



# “FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO GOSPEL” ST. CLARE FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

St. Clare Fraternity, Stafford Springs, CT

December 2025

## MAY GOD GIVE YOU PEACE!

### FRATERNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, December 20—Mass at 9:00 a.m., followed  
by an Advent reflection by Fr. John

### CRECHE SERVICE & FRATERNITY CHRISTMAS GATHERING

Sunday, January 4, 2026—12 noon

We will begin in St. Edward Church with our Creche  
Service followed by a pot-luck luncheon in the hall.

Please bring your favorite dish to share.

Invite friends and family!!!!



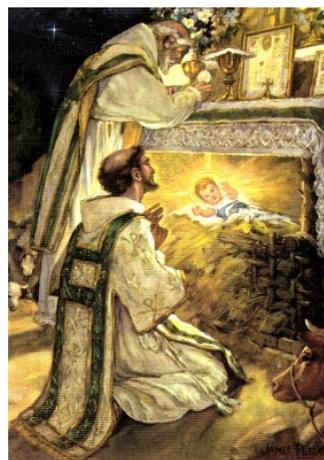
### FRATERNITY LIFE

#### Monthly Gatherings:

**Creche Service & Fraternity  
Christmas Gathering**  
Sunday, January 4, 2026—12 noon  
St. Edward Church & Hall

**Next Regular Fraternity Gathering**  
Saturday, January 24, 2026—10 a.m.  
St. Edward Parish Center  
Hospitality— volunteer needed

Please remember our Common Fund



*“For I wish  
to recall  
to memory  
the little child  
who was born  
in Bethlehem.”*

**St. Francis**

*In describing the Nativity at Greccio*

### OUR FRATERNITY COUNCIL:

Minister: Sandy Comarella, OFS

Vice-Minister: Zofia Fitzgerald OFS

Secretary: Nancy Rudek, OFS

Treasurer: Joe Comarella, OFS

Formation Director: Diane Garabedian,  
OFS

Councilor: Barbara Peirola, OFS

Spiritual Assistant:

Father John Koziol, OFM Conv

### CONTACT US:

comsandy@cox.net

St. Clare of Assisi, Patroness of our Fraternity

## POPE LEO'S

### PRAYER INTENTIONS

December 2025

#### ***FOR CHRISTIANS IN CONFLICT CONTEXTS***

Let us pray that Christians living in contexts of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, may be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

January 2026

#### ***FOR PRAYER WITH THE WORD OF GOD***

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

## OFS INTENTIONS

December 2025

**For a better collaboration between OFS and YouFra in the world, for the national fraternity of France.**

January 2026

**For the national fraternities of Haiti, Mozambique, Lebanon and Rwanda.**

## *Thoughts from your minister:*

Friends,

The entrance antiphon for Gaudete Sunday calls us to "rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near." We pause from our Advent preparation and expectation to focus on the joy and hope that the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ brings. The first reading from Isaiah 35:1-6a,10 is filled with anticipation as the flowers bloom, joyful songs are sung, the lame leap, the mute sing, and "sorrow and mourning will flee". Rejoice!

A few days earlier, we heard Isaiah's call "Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God" (Isaiah 40:1). We're told not to fear as the hills are made low, the valley filled in, a path made for our God. As a shepherd He feeds us, cares for us, carries us, leads us. Miguel Dulick reflects on this reading in *Living with Christ* by comparing Isaiah to the malls getting ready for Christmas before Halloween - only Isaiah is "hanging lights and trimming the tree 600 years before the Big Day!" Dulick continues to imagine Isaiah humming along with Handel's "Messiah", composed nearly two and a half centuries later. Preparing.

In Advent, we wait with Mary for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Saint Francis called Mary the "Virgin made Church" for "she is the first Tabernacle, the first disciple and an abiding reminder of God's love" (Fran McManus, RSM). As seculars, promising to live a gospel life, we too are called to be disciples of our Savior Jesus Christ and a reflection of His love. Advent reminds us to examine how we may have strayed from that gospel life and how to return to it. Repentance.

This Gaudete Sunday, may each of us slow down, take a deep breathe and remember what we are anticipating. Not just the birth of a helpless innocent child, born in poverty, in the cold of a manger, to a virgin mother. We are anticipating the Incarnation! We are anticipating the Word made Flesh, the Messiah, the Son of God! We are anticipating the salvation of the world. So Rejoice! Again, I say Rejoice! The Lord indeed is near! May the remainder of your Advent be filled with joy, expectation and anticipation.

Grace, peace and hope!

Sandy

## FRATERNITY MATTERS

**A REMINDER:** Our monthly gatherings are a "privileged time" of fraternity and community. A time for us to share and grow together in our Franciscan vocation. If you cannot attend a gathering, and are not permanently excused, please contact one of the council members to let us know you will not be attending. Thank you.

**MAY WE BE INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE** Continue to pray for peace in the Ukraine and the Holy Land, Haiti, the Sudan and all those places in the world torn apart by war, civil unrest, violence and fear. Please also for peace and unity in our country.

## FEAST DAYS

*December 25—Nativity of the Lord*

*January 1—Mary, Mother of God*

*January 3 - Holy Name of Jesus*

*January 8—Angela of Foligno*

*January 16—Berard & Companions*

## WE PRAY FOR:

*Vocations to all branches of the Franciscan family, especially to the vocation of priesthood.*

*Healing for fraternity members Marie, Nancy R., Nancy L., DeDe , Rich, Lynn, Greta , Anne, Marion, Carolyn, Pat, Charlotte, Mabel , Albert*

*Healing for : Father Jude, Brother Vincent, Ginny, Tom Stauffer, Ronald C., David D., Patty, Bob G., Gayle, Robert, Frank, Emily , Alison, Jan, Laraine D., Kirk, William, Harry, Bob, Guy, Koren, John, Mary, Clare, Kerry, Jared*

*For an end to the war in Ukraine and in all places affected by war, violence and destruction caused by war.*

*For the Confirmation students at St. Edward Church*

*For an end to the gun violence in our country*

*For all migrants and refugees*

*For those who will benefit from our collection for Cornerstone*

*Peace, healing and justice in our country and in the world*

*In thanksgiving for all our blessings.*

*AMEN.*

## FORMATION



*CHRISTMAS TIME ~ Anne Mulqueen, OFS*

*Formation Friday—December 20, 2024*

It is said that Christmas is a time for children, but I say Christmas is a time for all who have not lost the wonder, joy and delight in celebrating the gift of the birth of a baby, human and divine, who came to earth to be one of us. On Christmas eve, 1223, our Father Francis made his ardent love for the Incarnation of God tangible through the reenactment of Bethlehem in a cave in Greccio.

*In the First Life of St. Francis*, Thomas of Celano writes that Francis wanted the birth of Christ to come alive, presenting anew the birth of the baby Jesus in a cave in Greccio. Francis wanted this event to be, *noted and recalled with reverent memory*. It is almost eight hundred years later, and we continue to display the Christmas creche in our homes and in our churches. And so during this Christmastide, let us set aside time to *recall with reverent memory* the wonder of the Incarnation as we gaze on the crib that holds Mary's baby.

What prompted St. Francis to create this scene? St. Bonaventure would say he wanted to *rouse the hearts of those weak in the faith*. Thomas of Celano would say the child had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but by grace he was brought to life again through St. Francis.

*(cont. on page 4)*

## OUR RULE of LIFE

### **PROLOGUE: EARLIER EXHORTATION OF SAINT FRANCIS TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE**

Chapter One: Concerning those who do Penance *(cont.)*

I pray for them and not for the world (Jn 17:9). Bless and sanctify them (Jn 17:17). I sanctify myself for them (Jn 17:19). I pray not only for them, but for those who will believe in me through their word (Jn 17:20) that they may be sanctified in being one as we are (Jn 17:11). I wish, Father, that where I am, they also may be with me that they may see my glory (Jn 17:24) in your kingdom. Amen (Mt 20:21).

**REFLECTION:** For whom do I need to pray?

## Christmas Time (cont.)

St. Francis was a man of action. So what did he do? He invited his brothers and the people in the village to a cave, filled with animals, straw and a feeding trough, that served as a crib for the infant savior. Francis wanted everyone to experience the humility and poverty of a tender God who was born into the world as a poor and helpless baby. He wanted everyone to experience the love of God poured out in the Incarnation. At the appointed time the people arrived, carrying torches and candles. And their hearts were no longer cold, but filled with love. Everyone gathered in joy around this divine baby, lying in a manger.

While gazing at the crib of the infant Jesus, ponder this quote from Pope Francis. "When, at Christmas, we place the statue of the Infant Jesus in the manger, the nativity scene suddenly comes alive. God appears as a child, for us to take into our arms. Beneath weakness and frailty, he conceals his power that creates and transforms all things. It seems impossible, yet it is true: in Jesus, God was a child, and in this way he wished to reveal the greatness of his love: by smiling and opening his arms to all." [Admirabile Signum 8]

It is always best to read the original sources on a subject in addition to a reflection or commentary. Therefore, please go to [www.franciscantradition.org](http://www.franciscantradition.org), pray first, then read and meditate on the accounts of Francis' reenactment of the nativity at Greccio. For those without access to the Internet, please read the account of the first Nativity in any biography of St. Francis you have.

Just one question to discuss or to comment on in your journal:

Has anything you read or meditated upon reawakened your imagination about the WORD made flesh—the invisible God made visible in a baby and has it changed your understanding of the nature of God?

*Formation Friday is the work product of the National Formation Commission of the Secular Franciscan Order-USA.*

### Our Prayer Intentions

We all know that there is nothing more powerful than prayer, and that an essential part of our fraternal life is praying for and with each other. Each month, our newsletter includes prayer intentions that have been brought forth by fraternity members. Some of these intentions have been on our list for a long time, which is fine.

We do ask that you look through the intentions, and if there is anyone or any situation that you would like to add (or delete, if prayers have been answered), please let Corinne know by the beginning of January, as we will start the new year with a fresh set of intentions.

If you have any questions, please contact Corinne.



***A most blessed Christmas to you and your families! God Bless you all!***

### NATIONAL PRAYER for VOCATIONS to the SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

O Good and Gracious God, God of mercy, compassion, generosity and love,  
As we live our lives today in the model of St. Francis, choosing daily to live the Gospel life,

Help us to help others to recognize their vocation as a Secular Franciscan that you have already planted in their heart.

Help us, so that together we may all work to bring the Gospel to life.



AMEN!

*Marian R. Crosby, OFS*