



PACE E BENE

TAU FRATERNITY

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

<https://tauofs.org/>

November 2022

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Peace and good!

This month we pay tribute to those who have met Sister Death on All Souls Day. On All Saints Day, we are reminded of our own calling and those who have paved the way. Later this month, we gather together in an American family tradition to give thanks. As such, I've been reflecting on my gratitude and personal thanksgiving to those who support the Secular Franciscan Order and those who have made our Franciscan journey possible.

First, we are under the pastoral care of the Third Order Regular (TOR). Beyond my reverence for all who have dedicated their lives to serve in Catholic priesthood, the TORs play a special role in the life of Tau. They have guided us through so many fruitful retreats and been a blessing to our ongoing formation. At St. Joseph Catholic Church, the TORs provide a home base and a sanctuary of sorts for our ongoing fraternal activities.

Second, we look forward to our annual remembrance services. As a newer member of Tau, I did not meet many of those whom we will celebrate and honor. Let me provide a few of my memories on Tau members who recently met Sister Death. Bill Brewster, OFS, at our first retreat together was so intensely interested in helping me learn the importance of Merton and Centering prayer. It was almost too much to take in. But I still remember those words. And while I was not ready to research all of it with the same passion he had, I realize now his words were infused with the love for a Brother, which I return in my prayers for him. Joseph Messina, OFS, exuded peace and joy in every interaction I had with him. He had a quiet presence that would light up the room. I can still see Joe sitting across the table from me in initial formation with that beautiful smile. As we gardened together outside Missionaries of Charity, we joked while we worked and I admired his ability to put people at ease. Catherine Williams, OFS, amazed us all with her courage and dedication to the Secular Franciscan Order. She went to great lengths to be with us and the mutual care we shared during those times was touching. While not part of the SFO, I'd also like to pay tribute to Jim Justen, who

was a long time parishioner at St. Joseph and someone I met through the Men's Society and Bible Study. His daughter Kathy Powers was my bible study teacher and whether he knew it or not, she was incredibly influential in my formation not just as a Catholic but as a Franciscan. I imagine her father, Jim, beaming down from heaven with the recognition of how angelic she was and how many lives she touched.

Finally, Sister Kimberley was so incredibly dedicated to all of those who passed during her Ministry. The families were grateful and we can all be thankful for her model of servant leadership.

In closing, let us not be somber this month but celebrate the Saints who came before us and thankful to those striving to be Saints with whom we were blessed to share in their journey.

RECAP OF LAST GATHERING

OPENING PRAYER

BLESSING FOR THE PRODUCTS OF NATURE*

Blessed are you, O God,

Creator of the universe,

who have made all things good

and given the earth for us to cultivate.

Grant that we may always use created things gratefully

and share your gift with those in need,

out of the love of Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.

Amen

PRESENTATION

The Tau Open House began as Josh welcomed guests and spoke to what the Secular Franciscan Order is about & how it is rooted in our faith as Catholics. As he explained, all are called to be holy. Therefore, responding is an act of obedience. Bill Richey gave an overview of St. Francis. He explained the Rule, Formation, & gave examples of how our fraternity brings the Gospel to life through our apostolates. Heber and Kelly then shared their experiences as members of Tau.

Brother John 'Gio' was elevated to Candidacy. Congratulations, Gio!

ONGOING FORMATION

Gil provided a handout on the Homily of Holy Father Francis. We have a mission of peace that must be active. We are called to love all creation, remembering that this includes nature & human beings.

Veronica spoke of the Pope's encyclicals and of how 99% of plastics start as fossil fuels. Eight million tons of plastic is now dumped into the world waters every year. She shared the handout, Care for our Common Home, from St. John Neumann Church regarding examples of reducing plastic waste.

FORMATION PREPARATION

INITIAL FORMATION

Candidates: Chapter 21 in The Franciscan Journey

Inquirers: Chapter 5 in The Franciscan Journey

ONGOING FORMATION

Bill Richey provided a handout, Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Celebration of the 53rd World Day of Peace, in preparation for the November meeting. A handout will now be provided each month in preparation for discussion the following month. Bill will email the information to those absent & those attending online.

Click [here](#) for message by Pope Francis for the 53rd World Day of Peace

PRAYER

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Hymn: #40 – Love Divine All Love Excelling: pg. 1548

Gospel Canticle and Prayer: Evening Prayer II: pgs. 639

Everything else: Sunday, Week IV Evening Prayer II: pg. 931

APOSTOLATES

ECUMENICAL APOSTOLATE WITH THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HERNDON:

Sally reported FBC-Tau ESL classes now have eight students from El Salvador, Honduras, Iran, & Iraq. Seven students attend the basic class & one is in the intermediate class. Semester two will begin at the end of January.

SHAWL MINISTRY

Sharon reports the ministry is expanding to hats/booties for newborns, which will be delivered along with baby shawls, blankets, & rosaries to the Gabrielle Project.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Checks or items specifically requested are much appreciated! This is also announced in the St. Timothy Church bulletin.

Kimberley & Cyndy will be talking with the regional director of St. Vincent De Paul to streamline collections.

Reminder from Joe: Please send checks to the new address:

Tau Fraternity
P.O. Box 711152
Oak Hill, VA 20171

MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY HOSPICE APOSTOLATE

Next delivery dates: 10/8 & 12/10. Volunteer cooks requested. Potatoes as part of a casserole, rather than rice, would be appreciated!

MISCELLANEOUS

Stanley requested members email him or Josh with any projects for 6th-8th grade students needing Confirmation hours. Pam suggested having them cook for the Missionaries of Charity; Joe will resend the email to Stanley

Kimberley reported a possible Advent Project: Virtual retreat with the Franciscan Sisters in Ohio December 3rd, Other options to be determined.

Walter asked that we consider Val's suggestion of participating in Michael's Fast by doing it together next year.

Gil suggested forming a Centering prayer group.

After many years of volunteering in this important role, Veronica asked that all please consider becoming our Hospitality Committee chairperson.

Sharon reported Tau October anniversaries – Congratulations to:

Sally 36 years
Pam 20
Helen 20
Clari 19
Gail 19
Beena 2

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
Infirmary Committee – Sharon Goldberg, OFS
Recruitment Committee – Vacant
Technology Committee – John Ata, OFS

NEXT TAU FRATERNITY GENERAL MEETING

Date: December 4, 2022

Location: In-person or online

Schedule: 1:30p-4:00p

ARTICLE FOR TAU NEWSLETTER

CONTEMPLATION FOR ACTION

"God's first word is silence" - Fr. Thomas Keating, OCSO

During the past two years I often felt like a hermit, cut off from most routine person-to-person contacts with groups important to me. This downtime was an opportunity to delve into books I had put off reading, for various reasons. These include Brother Lawrence's *Practice of the Presence of God*, the anonymous *Cloud of Unknowing*, Julian of Norwich's *Shewings*, and various books by Thomas Merton on the contemplative life. I also read Robert Cardinal Sarah's book *The Power of Silence*.

These books impressed upon me the importance of making periods of silence in our lives in order to listen to God. Doing so I also learn a great deal about myself and what God has in mind for me to do. Many signs pointed out to me the importance of contemplation: daily meditations by Fr. Richard Rohr, homilies by a neighborhood pastor Fr. Bob Cilinski, presentations by various speakers in the Institute of Catholic Culture, and homilies by Bishop Robert Barron. Over the months and years, I was taught about the benefits, and even the essentiality, of deep contemplative prayer.

The question then arose: How to learn this practice?

Centering prayer is a technique developed and taught by Trappist Fr. Thomas Keating. He was picking up on Fr. Thomas Merton's reenvisioning and reintroduction of the contemplative practice which had been sidelined by the Enlightenment. There are several YouTube videos by Fr. Keating, Fr. Rohr and Anglican priest Louise Bourgeault that explain centering prayer and guide people through the process. I commend these videos to those who would like to learn about and practice this form of contemplation.

In conjunction with centering prayer, you might want to consider downloading a free app for your smartphone: Centering Prayer by Contemplative Outreach. This app guides one on the process of deep contemplation, and provides a timer to start and end the exercise.

I have already discussed with some members of the fraternity the possibility of arranging a regular session, perhaps once per month via Zoom, to have a short contemplative exercise. I would use the following format:

- Opening Prayer
- Short Scripture Reading
- Selection from Franciscan literature
- Centering Prayer Session (perhaps 10 minutes)
- Short Period of Silence
- Opportunity to Share Reflections on the Experience
- Closing and Franciscan Blessing

At our February 2023 meeting, I will present a brief explanation of centering prayer and conduct a short session based on this format. This may spark interest in holding a monthly Zoom

session. Please let me know if you have any questions or are interested in pursuing this form of prayer. Peace and All Good,

Gil Donahue