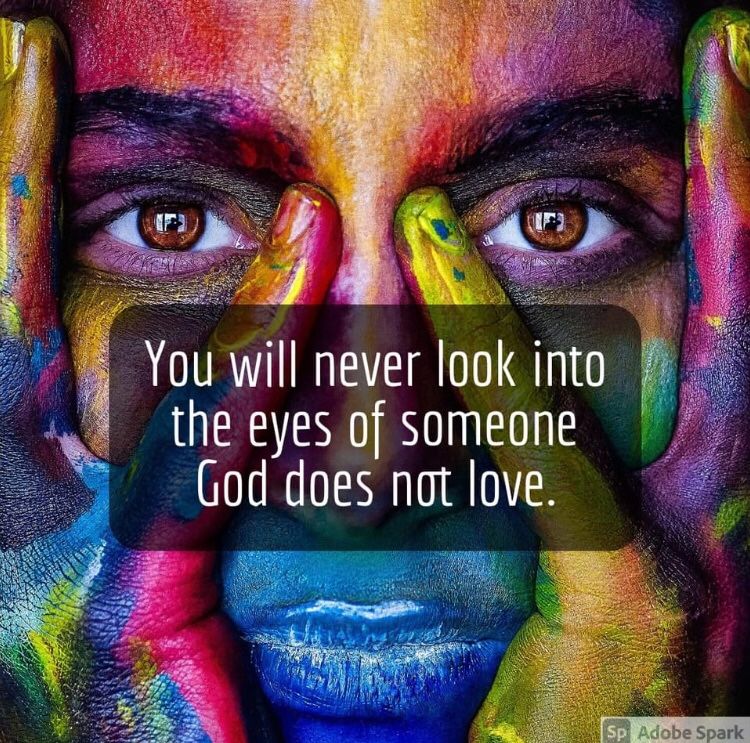
Secular Franciscan Order January 2021 Newsletter



***The Secular Franciscan Order was established by St. Francis of Assisi more than 800 years ago. Our purpose is to bring the Gospel to life where we live and where we work. We look for ways to embrace the Gospel in our lives and try to help others to do likewise.***

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**1**

**Our Gathering**

On January 2, 2021 we once again met virtually due to safety concerns relating to the pandemic.

Dora graciously agreed to pray the Candle Prayer and did so beautifully.

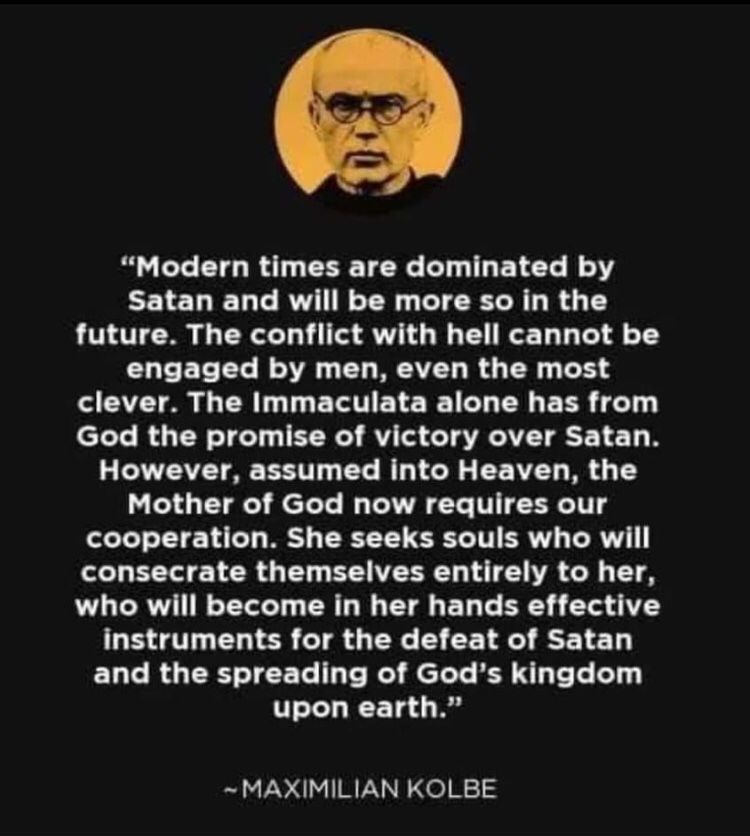
We all joined in to pray together from our Ritual pg. 36 the Opening Prayer. Fr. Mike blessed us with reading a thoughtful meditation from Fr. Murray Bodo’s book, Francis & Jesus.

Alan & Ryan, our “IT” guys extraordinaire helped us view a video put together by family members for a tribute to Karen Parsons retirement from her amazingly blessed career as Chaplain to Seafarers for 36 years! In giving, we receive! Karen shared that the voices at the end of the video were of her parents, who are both now living the good life in Heaven. Very touching tribute.

In preparation for today’s Gathering, Mike had previously asked everyone to be thinking about a Gospel story/parable that meant something special to us. As is so typical of God, he touched our hearts and minds with such profound insights. Many shared the same parable but with a different take on it, showing how God speaks to us individually, challenging us to grow closer to Him. Wow! Just WOW! Sharing our personal take on the Gospels, gave each of us an opportunity to glean something new, see that parable through a new set of eyes & hearts. Lots to ponder, for sure! Thank you all for sharing courageously your intimate journey through the Gospels. I know I will be re-reading with new insights. Ready, set, GROW!

Fr. Mike led us in a discussion on Pope Francis’s third encyclical, Fratelli tutti on fraternity & social friendship. Fr. Mike said Fratelli tutti translates to: “all the brothers”. He stated Pope Francis calls to mind that the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) is a good example of how we should view all people, with compassion and love. He read the parable from Eugene H. Peterson’s translation of the Bible, “The Message”, as it is written in contemporary language. He asked us 2 questions: 1). How am I like the robbers? 2). How am I like the Priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan (the ones who came upon the man who was robbed)? Fr. Mike had prepared a 3rd question but because there were so many wonderful insights, we ran out of time. Due to COVID-19, our elections will be pushed forward to May 2021, which will allow more time to continue the discussion at our February 2021 Gathering.

As a Fraternity, we prayed “An Ecumenical Christian Prayer” posted @ [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org) and closed in the usual manner from our Ritual pg. 36-37.

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2



**Greetings Good People**

Joyful anticipation was what carried most of us into this New Year. Hope was in our hearts. Our national election had been decided; yet in some peoples’ minds they hoped political wrangling could change the outcome. Others hoped and prayed our democracy would survive despite the threat which became a self fulfilling prophesy. As Christians, Catholics, and Franciscans we are called to be Peacemakers; even as divisions within our Church and country use their platform and opinions to further divide us. We must strive to go from Gospel to Life, Life to Gospel. Simplicity……We are. Like Francis, called to rebuild the Church.

The recent events sent me back to a time I never wanted to return to including the associated negative ideations. Yet I am finally able to recognize and name the demon. I have been turning to one of my favorite prayers multiple times a day:

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

I am so grateful for so many in our Franciscan Family. The night before the Inauguration we were able to join in with sisters and brothers throughout the country to pray for a peaceful inauguration. I admit I was really worried at what might have happened. And then Amanda Gorman’s Poem….whoa! This young girl, a convert into our Church touched so many of us…she is even going to recite a poem honoring three first responders for the Super Bowl!

I want to close with a prayer that was written by Benjamin Turk (you probably just know him from our Zoom gatherings as we have only met once in person since he has been with us)

“Saint Francis of Assisi, you were called to rebuild God’s Church. You immediately set out to do that, and used your own hands to repair that decrepit building in which you prayed.

God’s call for you was greater than this though!

He called you to be a beacon of the Holy Spirit to shine a light on the Body of Christ through your fervor, charity, and spirituality.

A wave swept through the whole Church, and generations of people still faithfully like to your example and invoke your name.

Here I come before you with a very special and important task:

Just as you rebuilt the Church by your efforts; so too do I ask you to rebuild the church within me; my heart.

It has been so wounded and broken by my sins and the offenses of others. It has become stained and tainted by my own failings and the Darkness.

I place within your care, with total trust, my heart. Rebuild its walls, purge it of error and corruption, and make it a dwelling place fit for the Most Holy, Magnificent, and Adorable Trinity.

Amen.”

Thanks for sharing this Ben!

Peace

Michael

A close up of a piece of paper

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While I was finishing this early this morning I came across an article in the Houston Chronicle. The introduction is an eye opener.

**We have much to learn from the humble oyster**

*By Lauren Williams, Haille Leija and Bill Rodney*

While some might say that the past year has drawn sharp to attention to the divisions between us, we see a real opportunity for common ground — if only we take some cues from the Gulf Coast oyster.

Oysters grow on reefs. They *attach to each other and take strength from their collective partnership.* With each passing year, oyster reefs grow bigger, more capable of withstanding challenges and *more poised to support each other*. They even provide benefits to others, such as serving as habitat for fish and other reef dwellers and protecting coastal communities from storms.

Just like those oyster reefs*, we can achieve so much more when we work together in partnership and pull together toward common goals. A willingness to listen and a commitment to collaboration can break down old assumptions*, like the belief that ensuring a healthy environment and a healthy economy are mutually exclusive……. **Houston Chronicle Jan. 31, 2021**

Imagine that…I’ll never look at an oyster in the same way again!

**4**

***Next Meeting: February 6th, 2021***

***10:00 a.m.in person & via ZOOM***

***Candidates & Inquirers in Formation: check your emails for more information***

**Our Gathering will be IN PERSON & via Zoom**

**Look for an email from Mike Freeman for log-in information.**

***(Due to COVID-19, our projected elections date will be pushed forward to May 2021, giving us time to continue our discussion on Fratelli tutti)***

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**Fratelli tutti means “All the Brothers”**

**We are continuing the SUNDAY Meal Sign Up for Deacon Louis & Jean Horr.**

**See email on 11-19-20 from** [secretary.StMaxSFO@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.StMaxSFO@gmail.com)

Alba ordered some F.U.N. Manuals (For Up to Now – Foundational Topics for Initial Formation). They do not come with a binder. Purchase price is $13/ea.

$$$ **Continue to save *money for our contribution bag when next we meet in person.***

***Cash or checks made payable to: St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity.***

David Schubert has invited us to contribute a meditation, prayerful musing, poem, joke, famous quote, anything that might lift the spirits of the men in prison at the Ellis Unit. He’s been sending a “Newsletter of Encouragement” out monthly since due to the pandemic, they are unable to visit in person. If interested in being a part of this great resource, contact David at (832) 567-7813. He’s be grateful for your contribution.



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Regional Crown Rosary will be prayed together via ZOOM each month on the 4th Sunday. If interested in being included in receiving ZOOM information, please contact Cherryle Fruge, OFS, Minister-St. Joan of Arc Region: [cherrylefruge@msn.co](mailto:cherrylefruge@msn.co)

A Spanish version of the **TAU-USA** is now available and being mailed to Spanish speaking members upon request. Email your name, address, fraternity name & region name to:

Cindy Wesley OFS, [cw93444@gmail.cm](mailto:cw93444@gmail.cm) Or mail request to:

Cindy Wesley OFS

846 Calimex Place

Nipomo, CA 93444



**Every Day for PRAYER!**

There are **LOTS** of ways to become involved.

Reference emails from Ryan @ [secretary.StMaxSFO@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.StMaxSFO@gmail.com) and emails from Michael @ [mbigfree@aol.com](mailto:mbigfree@aol.com) for specifics!



March 2021 Meeting of the New Year will be 3-6-2021

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More Grateful

*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

*Ephesians 1:5*

Before we adopted our first rescue, I’d always dismissed statements like “rescue dogs make the best pets” or “somehow they just seem more grateful” as romanticizing. *That’s silly*, I’d think. *A dog is a dog*.

Then Winston joined our family. He was a freckle-faced spaniel with curly ears and a feathery tail that he waved like a flag in a parade. Unlike our previous dog, a purebred cocker with a snobby sense of entitlement, Winston enthusiastically received anything and anyone.

I’d toss him a paper towel roll to shred, and he’d act like it was Christmas. A plastic soda bottle to roll around the yard? Coolest thing he’d ever seen. He gobbled treats like manna from heaven and ate his meals with enthusiasm and abandon. Sitting beside me, he’d lay his silky head on my lap, close his eyes, and exhale a deep sigh of doggie joy.

“David,” I said to my husband, “I think it’s true. Winston does seem more grateful. I think he remembers what it was like before he was adopted, when he was hungry, sick, and abandoned. He doesn’t take anything for granted.”

Winston and I have a lot in common. Like my furry friend, I was hungry, sick, and abandoned in my sin. But God adopted me. He fed me with spiritual food, healed my sin-sick soul, and welcomed me into his family. And every day, he fills my life with good things. It’s only fitting, then, that I live a life of gratitude.

I can almost imagine the angels in heaven looking down on the inhabitants of Earth and saying, “Rescued humans make the best people. Somehow they just seem more grateful.”

*Lord, help me never forget how you rescued me, healed me, and adopted me into your family.*

*May I be ever grateful for the good and perfect gifts you bless me with every day. Amen.*

**Author: Lori Hatcher**

**Guideposts - All God’s Creatures**

**Daily Devotions for Animal Lovers**

**November/December 2020**

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**7**



Remain in prayer for:

Healing prayers for **Michael Freeman** & his diagnosis of prostate cancer

Healing prayers for **Consuelo Davis**

Healing Prayers continue for **Joan & Deacon Louis Horr**

**Fr. Mike** requests prayers for all who have been infected with COVID-19 & all who have died.

Claire Dwyer: pray for her daughter **Shannon**, suffering from anxiety & depression.

Continued prayers for **Alan Allen**, his **fellow coworkers** & **all seeking sustainable employment!** Pray for peace, patience & renewed hope.

Continued success for **Alan & Fabiola** in their ministry of YouFra.

**Ryan Efaw, Caitlyn & child**: Expected due date is May 24, 2021! Pray for good health for mother, child and of course, daddy!

Pray for **Fr. Stephen Arabadjis** & all priests & seminarian in the Society of St. Pius X.

May they recognize God’s Will for their lives & be open to His direction.

Pray for **all Holy Priests and Seminarians** throughout the world.

Pray for **Martha Restrepo** (healing of eyes), her Husband **Holbein** (cancer treatments) &

son in law **Deacon Robert Trahan** (bypass surgery & good heart health)

Remember to email Ike [ecolleton@comcast.net](mailto:ecolleton@comcast.net) for prayer requests to be included in Newsletter



Make sure you make room in The Rule for THE RULER!

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