

# Weekly re:Cap



Published for the Friars of the Capuchin  
Franciscan Province of St. Joseph  
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20 December 2017



Issue Number 1120

## Personal reflection

If you are a regular subscriber to *Weekly re:Cap*, you're aware that we almost always include articles that reflect Catholic social teaching on justice and peace issues. The St. Joseph Province has a long history of promoting these issues, and I'm proud of our efforts to highlight those areas of our culture and society which promote a more inclusive and just stance towards our sisters and brothers. We're Franciscans, after all! Those of us who have professed our vows as Capuchins have a unique responsibility to reflect our "minority;" i.e., we are lesser brothers and sisters, and our charism demands that we identify with the marginalized of our society.

I have a very comfortable life. I have excellent health care, and I eat very well. I don't have to worry about paying my bills, and I rarely have to be concerned about my spending. That's a good thing...religious life is about taking care of each other. But I'm realizing more and more that I'm not very good at *taking care of others*. The old adage that "talk is cheap" is haunting me.

Conversion is an ongoing process, and I've been seriously uncomfortable more recently about my own behavior vis-a-vis my Franciscan commitment. I confess that my internal ministry as communications director for our province has had the effect of making me too smug. It's become easy to rationalize my lifestyle and my day-to-day interactions with both my brothers and everyone else I encounter; after all, this newsletter consistently challenges others to take their faith seriously. *It's so easy to preach!*

As this year ends, I'm struggling to figure out how I can *incarnate* the message that this season proclaims. Just a few weeks ago, our brother Solanus Casey was beatified as an example of a simple follower of Francis of Assisi who not only *proclaimed* the message of the incarnation, but *demonstrated* that message by his life and work.

I'm pretty good at *proclaiming* the message. I need to work on *demonstrating* it!

~ TL Michael Auman, Editor



## *Advent reflection on human rights and women*

Following a famine, Naomi and her family moved from Bethlehem to the land of Moab. There, her two sons married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. When tragedy struck, leaving the three women widowed, Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem and released her daughters-in-law from their marital obligation. Orpah returned to her family but Ruth remained faithful, saying, “Wherever you go I will go... Your people shall be my people and your God, my God” (Ruth 1:16). Despite encountering many difficulties along the way, Ruth’s love and commitment to Naomi was justified in the end. She married Naomi’s relative, Boaz and both became the parents of Obed, the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David.



The story of Ruth is a story of faithfulness and love, but it is also the story of a foreigner and of the difficulties migrants and refugees find in a foreign land. Whether it is climate-induced, or brought about by war, natural disasters, or lack of economic opportunities, global migration is one of the most pressing issues in the world today. Women and girls are the most vulnerable migrants and refugees, and they often face unspeakable violence in the form of physical and sexual assault, and even death. Moreover, women experience multiple and intersecting oppressions before, during, and after their migration journey. Sexism, misogyny, racism, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia collude with other forms of gender-based violence to inflict harm on migrant and refugee women and girls. Our response to the global migration crisis must therefore work to develop and promote gender-responsive policies and a compassionate, human rights-based approach to migration that recognizes and defends the innate dignity of all women.



**God of the Poor,** grant us the generosity of heart to provide for those who suffer under the burden of extreme poverty – *Open our eyes to the sources of inequality that disenfranchise women all over the world.*

**God of Freedom,** grant us the confidence to work for the liberation of those who have been ensnared by contemporary slavery – *Give us the courage to defend the rights of all who have been degraded by sexual exploitation and human trafficking.*

**God of Justice,** grant us the strength to journey with our migrant and refugee sisters and brothers – *Inspire us to dismantle the barriers, both physical walls and those within our hearts, that are propped up by xenophobia, racism, and fear.*

**God of Mercy,** grant us the compassion to comfort those who mourn because of senseless violence – *May we learn to value the sanctity of all life, especially those who are seen as less than because of the color of their skin, their social class, or their addiction.* Ignite our hearts with Your justice, as we wait with joyful and expectant hope for Your coming.

*The above was excerpted from the Advent newsletter of Franciscans International.*



## Franciscans and the Christmas message

by Michael Perry, general minister of the OFMs



My dear brothers, we must ask ourselves how we can live and share the message of communion and love that we ourselves have received as a gift from God in and through His only beloved Son. How do we offer hope, joy and peace to one another in fraternity and to the people around us? How do we make a difference in the world, showing special compassion for those who are oppressed and vulnerable?

How does the Incarnation, the pouring out of the love and communion of God with each of us and with the entire world and created universe, shape our lives as Friars Minor? One response we might offer is found in the witness of Pope Francis who invites us to move into the existential peripheries of our world, promoting a church and an order that is open to the “joys and hopes, the grief and anguish” of the people of our time. Saint Francis also offers us clear and practical recommendations for how we might demonstrate God’s communion and love. As Francis witnessed in all of his relationships, we too are called to approach people with courtesy, respect and with ears and hearts open to listen to the murmurs of their hearts, entering into their pain and their desire for a world made new. Like Francis, we are called to be persistent in our work, our service, keeping our eyes fixed on the goal and remaining faithful to our promise to walk with God’s people, especially the poor and oppressed, in humility and with hearts turned towards the Lord. And we, like Francis, must seek to take concrete steps – the rebuilding of a church in ruins – in order to be the reconciling presence of God in the world today, a world thirsting to death for peace.

My dear brothers, may the power of God’s love, a love poured out in Christ Jesus through the Virgin Mary, give you comfort and encouragement. May the maternal love of Mary set your hearts afire! And may all of us be messengers of God’s message of peace, joy and hope to a world that is thirsting for Good News.

## St. Nicholas’ Day in the “Holy Land”



St. Nick came to St. Isidore the Farmer/Holy Cross Church in Mt. Calvary WI during the children’s mass on the saint’s feast day. Oliver Bambenek presided at the liturgy, and told the children the story of St. Nick. At the end of Mass the children were blessed and received a small gift from the saint.



*Ed note: We often refer to the Mt. Calvary area as “The Holy Land” because this is the location of our high school seminary, and several Catholic parishes.*

# Christmas Prayer

(Robert Lewis Stevenson)

Loving God,

Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the Magi.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.



- 20 ..... Public Relations Zoom/Video Conference
- 22 ..... **John Francis Samsa (B)**
- 23 ..... **Thomas Hill (B)**
- 24 ..... **Edward Hagman (N)**
- 25 ..... Nativity (F)
- 27 ..... Public Relations Zoom/Video Conference  
**John Kocian (N)**



*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace  
(Isaiah 9:5)*