

# "The Canticle"

## Divine Mercy Fraternity • Secular Franciscan Order • December 2018

### Regular monthly gathering

Sunday, [December 9, 2018](#), 2:00-4:00 pm, at  
St. Helen Church, South Room, Vero Beach

### Fraternity Officers/Council Members (exp. Jan. 09, 2019)

Minister:	Fred Schaeffer, OFS
Vice-Minister:	Helen Caldarone, OFS
Secretary:	Jean McGovern, OFS
Treasurer:	Jack Reddy, OFS
Formation Director:	Donna Haro, OFS
Councilor-at-large:	Joanne Giordana, OFS
Spiritual Asst.	Deacon Richard Blake, OFS (when available)

### Agenda and Schedule

2:00 Opening, Reports, etc.

2:10 Formation Director, Donna, presents: "A Franciscan Christmas". Our annual reading of St. Francis and the creation of the Christmas Crib at Greccio. Bring your own Nativity set if you wish to.

3:00 Break and Refreshments

3:20 Liturgy of the Hours, using, "Christian Prayer," and, Franciscan Crown Rosary.  
In lieu of Franciscan Crown, a Rosary may be said if time is too short.

4:00 Closing Prayers and Dismissal

Do not bring refreshments. After the meeting, we will visit: [The Pizza Guys](#), 6690 20th St, Vero Beach, FL (772-213-8072). Sunday Hours: 4pm - 8pm

**Council Meeting:** NO council meeting planned for December 2018.

**Remember in your prayers:** All fraternity members, especially Marie, Fred, Stan and Virginia. Please pray for Nick (Joanne's husband) for healing. See fraternity's prayer request notebook for other intentions.

**Anniversaries - December—None**

**Minister's Message:** *Note:* Our Chapter of Elections will take be Sunday, **February 10, 2019**. 2 PM (Doors open 1:30 PM). Please mark your calendar.

We are pleased that Trudy Carlson agreed to join us for formation to become a Secular Franciscan, and we have welcomed her in our midst. Please keep her in your prayers.

*A very Happy Thanksgiving to all!*

*Please support St. Helen Harvest Festival November 18-22*

*[See St. Helen Bulletin for further information](#)*

**The Week Before Advent:** from Sunday, November 25, *Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Jesus. That is significant because He came to earth, born as a human being, to save the world. Also, he came to make it possible for us to gain eternal salvation.

In Art. 1129 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. "Sacramental grace" is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive him by conforming them to the Son of God. The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Savior."

These words are so rich in meaning. It tells of the Holy Spirit bringing us "Sacramental grace" needed to understand and carry out our preparation for understanding Salvation. Without the Holy Spirit, it is doubtful we'd even understand the divine nature that unites us in a living union with Jesus our Savior. This "living union" tells us that we must abandon everything that comes in the way of this relationship with Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit, let's try. Get to know the Lord so well, that we push occasions of sin away from us so that we may reach this intimate union with Jesus.

A dear Carmelite nun who was my aunt, once sent me a little bit of writing in German. It was penned in script on a piece of vellum. What she wrote was most relevant: "Christ wants people who excel!" In other words, Jesus doesn't look for 'second-best.' That does not mean that He won't give us the Grace to make us better. He has infinite compassion and mercy, but He knows we can improve. If we think this through, we also know that we can improve, make no mistake about that!

So during this week before Advent starts, let's get a 'running start.' - A brand-new Liturgical year will begin next week (First Sunday of Advent); let us get ready to run the race again, as you give thanks on Thanksgiving (*Nov. 22*) asking for His continuing blessings for the year to come.

Only Mary and Joseph knew exactly how long it took them to find shelter on that first Christmas Eve in Bethlehem. They probably prayed very hard that they would find a suitable place for little Jesus to be born. Mary knew, from the message of the Angel Gabriel, that her Son would be the Son of God, the King of Kings, our Savior—and here He was to be born in a stable used by animals, oxen and donkeys and perhaps goats. What humble beginnings.

We too have humble beginnings but it may not be apparent to you. We are born usually, in a hospital, surrounded by professional health-caregivers who know what to do if something goes wrong during the birth, but many of our grandfathers/mothers who came from Europe didn't experience these luxuries. I was born in The Netherlands, in a sooty coal-cellar during World War II.

For Mary and Joseph the stable was all they had. Knowing who her Son was, she wanted much better for Him. But Mary settled for what was available. During her whole life she was a strong example of humility. Jesus asks us to be happy with what we have and not to want what we cannot or, perhaps, should not have. Be happy with little. Be happy with the count your blessings rather than comings are not the material things we greater value: they are blessings of



what we have and not to want what we cannot or, perhaps, should not have. Be happy with little. Be happy with the count your blessings rather than comings are not the material things we greater value: they are blessings of Jesus asks us to deny ourselves and be "stable" if that is all you have. When you plain, He will bless you richly. His blessings sometimes crave but they are of much *eternal life*, with Him! (*continued p.3.*)

Mary and Joseph suffered on that first night. Jesus suffered throughout His life until His death. Yes, my brothers and sisters, Jesus died for us so that we might live. His love is greater than any love in existence. Many people, especially during this time in the history of mankind, suffer from hunger, great illness (cancer, Aids, etc.) lack of work, and lack of Faith, and when things go wrong some people blame God. But God does not bring pain and suffering. Suffering we all experience is because of Original Sin; it just hits some harder than others.



I pray, during this Christmas Season for many things, but two in particular. First, I pray that your Christmas will be richly blessed. I pray that you will remember what Christmas is all about, namely, the Birth of Christ. Secondly, I pray that, in faith, you will reach out to a sick person. People are sick in several ways: physically, mentally or spiritually. Please reach out and touch someone with your prayer. Bring a little cheer into the lives of others. We wish you a very special Christmas, filled with moments of Grace and much joy as you celebrate Jesus in your midst.

Fred Schaeffer, OFS  
November 15, 2018

A Blessed Christmas and  
a Happy New Year 2019!

