.: Start of our Gathering with Lenten liturgy, followed by a business meeting and social time.
All welcome!

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You must call Lisa if you cannot attend.

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Our gatherings are at 7:30 p.m. on the **second Monday** of each month.

■ **Youth Prayer Partners.** Coordinated by Brother Tom, this apostolate matches up fraternity members with children preparing for First Communion or Confirmation. We last prayed for Confirmands at St. Thomas of Villanova (Palatine), and will pray again for a new group of students when we have more details. For more information, call Brother Tom. ☒

Excerpts from *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2015*

[E]very Christian community is called to go out of itself and to be engaged in the life of the greater society of which it is a part, especially with the poor and those who are far away. The Church is missionary by her very nature; she is not self-enclosed but sent out to every nation and people.

Her mission is to bear patient witness to the One who desires to draw all creation and every man and woman to the Father. Her mission is to bring to all a love which cannot remain silent. The Church follows Jesus Christ along the paths that lead to every man and woman, to the very ends of the earth (cf. *Acts 1:8*). In each of our neighbors, then, we must see a brother or sister for whom Christ died and rose again. What we ourselves have received, we have received for them as well. Similarly, all that our brothers and sisters possess is a gift for the Church and for all humanity.

... As individuals too, we have are tempted by indifference. Flooded with news reports and troubling images of human suffering, we often feel our complete inability to help. What can we do to avoid being caught up in this spiral of distress and powerlessness?

First, we can pray in communion with the Church on earth and in heaven. Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer! The *24 Hours for the Lord* initiative, which I hope will be observed on 13-14 March throughout the Church, also at the diocesan level, is meant to be a sign of this need for prayer.

Second, we can help by acts of charity, reaching out to both those near and far through the Church's many charitable organizations. Lent is a favorable time for showing this concern for others by small yet concrete signs of our belonging to the one human family.

Third, the suffering of others is a call to conversion, since their need reminds me of the uncertainty of my own life and my dependence on God and my brothers and sisters. If we humbly implore God's grace and accept our own limitations, we will trust in the infinite possibilities which God's love holds out to us. We will also be able to resist the diabolical temptation of thinking that by our own efforts we can save the world and ourselves.

As a way of overcoming indifference and our pretensions to self-sufficiency, I would invite everyone to live this Lent as an opportunity for engaging in what Benedict XVI called a formation of the heart (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, 31). A merciful heart does not mean a weak heart. Anyone who wishes to be merciful must have a strong and steadfast heart, closed to the tempter but open to God. A heart which lets itself be pierced by the Spirit so as to bring love along the roads that lead to our brothers and sisters. And, ultimately, a poor heart, one which realizes its own poverty and gives itself freely for others.

During this Lent, then, brothers and sisters, let us all ask the Lord: "*Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum*": *Make our hearts like yours* (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). In this way we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference. ☒

Anniversaries This Month

30: **Dorothy**, Professed in 1974.

God's blessings for your years of Franciscan living!

Calendar

March

09: Monthly Gathering

23: Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Arlington Heights Memorial Library

April

13: Monthly Gathering

27: Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Arlington Heights Memorial Library

Remember in Your Daily Prayers

- All infirm, shut-in, and deceased fraternity members.
- All Candidates and Inquirers, and their formation instructors.
- Our entire Franciscan Family, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd (Secular & Regular) Orders: For strength in commitments, increase in vocations, and the work we do, especially for Franciscan Outreach, Franciscan Missionary Union, the Poor Clares in Palos Park, and Amazon Relief.
- The guests of Franciscan Outreach's shelter and soup kitchen: That they know God's loving care and overcome the difficulties that keep them homeless.
- Little Sisters of the Poor and the residents of St. Joseph's Home.
- Our families and loved ones.

Please pray that our fraternity and all Franciscans:

- Live the Holy Rule we've professed,
- Bring the Gospel to Life, and Life to the Gospel in the spirit of Francis,
- Live simply so that others may simply live, and
- Are active and participate in the Franciscan apostolates.