

## Part 2: Article 7/Rooted in Scripture

**\*Our Formation tells us that Article 7 of our Rule focuses on our lives as  
“Brothers & Sisters of Penance”**

**\*As we look at Article 7, let’s think about:**

- Each of us has our own “Personal Conversion Story”
- Each Fraternity has its own story of Conversion

**\*\*\*READ ARTICLE 7\*\*\***

**I want to share 2 personal “AHA Moments” that I had this past Lent that really helped me  
Deepen my understanding of this Article:**

1. From Fr. Dan Crosby. from a Lenten Reflection at the Solanus Casey Center in Detroit.

**Fr. Dan offered this definition of conversion:**

**“Conversion is becoming who we really are & remembering who we really belong to”**. This is so beautiful, I’m going to repeat it....

**\*As WE become more deeply rooted in scripture, we allow ourselves, “to become who we really are as we remember who we really belong to” and this we know, is a life-long-process. Fr. Dan told us that Even Blessed Solanus Casey said this near the end of his life,**

**“Please pray for me; I am only half converted.” Like us, Blessed Solanus saw conversion as a life-long-process. After Jesus sent out the Apostles**

**after His Resurrection, we see, over time, the Apostles becoming closer & closer to who they really were and to whom they really belonged. Their lives became Sacred Scripture.**

2. My 2<sup>nd</sup> AHA Moment- came from a Lenten Homily@The Capuchin Retreat Center. Pope Francis tied together the Feast of the Annunciation & Confession.

**Mary said, “Yes” and the “word became flesh”**

**We, too, are invited to say “YES” to service. Our Fraternities are invited to say “YES” to a Fraternity Apostolate. We are called to be transformational, just like Mary. Our Fraternity Apostolates are called to be transformational.**

**For the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Pope Francis invites us to imagine THIS as we enter confession: AS WE COME TO JESUS, WE RISE!**

**AS WE COME TO JESUS, in confession, we say “Yes” to the Risen Christ. This “Yes” allows us to heal, and as we heal, we live more fully in God’s Love. Then we become more able to bring the Gospel to life. What we say “Yes” to, invites our lives to become Sacred Scripture! We’re also invited to let the life of our Fraternity become Sacred Scripture!**

**(Share Examination of Conscience based on the Beatitudes which I got from Br. George’s Facebook page!)**

**\*Often the conversion story of our Fraternity becomes integrated with our own story of conversion.**

**We hear from John 17:20-26 and I am paraphrasing here....**

**[God will provide mothers, fathers, sisters & brothers, and in God, we are all one]**

**\*Let's look at this through our own story of conversion. The Holy Spirit speaks to each of us in a very intimate way. Reflect & ask yourself:**

**"Who has touched you & brought you closer to God?"**

**"What experiences have pierced your heart & brought you closer to God?"**

**Sometimes it's someone from our Fraternity who brings us closer to God.**

**Sometimes it's an experience from Fraternity that brings us closer to God.**

**Fraternity Apostolates often provide powerful experiences that bring us closer to God; experiences that deepen our relationships with each other. Experiences that create meaningful relationships with those we reach out to. We learn we all serve each other.**

**We all have our own personal "Yeses" and we all have a sacred "Yes" in common: We all said "Yes" to become Secular Franciscans in Fraternity...**

**\*I'll share a personal "Yes" with you. A "Yes" that also became integrated with my Fraternity...**

**I said "Yes" to volunteering at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen 15 years ago at "On the Rise Bakery" and in their Art Therapy program for children living on the East Side of Detroit. As I look back on those 15 years, I realize more fully, that my personal service was also embraced & supported by my life in Fraternity. The support from my Fraternity helped keep me going when things got tough. Our Fraternity relationships are Life Giving and flow out into the world.**

**Going back to Fraternity**

**\*I think of the spirituality of St. Clare when I say this: "Our life in Fraternity should mirror the scriptures." Our relationships in Fraternity are sacred and we're brought together by our Profession. Hopefully, folks who look at us in Fraternity from the outside can say, "Look how they love each other!". As we strive to love each other as St. Clare and her sisters did in San Damiano, we become Christ like servants to each other. Grounded in Fraternal relationship, our Fraternity Apostolates can be so impactful, so transformational.**

**Our life in Fraternity should help us bring the Spirit of the Living Christ into all we do: In Fraternity, in Fraternity Apostolates, in our families, our work, our parishes, our friendships, our personal outreach. One flows into and feeds the other. And as I say all this, let's remember what Mother Teresa says, "If you want to change the world, go home and love your family first"**

I'm reminded of the story of the 3 Wise Men from Matthew 2:1-12.

[What did the 3 Wise Men do on cloudy nights? (We all know life in Fraternity isn't always Easy). The 3 Wise Men relied on "the light of each other". In Fraternity, as we bring "light" to each other, we lead each other to Christ. We're inspired to reach out in service].

This reminds me of a personal story of my "Franciscan sister", Kathy Carsten....

At the beginning of the Pandemic, I lost my Father to Covid. This quickly became a "dark, cloudy time" for me.

Every time I reached out to Kathy, which was many, she was there. Kathy listened. More importantly, Kathy listened with love. Her loving & compassionate presence brought more "light" into my life than she'll ever know. Kathy's "light" allowed me to navigate the early days of losing my Father. Kathy's "light" allowed me to carry on and to bring that same light to my Mother.....at that time, my service became taking care of my Mother in her grief. At that time, when it came to me supporting my Fraternity's Apostolate, I learned there's always a creative way to be supportive.

Let's not underestimate the sacredness of our relationships in Fraternity. God offers His love, compassion, mercy and peace through each other. As we go through life's ups and downs together, we help each other heal and gently move each other's conversion stories forward.

A LOT has happened in the past two years. Many of our lives have taken unexpected turns. Some Fraternities weren't able to meet much during the Pandemic. Some of us were able to keep things going with Zoom. I used to think "zooming" was my Golden Retriever running like crazy around the house! Now, my Golden Retriever looks at me when I'm on a "Zoom Meeting and his eyes seem to be saying, "Who on earth are you talking to? And who is talking to you!"

Whatever your situation, now is a great opportunity to reflect and to look at things with a new set of eyes.

Perhaps these are some questions you can take into your prayer time:

\*Where are you in your conversion story?

\*How has your Fraternity changed in the last few years?

\*How is the Holy Spirit guiding your Fraternity at this time?

\*What's working? \*Any changes need to be made?

\*What is your Fraternity Apostolate? Is a new Apostolate needed? How can everyone be involved?

Like Elizabeth of Hungary, let's allow ourselves to become more deeply rooted in scripture. Let's allow ourselves to step out of our comfort zones and open our hearts even wider. Let's be bold, let's be creative. Spring ushers in the perfect time to be open to growth!

[Story of my Student Council reaching out in a meaningful way to the needs of our local Community. Broke down into small groups & brainstormed. They concluded that it wasn't fair that children living quick car ride away from them should be living in extreme poverty. They decided to tackle the issue of homelessness in Detroit and formed a partnership with The Capuchin Soup Kitchen. Their response led them in very unexpected and life altering ways.....]

I want to close by saying:

Let us love each other as St. Clare and her sisters at San Damiano.

We're inspired to reach out in service as a Fraternity in very meaningful and needed ways....

\*We can all challenge ourselves & our Fraternities to adopt ways of "taking care of our Common Home: Thank you Mary for giving us a deeper understanding of Laudito Si.

\*Each of us can create a Fraternity Apostolate that works for your Fraternity

Before the Pandemic, my Fraternity's Apostolates were:

Supporting the Hospitality Ministry at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Detroit

Supporting Youth at Nativity Parish in Detroit at their annual "Trunk or Treat"

Annual Christmas Bird Seed distribution to help the birds celebrate Christmas

Discovering Each Other Events where folks are invited to learn how others are leading the way in word & example as messengers of Peace. Our first was with an Imam.

No matter how we reach out in service, here's a few questions we should be asking ourselves

\*Do we see ourselves in tune with the "norms of society" or do we see ourselves, like Jesus, in tune with the Beatitudes?

\*Do we bring love, compassion and reconciliation to everyone?

\*Do we bring a firm stand for restorative justice in response to the other:

the refugee, the poor, the sick

those marginalized by unjust power structures, those impacted by war & violence,

those who don't have access to clean water, education, food, medical care, etc.

Being Rooted in Scripture sparks the light that God's already placed in each of us

Being Rooted in Scripture sparks the light that God's already placed in each of our Fraternities

As we embrace each other and say "Yes" to the Holy Spirit

Let's go forth and rebuild God's wounded world, stone by living stone

And as we do this, we become who we really are and we remember who we really belong to....

