

Franciscan Sisters, Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother



From the desk of
Mother Katherine Caldwell, T.O.R.



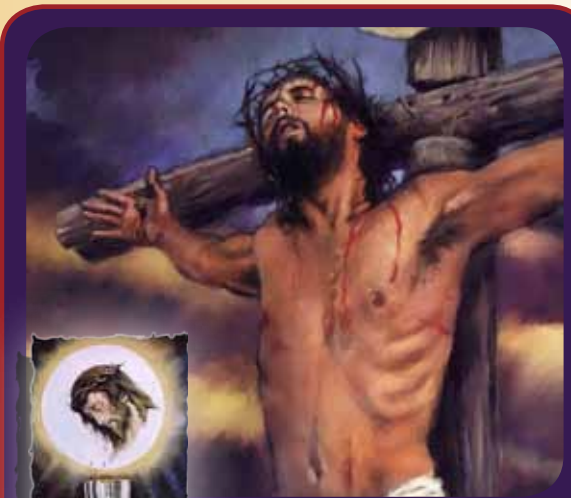
Holy Week and Easter 2013

Letting the Christ within Us Rise to New Life: Experiencing the Ordinary with New Eyes and Hearts

Dear Family and Friends:

I pray that you may enter deeply into the graces of this Holy Week so that you may experience the transforming power of Christ's love. Through God's amazing love, on Holy Thursday, Jesus transformed ordinary bread and ordinary wine into His Holy Body and Blood, anticipating the power flowing from His ultimate sacrifice of Himself on the Cross. It could only be God who could bring good out of the earth-shaking evil that took place on Calvary, transforming that dark day into what we now call Good Friday.

As we enter into this Easter Season, let us allow Jesus' transforming love to "make all things new." Many of us go through our daily lives as if in a tomb, dead to the beauty and graces that surround us. We miss the many ways that God invites us into intimate communion with Him. This Easter let us remember that Jesus is not in the tomb—He has risen! May we allow the Jesus who lives within us also to rise from the tomb! Let us pray that He may give us new eyes and new hearts to experience Him alive in the ordinary things, events, and relationships that make up our daily lives.



"Let the whole of mankind tremble and the whole world shake when Christ, the Son of the Living God, is present on the altar"

His Life Outpoured...



St. Francis had an amazing way of experiencing Jesus in all of creation, in all people, and in all circumstances. Francis was not always this way. He had to experience the horrors of war, the humiliation of imprisonment, and the vulnerability of illness before he recognized his need for God. It was in the tomb-like cave outside of Assisi that Francis laid bare His soul to Christ and cried with a contrite heart for new life in Him. Christ Crucified appeared to him, melted his soul, and imprinted His compassionate love upon his heart. Francis left the tomb-like cave a new man, interiorly clothed with a spirit of poverty and alive with the love of Christ Crucified. With new eyes and a new heart, Francis gave himself to the care of the ill and suffering. He saw in them the dignity and beauty of Christ.

One of the highlights that the Postulants shared this year was their course and prayer meditations on the life of St. Francis. As I read Jenny Lynn and Amanda's reflections of their experience visiting their elder brothers and sisters in Christ at Serra Village, I could see how they have truly embraced the compassionate heart of Christ, like our beloved Father Francis.

He is Risen ... Alleluia!

Jenny Lynn's Reflections: "Same gaze of love"

Before entering, a friend of mine asked me what mercy was and how it is different from charity, forgiveness, generosity, etc. I didn't have an answer at the time. A few months into candidacy, I heard a homily in which the priest said to be merciful was to enter into and to stay in communion with another, especially those suffering. Mercy does not seek to fix problems, but to simply be with another and love them where they are, as Our Lady does from the foot of the cross.

Through taking communion weekly to residents at Serra Village, I have come to a greater understanding of what it means to be merciful. I cannot do anything to help relieve their physical suffering, just as Mary could not do anything to relieve Jesus' physical suffering on the cross. Mary did not consider it a waste of time to stay with her Son because she could not help Him, but remained at the foot of the cross to be in communion with Him in His suffering. Many times I have felt that

*As Mary's gaze
is fixed on Jesus...*



*... So also my gaze
is fixed upon my Lord*

more than the words I speak to the residents, my presence to them is the greater gift I give. My gaze of love upon my Lord in our chapel is the same gaze of love with which I look upon the residents, and in that I experience the reality of loving Christ in the residents. When I bring the Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist to others, I am giving them my heart as well, in that I seek for my heart to be hidden within the Heart of Jesus. I am blessed to minister to the residents, who teach me what it means to be merciful and serve our suffering Lord.

Amanda's Reflection:

"They are His smiles and His tears"

I remember a homily from when I was a student at Franciscan University of Steubenville. A businessman flies to Calcutta to present Mother Teresa with a large check. He unboards the plane in his best suit and finds his way to the convent. Upon arrival the sisters greet him. He insists on meeting Mother Teresa to physically hand her this check before returning home. Waiting a couple hours, eventually the little nun enters and approaches him. Proudly he hands her his check which she takes and sets on a table. "Come with me," she invites him. Curious,

he follows her out the door and into the streets of Calcutta, trying to keep up with her pace. Into the poorest area they travel, the poor lining the streets. Down a back alley they continue until they reach a man left for dead in the mud. "Pick him up," she tells him. "Do what?" Though first protesting, he complies, following her back to the convent with the man in his arms. Through the streets, back to the convent, up the stairs he carries the man, placing him in a washtub. "Wash him," Mother Teresa instructs, and leaves him there. Again, the businessman in his now soiled suit protests, "What?" but he does as she directs. A while later he makes his way down the stairs, completely changed in his countenance, filled with awe, radiating peace. "I saw Him."



Every week we have the opportunity to visit our elder brothers and sisters at Serra Village and bring Christ to them, both in the Eucharist, His very body and blood, soul and divinity, and in our presence. And every week, though bringing Christ, I encounter Christ in them. It is at His bedside we listen and console, His thirst we quench, His struggles and joys we partake, and His heart we see poured out, loving others, despite their own pain. They are His words that bless and thank. They are His smiles and His tears. It is His life that we share.

It is not always easy

Sometimes, it is not so easy to see the beauty of Christ in others. I had an enlightening experience several years ago when I found myself consistently irritated by one of my professors. I took this to prayer, asking for insight and the grace to move beyond these feelings. Shortly after this prayer, I had a dream in which I looked into the bathroom mirror and saw the professor's face rather than mine. I understood that the faults I thought I was seeing in this person were the faults that were in me.

Recently, Sr. Carrie Ann gave a talk to the University students to prepare them to serve the people in our local downtown area. She shared with them a similar reflection regarding a struggle she had accepting some of the people she was serving. Through prayer, God enabled her to see how her own sinful nature and poverty mirrored theirs. This grace enabled her to receive God's mercy, and in turn she was able to accept and love these people with a new heart.



Sometimes when we come out of the tomb we are like Lazarus in the Gospel of John who was still bound-up. In the Gospel, Jesus asked the people near Lazarus to unbind him. It takes courage to see our own fallen nature and to be vulnerable enough to let others help unbind us. Such courage and humility is the beginning of true compassion, the ability to see Christ in the other. REFLECTION QUESTIONS ON THE BACK PAGE.

Poem and drawings by
Mother Katherine Caldwell, T.O.R.

May these high holy days be filled with much grace as you prepare to enter into the joyful season of Easter! Please know our love and prayers are always with you.

Relying upon His Mercy and Grace,

Mother Katherine Caldwell, T.O.R.

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*Burst through the shell of discontent
Break open your true self
Become who you were born to be
Caritas, risen in glory!*

*Love is Who made me
Love is who I am called to be
Love has remade me
setting my heart free.*

*Wings of love now carry me
seeing life from above
I live no longer for myself
Love has remade me into love*

To read Mother Katherine's entire poem
please visit our website at
www.FranciscanSistersTOR.org

In Joyful Gratitude ...



We are so grateful to each of you for the love and support you have shown us over the years. Thank you specifically for your generous response to our Christmas appeal which allowed for a successful financial outcome for 2012. Through your love, prayers, and financial support we are blessed to form and train wonderful new Postulants like Jenny Lynn, Meaghan, Amanda and Molly, as well as our other fourteen sisters in initial formation. The fruit of your generosity allows us to receive new candidates every year who desire to make known God's merciful love. Please know that you are remembered in our prayers.

*Gratefully,
Mother Katherine*

Thank You!

25th Anniversary Celebrations

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday May 4, 2013 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Vigil Mass 4pm

Hay Rides, Games, Lunch, Climbing Wall, Crafts,
Live Music, May Crowning, & More
No RSVP necessary Donations accepted

Benefit Dinner

Saturday, September 21st, 2013

4:00 Mass with Most Rev. Jeffrey Monforton,

Bishop of Steubenville

5:00 Dinner

Reservation information forthcoming

www.facebook.com/FranciscanSistersTOR

740-544-5542



Reflection Questions

Am I sometimes too busy or preoccupied to notice the beauty around me in creation, in my co-workers, in the suffering, or in my family? If so, how is the Holy Spirit guiding me to change this in my life?

Do I take the time to pray with the Gospels and reflect upon how I can bring Christ's presence into my daily life, and do I take the encounters and challenges I face in my day to prayer?

Do I allow my weaknesses and shortcoming to become opportunities for me to experience mercy and compassion for myself and for others?

How is the Holy Spirit leading me to become more vulnerable in my relationship with Christ and with those I love?

"To make known God's Merciful Love..."

From Gospel to Life and Life to the Gospel

New Postulants Commit Themselves to a Life of Ongoing Conversion

On January 26, 2013, Jenny Lynn, Meaghan, Amanda and Molly were received into Postulancy, the next stage of formation, and received the Tau Cross, an important symbol for Franciscans, signifying our commitment to ongoing conversion—our daily 'yes' to strive to live the Gospel and imitate the love of Christ Crucified. In preparation for Postulancy, while on retreat, each one uniquely experienced the love of Christ Crucified and a loving invitation to join His Sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross. One of the Postulants, who had hoped to receive a profound reflection to share, instead received a simple gaze and a simple invitation to just be with Jesus—it seemed so ordinary. She soon realized that this was the grace she needed to be faithful in the midst of ordinary daily life. As we approach Holy Week and the Easter Season, let us take time to prayerfully reflect upon Christ's life and words found in the Gospels and strive to imitate Him. Let us reflect upon how Christ is present in the ordinary, in the people we meet and in those we hold most dear. In other words, let us go from *Gospel to Life and Life to the Gospel*.

We invite you to come to know our Postulants more fully by reading their vocation testimonies on our website at www.FranciscanSistersTOR.org.

