



IMMACULATA FRATERNITY, S.F.O.

THE THREE COMPANIONS REGION

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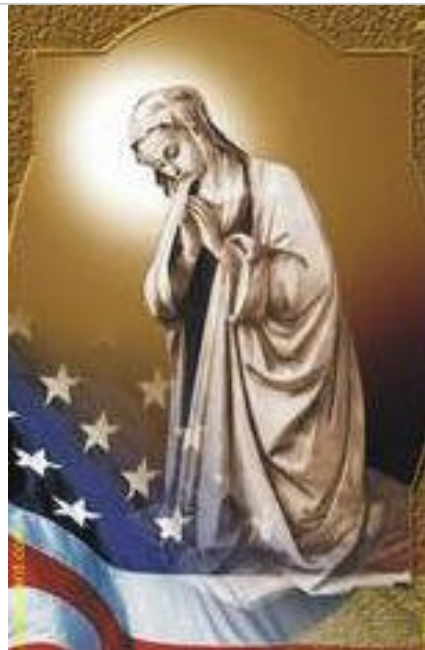


of our membership, including Master Daniel Refi and Baby Ian Ramirez gathered at the St. Maria Center on a warm Summer's evening. I guess you could say "our fraternity is growing from within". Our minds were re-charged and our Spirits were refreshed to go forth and live the Gospel.



On a Hot Summer Twilight

Immaculata Fraternity came together for an evening of prayer, business and on-going formation. The evening was a witness to the faithfulness of its members in meeting despite personnel difficulties and conflict of interest. A sizeable portion of



"Almighty God; We make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

President George Washington



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The Shepherd's Cafe



The First Anniversary of The Shepherd's Café on Saturday June 21st has to be classified as "a rousing success". After being led in The Liturgy of the Hours by the mellow tones of Matt Gill, we were *Blown Away* by the music of TSC house band led by Bro. Mariano Demma, CFR. These musicians play "second fiddle" to no one. The whole evening was broadcast live on Catholic Radio, 910 on your AM dial. Dave Palmer of Guadalupe Radio MC'ed the happenings with live interviews and descriptions of this Great Catholic

Dominican Brothers from Irving dropped in and as usual, the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal joined the celebration with Yong and TSC staff. Despite the warmth of the evening, TSC unveiled it's version of an outdoor café with tables set up in front of the St. Maria Center. Some took advantage of the al fresco atmosphere where cool lemonade was served.

The evening would not be complete without the proper conclusion. Around 9:00 pm the crowd migrated over to the church for Eucharistic expo-



party. Nine members of Immaculata Fraternity were there to lend support and enjoy the evening festivities. Baby Ian Ramirez brought his parents over for a cameo appearance after the 5:30 pm Mass and gave a smile of approval and departed for his evening nap.

Father Rodolfo Garcia, Vocations Director for the Diocese of Dallas was there along with Seminarians from Dallas, Fort Worth and Austin. The

sition and a Holy Hour filled with prayerful songs of adoration led by Matt Gill. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was available during the hour thanks to Father Michael Kmiotek, CFR and Father Joseph Mary Deane, CFR.

Thanks Yong for this wonderful event. Your dream to provide a good Catholic platform to evangelize young people seems to have captured the young at heart also. See you again in August.





America's Patron Mary in Her Immaculate Conception

by Benjamin Cieply, LC



In the Constitution 'Ineffabilis Deus', December 8, 1854, Pius IX pronounced and defined that the Blessed Virgin Mary "in the first instance of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin."

In the United States of America this year we celebrate the **162nd anniversary** of a decree from the First Council of Baltimore electing Mary in her Immaculate Conception as our principal Patron. A patron is one who has been assigned, or in this case, chosen by election, as a special intercessor before God.

Not to boast, but as an American, I think we are pretty fortunate to have Mary as our patron saint. First of all, because the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses that **the Blessed Virgin is preserved/free from any stain of sin** – something that cannot be said of any other saint in history. In other words, when it comes to sanctity, Mary "takes the cake."

How so? Steve Ray, a convert to Catholicism and a well-known apologist, explains it something like this:

If someone falls into a puddle, there are two ways to help him get the mud off: Either you hand him a towel, or you go back in time and, as he approaches the puddle, pick him up and place him on the other side. Only God can do it the second way. This is what he did with Mary!

Secondly, other than her unique holiness, we are honored to have Mary as our patron saint because **she is the most powerful intercessor**. St Louis de Montfort, in his renowned manuscript *True Devotion to Mary*, boldly suggests that Christ is *weak* in front of his Mother. It's as if he can't say "No" to her!

Indeed, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (969) states that the Blessed Virgin is invoked under the title *Mediatrix* of all grace. While no creature measures up to the one and only Redeemer, we profess that Mary cooperates in a unique way in her Son's redemptive mission. She knows what is best for her children and so intercedes for us before the very source of all grace, Jesus Christ.

Yes, America, you are truly blessed; God, through the powerful intercession of Mary, the Immaculate Conception, has *shed His grace on thee...* May he continue to do so *from sea to shining sea!*



Down the Road

There will be a special celebration on August 2, 2008, Our September gathering will feature the Pastoral Feast of Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula, at Visit of Friar Lambert Leykam, O.F.M. of St. Francis Village in Crowley, TX. This S.F.O. constitutional requirement is performed every three years and is a privileged communion with the First Order and Third Order. This event should be witnessed by the entire fraternity membership. Mark the date on your calendar and set your priority.

Following Mass will be a renewal of our commitment to the Gospel Life, and Rite of Admission for 12 candidates in the emerging Fraternity of San Bonaventura of Fort Worth. ALL ARE INVITED !!!

A Heart In Search of the Sign of Peace

"I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever. . . . Let us offer each other a sign of peace."

How beautiful. The first time you come to a Catholic Mass, this is your introduction to its community; reaching out with your hand to another, in essence embracing them to your church, offering them a sign of peace, a welcome among friends, a cordial invitation to join in communion with Him

Embedded in the Eucharistic celebration is a door to the heart. I knocked on that door when I moved from one city to another. During the summer not so long ago I was in need of a new church home. I went to several Catholic communities seeking their heart through the sign of peace. Imagine Mary and Joseph, going from inn to inn, I traveled from Church to Church seeking respite. Was I welcomed? Was there a place for me?

Sadly, I witnessed this shortcoming: when the prayers turned towards the sign of peace sometimes I was ignored or barely touched as my hand was quickly embraced and dropped without a nod. The words of peace were inaudible. None dared to "see" me. Were they shy? Were they afraid? Was I invited to join? I traveled from one community to the next, attending many Churches and their various Masses hoping to find a connection and each time I was disappointed. Each time I came away with that same disconnected "feeling". I was unable to find their heart.

Wondering on this "feeling," I began to do a little "research," looking inward. What was the expectation that was not being met? Was not He present in the Tabernacle and present in the Eucharist served at the Altar? Where was that peace that I longed for?

The first Mass of the morning of the last Sunday of that fateful summer, I quietly sat amongst the congregants and listened to the Mass. ". . . I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do." As I prayed in unison with them the familiar words of the Penitential Rite, I began to reflect on what I had failed to do in my entrance to this community. What of myself had I offered to Christ's presence in this holy place? As the words of the Gloria played upon my ears "...you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us..." like night to day it was revealed to me that these were prayers of mercy for all of us. We both had erred. Just as one unknowingly cuts someone off on the freeway, and suddenly becomes aware of the mistake and is helpless to correct the offence because the innocent victim has moved on, there was no malicious intent. In going through the motions I had made an error in judgment.

As the prayers turned to the sign of peace I emptied my heart of my expectations of what they should do and graciously embraced the hand of the person next to me. Looking them in the eye so that they could see into my heart, I poured out all of the peace Christ had given to me in this small revelation and received that familiar "feeling" of peace. *Deborah Pettie, S.F.O.*

If You Ask Me

"If You Ask Me", is an attempt for your newsletter to solicit comments about things pertaining to the fraternity, things about Franciscanism, The Secular Franciscan Order, or anything that crosses your minds about anything that's printable.

For instance: How can we improve the content of the newsletter? How about the web site? Are our gatherings fulfilling as far as on-going formation is concerned.

This is not to say that anything is wrong, on the contrary, I think Immaculata Fraternity is humming along right on track. We are growing in size and in spirit thanks to the leadership of our Minister and Formation Director.

Everyone has an opinion so shake them out and hang them on the line.

Now it's my turn:

Since the fraternity saw fit to turn me loose with the publication, printing and editing of our newsletter, I would like to express my opinion about US!

In the years of formation as a Candidate, the fraternity seemed to me to be a group of individuals striving to find their way as Franciscans. Notice I said individuals. We were not yet a family and it took some time to achieve that status. As we grew in numbers, new ideas, new enthusiasm, stronger commitment and love and compassion for each other transformed our Teflon group into a fraternity of Velcro. We feel the sadness when a member's loved one passes away and the joy when a new Franciscan is born into the world. Our monthly gatherings are now family reunions with our Heavenly Father in our midst. That's My Opinion.... if you ask me.

July — Franciscan Calendar

- 1 *Bl. [Junipero Serra](#)*, priest, 1st Order. (Optional Memorial)
- 8 *Gregory Grassi*, bishop, Augustin Zhao Rong and companions, martyrs, 1st & 3rd Orders (Optional Memorial)
- 9 *Nicholas Pick*, priest, and companions, martyrs, 1st Order (Memorial)
- 10 *Veronica Giuliani*, virgin, 2nd Order (Memorial) (For 2nd & 3rd Order nuns: Feast) 12 *John Jones & John Wall*, priests & martyrs, 1st Order (Optional Memorial)
- 13 *Bl. Angeline of Marsciano*, religious, 3rd Order (Optional Memorial) (For 3rd Order nuns: Memorial)
- 14 *Francisco Solano*, priest, 1st Order (Optional Memorial)
- 15 *Bonaventure*, bishop & doctor, 1st Order (Feast)
- 21 *Lawrence of Brindisi*, priest & doctor, 1st Order (Feast)
- 23 *Cunegunda*, religious, 2nd Order (For 2nd & 3rd Order nuns: Optional Memorial)
- 24 *Bl. Louise of Savoy*, religious, 2nd Order (For 2nd & 3rd Order nuns: Optional Memorial)
- 27 *Bl. Mary Magdalene of Martinengo*, virgin, 2nd Order (For 2nd & 3rd Order nuns: Optional Memorial)
- 28 *Bl. Mary Teresa Kowalska*, martyr of Nazi persecution in Poland (For Capuchins: Optional Memorial)