



The Tau Signature

Tau Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order – Herndon, Virginia
St. Margaret of Cortona Region

September 2015



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Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I hope you each have had a wonderful summer. It feels like summer has flown by so quickly and fall will be upon us before we know it. Even though times seem to go by more quickly as I get older, I remind myself to take the time to slow down and embrace the graces that God blesses me with every day. I encourage each of you to do the same. It may be something as simple as being able to see a beautiful sunrise or sunset or something greater such as being able to share your faith with someone with whom you interact. I had one of those moments yesterday (which happened to be the feast of St. Clare). In my day job I am not allowed to discuss religion (though I make exceptions if someone else brings it up first) because of the constitutional separation of church and state. That does not mean I don't pray at work – I have many reasons at work to pray! Yesterday I had a young adult in front of me who had recently moved into a new family placement. The young man was describing the father figure as a man of deep faith and few words (as part of the discussion of the young man's church and upcoming mission trip overseas). I told him that the foster father reminds me of something my favorite saint used to say "Preach the Gospel, when necessary use words." We then had a discussion about actions speaking much louder than words and living one's faith through action. I feel so blessed to have been able to have the conversation with the young man and I do not think it is a coincidence that it occurred on the Feast of St. Clare. I pray that God will bless each of you with similar graces and blessings in your daily lives. I look forward to seeing each of you at our next meeting on September 6.

Peace and blessings, Pamela Brooks, OFS

Recap of 2 August 2015 Meeting

Opening/Formation:

We started with our opening prayer, followed with a reading by Gail Dowling. Thereafter, grace was said before our meal/social time. At 2 o'clock, Bob Calderon led the ongoing formation discussion of Chapters 1 & 2 of our new book Catching Fire, Becoming Flame. Unfortunately, we ran over the time limit and Bob advised that we

will cover Chapter 3 at our next meeting along with newly assigned Chapters 4-6.

Presentation:

Terry Rinker gave a presentation titled “Who is Melchizedek?” To begin, he passed out 3x5 index cards asking members to write down their responses to three questions:

Who is Melchizedek?

In how many books of The Bible is he mentioned?

What are the names of those books?

Terry advised that the greater portion of his research on Melchizedek was gathered from the Internet. Outside of the potentially faulty facts compiled on the ubiquitous Wikipedia website offering, he announced that he found the website of Catholic Exchange (CE) to be the most informative. It can be found at <http://catholicexchange.com>. It would be beneficial to learn from the experts in our community how trustworthy the facts are on this site. Following are the three articles that Terry found most interesting:

“Who is Melchizedek?” from the 6 February 2003 issue was authored by the CE editors themselves. The editors remarked that “the Catholic Church does rule out that Melchizedek was a non-human person, e.g., an angel or manifestation of the Holy Spirit. However, the Biblical text does not provide clarity on Melchizedek’s identity, and the Church does not provide a definitive pronouncement otherwise...We don’t know the name of this Biblical person because ‘Melchizedek’ is not a name but a title, meaning ‘king of righteousness.’ In the Bible he is only identified as a high priest of God and by his royal title.” There is much scholarly conjecture presented, but in short the article identifies Melchizedek appearing in three books of the Bible: Genesis, Psalms, and Hebrews.

“The Order of Melchizedek” from the 26 June 2013 issue by Fr. Kyle Schnippel states that we are introduced in Genesis 14 to Melchizedek who is described as “Priest of God Most High.” Subsequently, Melchizedek is “identified in Psalm 110 and extensively reflected upon in the Letter to the Hebrews.” Despite that, Fr. Schnippel notes that “Melchizedek remains an elusive figure in the Scripture. Fr. Schnippel continues: “Even so, he appears in the Roman Canon at Mass; today’s priests are ordained to ‘the Order of Melchizedek’; and his appearance in Genesis forms the basis of some of our theology of the priesthood.” Most importantly, he points out that Melchizedek offered a sacrifice of bread and wine, “now fulfilled in Christ to be His very Body and Blood.”

Melchizedek is highlighted as a mystery in “Six Great Mysteries of the Bible” from an article dated 8 August 2013 in CE submitted by Stephen Beale. Mr. Beale asks “Where did Melchizedek come from?” He answers his own question: “Seemingly out of nowhere, Melchizedek bursts onto the scene in Genesis 14, venturing out from the city of Salem – a possible precursor to Jerusalem—to bless Abraham and offer a sacrifice of ‘bread and wine.’ Mr. Beale continues that “Later Scripture raises more questions than answers. In Hebrews 7:3 we read that Melchizedek was ‘without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but likened to the Son of God, continues a priest forever.”

Terry found it worthy to note a couple of points, including the fact that Melchizedek in addition to the Roman Catholic Church, is venerated in Judaism, Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodox Churches, Anglican Communion, Mormonism, Lutheranism, Ismailism, and Theosophy. Lastly, the feast day for Melchizedek in the Roman Catholic Church is 26 August.

Trappist Monk Diary Extract

Brother Walter Gawlak submitted an item to share with the fraternity. It is an entry from the diary of Trappist Monk Thomas Merton. Walter commented that it provides what he feels are profound insights into how to understand the Gospels. He added that it seems to complement our recent study of the New Testament. It follows:

“Pious Abbe Fillion suggests that, when we are stumped and cannot find out the meaning of a passage of Scripture, we ought to pray to the ‘sacred author,’ that is, to whomever it was that served as God’s instrument in writing the work. The suggestion appeals to me, for I have a great though confused affection for the writers of the Bible. I feel closer to them than to almost any other writers I know of. Isaiah, Job, Moses, David, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are all part of my life. They are always about me. They look over my shoulder, earnest men, belonging to the façade of a medieval cathedral. I feel they are very concerned about me and that they want me to understand what God told them to write down, that they have always surrounded me with solicitous prayers, and that they love and protect me.

“They are more part of my world than most people actually living in the world. I “see” them sometimes more really than I see the monks I live with. I know well the burnt faces of the Prophets and the Evangelists, transformed by the white-hot dangerous presence of inspiration, for they looked to God as into a furnace and the Seraphim flew down and purified their lips with fire. They are solemn and dreadful and holy men humbled by the revelation they wrote down. They are my Fathers...I am more and more possessed by their vision of God’s Kingdom, and wonder at the futility of seeking anything on earth but the truth revealed in them, and in tradition – the Church’s treasure to which she holds the key.”

Franciscan Resources

Our brother Ron Kauffmann asked me to include the following information for those who wish to order SFO items (shirts, books, crosses, etc.):

Franciscan Resources
201 – 5th Street, S.W., #10
Sebeka, MN 56477

Phone: 1-800-772-6910 E-mail: WWW.FranciscanResources.com

St. Vincent de Paul

Please remember to bring your food donations – they are greatly appreciated. Note that I attempt to load up my vehicle with your donations before and after the opening prayer. I do check during breaks and after the meetings for late arrivals. If you have something that you cannot bring in yourself, let me know and I will give you a hand. Thanks! Terry

Prayer Submissions

Please forward prayer requests to me (Terry Rinker) by the 14th of the month, so that they may be included in the newsletter. Please keep the following members, relatives, and friends in your prayers:

Sally & Gary White, Sally’s sister, and Sally’s friend Rene

Mary McCarthy

Richard & Carole Clarke and their son Liam

William Brewster

Helen Broxmeyer

Fr. Alberto’s father

Kimberley Heatherington

Ed Geiger

And for all those who are in need of our prayers who have been inadvertently omitted from this list.



Tau Fraternity: Next Meeting Date

Tau Fraternity General Meeting:

Sunday, September 6. Please read chapters 4-6 in our current On-Going Formation book Catching Fire, Becoming Flame, by Albert Haase, OFM.

St. Joseph's – Room 210 from 12:30 to 1:30 pm and Room 209 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm.

12:30 - 1:30 Inquirer/Candidate Formation

1:30 - Opening Prayer -- Veronica

1:35 - 2:10 Social time with meal

2:10 - 3:00 On-going formation

3:00 - 3:10 Break

3:10 - 3:30 Vera's presentation

3:30 - 4:00 Liturgy of Hours (Walter-reading), business meeting, and closing prayer

Readings for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Hymn: #40 – Love Divine All Love Excelling

Pg 861 – Psalter, Week III/Evening Prayer II

Pg 629 - Gospel Canticle and Concluding Prayer

For the next newsletter, please send your prayer requests and submissions to Terry Rinker at reknir12@yahoo.com, or call (703) 383-0562.

