

FRANCISCAN SISTERS, T.O.R.
of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother

Under His Mercy

JANUARY 2016



Year of Mercy



DEC. 8, 2015-NOV. 20, 2016



It is hard to describe the joy with which our community heard of Pope Francis' announcement of an upcoming Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Glorifying God and making known His merciful love is our mission as Franciscan Sisters, T.O.R. of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother.

Mercy is one of our four community charisms, and Father of Mercy is the name of our beloved motherhouse chapel. Our community also has a devotion to the Divine Mercy, as revealed to St. Faustina Kowalska. We realize that we can never fully know the wideness of the Father's mercy for us, and so we look forward to the many new graces to be found in this year.

Before anything else, this year is an invitation to a personal encounter with Mercy Himself, who alone knows each of our hearts, the sins with which we struggle, and the healing only He can bring. Pope Francis called this to mind when he said, "*To pass through the Holy Door means to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them.*"

Receiving His loving acceptance will change us. As our Constitutions say, "*We continually allow the merciful love of Christ to convert us and to transform us into vessels of His mercy for others.*"

Making Known God's Merciful Love

At the foot of the cross, we receive this love and then pour it out on others. We are blessed that so many of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy are part of our daily life and ministries, both to our sisters at home and to many others we encounter outside.

We invite you to look at your life anew to find ways you can be more intentionally merciful. You don't have to go far to feed a hungry family member, visit an elderly relative, or pray for a struggling friend. If you are able, also join us in our ministries to the poor, the sick, and the unevangelized, either here in Steubenville or in your own local area.

If you follow our blog, you will find many reflections related to mercy throughout the year. Each month we hope to share a meditation on Scripture and a Work of Mercy. And look out for Mercy Monday, when we'll post quotes on our Facebook page from saints and others on the mercy of God. We can't contain the joy of knowing His merciful love!

You are also invited to join us in prayer here at Father of Mercy Chapel to soak in His love for you. We are offering a Lenten retreat on March 19: "Immersed in the Father's Mercy." The retreat includes talks on the mercy of the Father, Mass, lunch, Eucharistic adoration and benediction, confessions, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. You can find more information on our website in the coming weeks.

In the midst of so much darkness, the Lord has consecrated this time for His mercy and light to reign over it. In the words of our Holy Father, "Let us set aside all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. Instead, let us experience the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things."

BY SR. MARY GEMMA, T.O.R.

WELCOME TO OUR POSTULANTS



Theresa Stano



Patricia Bell

AND TO OUR NEW STAFF



Jennifer Parker
**DIRECTOR OF MISSION
ADVANCEMENT**

Jennifer has lived in Steubenville for 20 years and earned two master's degrees from Franciscan University (FUS).

She loves fishing, hiking, and cooking Greek burgers for loved ones.



Alicia Herson
**MISSION ADVANCEMENT
ASSISTANT**

Alicia has lived in Steubenville for 25 years and is a '94 graduate of FUS.

She has her own CD and sings monthly at Holy Family with Cantate. She is one of ten and has ten children.



Debra Reilly
**MULTIMEDIA MISSION
ADVANCEMENT ASSISTANT**

Debra has lived in Steubenville for over 30 days.

She is one of ten, a twin, and loves jokes: "What do you call a sleepwalking nun?" ... "A roamin' Catholic!"

ROOM AVAILABLE

BY SR. MAGDALA MARIE, T.O.R.

This past month was our annual LAMP (Breakfast Ministry) Christmas party. Here we fed many hungry bellies and hearts. Thanks to St. John Paul II, who popularized the term “feminine genius,” we know that it is a special gift of woman to “make room for the other.” In her pep talk to the volunteers before we opened the doors to our guests, Sr. Agnes Thérèse shared this quote from Catherine Doherty about being pregnant with God:

“Eventually, this Christ whom we have accepted into the womb of our heart is going to become a Child. And then He will grow and grow and grow – for God needs room!...If we allow Christ to grow in us, He, like the good Samaritan, is going to bring a lot of wounded people into the ‘inn’ of our heart. In fact, knowing the size of our heart, and being able to enlarge it (if we let Him) He will make our pregnancy become a fantastic gift to the world!...And to do that, He needs our availability. He needs our emptiness.”

*LIKE MARY, WE ARE MEANT TO BE MOTHERS,
BEARING CHRIST TO THE WORLD.*

Yes, as spiritual mothers, we help form and save souls, but most importantly, we carry and give birth to Christ. Through the sacrifices that we make we are empty, available for Jesus. How do we give birth to Him? Through the Works of Mercy. The fruit of our spiritual motherhood, lived out through the Works of Mercy, is Christ.



At LAMP the most obvious thing we are doing is feeding the hungry, which is probably the most basic Work of Mercy. But, since LAMP is a catechetical breakfast ministry, we also want to satisfy the spiritual hunger for knowledge of God. At LAMP Christmas the catechesis takes the form of a skit. This year we took advantage of the fact that the Christmas party was on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the only apparition in which Mary is pregnant. Through the skit, we taught that Mary is our compassionate, merciful mother who cares for us. Most importantly, she bears Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. This basic message is what the people we serve are hungry to know.



*WE HAVE A GOD WHO LOVES US AND COMES TO
DWELL AMONG US.*

The Works of Mercy are just the basic things that a mother does for her child – feed, clothe, shelter, comfort, teach. As Catherine Doherty points out, we need to be empty to be mothers—women have an empty space in which a child can grow. I went to LAMP with nothing else to do but receive children crying out for food and for love. The little girl I spent most of the morning with was starving. She clung to me, craving love and physical touch. She doesn’t know me from the next sister, but I was available. I made room for Christ and He brought this hungry little girl into the inn of my heart.



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OF PENANCE OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER
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"I HAVE A HUNGER"

Sr. Maria Teresa and a group of Franciscan University students regularly visit inmates at a nearby correctional facility. One of the inmates, Justin, recently wrote:

"I have a hunger for the time that I am able to share with you all. I know that none of you is perfect, but you wear your love so well! Mine is buried beneath so many fears and hurts. When I see the joy and hear the compassion you all have for us it gives me something to strive for."

CONTACT US! (740) 544-5542

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WWW.FRANCISCANSISTERSTOR.BLOGSPOT.COM

"To Make Known God's Merciful Love"



UPCOMING EVENT

LENTEN RETREAT:

*Immersed in the
Father's Mercy*

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

Our Lady of Sorrows

Monastery

8:30 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
PLEASE RSVP BY MARCH 7

ON OUR WEBSITE
OR CALL (740) 544-5542
EXT. 112

SUGGESTED DONATION:
\$15

SCHEDULE:

8:30am

9:00am

9:20am

10:45am

12:00pm

1:30pm

2:45pm

3:45pm

4:00pm

Registration

Praise & Worship

Talk by Mother Mary Ann

Mass

Lunch: Religious Articles and Displays open

Talk by Sr. Thérèse Marie

Eucharistic Adoration and Confession

Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction

Retreat Officially Closes