



The Tau Signature

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

February 2016



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Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

By now hopefully all of you have dug out from the 2016 blizzard. Other than being housebound for several days, and feeling sore from shoveling, the storm did not impact me or my family in the same way that others have been affected. I suspect the same is true for most of you. Let us remember to thank God for our many blessings. Times like these really cause me to worry about our less fortunate sisters and brothers (not just the homeless, but also those who have fragile housing, those who struggle to pay their utility bills with normal winter weather, those who work hourly and depend on those wages but could not get to work because of the weather, those children who depend on free lunches at school, etc.). I encourage each of you to lift these sisters and brothers up in prayer, and also to take advantage of opportunities to help them that may present themselves to you in your daily lives.

Peace and blessings, Pamela Brooks, OFS

Recap of Last 10/4/15 Meeting

Opening/Formation:

Bob Calderon opened the on-going formation discussion with Chapter 6, *Does Your God Love You?* from *Catching Fire Becoming Flame*. Bob addressed how people constantly change over the years in their journey of faith. He stated that one's upbringing, education, and religious life all contribute to forming one's character. He shared that he spent his early years in a strict Catholic school environment. Bob emphasized that despite one's religious foundation, one's image of God should

change, and if it doesn't then something is wrong. Bob's first question to members was: "Who is God to you?" Notably, Vicky responded immediately with "Best Friend." Others followed with their descriptions. Bob then asked: Does anyone fear God?" whereupon all hands shot up in the air. Finally, members were broken down into small groups to share their answers to the questions that appear on page 40 of the on-going formation book:

What is your current, most common, image of God? How does it foster or challenge you to loving service of your neighbor? How does it hinder you?

Varied responses were given by each team's chosen representatives.

Presentation

Gil Donahue – *Franciscans in the Jubilee Year of Mercy*: Gil recalled for members that the scriptural focus for the jubilee year will be Christ's command from Luke 6:36, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

Next, he brought to our attention what Pope Francis wrote in *Misericordiae Vultus*:

"We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it.

Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us.

"Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life.

Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

"We will entrust the life of the Church, all humanity, and the entire cosmos to the Lordship of Christ, asking him to pour out his mercy upon us like the morning dew, so that everyone may work together to build a brighter future. How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in their midst!"

With this being the first meeting of the calendar year, Gil highlighted Chapter Two "The Way of Life" from the *Secular Franciscan Rule* as a reminder of how we should conduct our lives as Franciscans.

Spiritual Bouquets

What is a Spiritual Bouquet? Michelle Arnold, a Catholic Answers Apologist, gives this response:

A "spiritual bouquet" is a group of prayers gathered together for a particular intention. The idea is that each prayer is like a flower and that the group is like a bouquet mystically offered as a gift to God for a particular intention. That is why, for example, you'll sometimes see Catholics organize "spiritual bouquets" for particular purposes, such as for the intentions of the Pope in honor of his

birthday. Those who participate promise a certain amount of prayers and devotions for the intention and then the list is compiled and given to the person whose intentions are being remembered in prayer. Please fill in the slip with your promise and put the recipient's name on the back. Return the slip to Vera.

Following are examples of promises that we can extend to those in need:

- Offer a Mass for the person's intentions
- Visit the Blessed Sacrament
- Rosary Prayers
- Divine Mercy Prayers
- Novena Prayers
- Acts of Charity
- Fasting
- Sacrifices

Prayerfully Discerning ~ An Interim Secretary's Experience

Someone very dear to us recently commented about "the interim secretary position." Yes, I am just that – your current interim secretary. Hmm...and all along I was under the impression that I actually won an election! It would have been the first and only office that I had ever run for in my entire life. For a few moments in time, I had been 1 for 1; a perfect 1-0; and undefeated.

An unwitting reader of the above passage would have sensed that I was pretty upbeat until someone's innocent remark resulted in bursting my balloon. Actually, it didn't happen that way at all. I didn't run for the office and I wasn't upbeat about the prospect of landing the position one bit. I did in fact experience an internal sense of desperation when I learned that the fraternity council had approved my written request to be considered for the position as secretary. Admittedly, I felt completely out of my comfort zone. Since that time it's been a humbling experience, and I pray regularly that I am up to the task.

I have to share that it's been an uncomfortable challenge for me, but at the same time it has been an enjoyable, spiritually fulfilling, learning experience that I will probably treasure for years after I leave the office. I thank you all for entrusting this important service to me. And, I look forward to running for the office of secretary in the next election and winning...but hopefully not uncontested.

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 White and Sally's sister; Mary McCarthy; Richard & Carole Clarke and their grandsons Liam and Rory; William Brewster; Helen Broxmeyer; Fr. Alberto's father; Kimberley Heatherington and her father; Ed Geiger; Pam Brook's daughter Rachel; Patricia Boye's mother Florence; Terry Rinker's mother; 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, February 7. The On-Going Formation will include discussions on chapter 7 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 Council Meeting with the Regional visitors

1:30 - Opening Prayer – (Clari)

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 – (Bill Richey)

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

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Hymn: #33 – O Christ, You are the Light and Day (verses 1, 2): pg. 1541

Gospel Antiphon and Concluding Prayer: pg. 249

Everything else from Week I: pg. 712

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

