



MISSION MATTERS

monthly



No. 4 Vol. 5 | January 1, 2024 | Staff/BOT Edition

BLESSED MARY ANGELA SAYS: (Foundress of the Felician Sisters)

"A community spirit does not happen of itself. It flows from people who share a common tradition and strive for a common goal outside themselves."

CATHOLIC Q&A

Hope in the New Year
from Fr. Mike Schmitz

Click [here](#) for the answer

INTERFAITH CALENDAR

Click [here](#) for more information

01/01: Mary, Mother of God - Catholic Christian
01/01: Feast Day of St. Basil - Orthodox Christian
01/01: Shogatsu/Gantan-sai (New Year) - Sikh
01/05: Guru Gobindh Singh birth - Sikh
01/06: Epiphany - Christian
01/07: Feast of the Nativity - Orthodox Christian
01/08: Feast of the Holy Family - Catholic Christian
01/13: Maghi - Sikh
01/18: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
01/30: Mahayana New Year - Buddhism

ANNUAL WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

By: Fr. James Loughran, SA

Graymoor Ecumenical & Inter religious Institute is pleased to announce the international scriptural theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18 – 25, 2024: "You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27)

This year's theme comes through the combined efforts of the Pontifical Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, the World Council of Churches and the Christian churches of Burkina Faso. Much of the coordination of this ecumenical project was done by the community of Chemin Neuf, a French Catholic and ecumenical community of vowed and lay people, particularly through their local community in Burkina Faso, a country in the Sahel region of West Africa.

Luke 10:25-37 tells the story of how Jesus is asked by a lawyer, "What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" and Jesus responds, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" The lawyer responds, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Then Jesus says to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But then in order to justify himself, the lawyer says, "And who is my neighbor?" which leads Jesus to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan.

It is a theme rich in charity, mercy, justice and unity. We hope it will facilitate powerful ecumenical prayer and homilies in the 2024 commemoration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Click [here](#) to learn more.

The Franciscan Contribution to our Understanding of Work

Ed Zablocki, SFO

"Let them esteem work as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption and service of the human community."

What is the Franciscan contribution to a Christian understanding of work? If we could only convey that understanding using a single word it would be "gift." Work is a gift! Work is a gift? Now only a moment's thought should lead you to conclude that St. Francis had a perspective on work that was uncommon (should that surprise us?) Have you ever thought of work as a gift? The song writer who penned the words "you can take this job and shove it" certainly didn't. My son, named after the Poverello, is now doing the dinner dishes and I can assure you that the idea that this activity is a gift is nowhere to be found in his adolescent mind.

While St. Francis' understanding of work as gift is counter intuitive to most of us it is very consistent with his Christ-centered world view. For him, all of creation was a gift of the heavenly Father through his Son. "Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him." (John 1:3) Francis perceives "a world that is seen and received as gift." Click [here](#) to read full article.



OUR CORE VALUES

Respect for
Human Dignity



Compassion



TRANSFORMATION



Solidarity with
People in Need



Justice
and Peace

2023-2024 Focus

TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITY - A VILLA COMMUNITY PARTNER PROFILE: Little Portion Friary

The Little Portion Friary was started in 1982 when Deacon John G. and the Rev. Alexius realized that homeless men and women needed a homelike setting and a sense of personal involvement with individuals who cared about them.

They envisioned a setting in which people from all walks of life would bring their talents and gifts, working anonymously and quietly, to help those in need. As they shared their vision and passion for this work, others responded. The Sisters of St. Francis, for example, provided furniture, bedding, and willing workers. Family members, co-workers, church groups and others responded generously. The Diocese of Buffalo provided the building, first as a rental and ultimately for a nominal selling price.

The name comes from the early history of the Franciscans. In the 13th century, St. Francis of Assisi, wishing to own nothing in this world, yet needing, a home for his growing community of friars, leased a little church called St. Mary of the Portiuncula, which literally means Little Portion.

To Francis, the name represented the poverty, humility, and simplicity that he wished for himself and his followers. For Buffalo's Little Portion, the name reflects a commitment to St. Francis' ideals and hope of allowing our lives, in little ways to touch and be touched by the lives of others.

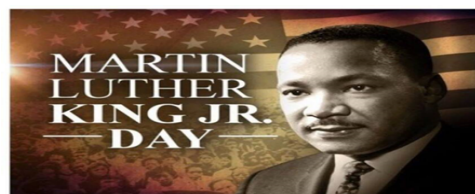
From the beginning, the endeavor has been blessed by those eager to serve and to share. Some have come to clean and to paint. Others donate time to do paperwork, to greet guests at the door, to cook meals, to do laundry. Often donors have arrived at the door with exactly what was needed.

With over 35 years, the Little Portion Friary continues to bring together workers, donors, and guest in an effort to meet the basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing, but also to see that each guest takes his or her own steps toward a more stable life. Click [here](#) to go to their website.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY 2024

On Monday, January 15th our nation celebrates the life and teachings of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Click [here](#) to learn more about this amazing man.



NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK JANUARY 28- FEBRUARY 3, 2024

Catholic School statistics in the United States for the 2022-2023 school year are as follows:

- *There are 5,920 Catholic schools operating today
- *4,746 of these are elementary schools, and 1,174 are secondary schools
- *Total enrollment in Catholic schools is 1,693,417
- *The highest enrollment is in elementary schools at 1,174,744 students
- *There are 521,749 students enrolled in secondary schools
- *There are 230 Catholic Colleges & Universities
- *They have a total enrollment of over 700,000

Learn more at the [National Catholic Education Association](#) and the [Association of Catholic Colleges & Universities](#)



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www.villa.edu

The Felician Sisters of Our Lady of Hope Province:

Click [here](#) for more
information

The Association of Franciscan Colleges & Universities:

Click [here](#) for more
information and
resources

Sister Mary Josette Food Pantry:

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Villa Maria College is a Felician Sponsored Ministry

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