



The Tau Signature

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

January 2016



Purchase this inspirational plaque at www.monasteryicons.com

Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I hope you each had a Merry Christmas and I wish each of you a blessed and Happy New Year! I have some things to update you on. First of all, the new class of aspirants begins on January 3. Please make sure you introduce yourselves to any aspirants you may not have already met and make them feel welcome. Clari will be meeting with the class by herself for the first meeting in January. Beginning in February, if anyone would like to assist the formation team, you are welcome. Just please coordinate with Clari. Secondly, the Council confirmed with the Region that we have miscategorized some of our members. Traditionally Tau has had two categories of membership for professed members - active and inactive. However, based on the constitution and after clarifying with the Region, the Council learned that if the Council excuses a professed member for serious health or family concerns, that member is actually considered professed excused, not inactive, and retains all voting rights and other privileges of the professed Secular Franciscan Order. This status applies to almost all of our formerly inactive members and the Council has adjusted its membership status on the roster and with NAFRA. Please note that a status of professed excused is granted only to those members who have SERIOUS health or family issues that prevent those members from attending meetings regularly. When the updated roster is released, you will note a change in status for these individuals. We need to continue to pray for our professed excused members who are facing these serious health and family issues, as well as reaching out to them to include them as they are able to participate. We, as a fraternity, ask our professed excused members to pray for the fraternity and the various prayer requests that come up. Prayer is such an important ministry and it is something that our professed excused members are able to do from their homes. I look forward to celebrating the Feast of the Epiphany with each of you on January 3 at our meeting. Peace and blessings, Pam

Recap of Last 11/1/15 Meeting

Opening/Formation:

The December 6, 2015 meeting of the Tau-OFS Fraternity was called to order in Meeting Room 205 at the St. Joseph Parish Facility. Opening prayers were offered from pages 35-36 of the *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order*.

Bob Calderon opened the on-going formation discussion with Chapter 5, *Breaking Bad Habits*, from Catching Fire Becoming Flame. He began by asking: "How many people have bad habits?" Hands went up from everyone. Subsequently, Bob recommended, especially for the visitors, the book that Fr. Winkler used during the retreat, "Addiction & Grace, Loving & Spiritually." He continued stating that according to experts willful behavior can only be successfully stopped after one denies it 21 times. Discussion ensued. Then, changing gears, Bob posed the question: "What is your preferred method of social media?" He broke the people down into subgroups to discuss this topic and have a subgroup representative provide a summary of the shared thoughts after 10-15 minutes. The speakers for the subgroups discussed the pros and cons of the various methods of communications, including face-to-face discussion, video conferencing (VTC), and emails. Face-to-face discussions were thought to lend clarity and continuity, because being able to see facial expressions divulges more of a person's sentiments and perspectives. Emails are useful in covering distance between parties. Unfortunately, misunderstanding can often arise when the recipient of the email doesn't interpret the content as the sender had originally intended. Computers are also susceptible to hacking and the recipient has to confirm the identity of the sender. VTCs were viewed as a sophisticated method of communication that can be extremely useful in making solid and definitive solutions, but having a good moderator is key. Bob advised that the assignment for January's on-going formation was to read Chapter 6, titled *Does Your God Love You?*

Presentation

There was no presentation at the December meeting.

Article Submission

Gil Donahue submitted the below article about a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. One of Gil's fellow parishioners had gone on their parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land last year and recommended the book as a good guide to the Gospels, as well as to the specific sites associated with Jesus' life.

Book Review -- Jesus: A Pilgrimage by Fr. James Martin, SJ.
Father Martin is Editor-at-Large of America Magazine; website
<http://jamesmartin.hc.com>

A fellow pilgrim on my parish's pilgrimage to the Holy Land in October 2014 called to my attention this most interesting book. It is a good guide for those desiring to make their own pilgrimage to Israel, and a reminder of the holy sites for those who have already been there. Readers who can only visit the sacred sites through the eyes of others will very much enjoy Fr. Martin's descriptions and comments.

Fr. Martin explains that he first wanted to write a book about Jesus and was advised to make a trip to the Holy Land before undertaking his book. At first he thought this suggestion was

frivolous, but as he started planning the trip, many things fell into place for him. He and another priest traveled on their own, without a guide, in order to maximize the opportunity to visit out of the way places, and to pray frequently. Fr. Martin used academic reference books for guides.

The book follows the general timeline of Jesus' life, which requires a different order than Fr. Martin's actual travel itinerary. Although he is not a specialist on the Holy Land or sacred scripture, he provides helpful insights from the works of others. At every stop related to the story of Jesus, Fr. Martin describes the physical surroundings of the location, its history and significance as a pilgrimage site, and how he related to it as a pilgrim.

Perhaps the single most useful aspect of the book is Fr. Martin's suggestion for the reader to engage in "Ignatian contemplation," a Jesuit-inspired practice. When reading a gospel passage about the life or actions of Jesus, the idea is for the reader to "put himself in the scene." For example, sitting in the boat on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus is calming the storm, or being present on the Mount of Transfiguration along with Jesus, Peter, James and John.

For those of us who have visited the Holy Land, this practice indeed works and we can vividly recall what the particular location looks like today. We also have a better sense of the geography of the country, and we can imagine the time and effort it took to travel by foot from, for example, the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem.

At every stage of Jesus' life, Fr. Martin comments about the biblical characters and how these incidents helped them grow in faith. Regarding Fr. Martin's visit to Bethlehem to contemplate Jesus' birth, he noted:

"Mary and Joseph do three simple but essential things: they listen, they trust, they love. .

. . God comes to us in ways that we can understand and appreciate, even if only partially or incompletely. For someone who delights in relationships, experiences of God might come through a conversation with a close friend. For a parent, through the smile on the face of an infant. For an active person, in working among the poor in a homeless shelter. For an introspective person, by meditating on Scripture. God meets us where we are."

I heartily recommend this book for those who wish to connect the Gospel accounts of Jesus with the geography of the Holy Land. Fr. Martin includes much useful information gleaned from recent archeological research and scholarly study, as well as theology. The writing style is vivid and highly readable.

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 grandsons Liam and Rory; Kay Flynn; Helen Broxmeyer; Fr. Alberto's father; Kimberley Heatherington; Ed Geiger; Gail Dowling; for a special intention; 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, January 3. The On-Going Formation will include discussions on chapter 6 in 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 No Formation until January

1:30 - Opening Prayer - Terry

1:35 - 2:10 Social time with meal

2:10 - 3:00 On-going formation

3:00 - 3:10 Break

3:10 - 3:30 Presentation – Gil Donahue

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

Readings for the Epiphany

Hymn: #81 – As With Gladness Men of Old

Everything else: pg 214

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

