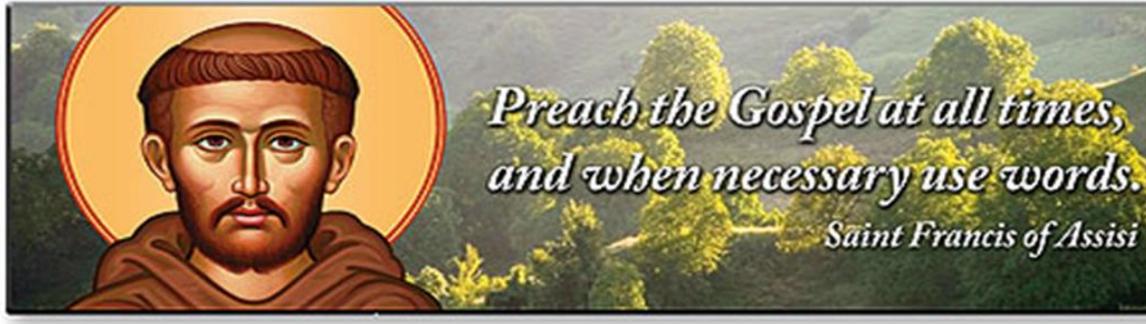


The Tau Signature

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

April 2017



Purchase this inspirational plaque at www.monasteryicons.com

Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I have a Bible verse framed in my office. It reads "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8. This is one of my favorite verses. I have also found a related theme in a lot of the reading I have done so far during Lent (and also leading up to Lent), about Jesus preaching that we are to love everyone. Neither of these instructions is always easy to do. However, God didn't promise us that things would be easy. It seems that if we would simply follow the instructions that God gives us, life would be better for us and for more of God's children. It really is sad that like the Israelites who wandered in the desert for 40 years because of their stubborn refusal to obey God that humanity continues to ignore very simple and basic instructions. As Franciscans, we are called to be the example for others - to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with God, to show love to all mankind - and when necessary, use words. I pray that each of you is having a good Lent. Peace and blessings,
Pam

Pamela Brooks, OFS

Recap of Last Meeting 3/5/17

At the initial formation meeting, John Ata gave a presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours. It was very much appreciated by the candidates. The Tau general meeting began with an opening prayer from Walter Gawlak, OFS. Walter then began the two-part ongoing formation with a recap of Chapter 18, "The Lord's Prayer Anew" from *Catching Fire Becoming Flame*. He asked members to gather in small groups to discuss their experience with praying the Lord's Prayer slowly and with concentration or experience with any other prayer methods during the past month. During the second half of formation, Walter asked the Fraternity to discuss their experience with the various prayer methods in *Catching Fire* and whether the Fraternity was having its need for group prayer met with the current prayers (Ritual, opening prayer, LOH) or whether other prayer methods ought to be considered. He asked the members to send him any ideas concerning the Fraternity's prayer life.

Walter announced that next month would be a break from starting the final sections of *Catching Fire* in order to talk about how we as Franciscans should deal with the current climate in the Country and how we might apply Gospel values. Members were asked to review a paper by Father James Martin on this topic. Following Ongoing Formation, Bill Bouffard, OFS gave a presentation about poverty and how things steal from our love and relationships. After the presentation, Bill Richey, OFS handed out copies of the survey results. He said that anyone may participate in the various committees: the Infirmarian Committee, Recruitment, Hospitality, Technology, and New Apostolates.

Prayer Submissions

Please forward prayer requests to Vera Stewart by the 14th of the month, so that they may be included in the newsletter. Please keep the following members, relatives, and friends in your prayers:

For physical and spiritual healing of Sally White, her husband Gary, and her sister; Mary Wood, daughter of one of the Tau Fraternity Founders Martha Ureke, OFS; Richard & Carole Clarke and their grandsons Liam and Rory; William Brewster; Helen Broxmeyer and her daughter Susan; Fr. Alberto's father; Irene Naveau; Ron Kauffman; and Ed Geiger; For Sally White's brother and family, who have been evacuated from their home due to prairie grass fire in Kansas. For the safety of the citizens of Aleppo, Syria during the civil war. For all those who are in need of our prayers who have been inadvertently omitted from this list.

Cooking Hospice - Missionaries of Charity

HOSPICE MINISTRY

Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity house a hospice for men and women in a former boys' orphanage in Northeast D.C. They grow many of their vegetables on their spacious grounds. They also rely on funds from the Washington archdiocese and other groups' food donations.

Men and women are housed on separate floors. The kitchen is on the floor between them. There are about 40 patients. They have their own simple, seasonally decorated chapel.

There are no elevators or carpets in the building (per Mother Teresa's orders), and some nuns and volunteers can usually be seen mopping the floors. Laundry is still dried on clotheslines outside.

There are refrigerators and a restaurant sized oven, but no electric kitchen appliances.

Their order also has their novitiate here. Professed and novices total about 40. Many of the professed women are from India, but we have also seen young women from the U.S. and other countries in the Americas.

Two of their entrance requirements seem to be a great smile and a quiet joy. When our fraternity members arrive about 8 a.m., they are usually singing in their own chapel.

We cook for about 60 patients and the other volunteers - people of all ages, including some seminarians who choose this ministry as their service project. Our food is provided by St. John Neumann Church in Reston. We try to cook easily chewed menus. There are three dining areas for the patients, with the patients divided by their physical conditions.

Veronica, Frank Bowen, Bill Richey, Joe and Pat, and Cynthia, are the stalwart volunteers here, but some of the rest of the fraternity with their relatives have also helped out. At least one of the nuns is there to help us find whatever we need.

We meet at St. Joseph's school parking lot at 7 a.m. on alternate second Saturdays. We're usually back at St. Joseph's by 11 a.m. or noon. Our next trip will be April 8.

All are welcome to lend a hand. We can usually keep 4 -5 people busy. A big bonus is getting to know each other on our trip.

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

Our Individual Apostolates

Kimberley Heatherington, OFS is a lector at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church. She has been lecturing since 2005. Kimberley has been chosen a few times for Easter Vigil and Christmas Midnight Mass. She was a lector in the Episcopal Church before she converted to Catholicism and wanted to continue once she was received into the Catholic Church. Kimberley says, "It's a privilege to declare the Word of God to fellow believers!"

Also, since Kimberley met Sr. Helen Prejean, she has become interested in her ministry against the death penalty. She's not yet completely sure how she would get involved. If you share an interest in this ministry, have a chat with Kimberley!

Breakfast with Tau

Please join us for breakfast on Saturday, April 22nd at Virginia Kitchen, immediately following the 8am Mass at St. Joseph Parish. Please RSVP to Clari if you plan to attend.

Clari Claus, OFS and Irene Naveau, OFS

Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation

Every Vote Counts

This piece discusses voting but not the political election type of voting we had this past November. This is the voting we do every day as by the choices we make. An example might be McDonalds versus Burger King. One likes the Big Mac and another likes the Whopper. Every time you go to McDonalds you are voting for them. You buy the Big Mac with a medium fry and a large Coke. You have voted again by telling McDonalds that you like the Big Mac, fries in the medium size, and you like Coke over Sprite or a milk shake. So now McDonalds takes into account all the purchases for some period of time. So, if you are the only one to have purchased a Big Mac in the last year, how long do you think this sandwich will stay on the menu? An extreme example could be, if no one goes to Burger King for that same period of time, how long do you think Burger King Corporation will keep that location open? So, your choices do make a difference, do they not? So, let us take this further, into the Franciscan realm

Let us consider the clothes business, how about a shirt. When was the last time you considered where the materials came from, how the shirt was made, who made it, etc. You probably did not even look at the label for material type and washing instructions. According to Esha Chhabra in Auroville, India you need too. Chhabra wrote an article, "The Dirty Secret About Your Clothes", for the Washington Post Business Section several months ago, addressing the textile business. To some up the conventional textile environment: genetically modified seeds cost more than cotton farmers can afford; dangerous pesticides used in the fields; dyes with caustic chemicals; toxic waste end up in rivers and other water sources; and chemically treated clothes that end up in landfills. Not a pretty picture but it gets worse. The people who make our clothes are exposed to a polluted environment from chlorine bleach to known carcinogens such as acrylamides. As far back as 1994, as reported in the Environmental Health Perspectives; Journal Volume: 102; Journal Issue: Suppl.6; Conference: 5: "Occupational exposure to acrylamides such as benzidine, 2-naphthylamine, and 4-aminobiphenyl is associated with exceptionally elevated risks of bladder cancer (up to 100-fold or more). In one plant, all 15 workers involved in distilling naphthylamine developed bladder cancer, suggesting that for high levels of exposure to potent carcinogens individual susceptibility is irrelevant." There are more examples but you get the point. Small businesses are now investing in "eco conscience" manufacturing from organic farming to natural vegetable based dyes. Their products are available on-line and starting to show up in stores like Target throughout the United States. Remember that shirt, now the shirt is hand dipped into an indigo vat, multiple times for deeper colors. The shirts are then hung on clotheslines stretched across a sunny field. The shirts change from green to blue due to the oxygen in the air. Sure, these shirts will cost more but as economics tells us increased demand along with increased production will bring down the price. Besides, how many shirts do you plan to buy, after all you can wear only one at a time! The organic food industry started in the 1980s and the food cost a great deal more than its counterparts; today look how much the prices have dropped, the same will hold true for the clothes industry.

In Father Joe Nangle's book, "Engaged Spirituality", he talks about both personal sin and social sin. Father Joe states that one must be conscious of the presence of social sin in the world if one wants to cultivate a valid spirituality today. Granted these are not necessarily one person's responsibility but we cannot just ignore them. This institutionalized sin inevitably makes us ask about each individual's responsibility. None of these social evils is our personal fault although individuals can be directly implicated in them. The hard truth is that we do participate in them, sometimes as victims but more often as beneficiaries. Take that shirt we are wearing, social sin? Sure, we did not manufacture it, we did not pollute the rivers with the run off; and expose the workers to cancer causing chemicals. However, we did vote for the shirt and how it was made whether we like it or not. Remember the burger example we started out with: start voting for the "clean textile" approach by your purchases and the other manufacturers will eventually follow. Just a few weeks ago, Apple temporarily stopped purchasing cobalt from mines in the Congo due to hazardous working conditions and child labor. This all came about when the reporting started about two years ago, concerning the rare earth minerals and how they are

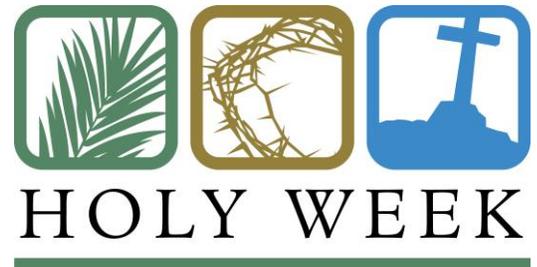
mined and end up in products such as smart phones. The reporting also exposed the high pressure working conditions in the China factories that produced the phones attributing to the high number of suicides. None of us can predict the outcome but we can cast our vote in the market place. No one is asking us to throw out all our clothes and smart phones. But as Franciscans we need to be aware, choose wisely, and speak out when we know something is wrong. After all, did we not vote for Francis when we chose to take the Franciscan road?

Bill Bouffard, OFS

Coming up in April

April is the Month of the Holy Face and the Redemption *

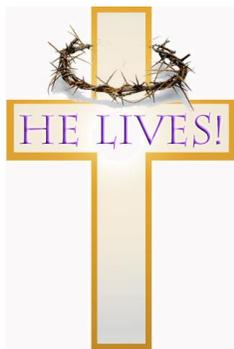
- Apr 2 – Paola Larin’s birthday
Tau Monthly Meeting
- Apr 4 – Frank Bowen’s birthday
- Apr. 8 – Cooking Hospice
- Apr 9 – Palm Sunday
- Apr 13 – Holy Thursday
- Apr 14 – Holy Friday
- Apr 15 – Holy Saturday
- Apr 16 – Resurrection of the Lord, Easter Sunday
- Apr 20 – Tau Council Meeting
- Apr 22 – Breakfast with Tau
- Apr 24 – Walter Gawlak’s & Erik Larin’s profession
- Apr.25 – Gil Donahue’s birthday
Josh Goldberg’s birthday
- Mar.25 – Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, Holy day of Obligation



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

An Easter Prayer

From http://www.lords-prayer-words.com/times/easter_prayers.html#catholic



Lord, the resurrection of Your Son
has given us new life and renewed hope.
Help us to live as new people
in pursuit of the Christian ideal.
Grant us wisdom to know what we must do,
the will to want to do it,
the courage to undertake it,
the perseverance to continue to do it,
and the strength to complete it.
Amen

Source: New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book



Tau Fraternity: Next Meeting Date

Tau Fraternity General Meeting: Sunday, March 5 at Saint Joseph's 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 – **Josh Goldberg**
- 3:30 - 4:00 Liturgy of Hours, business meeting, and closing prayer

Initial Formation discussion:

Candidates: Chapters 15 and 16 of The Franciscan Journey

Aspirants: Chapter 4 of The Franciscan Journey

Ongoing Formation discussion: We will be discussing living the Gospel Values.

Liturgy of the Hours:

Fifth Sunday of Lent:

Hymn: #89 – The Glory of These Forty Days (Verses 1, 2 and 4): pg. 1604

Psalms and Canticle: Sunday, Week I Evening Prayer II: pg. 712

Everything Else: Fifth Sunday of Lent: Evening Prayer II: pg. 366

Reader: **Bill Brewster, 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.

