

THE FRUIT OF SERVICE IS JOY

by Emma Lozowsky, OFS

If we are truly seeking what the Lord wants for us, we will come to the conclusion that Joy is His dream for His followers. Not fleeting happiness, not momentary bliss, but something deeper, more profound, more lasting. Of course, Eternal Joy is only going to be ours once we enter His Kingdom, but joy is available to us already. St. Francis taught us about "perfect joy," what we can attain by conquering ourselves, subjugating our egos to a higher good. This is a difficult task for many of us, but with practice and discipline and profound faith in God, it can be attained. Something that is more immediately available is the joy experienced as the fruit of service. The Psalmist exhorts us to, "Serve the Lord with Gladness! Come into his presence with singing!" (Psalm 100: 2) If service were all drudgery and hard work, nobody would be singing while serving.

The parable of the Talents in Matthew's Gospel is another source where we can hear about how joy and service are related. A man going on a long journey gave some talents to his servants. When he returned, he settled accounts with each. "And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'" (Matthew 25:20-21) The reward of this servant's faithful service was entering into his Master's Joy.

The word talent has two different meanings. In the old days, talents were coins. Now we also understand talent as "charism," some gift of personality, disposition, or ability that is given to a person so they can use it for the good of all. The work of the servant in the parable was not forced upon him; he voluntarily used what he had—his ability to trade with the coins. He produced a profit for his Master and, as a result, joy for himself.

Discernment is at the heart of the action of this servant. He knew what he could do, and he confidently made profitable trades. We might look at his example and say, "I would have never been able to trade and produce a profit!" I say this when I look at my retirement account, which I entrusted to an ethical financial professional. Maybe trading at the stock market is not for me, but there are other things I can do. As Secular Franciscans, it's a daily call for us to continue to discern and confidently walk forward, converted. Daily we are to turn farther and

farther away from our sins and bad habits and to turn closer and closer to God. Choosing a new opportunity to serve might be a great way to draw closer to God.

The National Executive Council is composed of brothers and sisters who have been given certain talents that they willingly put at the service of others. They have somehow balanced in their lives service to the Order with other responsibilities they have. Tibor Kauser, Minister General of the OFS, remarked,

"Grace and sacrifice go hand in hand. Each sacrifice will bring fruits of grace. As we are serving not only on Sunday afternoon, but every day, family life, professional work and service in the OFS have to be brought together. I have experienced both the sacrifice and also the grace in all these three, receiving the grace from the hands of God in one of these, when I had to experience the sacrifice in others. This is the holy balance of God, which has been nourishing me and enriching me every day, day by day."

The nourishment and enrichment Tibor talks about is the joy that is the fruit of service. May we open our minds and hearts, discern, and courageously walk forward and accept the call to the service that we have talents for.

National Elective Chapter date and location:
Saturday, October 15, 2022,
Detroit, Michigan

Positions to be filled are:

National Minister **National Vice Minister**
National Secretary **National Treasurer**
National Councilor 1 **National Councilor 2**
National Councilor 3
International Councilor

Please send your nomination (NAME, ADDRESS, ZIP CODE, EMAIL ADDRESS) either via electronic e-mail or via snail-mail to **both:**

Joan Geiger, OFS

E-mail: geigerjmm@hotmail.com

AND

Emma Lozowsky, OFS

E-mail: ofs.minister.prairie@gmail.com

All professed members may make nominations.

2022 OFS-USA Chapter of Elections

The OFS-USA (National Fraternity) will hold its Chapter Oct. 11-16, 2022 in Detroit, Michigan.

This Chapter will also be a Chapter of Elections for the next National Executive Council.

There is room for observers.

Observers are responsible for paying for lodging, meals and transportation.

If you would like to attend as an observer, please contact Jane DeRose-Bamman OFS, National Secretary, at ofsusasecretary@gmail.com or 505-228-6851 for information on registering.

The registration deadline is August 29, 2022.



St. Francis



St. Clare



Mother Magdalen Damen

THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT SERVING THE COMMUNITY

This Tau Cross Monument is located at the entrance of the Marian Regional Medical Center in Santa Maria, California, and is quite visible to the surround community. The hospital's history began in 1940 when, in response to a call for health care services in the community of Santa Maria, the Sisters of St. Francis founded Our Lady of Perpetual Help Hospital. It was their unwavering mission to further the healing ministry of Jesus that guided the Sisters to serve their community.



THE TAU MONUMENT

As a symbol of faith, love and hope, the Tau Cross Monument will remain a significant symbol in the architecture and landscape of Marian Regional Medical Center.

The Tau Cross, which serves as a tribute to the healing ministry and presence of the Sisters of Saint Francis, the founders of Marian, is located on each of the three sides at the top of the Monument. At the base of the Tau Monument are three statues: Saint Francis, the founder of the Franciscan Order; Saint Clare, who followed and continued the ministry of Saint Francis; and Mother Magdalen Damen, the Foundress of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Penance and Christian Charity.

The Tau Monument will forever serve as a symbol of gratitude to the Sisters of Saint Francis for their visionary leadership, dedication, and service to the people of the Santa Maria Valley.