

# ECHO of ASSISI

FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

December 2009

Vol. 23



## ADVENT MEDITATION

The mention of Advent always stirs thoughts of waiting. . . waiting for Christmas.

We Theologians always speak of reflecting on the three ways of Christ's

coming: in history in Bethlehem, in the daily events of our lives, and the second coming in the future.

I've been thinking that we've got it all wrong. We need not wait for God. God is always present, always with us. That's what the name Emmanuel means: God-with-us. And, that's the primary truth we hear in the Scriptures. God created us, and calls us into relationship. God is indeed present with us, and especially in the person of Jesus the Christ.

No, this Advent, I've come to see that it's GOD who waits for US. . .

...waits for us to notice that we are indeed created by God. We are born with unique gifts and qualities as well as deficiencies and lack of qualities. God only sees our goodness, and waits for us to notice too.

. . .waits for us to notice the myriad ways in which God is with us, always. We know the Creator in the beauty and amazing capacities of creation, both earth and human. We know the Creator when we experience love. We know the Creator when we can not explain or understand mystery.

. . .waits for us to notice when we observe people acting in the image of God: in covenant with one another, both those known and unknown, both those alike and those very different.

. . .waits for us to notice the emptiness in our hearts that can only be filled by God's own Self.

. . .in the season of Advent, as Christmas approaches, God waits for us to notice the wonder and innocence of little children. How God must long for us grownups to be more like them, without guile.

It is true that in Advent we wait; but really, it is God who waits for us. May we savor and revel in that reality. *Author unknown*

*Blessed are the flexible  
for we shall not be bent out of shape*

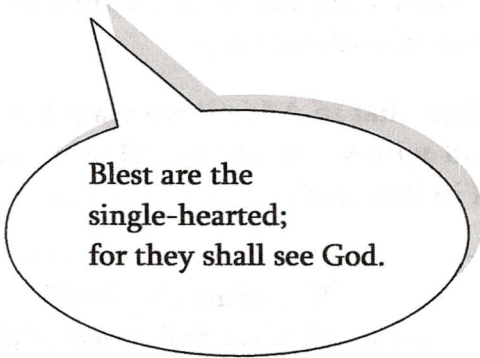
## **CHURCH'S PRESENCE AMONG SICK PROTECTS LIFE**

Taken from The Evangelist Albany Diocesan Newspaper Dec. 10, 2009

The Church must increase its presence among the sick and in society so it can better help defend human life from conception to its natural end. Pope Benedict XVI said.

In his message for the 2010 celebration of World Day of the Sick, the pope highlighted the important role of the church in bringing Christ's love and healing to all those who suffer, be it from poverty, oppression, remorse or illness. Given current cultural and historical context, the pope wrote, there is a growing need for "an attentive and widespread ecclesial presence among the sick." There's also a need for such a presence in society "to be able to effectively transmit the Gospel values of safeguarding human life in all its phases, from its conception to its natural end."

As Franciscan Missionaries of Jesus Crucified our response to Pope Benedict's call can only be a renewed commitment to what we have vowed, as individuals and as a community; and to live more deeply the life God has called us to. The very purpose of our vocation is to live a life of total consecration in the pursuit of holiness, and to give apostolate service to the Church and to those who suffer in any way. We must pray for renewed zeal and that our apostolate will be broadened and intensified for the glory of God.



Blest are the  
single-hearted;  
for they shall see God.

## **THE GRACE OF GOD IN COURTESY**

*Of Courtesy, it is much less  
Than Courage of Heart or Holiness,  
Yet in my walks it seems to me  
That the Grace of God is in Courtesy*

Courtesy is the mark of a Christian Knight. To be more than a mere warrior, a man must be gallant in considerateness as well as courage. In late medieval literature, the exemplary knight is decked not just with iron mail, but with the whole armor of the virtues, of which courteous chivalry is the helm. Of Sir Gawain it is said that "his cleanness and his courtesy crooked were never," and in *The Canterbury tales*, Chaucer's Knight is praised as a "worthy man" who loved "chivalry, truth and honor, freedom and courtesy." When he was ritually blessed by the bishop, the new knight made promises touching chiefly on faith and charity: unfailing obedience to the Church and a constant readiness to defend the widow and orphan. The secret of chivalry was in the soul.

**St. Francis tries to pursue his dream of chivalry: The whim of the young St. Francis to become a soldier.**

There is evidence to suggest that it was not in the court, but in the cloister that courtesy was first practiced and promoted. In the Dark ages, long before there were civic structures in the world, there were civil manners in the monastery. The first to teach the value of refinement of conduct in the small matters of daily life were St. Benedict and his sons, the authors of the monastic rules and customs, the soldiers of spiritual combat. There is without doubt a natural courtesy to be found outside of Christendom, a gentlemanliness which, as Newman saw in *The Idea of the University*, may attach to the man of the world, but the nobleness of soul celebrated the late Middle Ages is thoroughly Christian, formed by explicit faith and charity. The Grace of God is in Courtesy.

### **Courtesy among Men**

Courtesy is not strictly distinct from the other virtues, but rather a quality to be found in them all. It has something to do with reverence, humility, and chastity. It is shaped by charity, the form of all the

virtues, into the quality of mercy. It is the beauty of a brave generous life.

Courtesy is, first of all, reverence for one's fellow man. In the Christian knight, it is a habit of seeing made possible by faith and charity, and eye which sees in every man, great or small, the shining image of the Trinity, the brother for whom Christ died. The courteous person has an attitude of "worship" toward his fellows: by small deeds of kindness, he acknowledges their worth, their dignity, as human persons.

Secondly, courtesy is closely tied to *humility*. In fact, Chesterton defined courtesy as "the wedding of humility with dignity" and gave us an example of the Black Prince, who waited like a servant on a man who was his own prisoner (*The Well and the Shallows*). The courteous man has dignity, but he does not stand on it. He does not lose his throne, and yet he is ready to leave it. There is something in courtesy that deserves to be called self-emptying, the noble refusal of self-worship. The proud or self-centered man may be polite, but he can never be courteous, because he refuses to serve.

Thirdly, courtesy is the first cousin of *chastity*, what the Middle Ages called "cleanness." A man blinded by lust cannot see his lady as the fitting recipient of his courtesy. She has become a thing to be used rather than a person to be served.

The knights of the courtesy literature are not saints, but they do strive to be saintly. They can be deceived by the world, racked with concupiscence, and tempted by the devil, but in Christ's power they struggle to overcome. The courtesy and cleanness are measured by the wholeheartedness of the struggle. Before all else, the Christian knight strives to remain in the state of grace. He does not presume to know whether that is indeed his condition, but like the greatest knight in the Middle Ages, the knight who was a woman – St. Joan of Arc – if he be not in God's grace, he prays God to put him there.

Fourthly, we can define courtesy as a species of *mercy*, a kind of compassion. The courteous man has fellow-feeling. His heart senses the possibility of pain and embarrassment in the other person, and he spares no cost in avoiding it. The courteous man is "a very perfect gentle knight." The bruised reed

he does not break. According to Cardinal Newman, "it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain." At the same time, we must add that there is nothing effete or timid about the courteous man. He is, after all, a knight, a crusader. When he needs to fight, he does so. The gentle kindness of his courtesy is very precisely directed towards the defense of innocent life and everything small and vulnerable. In the heart of courtesy, lion lies down with lamb.

Finally, we must say that courtesy has beauty. It is an attribute of the whole person, at once graceful bodily gesture (the "curtsy") and gracious attitude of mind. St. Thomas Aquinas said that the spiritually beautiful and the morally right were really identical, because when a man is righteous, the splendor of reason shines through his actions. Now courtesy as we have seen, is inseparable from the morally right.

Therefore, the courteous person is beautiful and sheds beauty on those to whom she/he shows courtesy.

### **Courtesy in the Soul after Death**

Courtesy does not die at death.

According to Dante, the living man shows himself *cortese* toward the souls of the departed by praying for them, so that they may purge their guilt and "leave the load behind." In paradise, the pilgrim of the life to come finds a sweet lack of envy in the saints. Each of the blessed accepts his own degree of glory and rejoices, without jealousy, in the merits of his fellows. According to Dante's report, Bonaventure the Franciscan is so moved by the courtesy with which Thomas the Dominican praises Francis that he lifts up his voice to celebrate Dominic:

*To emulous praise of that great  
paladin*

*The modest speech and glowing  
courtesy*

*Of Brother Thomas moved me,  
and therein*

*Moved all his fellowship to join  
with me*

### **Courtesy in the Angels**

The angels are the courtiers of God. In one medieval view, it was they who first brought

courtesy from heaven to earth at the time of the Annunciation. When we look at the artistic images of the Annunciation in the 15th century, the great age of courtesy, we find all the tell-tale signs of courtesy. Gabriel bends his knee and bows his head in the presence of the Holy Virgin, and his arm appears to strike his breast as if to say, 'Madonna, my Lady, I am not worthy to come under thy roof.' In the angels, person and mission are one-the very name "angel" describes an office, not a nature. Everything in the angelic world is centered on God. Self-effacement and thus courtesy are the secret of the angels.

### **The Courtesy of our Lady**

Our Blessed Lady, God's Mother and ours, is medieval man's first thought when he hears the word "courtesy." She is the object of the courtesy of Gabriel and Elizabeth, but among creatures she is also the virtue's most perfect embodiment. If courtesy is self-emptying, then no created person is more courteous than she whose every thought, word, and deed is centered on her son. "Do whatever he tells you." Our Lady is the Church's supreme model in courtesy, as she is the everything that is Christian.

**Our Lord's courtesy:  
The Washing of the Feet.**

### **Courtesy in God**

The triune God is the source of all the perfections to be found among his creatures, and so in him is infinite courtesy. God the Father, great is the courtesy when the King of Kings and Lord of Lords invites us to his wedding feast. According to an English mystic of Norwich, Lady Julian, we belong to Christ through the courteous gift of the Father. Everything Christ does in his human nature is for us, his members. Somehow he includes us all. The Word incarnate maps the heavenward path by his teaching and opens it by his death, resurrection and ascension.

Divine courtesy was first made manifest when God the Son took flesh from the Virgin Mary. His and the Father's gentility were revealed with a wonderful clarity in the manner of his conception and birth. The divine Word did not force himself

into human nature, but considerately asked mankind in the person of the Blessed Virgin to give its consent. He came mildly into her womb without seed and left it gently without corruption. Incarnation is not invasion. From his mother's womb, the divine redeemer establishes courtesy as his style.

The Father and the Son are courteous, and so too is the Holy Spirit. He works delicately, indwelling in our hearts, enlightening our intellects and strengthening our wills. Without him we can do nothing for our salvation, and yet he does not save us without us. The "giving" work of the Holy Spirit is, according to Lady Julian, "a courteous working, of grace, full filling and surpassing all that is deserved by creatures." The grace of the Holy Spirit is in courtesy.

### **The Discourtesy of Antichrist**

If God's grace is in courtesy, the devil's disgrace lurks in discourtesy. According to the author of *Piers Plowman*, discourtesy will be one of the marks of Antichrist. Intellectual arrogance would lead men into infidelity to Holy Mother Church, contempt for the little and weak, and depravity of morals-in a word, into what Scripture calls "pride of life," the deadly opposite of courtesy.

*Loud laughed Life....  
And armed himself in haste  
in harlot's words  
And held Holiness for a jest  
and Courtesy for a waster,  
And Loyalty a churl  
and Liar a free man,  
Conscience and Counsel  
he counted it a folly*

The disaster of discourtesy seems to have engulfed us. And yet we must not relinquish Christian hope. Only with the gentle weapons of Christian courtesy can he be vanquished: reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, gentle devotion to our Lady, faithfulness to Mother Church, humble charity, chastity, the championing of the innocent. The grace of God is in Courtesy, and so is his Power.

*Come with me ye fools,  
Into Unity of Holy Church  
and let us hold ourselves there*

*And cry we to Nature  
to come and defend  
Us Fools from the fiend,  
for the love of Piers Plowman,  
And cry we on all the commons  
that they come to Unity,  
And there abide and do battle  
against Belial's children.*

*John Saward teaches dogmatic theology at  
St. Charles Borromeo Seminary Phil., PA*

## **UNITED STATES CONFERENCE FOR SECULAR INSTITUTES MISSION STATEMENT**

**The United States Conference of Secular Institutes shares in the mission of Jesus Christ in serving its member institutes by providing education, resources, and support for member institutes. USCSI is an organization of member institutes committed to making known, understood, and appreciated the call to consecrated secularity in the Catholic Church. USCSI collaborates with other groups to present consecrated secularity as a viable option in today's Church.**

### **FALL, 2009 - THE MOUNTAINEER**

**"You are spiritual mountaineers with a stiff climb before you."**

*(Paul VI, International Congress, 1970, no. 15 –  
addressing representatives of Secular Institutes)*

### **Message from the President, Fr. George Hazler**

#### **Sister Sharon Holland, IHM**

An article written at Monroe News come on July 22, 2009 reported: "In June, Sister Sharon Holland retired from her Vatican position as a bureau chief at the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. She described her ministry at the Vatican as a 'wonderful experience in terms of being exposed to the universal Church.' The article reported "Sister Sharon Holland received the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal from Cardinal Franc Rode at the Vatican on June 26 as she prepared to conclude her 21 year ministry at the Vatican." Sister Holland has played a very important role for USCSI in its formative years in writing the Statues of USCSI.

She has attending our Annual Meeting in Bethesda, MD to help and give the Conference the legal advice in writing the statutes of USCSI. Happy Retirement Sister Sharon.



**Barbara Ottinger**, a member of the Secular Institute of Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ, passed away on September 9, 2009. Irene, a member, shared:

"Barbara was a remarkable woman. With deep faith in our Lord, she saw the Institute grow from five members in the Washington Tri-State area to almost 100 scattered throughout the country from coast to coast... She was instrumental in the formation of missionaries in Australia and the Philippines among other countries. She continued to be a mentor to many, especially the young, which kept them connected to our history." She also held various responsibilities within her group both in the United States and abroad. As early as 1949, Barbara was very active in forming a group of dedicated lay person in light of "Provida Mater Ecclesiae". The group was known under various names. Only after the first World Conference of Secular Institutes in 1970, this group in the United States could be recognized as a National Conference. The USCSI was founded by Barbara Ottinger. She was the first President of USCSI. Even in her retirement, Barbara continued to cherish the works of USCSI. As Irene stated so well, "She will be missed." She continued by saying that Barbara possess "a keen intelligence, a wonderful sense of humor, an air of serenity and a deep spirituality." Many from various Secular Institutes are privileged to have known and worked with Barbara and we will surely have precious memories of her work on earth. Barbara your reward is great now and you can continue your work on earth for the Missionaries and USCSI. Rest in peace!

**Theresa Cademartori**, secretary for USCSI passed away suddenly on July 16, 2009. She was born in New Jersey and since 1956 was a member of the Secular Institute the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate. She worked in Rome, Italy for over 28 years. Most recently she was a member the Administrative Council with her Institute. She

worked as a French, Spanish and English Translations from her home while caring for her now deceased aunt. One of her comments: "To be an Oblate is to be the presence of Jesus wherever we are. I have noticed that people and situations change when we are in and part of their environment." Rest in peace Theresa.

**Natalie Anne Grabowski, FMJC** represented our Association of the Faithful, Franciscan Missionaries of Jesus Crucified at the USCSI Annual Meeting which took place October 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in Plymouth, MI. Exciting was the presentation of a new Vocation Video "*Mountaineers of the Spirit: The Vocation of Consecrated Seculars*" made for TV. The plan is to have special programming channels air it on TV making our vocation better known and understood. A workshop was held expressing the need to know how to explain to others what it means to be part of an institute. The clearer we explain the greater the possibility for others to hear what we are. Everyone was also blessed to have gone on a pilgrimage to the Tomb of Venerable Solanus Casey. Many new friends were made. Thank you, Natalie for representing our community.

***Ongoing Formation is essential  
for keeping one's faith and  
vocation alive and growing.***

The following was taken from Echo of Assisi Newsletter dated February 1997 by Louise Principe, FMJC

*Jesus said, 'No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.'* (Luke 9:63)

*"be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."* (1Cor. 15:58)

As we continue our series on perseverance, we come to consider the vow of obedience and some of the sacrifices involved in living it. Let's begin with Chapter IV of our Constitution:

## **OBEDIENCE**

"Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him..."  
(Heb. 5:8-9).

### **Article 14**

In conformity to Christ who "became obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8), Missionaries together with Christ make their entire lives a single oblation to the Father.

Docile to the Spirit and attentive to the call of grace, Missionaries, accept in faith the will of God expressed by those who represent him. They participate in the life of the ecclesial community with a lively sense of coresponsibility and of fidelity to the teaching authority of the Church. They are attentive constantly to the call of God expressed in the various situations of life, particularly in their relations with their fellow human beings.

In a lifestyle requiring them to face with full personal responsibility situations ever new and often difficult, Missionaries prove their true missionary character.

By the vow of obedience, Missionaries accept the obligation to be faithful to the Constitution and the Rule of Life (Particular Norms of the present Constitution) and within these limits to be obedient to the superiors of the Institute in a spirit of openness and of dialogue. At all times they seek to know and do the will of God rather than their own will.

In imitation of St. Francis who wished to imitate Jesus perfectly, we vow obedience simply because Jesus was obedient. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews quoted above says some quite astounding and instructive things about Jesus' obedience.

Even though Jesus was the Son of God he had to learn obedience. Of course, this refers to Jesus in his humanity, not in his divinity. As God, Jesus' will was always perfectly and totally united to the will of the Father. But as a man, as a human being, Jesus had to learn to discern the Father's will for him and to will to

act in accord with the divine will. We must learn to do the same.

However, learning obedience is not easy. Our human nature prefers to have its own way, to do its own thing. We usually find it difficult to submit our wills to the will of another – even to the loving and holy will of God. It is this disorder of our fallen human nature that the vow of obedience addresses and corrects.

Jesus learned obedience and so should we. Hebrews says that Jesus “learned obedience from what he suffered.” Here we have an amazing insight into the mystery of suffering – and into the necessity of suffering for growth in the spiritual life.

Suffering is like fire – it can purify or it can destroy. The effect that suffering has on a person is up to them.

If we follow the example of Jesus, Mary, Francis and all the saints and accept the suffering which is an inevitable part of life with a spirit of “Flat,” of “Yes, Lord,” and of “Not my will but Yours,” we will learn the secret of obedience. We will be able to trust that God will help us and be near us no matter what happens – and we will be at peace. We will also be able to reach out to others who suffer and relieve their burdens. Quite simply, we will be able to live our charism.

But if we fail to accept suffering in a spirit of obedience, we will find that suffering will turn us in on ourselves, make us selfish, bitter, angry, self-centered and fearful. We will find ourselves totally wrapped up in ourselves, and our problems, and unable to reach out to others – and we will never be at peace. We will also be unable to live our vocation and our charism.

Finally, Hebrews says that when Jesus was made perfect through suffering and obedience to the will of the Father, “he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him...” Likewise, only if we are obedient to the will of God will we be able to effectively reach out and serve our hurting brothers and sisters. Without the blessing of obedience we can have no true apostolate.

In addition to guaranteeing that our apostolic efforts

are God’s work and not ours, obedience has many other fruits. However, these fruits are attained only at a price.

It is easy at profession to say “Yes, Lord, whatever you ask of me I will do!” It is very difficult to carry this out for our entire lives, particularly when obedience requires us to die to ourselves.

**We vow obedience to our Constitution and Rule of Life – each in their entirety, not just what we like, or what we find convenient, or what we agree with.** It is frighteningly easy to find reasons to excuse ourselves from obligations which are not always easy to fulfill. Self-discipline is not something we come by naturally. It requires hard work, prayer and a firmly committed will.

Whether it be formation, monthly days of recollection, the annual retreat, the Stewardship Accounting, DOR reports or anything else, some people can always find an excuse (not valid a reason) for not fulfilling their obligations. Initially, these individuals may justify their lack of fidelity to their vow of obedience, but eventually they will grow lukewarm in their vocations. They may coast along doing the bare minimum and living the externals of our vocation, but with no heart – or, if they are honest with themselves, they will admit their infidelity and leave.

**By the vow of obedience, we accept the obligation of being obedient to the Church and her teaching authority and to our Ministers in a spirit of openness and of dialogue.** This applies to each and every person in a position of authority – not just those we like, those who like us, those with whom we agree, those who are as smart or as educated as us, or those who let us do what we want. It means anyone whom God places in authority over us.

**We are vowed to obey in all things that are not contrary to the Constitution, the Rule of Life our consciences.** This means we must obey even directives that seem foolish or stupid to us, or which we don’t understand, or which we find difficult or inconvenient, or which appear unreasonable. They may in fact be all of these things and the responsibility for such errors rests with the Minister who will have to answer to God. However, even if

those in authority are in error in commanding, we are not in error in obeying.

Perfect obedience is possible only if we are men and women of faith – only if we truly believe that God's will can be manifested through imperfect human instruments, and through our Constitution and Rule of Life.

Perfect obedience does not mean “blind obedience” or “giving up our wills” – both of which are false concepts that can lead us to serious errors. Obedience requires honest and open dialogue with our superiors. We have the right – and the duty – to question what we do not understand and to expect reasonable explanations. We also have a duty to disagree when we feel the Minister is in error, and when we believe a command is harmful to the good of the community. However, after presenting our point of view, we still have the obligation to obey.

The phrase “to give up our wills” should not be taken literally, since it is impossible to divest ourselves of our will – to do so would be to deny our humanity.

What this poetic expression means is to conform our will to the will of God. This is the heart and soul of our vow of obedience. We freely choose to obey God's will rather than our own. We freely choose to let God be the master of our lives. We freely choose to decrease so God may increase in us. We freely choose to let God empty us of ourselves so that we may be filled with God.

The rewards of a life of obedience are unity and order within the community, individual inner freedom for personal growth, and the certainty of knowing and doing the will of God in all things. All these bring peace, tranquility and union with God – truly the pearl of great price which is worth any sacrifice.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Phil Sweeney**, FMJC recently sent an email indicating, for health reasons, it is necessary for him to relinquish his responsibilities of doing our community newsletter, the ECHO. Needless to say we are saddened by this news and wish him well. Please keep Phil in your prayers.

Phil's new email is: [Philfmjc@cs.com](mailto:Philfmjc@cs.com);  
Phone (607) 693-1695

**Bill Watts** new email is: [billwattsjr@bwatts.org](mailto:billwattsjr@bwatts.org)

**Anne Scripps** (FMJC Associate) has moved into an Assisted Living Residence. Her new address is:  
McAuley Residence  
308 So. Manning Blvd. Albany, NY 12208;  
Phone (518) 482-5216



### **Just a Reminder!**

If you know of someone in the community being in the hospital or in need of our special prayers, please contact our Local Mission Contact persons, so they can get word out to the whole community.

St. Francis LM = Lena Celano, FMJC  
St. Clare LM = Debbie Martinez

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!**

**2010 FMJC ANNUAL RETREAT** will be the week of June 6 – 12, 2010, at Siena College Loudonville, NY. We still need to find a Retreat Master, so please keep this intention in your prayers.



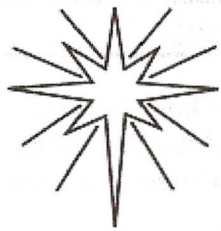
Please mark your calendars for our **FMJC Community Conference Call to pray Evening Prayer together on Christmas Day, December 25 at 8:15 PM.**

Our opening song will be #74,  
“What Child Is This”

The Dial-in phone number is  
**1-800-393-0640.**

After dialing in you dial your participants  
pass code **1 4 2 4 8 3 #.**

**Let our voices be one in prayer on this glorious day!**



**from Bonnie**

During the Christmas Season there is always a lot of emphasis on the exchanging of gifts. For most of us it isn't difficult to see material gifts, but how many of us can see the *spiritual gifts* that God gives to us?

One of the most precious gifts that I see as a spiritual gift is *time*. Seeing *time* as a gift from God helps me to be more aware of how I use it, spend it and even invest it. The uniqueness of most of God's gifts is that they are not meant for us to keep, but given to us so that we can share them with others. Other spiritual gifts that I see, especially when God gives them to me through others, are *kindness, courtesy* and *love*.

This Christmas let us give witness to being in the world, but not of the world, experiencing and sharing in the exchanging of spiritual gifts that money can't buy. These gifts can change the world from within; Giving glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth.

This New Year I invite you to share in a spiritual bouquet to our Heavenly Father in thanksgiving for the many gifts that He has given us, especially for His son, Jesus. Let us share with others the gift of time and the other spiritual gifts he has given us. May our sisters and brother from FMJC who have gone home before us gather up our offerings and bring them to the altar in heaven.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EACH OF YOU  
AND TO YOUR FAMILIES.

God bless you. With love, *Bonnie*.



**Christmas Greetings** were received to the Community from Fr. John Malecki and Br. Brian Belanger, OFM, Guardian and the Friar Community of Siena College and from Fr. Julian Davies, OFM.



### **A CHRISTMAS PRAYER**

*by Colleen Baxter*  
(FMJC Associate)

A miracle has come today on wing of bird  
and seaside spray.

The warmth of sun, a gentle breeze, thank our  
God for each of these.

A miracle has come my way in laughter, hope  
and child's play.

A miracle so small yet huge, I see it, touch it,  
then refuse to keep it. I must its perfume  
sweet defuse.

A miracle has come today in dialog and time  
to pray.

I send the miracle to you in hues unique and  
wholly new - your vision and your tender  
care will send it softly on its way to touch  
another, heal a pain and send it back to God  
again.

A miracle shared, so magnified, reflects the  
love of Him on high.

Praise always to the Cosmic Three for  
sending wonders thus to me.

Praise evermore the Holy One for having sent  
His only Son.

A miracle brushed by today; I felt it in its  
quiet stay.

In words encouraging and true  
it gently bid me start anew.

It bid me give it soon away, to help another in  
the fray.

**A miracle then I share in peace; may joys of  
friendship never cease!**

**I saw our God shine in your face:  
The greatest miracle of grace.**

**In thanksgiving for the miracle of you.**



## **S**PIRITUAL ASSOCIATION

Please keep in prayer all persons enrolled in our Spiritual Association/Memorial Fund especially on your Day of Recollection offering that Mass for all those who have been enrolled in the Association. This is a serious obligation binding on all FMJCs.

The following additional deceased person(s) have been enrolled in this Association:

Helene Allessio, Michael Allessio, Robert Barton,  
Janice Bracciante, Eunice Cole, Hilda Rohal,  
Francis C. DuCharme, Rudolph Horton,  
Irene Stewart, Antoinette Miskiewicz,  
Judith A. Mysliborski, M.D.,  
Marie Sullivan, FMJC, Michael Sullivan,  
Clarence Nicholas, FMJC,  
Maxine Piaseczny, FMJC,  
Judith Kiernan, FMJC,  
Elizabeth Henderson, FMJC



***Merry Christmas!***

## **PRAYER INTENTIONS**

- 1. Fr. Stephen Hartdegen, all our benefactors, all who have asked our prayers, those for whom we promised to pray, and those who have no one to pray for them.**
- 2. For the bishops of all the dioceses in which there are FMJC members, and especially for Bishop Hubbard of the Diocese of Albany.**
- 3. For those who are considering FMJC vocations, that they may be open to the Holy Spirit and know the will of God for them, and for those who have been part of our community.**
- 4. In gratitude for the graces bestowed upon us as individuals and as a community.**
- 5. For members of the Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ, the Poor Clare Nuns of Roswell, NM, the Poor Clare Nuns of Andover, MA and the Sisters of Jesus Crucified.**
- 6. That the vocation to consecrated secularity be better known and understood.**
- 7. That we may be of one mind and one heart, insuring peace and unity within the community.**
- 8. For each other and for all Community Intentions and for the members of our Spiritual Association/ Memorial Fund.**
- 9. For deceased Franciscan Missionaries of Jesus Crucified.**



***Happy New Year!***