

Newsletter # 10 – Franciscan Friars of Mary Immaculate (O.F.M.I.)

Sept., 1983 Saint Hyacinth Parish, Detroit (Poletown), Michigan.

NEWSFLASH!

HABEMUS EPISCOPUS! On July 15, 1983 we had the privilege of entertaining here at St. Hyacinth Parish the bishop of Gallup, New Mexico, the Most Reverend Jerome J. Hastrich, Spiritual Director of the National Blue Army. During that time I had the opportunity to talk with His Excellency about our group. It was not my intention to ask him to adopt us, however, not only because of its distance away from Michigan, but also because I felt it was not what we were looking for.

Yet, as often happens, God had other plans for us. While driving the good bishop to the airport on the following Sunday, the bishop proposed to me. It was a solemn moment even though it was in my car, Zosia. He asked me to come to Gallup, NM., establish our community, work amongst his own seminarians, and work jointly with the Franciscans already in his diocese.

On July 23rd, I wrote back to the bishop accepting his proposal on behalf of the group. It was with, I hope, prayerfulness and joyful willingness that I formally wrote to His Excellency. On that very same day, the bishop himself wrote a letter formally expressing his desire for us to come and work in his diocese. My letter of July 23rd arrived after he sent his and so he wrote again on July 30th, 1983 expressing satisfaction at our positive answer. He invited us down to Gallup to visit with him and to discuss our ideas with him. This visit we will arrange for the middle of November (23rd) during the Thanksgiving recess. This is the only possible time we can make it.

Before any move to New Mexico, much has to be done. I must write first to my provincial informing him of all that has happened. Then we must lay the groundwork for our work there, our adoption, and our legal status. This will take time. Meanwhile I will remain here in Detroit working at St. Hyacinth and directing the novitiate for tertiaries at Assumption rectory.

Needless to say, we are overjoyed that Our Lady has send us so good and holy a bishop as Bishop Hastrich. His reputation amongst orthodox Catholics is unequalled by any representative of the Hierarchy in the United States. He is Marian; he is absolutely orthodox, and he is not afraid to profess either. It can be no accident that God has answered our prayers. We now pray for the continued health of the bishop so that he may continue to direct our group for many years to come.

By the way, not that it is relevant or anything, but His Excellency is a Milwaukee boy just like I am. Of course, that hat to have counted little for the bishop.

We shall continue our prayers and penances for the intention of the bishop and for our community's success.

ANOTHER PROPOSAL?!

Last week I was lampooned by a number of persistent calls from a "Fr. Tom" whom I did not seem to know. Finally we both had a chance to talk after having our calls miss each other for a while. Fr. Thomas Charlton is from the east. He was phoning from Boston, so I presume he was from that area. He hit me with a very interesting proposition which I promised him that I would pass on to you gentlemen.

It seems that Fr. Tom is from a new group called the Rosarians which is a revival of a previously obscure and almost extinct congregation. I hope I am not in any way confusing the issue. Fr. Tom, coming from the east talked very fast. From what I gleaned from our conversations (several different times) his group is totally dedicated to the Fatima message, promoting it, living it, and spreading it. They recite the full fifteen decade rosary each day, have at least two hours of prayers, wear religious garb. Their community has a house in Italy about forty-five minutes away from Rome. They also have a bishop who is a member, I believe, of their community and who supports their efforts. This bishop lives in Rome and is an exile from Czechoslovakia. Somewhere I have his name written down. Their monastery is also a shrine of Our Lady of Mercy where Our Lady was once supposed to have appeared to a peasant two-hundred years ago. There are six members who have formed this society.

What Fr. Tom wanted from me was to invite me to plug in our group into his. In other words, he was inviting us to full union with his group, a merger, if you will. They are all Americans; Fr. Tom, besides the bishop, is the only priest. Presently, he is living a diocesan life until they begin to live together as a community. He was in Boston to contact other groups like ours to try to combine together to form one strong united group instead of piddly little groups. Fr. Tom listened patiently to me while I explained our goals, purposes and objectives. He said they perfectly match with those of his group. Yet, Fr. Tom wasn't too sympathetic with the idea of our group being founded along Franciscan lines. He claimed that his group also incorporated Franciscan ideals within its framework. Fr. Tom feels that to found a group today for the purpose of reform along Dominican or Franciscan (or any other existing order's) lines defeats the purpose of founding it at all! I informed Father that I was a Franciscan and that I took vows and will always remain Franciscan and that I would form our group along those ideals. In fairness, I promised that I would contact all of you soon.

Fr. Tom expressed the urgency with which the Fatima message should be adapted. He also felt that it was a waste of time to try to reform already existing groups from within. The only way to go was to unite as one group with all the other small, orthodox groups now being established into a brand new order.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

As I promised Father Thomas, I would like to bring this up to all of you. And I certainly would not stand in the way of anyone wishing to take Fr. Tom up on his proposal. Now you understand that the mere fact of allowing you to discuss this amongst yourselves is indicative of my philosophy of wanting to, trying to do God's holy Will? I am just here without any benefit of direct Divine Revelation hitting me over the head. Who am I to stand in the way of God's Will? I want whatever He wants. But until I know differently, I will continue to do what I, through my intellect, instincts, feelings, emotions, spiritual reflection – all of those – lead me to do.

PLEASE! PLEASE! GET BACK TO ME ABOUT WHAT YOUR THOUGHTS ARE. There is a lot to what Fr. Tom is presenting to us. In principle, it is better to have a united front of one strong group rather than all these small bands of good groups wandering around. Also, it is an advantage to have a bishop as head of the group and at its core of activity.

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, INSTINCTS ABOUT THIS?

MY OPINION

Let me summarize my thoughts:

- Our adapting a Franciscan idealism is a definite advantage:
 - Franciscans are known world-wide.
 - Franciscan charisms are as broad as the Church's needs.
 - Franciscan idealism can easily be identified, tested, proven and universal.
 - And finally, Franciscan traditions, idealism, and emphasis can be easily blended with the four pillars of all orthodox groups presently being founded: loyalty to the Church's teachings, loyalty to the Holy Father, love for Our Lady, and a life of penance.
- By forsaking our particular Franciscan identity, garb, and traditions, we lose out at readily identifiable means with which to implement these Fatima emphases in the world.
- Franciscans adopting the Fatima motif for their expression is very possible and most likely compatible, especially in its emphasis on poverty, which means "letting go" the world, the material things of life, the selfishness, and the use of sexual expression for our lives.
- The Fatima message is also a strong point. Not in the name of Fatima only but in actually implementing Our Lady's messages in Fatima and elsewhere: PRAYER! PENANCE! ROSARY & SCAPULAR(as a means)! EUCHARISTIC PIETY!
- All religious groups should be living these essentials, whether or not they come from Fatima, Lourdes, La Salette, or Yugoslavia.

Thus having summed up my objections, or rather, my observations, I would like to propose to them that they join us in

adopting a Franciscan flavor which is so universally known and loved. I do agree in essence that joining forces is good as a modus operandi as I had tried to join our group with the Franciscans of Sr. Miranda in New York. Perhaps Fr. Tom could retort that now is not the time to worry about petty provincialism of distinctions or designations of “Franciscan” or “Dominican”.

As you see, there are two sides to every story. I ONLY HOPE THAT I HAVE BEEN FAIR to this wonderful young priest who approached me with such sincerity and fervor. But what I have told you is essentially what I have tried to convey to Fr. Tom. In fact, I plan to send him a copy of our newsletter. Please pray for God's Will. If the majority of you feel inclined to explore his offer, please write and inform me. We haven't got anything decided as of yet. We are just in the embryonic stages of development so we may move in any direction. HELP US PLEASE!

PILGRIMAGE 1983

As you know our pilgrimage began on July 28th, 1983 and was successfully completed on August 20th, 1983.

We will have a fuller account of our impression and descriptions of our Pilgrimage, 1983 in succeeding newsletters. But for now, we would like to inform you of our itinerary.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Shrine/Activity</u>
July 26	U.S.A.	New York State	Visit to the shrine of Our Lady of Victory, Lackawanna, NY.
July 27	U.S.A.	West Point, NY.	Celebration of Mass at Catholic Chapel.
July 28	U.S.A.	New York City	Celebration of Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral.
July 29	Ireland	Claremorris	Celebration of Mass at Our Lady's church.
July 30	Ireland	Knock	Mass at the shrine of the apparition of Our Lady of Knock.
July 31	Ireland	Dublin	Mass at the Franciscan church of the Immaculate Conception.
Aug. 1	Ireland	Wexford	Historic Franciscan church, Mass and lodging. Also a visit to the tomb of the “Boy Martyr”.
Aug. 2	Travel day spent on ship		
Aug. 3	France	Paris-Rome	Mass celebrated at Franciscan Generalate.
Aug. 4	Italy	Rome	Pilgrimage for Holy Year officially begins at St. Peter's – Also visit to dozen other shrines. Notably the shrine of the “Weeping Virgin” where St. Maximilian Kolbe said first Mass.
Aug. 5	Italy	Rome	Pilgrimage to major basilicas of Rome: St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, Catacombs, Colosseum.
Aug. 6	Italy	San Vittorino	Mass at shrine of Our Lady, Father Gino's Mass, Fr. Gino's personal blessing, Mass at the prison of St. Peter and Paul in Rome.
Aug. 7	Italy	Assisi	Visit to San Damiano, the basilicas, St. Claire's incorrupt body, San Rufino.

Aug. 8	Travel day spent on train		Mass said for the last time at morning at Franciscans.
Aug. 9	France	Lourdes	Mass celebrated in open field, candle-light procession, Mass at basilica attended by all.
Aug. 10	France	Lourdes	Mass celebrated, Pilgrimage to grotto, basilicas; Mass concelebrated with bishops in basilica of Pius X, bath in Lourdes water, etc.
Aug. 11	France	Lourdes	Mass concelebrated with Polish priests at grotto.
Aug. 12.	Portugal	Fatima	Arrive in afternoon. Mass at Cloistered Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Perpetual Rosary. Grand Carmelite procession (250,000) at capella, Mass for all.
Aug. 13	Portugal	Fatima	Great feast of the 13 th : Mass concelebrated with ten bishops and dozens of priests, tens of thousands of people.
Aug. 14	Portugal	Fatima	Mass of investiture of Bro. Francis Solanus (Edward Gajewski) as our first Third Order Secular vocation. This was also the feast of St. Maximilian Kolbe.
Aug. 15	Portugal	Fatima	Another grand Mass of celebration with bishops and many priests for the feast of Our Lady's Assumption. Also visited: Jacinta and Francesco's house, Lucia's house, Angel's apparitions, July 19 th apparition site, Angel's well, via crucis, etc.
Aug. 16	Travel day on ship		Mass on ship.
Aug. 17	Ireland	Cork	Mass at Franciscan shrine in Cork.
Aug. 18-19	Travel day.		

ODDS AND ENDS

Below you will find how we have grown. Not everyone on our mailing list is really a potential member of our Franciscan community. But we have about 53 on our mailing list – interested parties – who want to be informed.

Detroit, City.....10	Necedah, WI.....1
Dearborn Heights, MI....1	Racine, WI.....1
Wyandotte, MI.....1	Sturtevant, WI.....1
Grosse Pointe.....1	Milwaukee, WI.....1
Grosse Pointe Shores.....1	Menomonee Falls, WI.....1
Essexville, MI.....1	<u>Beaver Dam, WI.....1</u>
Grand Lodge.....1	Wisconsin-----7
Ypsilanti.....1	
St. Clair.....1	Boston, MA.....1

Plymouth, MI.....	1	Wilbraham, MA.....	1
Allen Park, MI.....	1	<u>Metheun, MA.....</u>	<u>1</u>
Warren.....	1	<u>Massachusetts-----</u>	<u>3</u>
Orchard Lake.....	1	Lavalette, NJ.....	1
Oxford.....	1	Trenton, NJ.....	1
<u>Prescott, MI.....</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Somerville, NJ.....</u>	<u>1</u>
Michigan-----	25	New Jersey-----	3
West Covina, CA.....	1	Grant Park, IL.....	1
Orange, CA.....	1	Alexandria, IN.....	1
<u>Hacienda Heights.....</u>	<u>1</u>	Annandale, VA.....	1
California-----	3	Rochester, NY.....	1
Cardiff, Wales.....	1	Oregon, OH.....	1
Dublin, Ireland.....	1	Winona, MN.....	1
Rome, Italy.....	1	Denver, CO.....	1
Europe-----	3	Louisville, KY.....	1
		<u>Honolulu, HI.....</u>	<u>1</u>
		Other States.....	9

BRINGING THE TOTAL MEMBERS OF OUR ROSTER TO: 53

DUE TO THE SIZE OF OUR MAILING LIST WE MUST LIMIT OURSELVES TO THOSE WHO ARE TRULLY INTERESTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF OUR COMMUNITY. THEREFORE WE HAVE DROPPED ABOUT TEN MEN FROM OUR ROSTER DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE NOT RESPONDED TO OUR MAIL AND NEWSLETTERS. IF FOR SOME REASON YOU NO LONGER WISH TO REMAIN ON OUR ROSTER AND HAVE LOST INTEREST COMPLETELY PLEASE WRITE TO US SO THAT WE CAN ELIMINATE YOUR NAME THIS SAVING US A GOOD DEAL OF POSTAGE. IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU FOR QUITE A WHILE, WE WILL HAVE TO PRESUME THAT YOU HAVE LOST INTEREST I NOUR GREAT VENTURE. WE WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO STAY ON OUR SUBSCRIPTION LIST IF YOU HAVE A GENUINE INTEREST IN OUR COMMUNITY AND IF YOU WISH TO SUPPORT IT EITHER WITH PRAYERS OR YOUR ACTUAL PRESENCE SOME DAY. SO IF YOU HAVEN'T AS YET WRITTEN FOR A WHILE PLEASE DROP US A LINE.

We want very much to expand our newsletter to include articles, pictures and news items of interest to you. We are beginning to work on this at the moment. If you have any ideas please write.

Our next newsletter will contain a complete article on our pilgrimage and further developments on our proposals. Also will contain information about our novitiate program.

MY TWO CENTS

Well, this has been quite a significant newsletter. Not only one but two proposals were presented to all of the members of our venture. These two proposals have their pro's and con's. I am sure it will be interesting to hear from all of you about your own thoughts on the subject.

These are trying times for the Church of Christ. Yet despite all of the apparent abuses in the Church today, their accompanying dangers, and the mass confusion; these are exiting times. Exiting? Yes, exiting because of the true challenge they present to us.

Whatever these days may be, they are days in which cowards find much consolation. In fact, in no other times had the invitation of Christ to follow Him been so clear as in these. Some say that we are living in the "end times". Well, I am not certain about that. I believe in the theory of multiple fulfillment of prophecies given about the end times. This means that our generation can experience what may seem to it to be those apocalyptic days. We know neither the day nor the hour. We must content ourselves with with doing the Will of God and being prepared like the wise virgins who were found with their lamps still brightly burning when the Master returned to call them to the Wedding Feast.

In our attempt to religious life through this venture we hope to be like those vigilant virgins as we await our Master's return to bring us to His heavenly Eternal Banquet.

So, my little brothers, do not be afraid of those who can kill the body, but rather fear those (the evil one) who can kill the body and soul. If it is your wish to protect this precious gift of spiritual life in your soul, you must not be a coward. You must be willing to fight the good fight, run the race (as St. Paul the Good Apostle of the gentiles expresses it).

My prayer for you all is that God will give you the grace of Christian courage. For there is nothing as destructive of the human soul as fear; nothing as constructive as a free fearless spirit.