

St. Peter's Church



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*Franciscans of the
Sacred Heart Province*

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PASTORAL MUSINGS . . .

“I Firmly Resolve. . .”

(This week's Pastoral Musings . . . is offered by Fr. Thomas Nairn, O.F.M., Erica and Harry John Family Professor of Catholic Ethics at Catholic Theological Union)

When our pastor, Fr. Bill, asked me as the resident moral theologian here at St. Peter's to write some thoughts on new year's resolutions, it sounded like a simple task so I readily agreed. However, I usually don't make new year's resolutions. As I began trying to say something meaningful about them, I realized that the task is a bit more difficult than I originally thought. I now may make my own new year's resolution after all – to walk the other way when I see our beloved pastor approach!

The custom of such resolutions seems to go back to the Romans of the second century B.C. They named the first month of the year after the god Janus, the Roman god of gates and doors [the Latin word for door is *janua*] and of beginnings and endings. He was pictured with a double-faced head, each looking in the opposite direction. Thus January became the month to look back and to look forward, to evaluate the past and to make promises regarding the future. This practice obviously gave rise to our current custom of making new year's resolutions.

It was interesting to look at the statistics regarding new year's resolutions: About 40-45% of Americans make new year's resolutions each year. The most frequent new year's resolutions deal with personal betterment – to go back to school and to get a better job are the first and second most popular resolutions. These are followed by health related resolutions – to diet or to exercise or to quit smoking. These in turn are followed by other change-in-lifestyle resolutions,

such as getting better organized, living more simply, or improving (or changing) personal relationships.

Almost as popular as making new year's resolution is breaking them in the early weeks of the new year. Twenty-five percent of the resolutions are broken within the first week of January. Although sixty-four percent are still being kept after one month, this number goes down to forty-six percent after six months. Researchers, however, maintain that, even if we break resolutions, they still are important. According to one study, people who explicitly make resolutions are ten times more likely to attain their goals than people who don't explicitly make resolutions.

As interesting as these statistics may be, it seems to me, however, that new year's resolutions are a bit redundant for those who regularly come to St. Peter's. Resolutions are not something we make on New Year's Eve and then break a week later. A central ministry here at St. Peter's is the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation or confession. On weekdays, priests are in the confessional ten and a half hours each day. Part of this rite, echoed in the typical Act of Contrition that is prayed, is the sentiment that "I firmly resolve with the help of God's grace to sin no more." We are essentially making an important resolution each time we avail ourselves of the sacrament.

In describing the sacrament, the Church's official introduction to the rite of the Sacrament of Penance is clear: "True conversion is completed by acts of penance or satisfaction for the sins committed, *by amendment of conduct*, and also by the reparation of injury. The kind and extent of the satisfaction should be suited to the personal condition of each penitent so that each one may restore the order which he disturbed and through the corresponding remedy be cured of the sickness from which he suffered. Therefore,

it is necessary that the act of penance really be a remedy for sin and a help to renewal of life. Thus the penitent, 'forgetting the things which are behind him' (Philippians 3:13), again becomes part of the mystery of salvation and turns himself toward the future." Thus we become "Janus-like" every time we go to confession: We look back to see how well we have lived up to our responsibilities as Catholics and we look to the future in a continual process of conversion.

This process of conversion is part of the very structure of the sacrament. Again, as the official introduction to the rite asserts, "the penitent continues his conversion and expresses it by a life renewed according to the Gospel and more and more steeped in the love of God." We engage in this process of looking back and looking forward every time we make use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. So in a real way, there simply is no need for us to make new year's resolutions. Every time we make use of the Sacrament, we firmly resolve, with the help of God's grace to sin no more and to enter more and more fully into that conversion to which the sacrament calls us.

I don't think that this brief essay will keep people from making new year's resolutions, however. If you want to make a new year's resolution this year, I would like to suggest a particularly Franciscan resolution that is also related to the feast we will be celebrating on January 1. We gather on that day to celebrate the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "Called in the Gospels 'the Mother of Jesus,' Mary is acclaimed by Elizabeth, at the prompting of the Spirit and even before the birth of her son, as 'the mother of my Lord.' In fact, the One whom she conceived as man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father's eternal Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity. Hence the *(continued on page 4)*

Activities This Week**Monday, December 31**

Regular Daily Mass Schedule

Front Office Closed.

No Confessions or Mezzanine.

No Programs.

Book & Gift Shop Hours 10am - 2pm

Anticipated Mass: 5:00pm

Tuesday, January 1, 2008

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

(Holy Day of Obligation)

Mass: 10:00am

Church hours: 9am - 11am

No Confessions or Mezzanine

Front Office Closed. No Programs.

Gift & Book Shop Closed.

Wednesday, January 2

12:10 pm San Damiano SFO (FCh)

Thursday, January 3

12:00 pm AA (A)

12:10 pm Prayer Group (P)

Friday, January 4

12:10 pm Bible Study (C)

Key to Abbreviations

A/B/C: St. Clare Auditorium

CH: Church

P: St. Paschal Room

FCh: Friary Chapel

12- Step Meetings

AA: Thursdays at Noon (A)

WEEKEND PRESIDERS**Saturday, December 29**

5:00 pm - Fr. Bill Spencer

Sunday, December 30

9:00 am - Fr. Bob Hutmacher

11:00 am - Fr. Jim Perluzzi

12:30 pm - Fr. Bob Pawell

6:00 pm - Fr. George Musial

Ministry to Divorced and Separated -**Mondays: 12:10 - 12:50 pm in St. Clare****Auditorium (C)** This is a support group for divorced or separated who want to find recovery and reclaim peace in their heart and mind. No meeting December 24 or 31.**Meditative/Contemplative Prayer Group****Tuesdays: 11:40 am - 12:10 pm in the Friary****Chapel** - One-half hour of silent contemplative prayer followed by a short period of shared reflection and/or questions. The sessions begin and end promptly. All those with an interest in this prayer style are invited to participate.

Please be at the elevator near the security desk by 11:35 am to be escorted to the Friary Chapel.

Walking the Labyrinth and Wednesday Evening Meditative/Contemplative Prayer Group resume on January 9.**Bible Study - Friday: 12:10 - 12:50 pm in the St. Clare Auditorium (C)** Fr. Lawrence Jagdfeld, ofm, leads discussion on the Scripture readings for the coming Sunday. All are welcome.

You need not attend every week, but rather as you are able.



Happy New Year!

Franciscan Priests are available for consultation or spiritual direction.**Monday - Friday 10:30 am - 6:00 pm****No appointment is necessary.****Come to the Front Office in the lobby and we'll be glad to assist you.**

(*Pastoral Musings continued from page 2*) Church confesses that Mary is truly 'Mother of God'" (par 495).

One might ask what this has to do with the subject of new year's resolutions. The answer lies in a letter that St. Francis of Assisi wrote to all Catholics, his so-called "Letter to the Faithful." In that letter, St. Francis wrote: "We are mothers [of Christ] when we carry him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others." If we take a look at this short sentence, we see that St. Francis is calling us to engage in that process of conversion that I talked about earlier in these musings. Using the image of the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary, the saint speaks of three moments that he sees as the model for each of us as Christians.

The first moment is hearing the Word of God. Mary listened to the Angel Gabriel and heard it as truly being the Word of God. She responded, "Be it done unto me according to your word." Using Mary as an example, our new year's resolution might be that of becoming better listeners to God's Word. One of St. Francis's most important followers, St. Bonaventure, once said that we listen and become formed by the Word of God in the Bible so that we can listen and be formed by the Word of God as it comes to us in all Creation. The Bible disciplines us so that we can see all creation as the Word which God has spoken in Christ.

The second moment that St. Francis talks about is carrying the Word in our hearts and bodies "through divine love and a pure and

sincere conscience." Just as Mary carried the Word of God within her, we are also called to carry God's word within ourselves. But how do we carry God's Word? St. Francis is clear: We let the transforming power of God's Word change us. We continuously enter into the process of conversion.

Finally, St. Francis suggests that, just as the Word of God became flesh so many centuries ago, the Word must become flesh in us. Actually, the Word must become our flesh! St. Francis said that we in fact *give birth to Christ* by our activities and example. St. Francis himself was transformed by his understanding of the incarnation of Christ. He challenges each of us to allow Christ to become more real in the world today by the way we live our lives. In many ways this writing of St. Francis is similar to the words of St. Theresa of Avila several centuries later, who reminded us that we must be Christ's hands and feet. St. Francis asks us to in fact become the very mothers of Christ by doing in our rather imperfect ways what Mary accomplished by receiving the Word of God in faith and helping it to appear in flesh that first Christmas day. This is also the challenge for all of us who call ourselves the followers of Christ! This is the sort of new year's resolution that is worthy of us as Christians.

As I mentioned earlier, a new year's resolution that I might be able to keep is to try to avoid Fr. Bill in the new year, especially if he has more work for me to do. Whether or not you make, keep or break any resolutions, the friars here at St. Peter's wish all of you a happy and holy new year 2008!

~Fr. Tom Nairn, O.F.M

In the beginning was the Word, and
the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1

WORKING WITH THE SCRIPTURES

(Col. 3:12-21)

In many workplaces talking about “God”, “religion”, or even “spirituality” is frowned upon. In some it’s actually prohibited. But there are other words that are more acceptable – words like “compassion”, “kindness”, “humility”, “gentleness” and “patience”.

Employees are expected to be compassionate and to support the needs of their co-workers. When Beth lost her mother her boss told her to take as much time off as she needed. In doing so, Beth’s boss exhibited the quality of “compassion”.

And everyone knows that the workplace is a much more pleasant place to be when people are kind to one another. No one likes to be around someone who is constantly gossiping or pointing out the faults of other employees. If nothing else, it makes one wonder what that person is saying about *you* when *you’re* not around!

Humility can be a bit problematic, probably because so many people confuse it with being a doormat. Some people practice *false* humility when in reality they’re looking for compliments. Humility is actually honesty, and most of us would have to admit that it’s much easier to be with someone who acknowledges and uses their gifts but doesn’t go around “tooting their own horn” about them.

Gentleness can also be confused with timidity. But there is a real strength in gentleness. Anyone who has ever worked in Human Resources recognizes the importance of this quality.

And, finally, there is patience. Are we patient with those who are new in the workplace? Do we encourage them to learn from their mistakes? Or do we shout and yell, demanding that they know how to do everything right the first time?

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians he invites the people to put on “... heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience...”. But then he adds one more line. “And over all these put on love...”. When we do these things in love we know that God is truly present, even if our workplace discourages talking about religion, because God *is* love. So “... whatever you do ... do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus...” – even if you never say a word.

Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, December 30

Sir 3:2-14; Col 3:12-21; Mt 2:13-23

Monday, December 31

1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18

Tuesday, January 1

Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

Wednesday, January 2

1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28

Thursday, January 3

1 Jn 2:29-3:6; Jn 1:29-34

Friday, January 4

1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42

Saturday, January 5

1 Jn 3:11-21; Jn 1:43-51

Saints' Days and Special Observances

Sunday, December 30

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Monday, December 31

7th Day in the Octave of Christmas
St. Sylvester

Tuesday, January 1

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Octave of Christmas

Wednesday, January 2

Ss. Basil the Great &
Gregory of Nazianzen,
Bishops & Doctors of the Church

Thursday, January 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus

Friday, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

Saturday, January 5

St. John Neumann, Bishop

Vinal Van Benthem

Christmas Season Schedule

Feast of the Holy Family ~ Sunday, December 30

Mass: 9:00am, 11:00am (choir); 12:30pm; 6:00pm

New Years Eve ~ Monday, December 31

Church Hours: 5:30 am - 6:00pm

Mass of the Day: 6:15am, 7:15am, 8:15am, 11:40am, 12:15pm, 1:15pm
 Anticipated Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God: 5:00pm
 No Confessions or Mezzanine. Front Office Closed. No Programs
 Book & Gift Shop Hours: 10:00am - 2:00pm

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God ~ Tuesday, January 1, 2008

(Holy Day of Obligation)

Mass: 10:00am

Church Hours: 9:00am - 11:00am

No Confessions or Mezzanine. Front Office Closed. No Programs
 Book & Gift Shop Closed.

December 30, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During a visit to Mexico City in January, 1999, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II appealed to all Catholics in the Americas to take responsibility for our brothers and sisters throughout the hemisphere. In solidarity and compassion with those in Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America, the Committee on the Church in Latin America has chosen the theme for the 2008 collection, *Forming Disciples . . . Building One Church*.

Forming Disciples acknowledges that long-standing work of the Committee in providing financial assistance for the formation of priests, religious, catechists and lay ministers in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Building One Church* calls our attention, once again, to Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation, **The Church in America**.

On behalf of those who, while lacking financial resources, are blessed in faith and love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, please accept my gratitude for your generous support of this collection. God bless you.

Second Collection
 Church in Latin America
 Weekend of
 January 5 & 6, 2008

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
 Archbishop of Chicago

ST. PETER'S BOOK & GIFT SHOP



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Monday - Friday 8:30am - 6:00pm Phone (312) 853-2341

A Pilgrimage to Franciscan Italy with Fr. Bob Pawell, OFM

May 13 - 23, 2008

\$3,689 per person/ double occupancy

FLORENCE, ASSISI, PERUGIA, LA VERNA, ROME

For Information/Reservations call Fr. Bob Pawell (312) 853-2355



Flowers at the Shrines

A big *Thank You* to all of you who have brought flowers to St. Peter's for the various shrines. It is much appreciated and does much to enhance the beauty of the church. **Whenever you have flowers please drop them off at the Front Office with a note regarding at which shrine the flowers are to be displayed.** If you merely lay them at a shrine we may not see them and we would like to put them in an appropriate vase and keep them watered. Thank you again for the love and beauty you add to our church and worship.

Chiesa Nuova presents...

A Franciscan Christmas

Friday, December 28 at 7:00pm

Our annual holiday celebration that includes entertainment, our cherished Franciscan heritage and the usual abundance of rich holiday culinary fare. Reserve early because this one always fills up quickly!

\$25 per person

Reservations/Information: (312) 226-0983

Chiesa Nuova

A Franciscan Center for the Performing Arts

230 S. Laflin, Chicago

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed to St. Peter's collection this past week. Your gifts are essential to our ministry, and we are grateful.

The Sunday and Weekday Collection information is unavailable this week due to holiday bulletin deadlines. Updated information will be in the January 13 bulletin.

Some who visit St. Peter's are confused about our funding and think we are a supported ministry of the Archdiocese. Not so! The costs related to the 41 Masses, the 57 hours of Confession, and counseling from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM that we provide each week must be funded by those of you who grace our pews. The Friars are delighted to provide these and other services, but can only do so with your support—both prayerful and financial. Please be generous!

2008 WINTER PROGRAMS

Programs take place from 12:10 - 12:50pm in St. Clare Auditorium (basement)
Programs open to everyone. No registration required. Free-will offering.

What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life by *Thomas H. Groome*

A Book Study with Fr. Bob Pawell, OFM

Tuesdays: January 8 - February 19

This book is written for all Catholics, and for anyone interested in the distinct nature of Catholic Christianity. It encourages the reader to bring faith to life and life to faith, because that is at the core of what makes people Catholic Christians - faith at work. Each chapter begins with a story about an essential ingredient of Catholic identity and ends with questions for reflection and suggestions of supporting practices. The author draws upon the core convictions of contemporary Catholic Christianity and its rich tradition to weave a way of believing that has universal appeal, offering a fresh horizon that nurtures spirituality for all.

Please bring a copy of the book with you to all sessions. Available for purchase in the St. Peter's Gift & Book Shop for \$14.95 (+tax).

The Meaning of the Tau Cross of St. Francis with *Fr. Bob Pawell, OFM*

Monday, January 31

The Tau Cross is universally associated with St. Francis of Assisi and Franciscan men and women whether they be friars, religious sisters or lay men and women drawn to the life and teaching of the Poverello. But, how did Francis come to adopt this ancient version of the cross and what meaning did the Tau hold for him? And what meaning might it have for us here and now?

Medieval Images of Jesus: The Church, Doctrines and Communities that Shaped Them

with *Amanda Quantz, Ph.D.*

Mondays: January 28, February 4, 11

Throughout most of Church history, doctrinal developments and social conventions shaped our images of Jesus. This lecture series focuses on reading, understanding and engaging the visual representations of Jesus that developed during the thousand year period of the Middle Ages. Among the many themes we will explore are: Jesus as a child, Good Shepherd, divine ruler and suffering servant. Theological narratives include variations on the infancy and passion sequences, parables, resurrection, Trinity and the eschaton (end time). In each segment we explore the major influences that shaped the Church's visual representations of Jesus.

January 28 - The Early Middle Ages (500 - 1000)

In this segment we see how the marriage of Church and State transformed earlier catechetical images of Jesus in a way that reflected the formal alliance between the Roman Pope and the elite rulers of what is today Western Europe.

February 4 - Transitional Middle Ages (c.1000 - 1200)

This lecture discusses why an increasingly affluent, educated Church desired a new set of Christological images. It also draws a connection between the images of Jesus that belong to this period and trade with the Christian East, the Crusades and the early Franciscan movement.

February 11 - Late Middle Ages (c. 1200 - 1500)

In this era the theology of the Eucharist reached a pinnacle, as did the Church's teaching about sin, salvation, penance and the intercessory role of Mary. Our final session examines how the sophisticated theology and boundless wealth of the Late Medieval Church shaped the Christological images of this era.

RSVP: God's Invitation to the Banquet

A One Day Retreat at St. Peter's Church on Saturday, February 2, 2007

11:00am - 7:00pm

God invites us to a great banquet each week at the Sunday Liturgy. Most of the time we come from our busy lives, attend Mass, and are not prepared to enjoy the richness of God's presence in the Word and Eucharist. This retreat invites participants to reflect on the Sunday Readings and Eucharist. We will use background information for Scripture. This will help shed light on what God is speaking to us in each of the Readings. We will also draw on the spirituality of St. Clare of Assisi to help us expand our appreciation of the gift of the Eucharist that is ours each week. Participants will attend the 5:00pm Mass after which we will gather for dinner and closing reflections.

Cost of the retreat is \$60 per person (includes retreat materials, light snacks and dinner) - due by January 28, 2008. Register before January 21 for a \$10 discount/\$20 discount to students with I.D. Non-refundable payment must accompany each registration. To register contact Fr. Paul Gallagher (312) 928-1252; email frpaul.stpeter@yahoo.com or Linda Jamrozy (312) 853-2376. (Brochures available in the lobby.)

Retreat facilitators: **Fr. Paul Gallagher, ofm and Sr. Anne Marie Lom, osf**

Fr. Paul Gallagher, ofm, is on staff at St. Peter's as coordinator of Young Adult Ministry, sacramental minister and confessor. He also offers spiritual direction and is organizing mission trips.

Sr. Anne Marie Lom, osf, is a Franciscan Sister of Charity. Several years of her ministry has been in elementary and secondary education. She presently serves as Spiritual Director at St. Raphael Parish in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Fr. Paul and Sr. Anne Marie have presented numerous retreats together.

Living Peace: A Peace Making Study

The Living Peace Retreat held in November was well received and those who participated wish to continue the study of becoming peace-makers. The group will meet on Saturday afternoons in January (12 & 26) and February (9 & 23) from 3:00pm- 5:00pm in the St. Clare Auditorium.

New participants are welcome. You need not have attend the retreat to participate.

The study will involve reading of selected material (to be read prior to each meeting date), discussion of the material as it relates to the Gospel and action of Jesus, some peace-making exercises, and sharing of conclusions.

The material to be read prior to the January 12 study can be obtained in the Front Office or from Br. Fabio Lamour, ofm. Contact him at (312) 372-5111 or e-mail at brfabio07@yahoo.com. Please obtain the material no later than January 8. Subsequent material will be distributed at each session.

SLICE OF FAITH - Young Adult Group

Young Adults (college age, 20's and 30's) are invited to gather on **Thursday, January 3** from **5:30 - 6:30 pm** in the **St. Clare Auditorium** (basement of St. Peter's) for prayer and discussion to help you understand and grow in your Catholic faith; and to share your struggles and triumphs with other young adult Catholics. Social activities and community outreach projects are also discussed. For more information contact Mary Beth Sivak at mb_sivak81@yahoo.com or Fr. Paul Gallagher at frpaul.stpeter@yahoo.com or (312) 628-1252. **Please note corrected date!!!!**

STRESS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Dr. Jerry Hiller & Marilynn Rochon, M.A., LCPC

Wednesdays: January 16 - March 5, 2008

12:10 - 12:55 pm /St. Clare Auditorium

(basement of St. Peter's Church)

Suggested Donation - \$5 per Session



We spend a lot of money on technology and try to “upgrade” our lives. Come and learn human technology that improves stress and relationships. Spend your lunch time learning practical, common sense, life-giving psychology that helps you develop human capital; coping with less wear and tear, balancing, and doing what you really want to do/bearing fruit/ vocation.

January 16 - Stress and Relationships - Increasing acute and chronic stress affects relationships in every area of our lives. Learn 7 stress tools for managing these relationships in a healthier way.

January 23 - Stress, Relationships and Toxic Environments - How do toxic environments influence stress and relationships? Distinguish external from internal stressors.

January 30 - Stress and Home-Work Balance- The incredible duties of home and work stress us a lot. Learn a healthier form of “duty” that results in more self-efficacy and fewer guilt feelings.

February 13 - Stress and Your Relationship with Yourself - How we manage our daily hassles and life transitions affect us for better or for worse. Learn how to motivate yourself and increase self-acceptance and self-worth.

February 20 - Stress and the Family: Stress of the Present Ignites Old Dysfunctional Patterns - How do present stressors ignite past and present family relationships. How can we modify old patterns that keep exacerbating the stress we already have?

March 5 - Stress and Our Relationship with God - a la Francis of Assisi - Francis of Assisi introduced a new set of relationships for humans: God and creation. Learn some spiritual tools of St. Francis.

Attend all session of the series or only those which your schedule allows.
No Registration Required. Bring your lunch.

Repair My House aims to decrease anxiety and depression, and increase resiliency & balance by combining the life-giving ways of St. Francis of Assisi and the interpersonal tools and practical psychology of Dr. Alfred Adler. **COME AND SEE WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!**

“Francis, go and repair my house, for as you can see it is in ruins.”

God's call to Francis in 1205