

Newsletter: Divine Mercy Region Secular Franciscan Order



Lower Michigan and Toledo, Ohio

October 2014

A Meditation for Us All

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In John 8, Jesus says "Amen, Amen I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin." This is the passage that struck me most today. Why?

First, it tells me that sin is relevant. In the modern culture that I live in it seems like there is no sin other than perhaps murder, rape and sexual child abuse. Virtually every other sin is becoming accepted as normal conduct. In spite of what contemporary Western society advocates the reality is that sin is a very personal rupture in my relationship with God.

Jesus says if I sin (and I do) I am a slave to sin. I am no longer morally and spiritually free because I have replaced God with doing that which is evil. I have said, "God, I like this activity or thing more than you." In doing so I cease being a child of God, for a child relies on its parent in all things.

Do I rely on my God for all things or am I relying on something else to satisfy me?

I know that God has placed within me a longing or desire that can only be satisfied by his presence. In my daily life I often turn to other things to satisfy this longing and they never do.

The great lie of Satan is that I can make myself happy. For instance if I had a million dollars, then I would be happy. Of course if one had that amount of money they would still have that unfulfilled longing, it would just be occurring in a bigger house or on their boat. The proof of this is in the amount of drug abuse occurring in America the richest country in the world. It is obvious that we are not happier because of our wealth.

Sin is that, the devil offering to me some forbidden behavior or desire with the promise it will satisfy me more than God. It is of course a real temptation, for God is invisible and his ways are subtle and require a seeking through prayer and meditation after that which cannot be seen or touched. I recognize that I am a sinner and easily tempted away from my God by that which I can see and touch.

Yet today I return to the source and I pray for the grace to remain rooted in that which is real and to reject the false illusion that I can satisfy my longing with something other than the God who loves me unconditionally as I am. Loves me even though I am a sinner. A God who intended my existence and who longs for a personal relationship me. God is there, will I put in the effort to go meet him? Will you?

Jim Howard OFS
Divine Mercy Regional Minister

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An Important Message from Our Regional Minister

Our August meeting was very special as we welcomed our National Minister, Deacon Tom Bello and our National Spiritual Assistant, Friar Steve Gross, OFM Conventual.

A very special thank-you to all the Fraternity Ministers and the many guests who were there for the weekend.

I know that Tom and Father Steve felt the warmth of the welcome given them.

As we listened to Tom there were points to consider:

1. We have to think outside the box.
2. Have a Franciscan Day and invite other fraternities. Even the region and possibly the National.
3. The default answer to serving on a fraternity council is "Yes."

Father Steve spoke at length and highlighted one main point: The Secular Franciscan Order is our order of success and growth or decline and failure are up to the brothers and sisters of the order.

What is a Spiritual Assistant?

Question: What exactly is a Spiritual Assistant?

Answer: Two words make up the title "Spiritual Assistant." Obviously they are Spiritual and Assistant!! The Spiritual part implies a "religious" connotation or perhaps "Gospel to life and life to Gospel." The Assistant word indicates the SA assists or helps, guides, aids or the SA does NOT dictate or even "strongly suggest." SAs are not experts in everything or perhaps not experts in anything! SAs may have experience in certain areas; they may have more knowledge than some but less than others. The SA is involved in a fraternity in a very special way.

Formation News

Is it on your calendar?

This year's Annual Day of Formation for inquirers, candidates, and newly professed will be held in Saginaw at the Center for Ministry on **Saturday, November 1st, 2014**. See the last page of this newsletter for a mail-in registration form and more information.

"Francis, go and rebuild my house, which as you can see, is falling into ruin." (Jesus to St. Francis of Assisi)

Contact Us

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Blessed All Saints and Happy
Thanksgiving!

Black Pebble . . . White Pebble

Anonymous

Many years ago, when a person who owed money could be thrown into jail, a merchant in Venice had the misfortune to owe a huge sum to a mean moneylender. The moneylender, who was old and ugly, fancied the merchant's beautiful young daughter. He proposed a bargain. He said he would cancel the merchant's debt if he could have the girl instead.

Both the merchant and his daughter were horrified at the suggestion. So the cunning moneylender schemed that they let Providence decide the matter. He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty bag, and then the girl would have to pick out one of the pebbles. If she chose the black pebble, she would become his wife, and her father's debt would be canceled. But if she refused to pick a pebble, her father would be thrown into jail, and she would starve with no one to look after her.

Reluctantly, the merchant agreed. They were standing, on a pebble-strewn path in the merchant's garden as they talked, and the moneylender stooped down to pick up the two pebbles. As he did, the girl, sharp-eyed with fright, noticed that he picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. The moneylender asked the girl to pick out the pebble that was to decide her fate and that of her father.



What would you have done if you had been that girl? If you had to advise her, what would you advise her to do?

1ô Should the girl refuse to take a pebble?

2ô Should the girl show that there are two black pebbles in the bag and expose the moneylender as a cheat?

3ô Should the girl take a black pebble and sacrifice herself in order to save her father from prison?

The girl in the story put her hand into the bag and drew out a pebble. But, without looking at it, she fumbled it and let the pebble fall to the path where it was immediately mixed in among all the others. "Oh, how clumsy of me," she said. "Never mind, however. If you look into the bag, you'll be able to tell which pebble I dropped by the color of the one that is remaining." Since the remaining pebble was, of course, black, it had to be assumed that she picked the white pebble. Of course, the moneylender dared not admit his own dishonesty.

We're on the Web!

See us at: www.divinemercuryregion.org

Please send stories and pictures of your fraternity's events to Jan or Linda:

Jan Kaeding OFS, Editor, divineprovidencefraternity@gmail.com

Linda Solis OFS, Secretary, divinemercuryregion@gmail.com

Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity's Annual Day of Formation
**Conference for Inquirers, Candidates, Newly Professed and
Formation Ministers and/or Team Member**

Saturday, November 1, 2014

Registration: Begins at 8:30AM

Gathering: 9:00AM ó 3:30PM

Location: Saginaw Ministry Center
corner of Weiss and Wieneke Streets,
5802 Weiss Street
Saginaw, MI 48603



Each year the Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity offers an opportunity for candidates, inquirers, newly professed and formation ministers of the region to gather. In the past these days have been well attended and enjoyed and each year there are great reviews! We are eagerly looking forward to this year's gathering. We may be able to offer Sunday Liturgy at 4:00 p.m. í . look for information to come.

The fee will be \$20.00 to cover the cost of a continental breakfast and lunch, and keynote. Please plan to attend. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

Send Registration and \$20.00 fee to:
(Make checks payable to: **Divine Mercy Regional Fraternity**)

No refunds after deadline.

Linda M. Solis, ofs
4813 E. Boardman Rd., SW
South Boardman, MI 49680
231-518-0244

Name _____

Position _____

Address _____

Fraternity _____

Preferred Phone _____

Email _____

Room fee for Friday night is \$45.00. If this is an option for you, please confirm attendance.

Registration Deadline is: Saturday, October 18, 2014

There will be a late fee of \$10.00 per person after deadline date.