

# Lent

## *a Journey of Love*

Feb. 17 - Mar. 31, 2021



[Rembrandt, "The Return of the Prodigal Son"](#)  
1662-1669  
([Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg](#))

# The Cord

February, 2021

Newsletter of the San Luis Rey  
Secular Franciscan Fraternity

Our Monthly Gatherings are on the  
**2nd Sundays** of the month

Upcoming Gatherings on Zoom:

- **January Monthly General Gathering ~**  
Sunday, [February 14th](#), 1:00 – 3:00 pm
- **Vespers Evening Prayer ~**  
Tuesday, [February 23rd](#), 7:00 – 8:00 pm  
View on Different Zoom Account than the  
monthly General Gatherings, [see p. 11](#)
- **March Monthly General Gathering ~**  
Sunday, [March 14th](#), 1:00 – 3:00 pm

**Our Gatherings Will Be on Zoom:**

**Login Link:** [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)

Click on: **Join a Meeting**

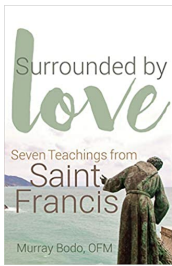
**Meeting ID: 760 726 2486**

**Password: 1798**

Contact Us via our website [Contact Page](#)

San Luis Rey Secular Franciscan Fraternity  
Mission San Luis Rey  
4050 Mission Avenue  
Oceanside, CA 92057

## Minister's Note for February



In his book, [Surrounded by Love: Seven Teachings from St. Francis](#), Fr. Murray Bodo OFM, creates what Sr. Mary Beth Ingham CSJ writes in the books forward is 'a beautiful meditation on the spiritual wisdom of the Poverello and its practical value for today... ' *Murray Bodo brings Francis of Assisi's life experiences and teachings into dialogue with our contemporary world, showing our need for the breathtaking beauty of the Franciscan spiritual and theological visions.*'

Fr. Bodo speaks of seven 'teachings:' Jesus Christ as the fullness of the Incarnation of God, the Paradox of Evangelical Poverty, Living the Gospel, Repairing God's House, Making Peace, God's 'house' being all of Creation, and the Joy of humble praise and service to God. Fr. Bodo explores each of these teachings, especially from the lived experience of Francis in a fresh and passionate way. Each chapter is almost like a love story. A story of the love with which Francis joyfully dances with God. And in a sense of falling in love with this incredible person Francis and taking his hand and *joining* in that Divine Dance.

**Then Fr. Bodo expounds on the 'Teachings of all Teachings.'** The foundation of all Francis's 'teachings' is Love. He examines all the key stories of Francis's life and wonders if underneath each one, Francis found a call to Love. Fr Bodo says that '*Francis fell in love with the love who is Infinite Love, a love that made him cry out: "May the fiery and honey-sweet power of your love, O Lord, wear me from all things under heaven, so that I may die for love of your love, who deigned to die for love of my love."*'

Fr. Bodo reminds of that all of who we are and what we do should be rooted in and grow out of Love. Our rule was inspired by Francis himself and written to 'all who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength (Mk 12:30) and love their neighbors as themselves (Mt 22:39).'

Let us all strive, to live our Rule and be those followers of Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis, who love the Lord with our whole hearts, our whole souls, and our whole minds. To live in 'wholeness' and 'holiness.' Let us, in each interaction, to see the face of Christ in 'the other' – perhaps people of other ethnicities, cultures, socio-economic statuses, and political affiliation - and to reach out to each other in Love.

Pace e Bene +



Laura Chun, OFS  
Minister, San Luis Rey



## *Surviving the Pandemic Through the Holy Family*

St. Joseph was guided by God within a dream, to take the Holy Family to safety to Egypt and flee from Herod as he was about to destroy the child, Jesus. They were to remain there until God told them, again in a dream, go back home.

Be with us, Oh Lord

May we be looking to God for guidance through the Pandemic of COVID, even with our fear and anxiety, to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Family to keep our faith and trust in God. Pray for those who have no faith and struggle in these times.

Be with us, Oh Lord

As the road from Bethlehem to Egypt was long and arduous for the Holy Family, so is our journey long and arduous. Turn to the Holy Family and see the Lord was with them to ease their fear of the unknown.

Be with us, Oh Lord

We have choices to make in all the chaos we live in, but keep our trust to know that Jesus is also with us as we journey down the road of the unknown. The Holy Spirit is always there to guide us in finding our way.

Be with us, Oh Lord



*Sandy Baden, OFS  
Vice Minister*



## The Journey Inward

Do you dream of taking a vacation to a beautiful tropical island in the middle of Winter? I did in 2017 at Christmas. I made my reservation to spend Christmas of 2018 on the island of Kauai, the most luscious, most green and oldest of the Hawaii archipelago. I envisioned myself laying on the golden sand of Kauai's beach, bathing in the warm Sun, stroked by a gentle breeze drinking piña colada and munching on macadamia nuts while watching surfers mastering the big waves. This trip paid in full was going to be the first of many around our beautiful Earth by way of the Marriott Vacation Club. I always wanted to go to [New Zealand](#), and see the 15th-century [Inca citadel](#), [Machu Picchu](#) in the [Andes](#) of southern [Peru](#). I imagined to walk in Jesus footsteps in the [Holy Land](#), the site of God's incarnation, and visit the pyramids of ancient [Egypt](#). But due to a serious hip issue that required major surgery, I had to postpone my trip to Christmas of 2019. Because my surgery got delayed due to other health issues, I had to again postpone my trip this time to Easter of 2020. Now I was ready but the world wasn't. All travels were shut down due to the pandemic that held the whole world in its grip for a year now. Maybe by Christmas of 2021, I can soak in the warm water of Kauai's beach. A three years delay!



How many people had to cancel their well earned vacation for the safety of the indoor? Going to the local grocery store became an adventure we looked forward to in fear - masks, gloves, 6 ft social distance - but at least we could see another fellow citizen even if just from a distance. Craving the



real presence in a world suddenly turned virtual. Thanks God we had smart phones, computers, and the internet to avoid total isolation. Now we could just zoom everywhere we wanted to go without leaving the house. But it wasn't the same. Something was becoming keenly obvious. Phone calls and zooms do not replace the real presence of our friends and family. And church isn't the same on YouTube. We need to hug someone, to kiss our friends, to freely gather socially and in church, and to have birthday and graduation parties in person.

Then it hit me. I may not be able to travel around the world now, but I can still travel inward to discover the hidden inner world in me. A largely uncharted territory when you consider its infinite nature. As it is said "We are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor 6:16) who is infinite. Therefore this trip will never end. I'll be uncovering a new and beautiful world that was always with me. I just did not pay as much attention to it as I did to the outside world. I was reminded of a statement by Pope Benedict XVI I read sometime ago in an article or a book I no longer have. Our beloved Pope reflected on how much men traveled to discover the world, and map all the continents, climbing the peaks of the highest mountains and descending to the bottom of the ocean. Yet men's inner world is left largely uncharted and to be discovered. All the beauty, majesty and wonder of the outside world, the Pope remarked, is far surpassed by the beauty we'll find inside when we set out to discover our inner world. He should know because he undertook that journey of discovery. The beauty of this journey is that it never ends. There is always more to discover. There will be always higher peaks to

climb and deeper valleys to descend into. It is a journey of love. It starts with a desire to know, God reaching out to us in love, an inexplicable force that draws us near, a call of the deep that begs response, a step forward, then a plunge into the unknown in faith, and finally the great embrace of Infinite Love, Power and Life that upholds us for eternity. Paul prays for the Ephesians that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith, that they may be filled with the fullness of God [Ephesians 3:14-19](#).

No camera can capture our inner journey to document it because this journey is not of this world, meaning not in the outside world. We need our spiritual eyes to see, and our inner ear to hear and understand. I need to tune into the wavelength God communicates at and makes himself visible. It is persistent prayer in love, a personal request in confidence He will grant, that opens up the channel of communication. When I was about 14 years old, I read the Gospels out of curiosity. Most of it I did not understand partly due to the very poor Hungarian translation (under communism there was no catechism, and no bibles in bookstores, this was an old family bible). But in spite of the poor translation, two things spoke to me clearly: the Gospel was a message of love, God is love and grants persistent prayers. I figured if it were true, I should ask for something that does not require another person's will and action. I did not want to interfere with the free will of others (that would complicate the "experiment"). So I just asked for something personal, like an attribute I'd like to possess (such as being brave, or patient). So every night in bed I prayed for that one thing, nothing more. I believed that "Ask and it will be given to you,...knock, and it will be opened." [Matt 7:8](#), and persistence pays off like it did the [old widow](#). After about 40 days of consistent daily prayer, my request was granted. I felt a connection with God, like a phone line or communication channel. I rejoiced and continued with praying to deepen my relationship with God. It gave me comfort in a dark oppressed world that God listens and answers my prayers. God gave me strength and joy. Things didn't look so bleak anymore.

Contemplative religious orders, like the [Poor Clares](#) and [Carmelites](#), live their whole life in a cloister, an enclosure that separates them from the outside world. Their focus is on the inner life. Their work is prayer 6 to 8 hours a day in community plus private prayers. These communities are powerhouses of prayer; a spiritual force to reckon with. Vocations have been diminishing as the opportunities and riches of the outside world increased. We've been praying for more vocations. Suddenly, the whole world became a cloister. Watch what you pray for! Lock downs, and sheltering in place have become the norm for the past year. To many it feels a chastisement or even imprisonment. Perhaps in these challenging times when we can't freely travel the world because we are requested to stay at home, we should turn inward, and discover the beauty and joy of our inner world, seek God who is love, and listen to him. This is our opportunity to build a stronger loving relationship with our Heavenly Father.



*The Return of the Prodigal Son (Leonello Spada, Louvre, Paris)*

The pandemic shutdowns started with Lent. Churches were closed for Easter. No eucharistic celebrations allowed. A year of Lent. We have given up a lot already. Now let's focus on prayer and alms giving. Let's embark on a journey of love, like the prodigal son, return to our Heavenly Father and reach out to our neighbors in love, so we will be ready for Resurrection at Easter!

*Dr. Marta Kassai, OFS*



## *Transforming Love*

*St. Margaret of Cortona, Third Order, 1247-12, Feast Day: February 22 97*

This Third Order saint fits wonderfully into our theme for this month. She was born near Perugia and her troubles in life began early. Her mother died when she was seven and her new step mother was uncaring and unkind. As a result Margaret became rebellious and left home in her teens to live as a mistress to a young nobleman. She gave birth to a son who was nine at the time her common law husband was found by Margaret brutally murdered by enemies in the nearby woods. This thrust Margaret and her son into crisis as she no legal claim or inheritance to anything.



She was rejected when she tried to return home to her family. Desperate, she headed to the town of Cortona hoping to find shelter and acceptance from the Franciscans there. She obviously found it in the kindness from the newly forming Third Order there. (This was only fifty years after the death of Francis). She became a dramatic example of repentance. She was known to make many public gestures of penance in the streets to demonstrate sorrow for her past. Her friar confessor urged her to stop, but much like Francis public stripping of his clothes in Assisi, the townspeople were impacted by her dramatic display of faith and humility.

Margaret desired to join the lay affiliates of Francis, but the friars there were skeptical of her conversion and fearful that because of her youth and beauty, she might be a cause of future scandal. She was considered a Mary Magdalene, so it took three years of persistence and holy living to be finally accepted.

It is quite noteworthy that her life story was written by a friar (Giunta Bevegnati). This was quite unusual for that time in history. In the 20 years she lived in Cortona she started an active healthcare ministry and founded a hospital for the poor and socially disenfranchised. She also acted as a spiritual advisor to both lay people and the friars.

Her boldness led to some conflicts with the friars. She was given to advising them on how they should handle lay candidates and even how they might improve their preaching. Her passion and transformative love proved however, to make her an early respected lay leader.

If you too have suffered injustices or poor choices in life, what a model we have in Margaret. We have our own current opportunities to imitate her tenacity and boldness. Just like Margaret, people will be influenced more by our actions and behavior than words. We too can use our own prior experiences to empathize with others in the unique situation we now find ourselves in. There are so many ways to bring others hope. 2021 can be an excellent time of beginning the new year and Lenten practices as we meditate on the message given to Margaret from Our Lord:

"Show now that thou art converted. Call others to repentance... The graces I have bestowed on thee are not meant for thee alone."

*Jan DeSpain OFS,  
Director of Formation*



## **BEATITUDES**

*Our Inner & Outer Goal*

“Let many things we hear go in one ear & out the other, focusing our minds on those things which pertain to our peace.”

(Imitation of Christ~page 208)

May we listen, *O So Attentively*, to hear God’s voice concerning these things :

POVERTY  
MEEKNESS  
MOURNING  
THIRSTING AFTER JUSTICE  
MERCY  
CLEANLINESS OF HEART  
PEACEMAKING  
SUFFERING FOR JUSTICE SAKE

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

We are Your servants and beg You for the understanding to know Your commandments.

Incline our hearts to follow Your holy teachings, that they may seep into our souls as dew seeps into the grass.

(Imitation of Christ~page 110)

♥ Blessed Lent ♥

Kelly  
Councilor



## *My Franciscan 'History'*

What does (St.) Valentines day mean to me? Well when I was a small child, it was a day that you celebrated in school by signing the little children's 'Valentine' cards, put a little candy in each envelope with its card and placed on your classmates desks. That was until February 14, 1965 (see attached) when I stood/knelt before our Spiritual Director, Fr. Geoffrey Bridges and the members present of the 'San Luis Rey Fraternity of the Third Order of St. Francis' and asked for permission to be Professed as a Tertiary, to which the Prefect responded 'yes,' and at 15.5 years of age, the minimum at the time, and I became a professed member of the TOSF. Back in those days you were under the authority of the First Order friars, unlike today when we are independent of them, as a fully separate group with our own Rule and Constitutions. That is when I became Jesus' and St. Francis' little 'Valentine,' as I jokingly refer to my profession date.

Due to the fact that 'formation'/noviciate, was only 12 months long, I/we definitely needed 'ongoing formation,' a phase of 'formation' that wasn't popular back then before the new rule of 1978 under Pope Paul VI. This was when the 'TOSF' became the 'Secular Franciscan Order' with a change to a more active lifestyle. Before the changes in 1978, we were more of a 'pious society' of praying laity devoted to St. Francis of Assisi. We didn't go out into the world to spread the love of St. Francis as we do today, but tried to live a life of self-denial, prayer, and mortification in our homes and parishes.

During the 25 years when I was serving our beloved country in the US ARMY, and raised my three children I became inactive to the point that I didn't know very many of my Franciscan brothers and sisters until my mom Dorothy at about 85 (2006ish) gave up driving herself to the gatherings. Ill never forget the day when somebody told me it was so awesome that I would bring her to the fraternity gatherings, thinking that I was simply her caretaker and companion, that I shocked them by admitting that I was the long lost 'Carol Johnson' whom had been inactive for many years. At which time they welcomed me back with open arms to the life of the Fraternity. That was when I was in my mid 50's about ten years before Dorothy passed on to her eternal reward.

My contributions to our beloved Fraternity, though few, are quite noticeable when we aren't under a pandemic:

1. I suggested our "Franciscan Sunday" that starts with Mass, and culminates with our 'general gathering.'
2. The digital edition of our Monthly Newsletter, "THE CORD" that I was responsible for, for about 15 years.
3. Bringing my mom to our gatherings during the 'golden' years of her life.

I consider these few contributions along with my service on our council to be but small contributions to the SLR Fraternity of the OFS.

What does the SFO/OFS/TOSF mean to me? It is a home away from my home, where I can go to pray, talk, vent, socialize ... et. All in addition to being a friend and companion to Joe my husband. I have been a member of the OFS for 57 years, 56 of which have been as a Professed member of the San Luis Rey Fraternity, yes, all my time as a member have been with the SLR Fraternity...

God Bless Everyone

PAX

*Carol (Johnson) Imhoff, OFS*

14-JAN-2021





## *On the Journey: Loving God and Doing His Will*

Because we love God, we seek to do His will.

As a Franciscan at the threshold of Lent, I ask, “What does God want me to do now?” and “What’s God’s will for me?” To my delight and surprise, I came across this passage last week:

*To understand what Jesus meant by God’s will, we might best translate it as “the common good.” The common good is whatever is best for the whole human family or the whole community of living beings or the whole universe in its grand unfolding. We are not isolated individuals. We are parts of a greater whole . . . A part exists for the good of the whole because the identity of the part is precisely to be a part of this whole.” \**



So, by reaching beyond my selfishness and acting for “the common good”, I do God’s will. I know this sounds extremely simple, but simple is often a good place to start. And I notice “God’s will” allows me time for prayer and meditation.

By contrast, lives ruled by “I, me, mine--first, last and always” is often accompanied by suspicion, loneliness and misery.

As a Secular Franciscan, I’m not alone on my journey. My brothers and sisters reach out to *provide* and *receive* companionship, encouragement, inspiration, knowledge and support. Walking the Earth, Jesus and his disciple Francis experienced all creation as brothers and sisters, loved them accordingly, and treated them with tenderness and compassion.

*Another friend of Mother Earth*

### **Time to React - or Reflect**

Now in this season of Covid, house-bound and unable to travel, there are fewer distractions. With scant in-person visits and no indoor assemblies, we are all more isolated and prone to concerns about health and safety.

I think there are two ways to hold these restrictions on our usual activities. One is to bemoan the inconvenience, the trips not taken and opportunities lost. This one is “I-ME-MINE” to the max.

Alternatively, these restrictions could make this Lent a great time for retreat and reflection. A time to be mindful of God’s support and loving solicitude. And time to reflect on the many ways Nature provides and sustains for God’s children as a beautiful and loving Mother, an expression of God’s heart, as Artist and Creator.

Here in my study, there’s a wooden desk. The desk was a tree, cut for lumber. Same for my house, built of timber. The clothes I wear are cotton, grown in fields that were once forested. Driving to the store, I’m surrounded by thousands of pounds of steel, iron and copper extracted from deep in the earth – and powered by the gasoline burned every time I turn my key in the “ignition.”

Moving through the grocery store, I see thousands of items: a cornucopia of vegetables, fruit, dairy and meat. There are sauces, snacks, confections, condiments, bread and cereal of all kinds. This food is the bounty of our good Mother – available everywhere, in stores all over the country. You get the idea.

It's so easy to take Earth's gifts for granted. Through my life, she graciously and wordlessly provided food, shelter, comfort and convenience. In an environment of overwhelming beauty, she continues to be a wonderful hostess for this guest – while I've mostly ignored her.

Now I see that much of what's been extracted from our Mother - used, cast off and piled up as junk - is making her ill. This causes great suffering and death among the birds, trees and creatures – people included - who are a vital part of Nature's family.

### A Lenten Petition

For this Lent, I have a suggestion. Thankful for Earth's kindness, let's pray for Earth's healing. And to end the rudeness of Earth's guests. In thanksgiving, we could act "for the common good" and for the good of Mother Earth:

- Substitute vegetable protein for animal protein – eating more live food and less meat helps relieve global warming. Growing less beef makes more grain available for people.
- Drive less by packing several errands into a single trip. Less driving saves gas and time, lightens traffic reduces emissions that cause global warming.
- Lower the thermostat a few degrees this winter and save energy.

These are small changes, easy to make. Together, these little things can be a great help to our Mother Earth and have a real impact on "the common good."

*\*Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom by Albert Nolan, O.P.*

*Karron Esmonde, OFS  
JPIC Animator*



## [News from the Fraternity Council](#)

### *From Our Spiritual Assistant:*



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Many many thanks for the beautiful card, a very generous check and your thoughtfulness and well wishes for my 80th Birthday.

May the Lord reward you a hundredfold. I will have a Mass offered for your special intentions and will give a hundred dollars to Casa de Misericordiae, a new ministry by the Sisters of Mercy to help with immigration and refugees. God Bless all of you and be safe and healthy!

In His Love,

Sister Madeline



## From our Formator & Councilors



Kelly Farnum, OFS



Joe Cannon, OFS

### VESPERS

Tuesday

**February 23, 2021**

7:00-8:00 pm

**Via Joe Cannons Zoom Account**

**Zoom Meeting ID - [555 347 4653](#)**

**Zoom Password - 2h19Xx**

Beloved Fraternity lets's gather for Evening Prayer centering on our Lenten journey in the Psalms.

Please bring your bibles.

Looking forward to leaning into a period of penance and reflection.

If you'd like to do the readings during the program or have any questions,

Please reach out to ...

Joe: [canncan@aol.com](mailto:canncan@aol.com)  
(760) 522-3203

Or Kelly: [kellyjofarnum@icloud.com](mailto:kellyjofarnum@icloud.com)  
(760) 710-9391

## From our Director of Formation:

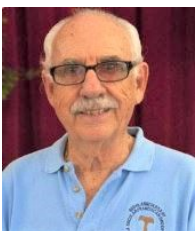
**Inquiry:** This month Kelly and Joe will facilitate Chapter six in "The Journey" which will explore writings and stories of Francis and Clare. Original sources are always important in finding insights into why we choose to follow their life and charism.

**Candidacy:** We are now on Chapter 22: Foundations for the Kingdom. The focus is on article 14. This is a challenging look in our call to build a more fraternal (brotherly) and evangelical (gospel centered) world.

Each fraternity meeting we plan to ask an inquirer/candidate to give a brief summary or insights gained from our sessions. We hope this will help you know our new people better and be updated on where they are in their journey. I encourage you all to pull out The Journey text and reread it. It is filled with so much. I find new insights as I prepare for formation even now after almost thirty years.

As always, pray for our new people as the Holy Spirit leads them. Peace! Jan

## From our Treasurer



You can mail your OFS fraternity contributions to:

**Rock DeSpain, OFS  
1257 Lodgepole Drive,  
Hemet CA, 92545**



## Laura Chun's Zoom Meeting Room



To join by Computer, Laptop, Tablet, SmartPhone App:

- Click or Go to this [link](#) (full link is below):
- If prompted use: Meeting ID: 760 726 2486
- Then use Password: 1798

To join by landline or audio-only Phone (no video):

- Dial this number (it's in San Jose): 1-669-900-6833
- Meeting ID: 760 726 2486
- Then use Password: 1798

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7607262486?pwd=dmRBNVU5WFUxMTdzaUxGcy9ibGtwdz09>



## Let us Pray for our brothers and sisters, especially: :



- ❖ For those who died in the month of January~~~✝
  - February 2, 1996                    **Gertrude Weaver, OFS**
  - February 9, 2007                   **Charles Dotson, OFS**
  - February 21, 1996                   **Florence Collins, OFS**
- ❖ For those who were professed in the month of January:
  - February 6, 2011                    **Sandra Baden, OFS**
  - February 10, 2002                   **Edna Patterson, OFS**
  - February 14, 1965                   **Carol Imhoff, OFS**
- ❖ Sandy's husband Ted who is experiencing afib issues with his heart. Please pray for his health and well being and that Sandy and Ted get through this very stressful and difficult time.
- ❖ All who are sick and suffering; there is so much of that in the world right now.

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**From the Editor:** Thank you all for your contributions to this month issue of The Cord. Due to change in our monthly general gathering date to second Sundays, please submit your articles, reports or adds by the 25th of the month to publish in next month issue. Send your Word or Pages files (font Arial 12 pt, if possible) and any photos (jpg or png) via email to: [mksfo@me.com](mailto:mksfo@me.com). Thanks, Marta

Dr. Marta Kassai, OFS

