



The Tau Signature

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

March 2018



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Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Happy Lent! I attended Mass yesterday with my youngest daughter and Fr. James spoke about how Lent is his favorite season in the Church calendar. His message really resonated with my daughter and me - that Lent is the time for us to reach down inside and really get in touch with ourselves. This involves acknowledging our failures and weaknesses, but also acknowledging our successes. For me, Lent is a time to reassess my relationship with God and to get myself back on track in the areas where I have slipped. Maybe it's because I am a convert, but I never really got how giving up chocolate would bring me closer to God. In past years I have given up social media - that certainly created more time for God. But for me, the things that bring me closer to God are things that require action - more prayer time, more acts of charity, expanding areas of study, etc. Lent is a very personal journey for each of us. Recently I saw something on social media about fasting - fasting from hate, from mean words, from being selfish and greedy, etc. Those are the types of fasts that make sense to me - because in fasting from what hurts other people, it leaves tremendous opportunity to show God's love to other people. I wish each of you a productive Lenten journey - and I look forward to celebrating our Lord's resurrection at the end of our 2018 Lenten journey!

Peace and blessings, Pam Brooks, OFS

Recap of Last Meeting 2/4/18

The Tau general meeting began with an opening prayer read by Gail Dowling, OFS, See page 3 for the prayer. Following the opening prayer, Walter Gawlak, OFS began the Ongoing Formation discussion with small group discussion on Chapter 2 "The Humility of the Incarnation" from the formation book *Poverty & Joy, The Franciscan Tradition*, by William Short. He asked the following questions, encouraging the members to be alert to any insights they could share about how to live out their Franciscan vocation

1. The chapter uses the phrase, 'poverty, humility and simplicity' with respect to the Incarnation. What do these terms mean to you?

2. Francis's actions at Greccio gave form to his beliefs about God, Mary and even nature. What of the many meanings implicit in this event most struck you?
3. How did you respond to this statement about the Eucharist: The 'little form' of bread, so unremarkable in itself, is the 'hiding place' of the Son of God?
4. Duns Scotus discerned that Mary was not so much 'conceived without sin,' as 'fully human.' Does this different perspective help to deepen our understanding of Mary?

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 and her sister; Richard & Carole Clarke and their grandsons Liam and Rory; William Brewster; 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 April 14th. 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

February Opening Prayer

Submitted by Gail Dowling, OFS

Do you Want to Fast this Lent?

In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

A Letter from Helen Broxmeyer, OFS

As you may already know, in 2003 I made a personal pilgrimage to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. My time there was spent in prayer, and in visits to the atomic bomb museum and the Ground Zero park in each city. Seeing the actual sites of the devastation, and looking at the artifacts in the two museums, made the nature of nuclear war far more real to me than the reading I'd done in preparation for the trip, including books of post-bombing photographs taken by both the Americans and the Japanese.

The North Korean testing of nuclear weapons, and of the ballistic missiles to deliver them, has brought my experiences in Japan vividly to mind. For several months I struggled to put my perceptions into an essay, with no success. Ordinary language seemed incapable of encompassing our predicament and describing the eeriness of physical processes that are native to the stars, but not to Earth. Finally, all my ideas came together in a poem, which concludes this letter.

This should be my last letter to you about a major topic. Nuclear war was the most difficult subject of all to write about. Until I developed a clear enough understanding of the problem, I wasn't able to put my thoughts into a form that was suitable for sharing with other people.

Love, Helen

Celestial Navigation

by Helen Broxmeyer

When traveling from one place to another, even locally,
I prefer a map, though verbal instructions are useful.
A map shows me where I'm going, and when I'm lost,
It helps me find the way back to the right road.
But what map can we follow that will guide us away

From nuclear self-destruction? We've ventured into unknown
Waters, and a navigator's chart would serve us best –

Shining a light down through the unfamiliar depths
Of our own nature; marking out the hidden
Reefs and shoals that could send our ship to the bottom.

For this trip we'll need Freud and Jung, Einstein
And the wisdom of the ages. And we'll have to call upon God,
Which could be a problem; but divine guidance is essential
For those who would sail out among the stars
To seize the celestial fire and carry it home.

Coming up in March

March is the Month of St. Joseph *

Mar 2 – Feast of St. Agnes of Prague
Mar 4 – Tau Monthly Meeting
Mar 7 – Helen Broxmeyer's birthday
Mar 14 – Veronica O'Donnell's birthday
Mar 17 – Tau Fraternity Lenten Day of Spirituality
Mar 19 – Solemnity of St. Joseph
 Josh Golberg's birthday
Mar 25 – Palm Sunday
Mar 29 – Holy Thursday
 Nellie Aston's birthday
Mar 30 – Good Friday
Mar 31 – Holy Saturday

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

Lenten Resources

You can sign up to receive daily meditations during Lent from:

Franciscan Media - <http://info.franciscanmedia.org/>

Dynamic Catholic - <https://dynamiccatholic.com/bestlentever>

FORMED - <https://formed.org/watch>

Word on Fire - <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/blog/video-why-lent-bishop-barron-explains/1639/>

The Franciscan Humility Challenge

<https://breakinginthehabit.org/2015/11/06/the-franciscan-humility-challenge/>

This Breaking in the Habit blog was posted online before Christmas of 2015. It is appropriate for Lent also. The blogger says, "For us, fasting doesn't have to mean the literal use of the word, that is, to abstain from food or drink at certain times; fasting can mean abstaining from luxuries more broadly, or even being more intentional with our time so to do something more purposeful, like prayer." Here is an excerpt from the blog about the challenge:

, , , We all know that humility was probably the highest desire of Francis' life, that he wished to always be the lowest and least important. We also know that one of his chief reasons for loving this virtue so much was in fact the Incarnation, the humility of God to become human, to be born in such an insignificant way, and to be presented to shepherds, among the dirtiest and least important people of society. For this reason, I will be taking the newly created and aptly named "Franciscan Humility Challenge."

The purpose of this challenge is to actively seek opportunities to give up control and to be humbled every day. What do I mean by this? Well, so much of our lives is working to get our own way. In our jobs, relationships, families, and interactions with strangers, we find ourselves in conflict with others who want something different from us: Who is in charge? What movie should we watch? Where should we go? Whose turn is it? Who gets to make the decision? Conflicts can range from inconsequential decisions like which station to listen to on the radio in the car, to significant decisions like which car to buy.

For me, what I see in these situations is an opportunity... an opportunity to exercise my ability to be humble like Jesus. The practice of letting go of my will and letting others make decisions, humbly assenting to the desire of someone else, is not just nice pleasantries to keep people happy. It is an active decision to imitate the will of our Lord Jesus, "who humbled himself even to the point of death, death on a cross," and to put into practice what I pray every day in the Our Father: "Thy will be done." It's no coincidence that these words follow immediately after "Thy kingdom come": the true reign of God's kingdom is the complete submission of our wills to the will of God. The Kingdom of God is trusting in God above all else.

But how can we expect to do that, a great task, if we struggle to give up our wills in even small situations? Like anything that is difficult, we need practice and preparation to be ready. Why not do so now as we prepare , , ,

Upcoming Events

Tau Fraternity Lenten Day of Spirituality

Theme: Stations of the Cross and Forgiveness

Date: March 17, 2018

Time: 9:30am - noon

POC: Kimberley Heatherington, OFS

Tau Fraternity Retreat

Theme: Breaking Free: The Transformation of Daily Life

Retreat Master: Father Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR

When: May 18 – 20, 2018

Fee: \$250

Short-Term Mission & Global Awareness Trip for Secular Franciscans

When: Summer 2018

Where: Bolivia

Contact FMS Executive Director, Liz Hughes:

liz@franciscanmissionservice.org or 202-832-1762 ext. 3

National Gallery of Art Exhibit

Theme: Heavenly Earth: Images of St. Francis at La Verna

When: February 25 – July 8, 2018

See <https://www.nga.gov/exhibitions.html>

The Angelus

During Lent, 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.



Tau Fraternity: Next Meeting Date

Tau Fraternity General Meeting: Sunday, March 4 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 – **Veronica O'Donnell, 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:

Candidates: Chapter 27 in The Franciscan Journey
New Candidates: Chapter 14 in The Franciscan Journey
Aspirants: Chapter 3 in The Franciscan Journey

On-going Formation:

Come prepared to discuss Chapter 3 in Poverty and Joy, *The Poverty and Humility of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, in small groups.

Liturgy of the Hours:

Third Sunday of Lent:
Hymn: #94 – Lord Who Throughout These Forty Days: pg. 1609
Psalms and Cantic: Sunday, Week III Evening Prayer II: pg. 861
Everything else: Third Sunday of Lent: Evening Prayer II: pg. 318
Reader: **Gail Dowling, OFS**

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



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TAU FRATERNITY