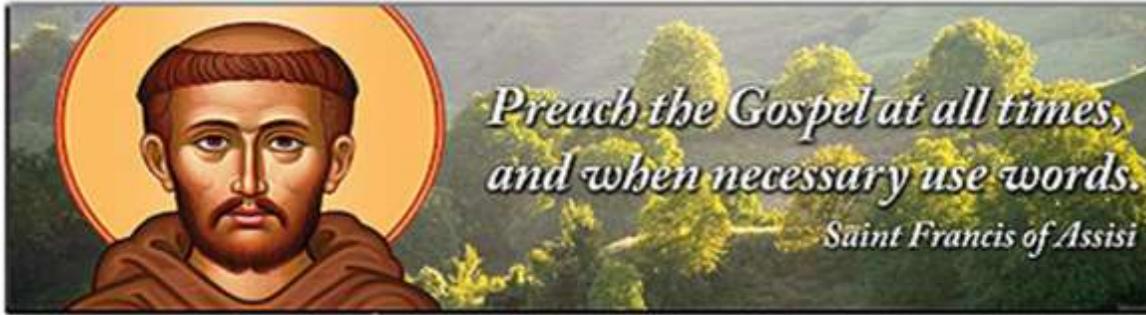


The Tau Signature

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

December 2017



Purchase this inspirational plaque at www.monasteryicons.com

Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

November has been a challenging time for a lot of people I know, including some of our sisters and brothers in Tau. Please continue to pray for each other. We all need to support each other and lift each other up in prayer. I know I could not have dealt with some of the challenges in my life this year without God and your prayers. Next week we will sit down at tables with our families and friends and give thanks. One of the things that I give thanks for is each and every one of you! I have recently been reminded just how much my Franciscan family means to me and how important each of you is in my life. Like all families, we in Tau do not always share the same views on some issues and we do not always get along. I don't think we would be a healthy fraternity if we did. Open discussion and dialogue is healthy and helps all of us grow and understand each other better. Thank you for being real with each other and for being real with me. Our monthly meetings are a safe place for us to express ourselves, and hopefully recharge our batteries from our fellowship with one another as we go back out into the secular world to live our Franciscan vocation. I pray that each of you has a blessed Thanksgiving! I look forward to seeing you on December 3 as we gather together as a Franciscan family.

Peace and blessings,
Pam

Recap of Last Meeting 11/5/17

The Tau general meeting began with an opening prayer read by Cyndy Filan-Kim. Following the opening prayer, the Tau Fraternity celebrated the Rite of Admission (pages 11 – 10 of the *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order*) and welcomed Al Carroll and Denis Dunn as new Candidates.

Walter Gawlak, OFS, provided the Fraternity with a brief recap of the discussion on Frailty of Families and asked

what should our Fraternity do? The group continued discussing a broad range of issues affecting families. Walter pointed out that our Apostolate Committee is already embracing family issues by helping the shelter for pregnant women with nightgowns for unwed mothers who would otherwise sleep in their street clothes. Walter urged the Committee to continue considering family issues in recommending apostolates. He alerted everyone to a special way to celebrate Thanksgiving on the Tuesday after the Holiday, namely through "Giving Tuesday," which is recognized by many charities as the opening day of the giving season. The Franciscan Action Network presents many suggestions for celebrating Giving Tuesday in an especially Franciscan way. The FAN website gives details. Next month, in light of the Christmas season, we will discuss "wants vs. needs."

After Formation, Kimberley Heatherington, OFS gave a presentation on Father Michael Gaitley's book *33 Days to Merciful Love*. The book is a journey with St. Therese of Lisieux and includes a consecration to Divine Mercy. Kimberley reminded us that Mary can be our model in how she clings to hope and trust in the Lord. She can lead us to the Lord's grace. The book encourages the reader to live the little way to become a saint. Kimberley emphasized that because of Divine Mercy, we can become saints, not despite our littleness, but because of it. We are expected to accept Jesus' love and mercy and give mercy to others.

Prayer Submissions

Please keep the following members, relatives, and friends in your prayers:

For physical and spiritual healing of Pam Brooks and her son; Sally White, her husband Gary, and her sister; Mary Wood, daughter of one of the Tau Fraternity Founders Martha Ureke; Richard & Carole Clarke and their grandsons Liam and Rory; William Brewster; Helen Broxmeyer and her daughter Susan; Irene Naveau; Ron Kauffman; Kay Flynn; and Ed Geiger. For the safety of the citizens of Aleppo, Syria during the civil war. For all peoples who suffer persecution. For the victims of natural disasters. For all those who are in need of our prayers who have been inadvertently omitted from this list.

Please forward prayer requests to Vera Stewart by the 14th of the month, so that they may be included in the newsletter.

Cooking Hospice - Missionaries of Charity

The next Cooking Hospice Ministry trip will be on December 9th. Join us every other month on the 2nd Saturday for the Cooking Hospice Ministry at the Missionaries of Charity Gift of Peace Home in Washington, DC. We will meet at St. Joseph's school parking lot at 7am and will return by noon. All are welcome to lend a hand!

If you would like to participate, please contact Veronica O'Donnell, OFS.

St. Vincent de Paul

Keep up the good work in 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 Rinker, OFS

Tau Fraternity Committees

If you are interested in participating actively in one of our Committees, take a moment to chat with the chair:

Apostolate Committee – Cyndy Filan-Kim and Pat B.

Hospitality Committee – Veronica O'Donnell, OFS

Infirmarian Committee – Irene Naveau, OFS

Recruitment Committee – Bill Bouffard, OFS

Technology Committee – John Ata, OFS

Thank you from Sally

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thanks to your help over 2,000 Christmas cards are on their way to our deployed troops either on ships or in far away places. Many of you donated cards. Some of you even hit the stores after Christmas and bought me boxes of cards. Bless you for helping. Some of our troops do not receive mail and even one card lets them know they are not forgotten.

Please continue to save your extra Christmas cards for me to sign for 2018 Christmas season. I also send monthly and daily cards such as birthday, sympathy, get well and thinking of you cards to deployed troops, veterans and their families. Every card brings joy.

Thank you!
Pace
Sally White, OFS

Coming up in December

December is the Month of the Incarnation *

- Dec 3 – First Sunday of Advent
Richard Clarke's Profession
- Dec 5 – Bill Bouffard's, Jim Haynes', & Liz Welborn's Profession
- Dec 6 – Ron Kauffman's Profession
- Dec 8 – Feast of The Immaculate Conception – Holy Day of Obligation
Frank Bowen's Profession
- Dec 12 – Discovery of the tomb of St. Francis, Feast of Our Lady of Guadeloupe
Ed Geiger's Profession
- Dec 13 – Memorial of St. Lucy
- Dec 15 – Mary Queen of the Seraphic Order
- Dec 25 – Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ – Holy Day of Obligation

Dec 26 – Feast of St. Stephen
Dec 27 – Feast of St. John the Apostle
Dec 28 – Feast of the Holy Innocents
Dec 30 – Denis Dunn's Birthday
Dec 31 – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

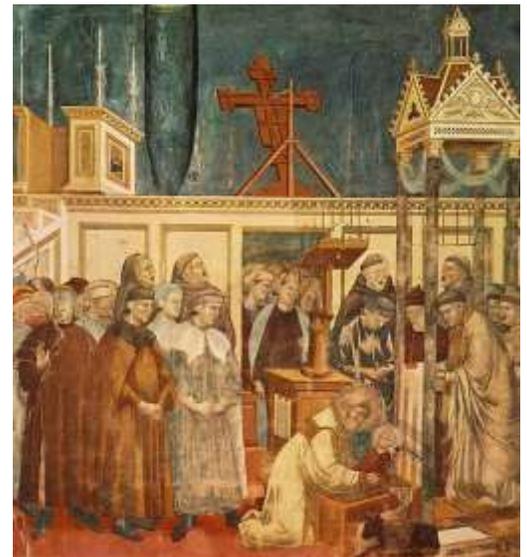
* See the Franciscan Calendar for more dates: <http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/traditional-franciscan-calendar.html>

The First Christmas Creche

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/st-francis-and-the-christmas-creche.html>

St. Bonaventure (d. 1274) in his Life of St. Francis of Assisi tells the story best:

It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem. A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant marvellously beautiful, sleeping in the manger, Whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep. This vision of the devout soldier is credible, not only by reason of the sanctity of him that saw it, but by reason of the miracles which afterwards confirmed its truth. For example of Francis, if it be considered by the world, is doubtless sufficient to excite all hearts which are negligent in the faith of Christ; and the hay of that manger, being preserved by the people, miraculously cured all diseases of cattle, and many other pestilences; God thus in all things glorifying his servant, and witnessing to the great efficacy of his holy prayers by manifest prodigies and miracles.



Fresco by Giotto di Bondone, Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi

Prayers

Advent Prayer

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a wonder at the [wisdom](#) and power of Your Father and ours. Receive my [prayer](#) as part of my service of the [Lord](#) who enlists me in God's own work for justice.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a hunger for peace: peace in the world, peace in my home, peace in myself.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a joy responsive to the Father's joy. I seek His [will](#) so I can serve with gladness, singing and love.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me the joy and love and peace it is [right](#) to bring to the manger of my Lord. Raise in me, too, sober reverence for the [God](#) who acted there, hearty gratitude for the [life](#) begun there, and spirited resolution to serve the Father and Son.

I pray in the name of [Jesus](#) Christ, whose [advent](#) I hail.
Amen.

From <http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=350>

Christmas Prayer

Lord, in this holy season of [prayer](#) and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infant's cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in its radiance.

Be with us as we sing the ironies of Christmas, the incomprehensible comprehended, the poetry made hard fact, the helpless Babe who cracks the world asunder. We kneel before you shepherds, innkeepers, wise men. Help us to rise bigger than we are. Amen.

From
<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=345>



Tau Fraternity: Next Meeting Date

Tau Fraternity General Meeting: Sunday, December 3 at St. Joseph Catholic Church

- 12:30 - 1:30 Inquirer/Candidate Formation
- 1:30 - Opening Prayer – **Vicki Shanholtz, OFS**
- 1:35 – 2:05 Social time with meal *
- 2:05 - 2:50 On-going formation
- 2:50 – 3:00 Break
- 3:00 - 3:30 Program
- 3:30 - 4:00 The Angelus, Liturgy of Hours, business meeting, and closing prayer

* BYOB - Please bring your own beverages to the meetings. Due to low consumption, coffee, will no longer be provided.

Initial Formation discussion:

Candidates: Chapter 24 in The Franciscan Journey

New Candidates: Chapter 11 of The Franciscan Journey

On-going Formation:

We will continue our discussion on family. This time we will focus on wants and needs.

Liturgy of the Hours:

First Sunday of Advent:

Hymn: #63 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel: pg. 1577 (Verses 1 and 2)

Psalms: Week 1 Evening Prayer II: pgs. 712

Everything else: First Sunday of Advent, Evening Prayer II: pg. 45

Reader: **Terry Rinker, OFS**

The Angelus

During Ordinary Time, we will precede the Liturgy of the Hours with the Angelus.

- V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
- R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with Thee;
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death. Amen
- V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
- R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.
Hail Mary, etc.
- V. And the Word was made Flesh.
- R. And dwelt among us.
Hail Mary, etc.
- V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

For the next newsletter, please send your prayer requests and submissions to Vera Stewart at thevastewarts@gmail.com, or call or text (703) 459-6958.



PACE E BENE
TAU FRATERNITY