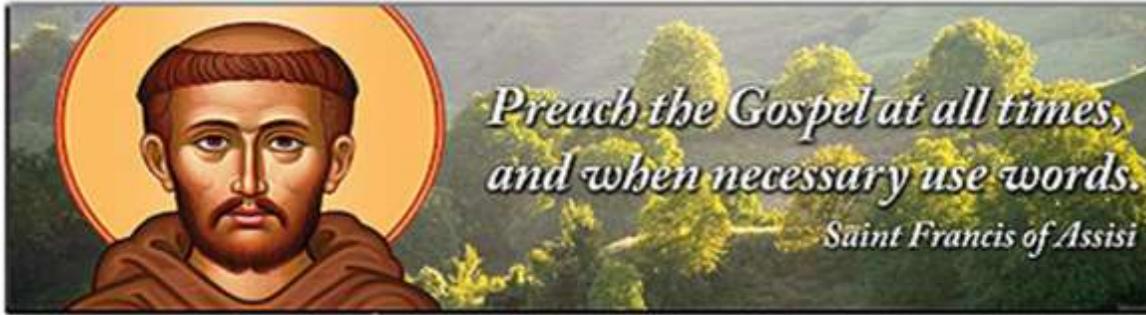


The Tau Signature

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

January 2018



Purchase this inspirational plaque at www.monasteryicons.com

Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Recently I was talking with someone about how quickly 2017 has passed. I made a comment that I was ready for 2017 to be over given what a difficult year it has been for me and my family. A couple of days later I was speaking with one of the friars and he inquired about how I am doing, and I told him I was fine but am over this Perfect Joy I have been given this year. Over the past couple of days I have thought about my comments, and I believe through the grace of God, I have come to recognize the error in my comments. Every day that we are given is a gift from God. None of us are promised tomorrow. None of us are promised that our days would be easy and carefree. We are only promised that God will be with us and help us bear our crosses, if we let Him. I also recognize that while I have been blessed (yes blessed) with these crosses this year, I have been given an opportunity to really experience God's healing strength and grace. Yes, some bad things happened to me and to my family. But in the end, we are all okay and moving forward. We still have each other, most of us still have jobs, we still have our beautiful home with enough food to eat, adequate clothing to wear and reliable transportation. Most of the health challenges have resolved, and the ones that haven't are stable. I have been able to use these bad experiences as a way to explain to other people what an awesome and loving God we have because God has gotten me and my family through these challenges (usually in response to questions about how could God let these things happen - I explained that God doesn't cause bad things to happen, but He will help people deal with their challenges, which is what happened to my family). If the bad things had not happened, I fear I would have been complacent and taking God for granted. And taking God for granted is something I never want to do! As we approach the beautiful celebration of Christmas, I feel so blessed that God loves me enough that He came down not only approximately 2017 years ago as a baby, but that He is present with me every single day of my life. We had a wonderful discussion at our December meeting about wants and needs. I am proud to say that I want and need God! And because of that wonderful relationship with Him, my family and I have survived 2017. So, I am looking forward to 2018 and pray that I don't have the same level of challenges I had this year. But if I do, I enter 2018 knowing I am not alone and that my Father loves me and will help me through whatever comes my way. I wish each of you a very Merry and Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year!

Peace and blessings, Pam

Recap of Last Meeting 12/3/17

The Tau general meeting began with an opening prayer read by Vicki Shanholtz, OFS. Following the opening prayer, the Tau Fraternity celebrated with a Christmas party.

Walter Gawlak, OFS began a Formation discussion on the topic of “wants vs. needs.” Fraternity members discussed how they deal with material wants versus needs, especially during the holiday season. The discussion then moved to emotional needs. After the discussion, Walter informed the Fraternity that next month we will begin the Formation book *Poverty & Joy, The Franciscan Tradition*, by William Short.

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 February 10th. 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

Food for Thought

Submitted by Helen Broxmeyer

“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”

(Psalm 90:12)

The ancient Greek philosophers told their followers that the beginning of wisdom was to understand oneself as honestly and thoroughly as possible, while the Hebrew Scriptures advised young people that, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” (Proverbs 9:10) (In secular terms, “fear of the Lord” signifies humility and awe in the face of that which we can neither understand nor control.) The Greek and Hebrew cultures, together with the Christian offshoot of Judaism, intermingled during centuries of rule by the Romans, with their pragmatism, their genius for governance, and their scientific orientation to problem-solving. Eventually these four ways of approaching life became synthesized into what is called Western civilization.

In their youth, the Founding Fathers studied the history and literature of each of these ancient cultures. From their studies, they received a foundation of time-tested moral and spiritual values, a fund of practical wisdom, and an understanding of human nature. Later, when they were drafting the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, they drew on this entire heritage for inspiration and guidance.

Many aspects of our present culture and our national life are visibly ailing, and external enemies threaten us. Our domestic problems are so manifold that the mind boggles when trying to decide which ones are the most important, let alone knowing how to solve them. My own perception is that the first step towards our national healing would be to detach from our electronic devices and our sources of continuous news and entertainment. These things dull our awareness of our authentic selves, and they disconnect us from meaningful contact with those around us. By reducing our use of them, we would invite the inner quiet that is conducive to clear and independent thinking. In addition, putting some intellectual and emotional distance between ourselves and the endless stream of “infotainment” would help to restore civil discourse, which is a prerequisite for successful problem-solving.

One of the most familiar adages is “DIVIDE AND CONQUER.” At the present time, we Americans are significantly divided, both from each other and from ourselves – a situation that makes our nation subject to dissolution from within and vulnerable to attack from without. I think that by repairing these tears in our national fabric, and by returning to the ancient springs of wisdom that inspired our Founding Fathers, we would greatly improve our chances of finding sound, creative and lasting solutions to our country’s problems.

NOTE: The Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version translation.

Coming up in January

January is the Month of the Holy Name of Jesus and His Holy Childhood *

- Jan 1 – Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord – Holy Day of Obligation
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
- Jan 2 – Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
Vicki Shanholtz’ Birthday
- Jan 4 – Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Veronica O’Donnell’s Profession
- Jan 5 – Feast of St. John Neumann
- Jan 7 – Epiphany of the Lord
- Jan 8 – Baptism of the Lord
- Jan 11 – Robert Calderon’s and Kimberley Heatherington’s Profession
- Jan 12 – Gail Dowling’s and Walter Gawlak’s Birthday
- Jan 13 – Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- Jan 23 – Feast of the Marriage of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Jan 24 – Feast of St. Francis de Sales
Paola Larin's, Terry Rinker's, and Vera Stewart's Profession
Jan 25 – Carol Clarke's Birthday
Jan 27 – Irene Naveau's Birthday
Jan 28 – Robert Calderon's Birthday
Jan 29 – Gil Donahue's Profession
Jan 31 – Richard Clarke's Birthday

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

St. Francis' Prayer in Praise of God, Given to Brother Leo

From <http://www.shrinesf.org/franciscan-prayer.html>

You are holy, Lord, the only God, and Your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong.
You are great.
You are the Most High.
You are Almighty.
You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good, Lord God, living and true.
You are love.
You are wisdom.
You are humility.
You are endurance.
You are rest.
You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.
You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector.
You are our guardian and defender.
You are our courage.
You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord, God Almighty, Merciful Savior. Amen.

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.



Tau Fraternity: Next Meeting Date

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

- 12:30 - 1:30 Inquirer/Candidate Formation
- 1:30 - Opening Prayer – **Veronica O'Donnell, 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 – **Bill Bouffard, OFS**
- 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 25 in The Franciscan Journey

New Candidates: Chapter 12 of The Franciscan Journey

On-going Formation:

We will begin the book *Poverty and Joy*. Please read the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2. We will discuss New Year's resolutions for the fraternity. Bring your suggestions for what we might do differently to improve fraternity life

Liturgy of the Hours:

Epiphany of the Lord:

Hymn: #81 – As with Gladness Men of Old: pg. 1596 (Verses 1 and 2)

Everything: Epiphany, Evening Prayer II: pg. 214

Reader: **Kimberley Heatherington, OFS**



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