



PACE E BENE

TAU FRATERNITY

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

<https://tauofs.org/>

December 2019

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Peace and all good!

It's hard to believe that 2019 is almost at a close — and yet, we all probably made an identical remark at the end of 2018!

Maybe it's the pace of life in our metro DC area, which seeps even into the suburbs of Virginia. Maybe it's the constant bombardment of politics, news, and advertising, which seems inescapable; the “static” to which Pope Benedict XVI once referred. Whatever the cause, it feels increasingly difficult to find silence in our lives.

And yet, silence is what is needed as we enter the annual holiday countdown. A holy silence and stillness in which to ponder the miraculous: God made flesh.

As many of you know, I have a special devotion to the Carmelite nun St. Thérèse of Lisieux. It's been observed that she was actually a Franciscan, and just didn't know it! But one thing she said about the Incarnation sums up the heart of this season perfectly: “A God who became so small could only be mercy and love.”

Mercy and love — that is the true gift of this season. And as Franciscans, we are called to keep that spirit alive throughout the year, not just at Christmas.

In an email, I proposed that we take a “road trip” to the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City on the evening of December 7 or 8 to see the friars' living Nativity — a re-creation of the events at Greccio so many long winter nights ago, when St. Francis introduced the crèche as we know it. It would be a perfect way to open our hearts and minds to the wonder of the divine that will be so especially alive in the coming weeks.

Holding you all in prayer,
Kimberley

RECAP OF LAST GATHERING

OPENING PRAYER

Read by Kimberley Heatherington, OFS

Most Holy God, I miss friends and family who touched my life and who have fallen asleep. Embrace these the quiet, humble and unrecognized saints, as You promised You would. These are the People who brightened and warmed others and Your world. They are the wise souls who shine in Your presence. They share the eternal life which Jesus won for us. I await the day I rejoice with them in Heaven with You.

Lord, remember those whose memory warms my soul. Embrace them tightly and warmly for me.

Amen.

RITE OF ADMISSION

Immediately following the call to order and opening prayer, we held the rite of admission from pages 11-15 of the Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order. This ceremony elevated Joseph Boyle and Valerye Milleson to candidate.

ONGOING FORMATION

Walter Gawlak, OFS began ongoing formation with a refresher on Breathing Underwater: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps, by Richard Rohr. Through the chapters, we are approaching awakening. We are moving away from trying to be God. Prayer is not about changing God, but allowing God to change us. In discussing Steps 11 and 12, we discussed the following in small groups.

- How do you individually know the will of God?
- What does it mean to you when you hear people say, "It's God's will?"

After the discussion, Walter remarked that there are two parts of being Franciscan: prayer and action. The next couple of ongoing formation sessions will focus on action and consider what we should be doing.

PRESENTATION

Bill Bouffard, OFS gave a presentation on the Franciscan Wake Service and funeral and burial options for Secular Franciscans. On page 37 of *The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order*, it states that our communion continues with our deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them. Deceased brothers and sisters are entitled to a Franciscan Wake Service. Bill has tailored the Model Wake Service for Secular Franciscans (*Secular Franciscan Companion*, pp 185 – 196) for our recently departed members. In addition, Secular Franciscans are entitled to wear a burial shroud. Poor Clares make the shrouds, which may be purchased online. Funeral masses may also be tailored; in addition to choosing scripture readings and hymns, we may choose the Eucharistic Prayer. It is important for the Secular Franciscan to inform his or her family of the preferences for the wake, funeral, and burial.

Bill shared a quote from Chief Tecumseh:

So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart. Trouble no one about their religion; respect others in their view, and demand that they respect yours. Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and its purpose in the service of your people.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

After the program, Kimberley handed out the Tau Fraternity Necrology and led the Remembrance Service for Deceased Tau Brothers and Sisters. After a brief memorial naming each person, she led a responsorial prayer based on St. Francis' "Canticle of the Sun." Immediately following, the Fraternity prayed a Franciscan Crown Rosary.

MEMORIAL POEM

Submitted by Irene Naveau, OFS

Great Cloud of Witnesses

Meditation by Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

"We do not run the race alone
Nor go into exile by ourselves
For we journey along the Way
Made smooth by those who've
gone before.

And though invisible to the eye
They are with us still, forebears in faith,
Whose example, wisdom and yes, prayers
Inspire, encourage and guide us
Through the valleys and mountains of life.

And in the silence of the night
Listen for the soft whisper of
Ancestors, relatives and friends
Who, though gone, from the sidelines
Still cheer us on and
Whose love and countless kindnesses
Brought us to this very day.

Alone no longer (as if we ever were)
We are part of a vast, unending
Profession of love and life
Past, present and to come,
Where memory and meaning mingle
To create an eternal, dynamic
Community of souls and
Communion of saints."

PRAYER SUBMISSIONS

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

For the repose of the souls of Ed Geiger and of Cyndy Filan-Kim's mother. For physical and spiritual healing of Sally White; Richard & Carole Clarke and their grandsons Liam and Rory; Helen Broxmeyer; William Brewster; Irene Naveau; and Kay Flynn. For the patients and Sisters at the Missionaries of Charity Gift of Peace House. For the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic and its patients. 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, OFS by the 14th of the month, so that they may be included in the newsletter.

APOSTOLATES

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

St. Leo the Great in the City of Fairfax runs a food pantry. Note that I attempt to load up my vehicle with your food donations before and after the opening prayer each month. I 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. After the meetings, I take the food collections and drop them off at the church for transfer to the food pantry. Whatever monetary donations I get, I deposit into the Tau bank account and write a check in the amount so that St. Leo knows that the check is coming from Tau fraternity. Keep up the good work in food donations – they are greatly appreciated. **All checks should be made out to "St. Leo the Great."**

Thanks!!

Terry Rinker, OFS

MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY HOSPICE APOSTOLATE

The next Missionaries of Charity Hospice trip is Saturday, December 14. We meet at the St Joseph Church parking lot (where we park for Fraternity gatherings) at 7 am, and usually return by 1 pm. All are welcome. If you plan to participate or have any questions, please contact Pat B. OFS or Joe.M, OFS.

INDIVIDUAL APOSTOLATES

MOTHER OF MERCY FREE CLINIC

The clinic requested 60 Spanish and 20 English Christmas cards for their patients during Advent and Christmas. Tau sent these cards and additional religious items for the clinic and its chapel. The clinic is especially grateful to Jim Haynes OFS who made and donated blessed rosaries for the chapel and patients. If you have rosaries, religious items, and or prayer cards you would like to donate, please bring to the Tau monthly gathering for Sally White, OFS. Vera can deliver to Sally if she is unable to be present.

WARM FEET SOCK DRIVE



Tau is receiving lots of warm socks. Thank you for all the donations. The race on for the prize of who donates the most socks for the homeless. The socks will be delivered during January when weather forecasters project a very cold January and February. Please bring you socks to the Tau monthly gatherings. Give them to Vera if Sally is unable to be present.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR DEPLOYED TROOPS

Please continue to bring in all unused Christmas cards for our deployed troops. Boxes of 1800 signed cards are on their way for this year. All your cards will now be saved and signed throughout 2020 for the next holiday shipment, November 2020. Thank you for all the cards this year. Remember cards without glitter go to deployed troops and cards with glitter go to veterans. Please bring your cards to Tau monthly gatherings and give to Vera to bring to Sally.

TAU COMMITTEES

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

Hospitality Committee – Veronica O'Donnell, OFS
Interfaith/Ecumenical Committee – Kimberley Heatherington, OFS
Infirmarian Committee – Sally White, OFS
Recruitment Committee – Vacant
Technology Committee – John Ata, OFS

INTERFAITH/ECUMENICAL NEWS

Submitted by Kimberley Heatherington, OFS

**The Sultan and the Saint:
The Spiritual Journey of Transformative
Encounter**
Thursday, November 7, 2019
The Catholic University of America

(1) “The Historical Encounter” - Lev Weitz, Ph.D.

Beginnings: 600-900 AD

The beginnings of Christian-Muslim encounter are traced as early as 600 AD.

Confrontations: 1000-1200 AD



By 1000 AD, Christian-Muslim interaction became more frequent and violent due to Turkish tribal expansion and the subsequent conquering of Byzantine lands. The emperor of the Byzantine Empire requested assistance, and Pope Urban responded in 1095, marking the beginning of the Crusades. The purpose was not simply the defense of Christian lands; strategically, calling for a Crusade also served to unify warring European factions in common cause.

Exchange: 1200 AD+

This is the context for the historical encounter between St. Francis and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil in 1219. Trade and trade routes between Europe (primarily Italy) and the Islamic world grew during this period; Muslim-ruled Egypt became a major trade hub. There was also cultural and intellectual exchange through a movement to translate classical texts from Arabic into Latin.

Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil was a nephew of Saladin, the famous Islamic warrior who captured Jerusalem during the Crusades. It was due to Christian-Muslim conflict that the Sultan encountered St. Francis; Francis was only present in Egypt because of the Crusades.

(2) “Hagiography and History in the Accounts of St. Francis and the Sultan” - Michael Calabria, OFM, Ph.D.

The historical encounter of peace and respect between St. Francis and the Sultan is an important paradigm for today's world, which continues to fragment along sectarian and political lines.

The written accounts of this meeting cannot all be taken as literal history; they are influenced by hagiography, and must be examined critically.

Sources include Jacques de Vitry (*Letter VI* - 1220 and *Historia Occidentalis* - c. 1221/25); Thomas of Celano (*Life of St. Francis*, Book 1:20 - 1229); St. Francis (*Earlier Rule*, Ch. 16 - 1221); *The Chronicle of Ernoul* (1229); Julian of Speyer (*Life of St. Francis*, Ch. 7 - 1234); Henri d'Avranches (*The Versified Life of St. Francis*, Book 8 - 1230/35); St. Bonaventure (*Major Legend*, Ch. 9 - 1260/63).

Many of these accounts treat the Sultan as a prop for St. Francis. But the earliest of them simply portray Francis as a preacher, preaching the Word of God. They note that the Sultan "willingly listened"; was a gracious host; asked Francis to pray for him; and gave Francis commemorative gifts.

These accounts later morph as authors unfamiliar with Francis and his intent — or Islam — interpret the meeting anew. St. Francis becomes "Francis the Disputant", a much more aggressive figure. Why? Because the Catholic Church was in the midst of continuous Crusades; indeed, Franciscans preached the Sixth and Seventh Crusades. So the earlier, gentler image of St. Francis disappeared. Later versions of the meeting portray Francis as condemning Islam and engaging in religious contests (walking through fire/over coals) to prove his religious superiority. This is not in the earliest accounts, but St. Bonaventure's version became the official story.

There were many Coptic Christians in Egypt, so the Sultan would have been familiar with Christianity; St. Francis would not have "introduced" it to him. The Sultan's court was learned in philosophy; literature; mathematics; etc.

The Crusades were meant to eradicate Islam as a political and military threat, not simply to regain lands. Armistice and surrender terms were offered many times by the Muslims, but were refused. However, in February, 1229, Emperor Frederick II and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil sent emissaries to one another, and a peace was brokered.

(3) Keynote Address: Francesco Patton, OFM - Custos of the Holy Land

The Franciscan presence in the Holy Land has been a witness of dialogue and peace for over 800 years.

St. Francis never uses the word "enemy" to refer to Muslims; he considers our own egos to be our worst enemy — i.e., the enemy is never in front of us; it is inside of us. All are brothers and sisters, even those of another religion. The "other" is a gift of God to be welcomed.

There are some calling for a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. The meeting of Francis and the Sultan can demonstrate an alternative perspective of encounter. We need to call for dialogue; hospitality; words of peace — not swords and stones. An emphasis on differences and ideologies is contrary to genuine encounter and dialogue.

In the Holy Land today, the Franciscans have several initiatives for peace. To mark the 800th anniversary of the meeting of St. Francis the Sultan, the Holy Land Franciscans held two conferences. Dialogue also takes place in their 15 Holy Land schools, where they educate about 10,000 Muslim and Christian students in a climate of peaceful co-existence.

(4) Keynote Address: Archbishop Christophe Pierre - Apostolic Nuncio (Vatican Ambassador to the U.S.)

We cannot forget history, but it is complex. Who is the "real" St. Francis? Who is the "real" Pope Francis? There are many narratives, and they can sometimes lead us in directions that don't correspond to reality.

Pope Francis stresses a "culture of encounter". We must dialogue and listen; we must witness.

Most sources portray St. Francis as a man of peace working to make Christ known, and to make disciples of all men. But he encounters the Sultan in peace. Francis had no expectation of his conversion, but surely, the Sultan's outlook was changed by the encounter. If we enter into dialogue, we need to know where we are, or else there is no true dialogue. We must be sincere about our identity. We can only

propose, not impose. We must show respect; faith is a gift to share. St. Francis was committed to poverty and peace, so he gained the Sultan's respect.

Encountering "the other" can be in the service of peace, and Pope Francis urges us to find God in every human being. The concept of human fraternity as a path for peace and mutual understanding is a major theme of the pontificate of Pope Francis. Treat others with respect and compassion, as St. Francis did.

(5) Keynote Address: Imam Mohammad Bashir Arafat - President of the Islamic Affairs Council of Maryland

The sacred mission of St. Francis is the mission of all of us — reaching out to the other to promote peace and harmony. We must leave our comfort zone and accept challenges. Our own communities may or may not support us if we reach out to engage and learn about others.

The Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* refers to Muslims:

3. The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

"Forget the past". We must work together.

Both St. Francis and the Sultan had deep convictions. But each wanted to see an end to the violence of the Crusades. Their encounter was 800 years ago, but many people do not know of it — and now we again have those calling for a "clash of civilizations". In the era of Francis and the Sultan, there was ignorance of the other, and misconceptions were not few. Now, we have the resources of the Internet, and much greater connectivity — but still, many are not talking to their neighbors! Suspicion and hatred of "others" threatens our world. We must use St. Francis and the Sultan as a model of engagement. We must spread understanding, and stand together against division.

"Blessed are the peacemakers" should be an ideal among all faiths.

(6) Roundtable Discussion

Lev Weitz, Ph.D.; Jude D'Angelo, OFM Conv.; Qamarul Huda; Dr. Mark Danner; Jordan Denari Duffner; Maryam Shahmoradi Varnamkhasti; Dr. Ibrahim Anli

Some key points:

- We don't know our own Catholic history concerning Catholic-Muslim relations
- History is not just learning facts, but developing an appreciation for and empathy with other traditions
- St. Gregory of Nyssa: "Concepts create idols; only wonder comprehends anything."
- There is a difference between dialogue based in theology (doctrine) and dialogue based in spirituality (seeking)

- Knowledge gaps in faith tradition can be exploited, allowing the hijacking of religions; know your faith! Learn — or unlearn — prejudices and misinformation
- Three components to/levels of interreligious dialogue to consider: (i) personal and individual - establishing peace for yourself; (ii) vertical - your relationship with God; (iii) universal - your relationship with creation
- Use and reclaim the mystical tradition as a component of interreligious dialogue to seek what is authentic; there is much overlay between the Christian and Islamic mystic traditions
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PHOTO OP!



Joe Boyle went to Williamsburg for a few days and captured this lovely photo at St. Bede's Catholic Church. See how Jesus holds the full moon in the palm of his hand!

COMING UP IN DECEMBER

December is the Month of the Incarnation *

- Dec 1 – First Sunday of Advent
Richard Clarke's Profession
Tau Fraternity Gathering
- Dec 3 – Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle
Feast of St. Francis Xavier
- Dec 5 – Bill Bouffard's, Jim Haynes', & Liz Welborn's Profession
- Dec 6 – St. Nicholas
- Dec 7 - Missionaries of Charity Hospice Apostolate
- Dec 8 – Second Sunday of Advent
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
- Dec 13 – Memorial of St. Lucy
- Dec 15 – Mary Queen of the Seraphic Order
- Dec 16 – Third Sunday of Advent
- Dec 23 – Fourth Sunday of Advent
- 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



God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word, that we may bring your life to the waiting world. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

From

<https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=347>

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

ADVENT RESOURCES



Advent Wreath Prayer - <https://fscs-calledtobe.org/2012/12/08/heres-a-franciscan-advent-wreath-table-prayer/>

Blessing of the Advent Wreath - <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/blessing-of-an-advent-wreath.cfm>

Praying Through Advent Like St. Francis – <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/spiritualdirection101/2014/12/praying-through-advent-praying-like-st-francis/>

Daily Advent Prayer and Reflection - <https://info.franciscanmedia.org/a-franciscan-advent>

Shrine of St. Anthony Advent & Christmas Events - <https://shrineofstanthony.org/upcoming-events>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Greccio Living Nativity

When: December 7 & 8, 2019, 7:30 pm

Where: Shrine of St. Anthony, Ellicott City, MD

Lenten Day of Spirituality

When: March 7, 2020

Where: St. Joseph Catholic Church

Annual Tau Retreat

When: May 15 – 17, 2020

Where: Priestfield Retreat Center

Fee: Single room \$231.50,
Double \$211.50

NEXT TAU FRATERNITY GATHERING

Date: Sunday, December 1, 2019
Location: St. Joseph Catholic Church
Schedule: 12:30 - 1:30 Inquirer/Candidate Formation
1:30 - Opening Prayer – **Vera Stewart**
1:35 –3:30 Christmas Party
3:30 - 4:00 the Angelus, Liturgy of Hours, business meeting, and closing prayer



INITIAL FORMATION:

Senior Candidates: The Little Flowers of St Francis

Candidates: Chapter 24 in The Franciscan Journey

Newest Candidates: Chapter 12 in The Franciscan Journey

All are welcome to attend Initial Formation groups. No preparation is necessary. Only your Franciscan spirit.

ON-GOING FORMATION:

There is no On-Going Formation in December.

THE ANGELUS

During Advent, 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.

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: **TBD**

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. If you call and do not get an answer, please leave a voicemail message.