



SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Online Advent Resources, p. 2
- December Underwear Drive, p. 4
- Christmas Reflections, p. 8

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Minister's Message

Peace and all good!

Just how far will God go to prove His infinite love for humanity?

The answer is found in and at Christmas. He will become one of us; like us in all things except sin (Hebrews 4:15). This is the mystery and the glory of the Incarnation — and the true “reason for the season”, as catchy slogans would remind us.

But the Incarnation is a not only a love story — it's also a story about humility; a profound divine humility. Can God be considered humble? The creator of everything, the ground of all being, the foundation of the universe — humble? Precisely — because the act of the Incarnation is ultimately an act of humility. The All Powerful became powerless; He who is capable of speaking worlds into being comes to us as the most helpless thing we can probably imagine — a newborn infant.

Perhaps this was so we wouldn't feel threatened; at least, not at first. No, God didn't choose a ground-shaking theophany to break into our world in human form; no pillars of fire or other manifestations of power. He was just a baby. But as we know all too well from the narratives of Easter that we will recite in a few short months, humanity's comfort level with Jesus didn't last. Indeed, He was actually hunted from the start; while we know nothing from Scripture of the years between Jesus' early childhood and the start of His ministry, we can nonetheless draw a violent through line between Herod and Pontius Pilate.

While both the Incarnation and the Crucifixion are acts of divine giving and emptying (kenosis), at Christmas, it is “right and just” to focus on the joyful offering we are given. God's gift of self is one that we can imitate; we, too, can give of ourselves — to family, to neighbors, to strangers in need — which is a gift more priceless than any to be found or purchased from a store. We are relentlessly encouraged by seasonal advertising to buy, buy, buy; to find the perfect present, because only then will true happiness and the ideal Christmas materialize. But as followers of Christ — and especially as Franciscans — we know this is an elusive and ultimately futile quest. We look elsewhere — to Someone, not something — for our Christmas peace and joy.

Back to humility for a moment. The Sylvania Franciscans — an order of nuns in Ohio — make for us the connections between Christ, Francis, and Incarnational humility: “Francis prayed and reflected on the Scriptures, he was deeply moved by the poverty and humility of Jesus who, though divine, freely and lovingly



Organization

Tau Fraternity
P.O. Box 51
150 S. Sterling Blvd.
Sterling, VA 20167

Meetings every 1st Sunday at:
St. Joseph Catholic Church
750 Peachtree St., Room 205
Herndon, VA 20170

Pace e Bene

The Tau Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order was canonically established on June 21, 1992. The Fraternity is affiliated with the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Tau Fraternity is in the St. Margaret of Cortona Region of the Secular Franciscan Order.

The Tau Fraternity Council currently includes the following officers:

- **Minister—Kimberley Heatherington, OFS**
- **Vice Minister—Josh Goldberg, OFS**
- **Formation Director—Walter Gawlak, OFS**
- **Secretary—Vera Stewart, OFS**
- **Treasurer—Cynthia Filan-Kim, OFS**



Minister's Message Cont'd

shared our human existence (Phil 2:6-7). For Francis, the Incarnation, the Passion, and the gift of Christ's presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist were the most profound expressions of God's unconditional love for each of us. For Francis, God was not a distant ruler and judge, but a loving Father, Brother, and Spouse."

So at Christmas, God comes among us — in both love and humility. As we prepare during Advent to receive Him, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the "seasonal static" that tries to distract us — but if, like St. Francis, we pray and reflect on the Scriptures that tell us the Christmas story, He will find the warmest of welcomes in our hearts.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to all!

Kimberley

Advent Resources

Dynamic Catholic: [Best Advent Ever Reflections 2021 | Dynamic Catholic](#)

Loyola Press: [Arts and Faith: Advent | Loyola Press](#)

Bishop Barron: [Advent Reflections with Bishop Robert Barron](#)

Catholic Relief Services: [Online Advent Calendar 2021 | CRS](#)

Recap of Last Gathering

November 7,
2021

Opening Prayer

Kimberley Heatherington, OFS offered a prayer of gratitude.

ONGOING FORMATION:

Walter Gawlak, OFS provided an overview of Chapter Seven, "Eucharist" of *Clare of Assisi: A Heart Full of Love*. He said that the Eucharist is:

- A sacrament
- The real presence of Jesus
- The body and blood of Christ

Walter read part 5 of the Rule and an excerpt from the *Franciscan Journey*. He said that we need to be intimate with Jesus. He read sections from Chapter Seven, and then passed out the following questions for small group discussion:

- Tell us something about Clare of Assisi.
- How does her life overlap/complement the life of Francis? How does she help guide us on our Secular Franciscan path?
- Letters to Agnes, Poverty of God, Gazing on the Cross, Image and Identity, Contemplation, Transformation, Eucharist – do any of these topics stick with you? If yes, why?

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE:



Joe Boyle, OFS led the Annual Remembrance Service for deceased Tau Brothers and Sisters. Joe said a few words about each of our deceased members. Kimberley led the Cantic of The Creatures as is presented in the Franciscan Wake Service. Following the service, Kimberley led the Franciscan Crown Rosary in remembrance of Kay Flynn, OFS and Joe M., OFS.

Tau Necrology:

12/07/97 James Sheehan	03/03/12 Edna Henke
06/10/98 Anna Seymore	05/12/16 Mary McCarthy
10/15/98 Bill Obernauer	07/03/18 Frank Mullin
12/24/98 Karen Sawtell	04/12/19 Ron Kauffman
03/16/05 Margorie O'Connor	10/17/19 Ed Geiger
05/02/05 Tony Del Popolo	08/21/20 Cathy Williams
11/28/06 Marie Fitzgerald	03/11/21 Kay Flynn
06/14/08 Isabel Bartlett	09/22/21 Joseph M.
01/2010 Diana Caputo	Unknown Edith Tomasoni
08/16/10 Martha Ureke	

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.



Photo of Clarian Crucifix at Shrine of St. Anthony -
Submitted by Gil Donahue, OFS

THANKS TO GIL'S AND STAN-
LEY'S CONTRIBUTIONS, WE
HAVE THIS LIMERICK TO
SAINT CLARE:

*That woman of Assisi named
Clare,*

*Trod the way of Saint
Francis with care,*

Christ to adore,

Died with the poor,

*With joy her soul she laid
bare.*

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

UNDERWEAR DRIVE

Tau Fraternity is participating in the "Undie Sunday" apostolate led by the First Baptist Church of Herndon. The underwear drive serves the 7,000 refugees at Fort Pickett in Blackstone, VA. Immediate needs for **NEW** items only are:

- Women's regular or maternity underwear in all sizes
- Women's regular or maternity bras in all sizes
- Men's underwear in all sizes
- Children's underwear in all sizes (both boys and girls)

If you wish to help, please bring **NEW** items to the Tau Gatherings in December, January, and February. Vera Stewart, OFS will transport them to Sally White, OFS. Or if you order online, you may have them delivered directly to Sally.

WINTER COAT CLOSET

Cornerstones, in partnership with the Hunter Mill District Supervisor's Office, is operating the Hunter Mill District Winter Coat Closet for 2021 – 2022 in order to provide free winter coats, hats, gloves, mittens and scarves to all who need them.

If you wish to help, please bring new or gently used, clean coats and new hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves to the Tau Gathering on January 2nd.



APOSTOLATES

MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY HOSPICE COOKING APOSTOLATE

Thanks to our Brothers and Sisters who support the apostolate at the Missionaries of Charity Gift of Peace House. The next food drop off will be December 12th. Contact Veronica O'Donnell, OFS or Joe Boyle, OFS if you would like to help.

Pace e bene!

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Help to feed the hungry. Cyndy Filan-Kim, OFS volunteered to shop and deliver food to the St. Vincent DePaul Society chapter at St. Timothy Catholic Church. Food donations may be dropped off prior to the Tau Gathering in the stairwell on the right at St. Joseph School. Tau Fraternity will continue to also give a monetary donation to the pantry. If you wish to make a monetary donation, please provide it to Cyndy.

Thank you!

For more, info, see <http://www.sttimothyparish.org>

POOR CLARES OF NEW JERSEY

Tau Fraternity supports the Monastery of St. Clare in Chesterfield, NJ with a biannual monetary donation. The monastery is home to Sister, Karen Stapleton, OSC, who began her Franciscan journey with Tau Fraternity. The main work of the Poor Clares of NJ is to provide Altar Bread to parishes in the diocese of Trenton.

For more information, or to submit a prayer intention to the Poor Clares, see [The Poor Clares of New Jersey — Joyfully Embracing the Gospel Way of Life .\(poorclaresnewjersey.com\)](http://www.poorclaresnewjersey.com)

FRANCISCAN MISSION SERVICE

Tau Fraternity provides a biannual monetary donation to Franciscan Mission Service. The organization prepares and supports lay Catholics for mission service opportunities around the globe.

For more information, see [Home | Franciscan Mission Service](#)

FAITH without WORKS is dead

James 2:17

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
Recruitment Committee – Vacant
Technology Committee – John Ata, OFS

INTERFAITH & ECUMENICAL

“Fratelli tutti” confirms a universal truth about man, panelists say



On the occasion of the first anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical "Fratelli tutti", Georgetown University and "La Civiltà Cattolica" hosted

a two-day international conference on intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Speakers at the event commented on the impact of the Papal document on interreligious relations and in society at large, emphasizing its continuity with Vatican II teachings.

By Lisa Zengarini

Human fraternity is the core of the Christian faith and the base for dialogue between faiths and cultures said panelists at an international conference hosted by two reputed Jesuit institutions. Titled "The culture of encounter: The future of intercultural and interreligious dialogue", the conference was co-organized on November 8-9 in Rome by the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs of Georgetown University, and Italian Jesuit magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica* on the occasion of Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli tutti*.

Speakers at the event included Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; and Father Antonio Spadaro, Director of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, who introduced the event and presented a letter by Pope Francis praising the initiative. Also speaking was Sultan Faisal Al Remeithi, Secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Elders.

We are all brothers: a basic truth

In the first part of the Conference, Cardinal Ayuso remarked that Pope Francis' encyclical only reaffirmed and recalled a basic universal truth that is valid at all times: that we are all brothers, "no one excluded". His call for fraternity should not, therefore, come as a surprise, he pointed out: "The encyclical stimulates us to revive a love that is capable of compassion, tenderness, care,

forgiveness, and which generates fraternity, opening our hearts to what the Gospel demands of us".

Working together for peace

The Vatican prelate also emphasized that Pope Francis' call for fraternity, compassion, and building a culture of encounter is perfectly in line with the teachings of Vatican Council II. He further focused on three aspects of the encyclical letter: gratuitous love for all, the urgent need to build together human solidarity in order to heal the wounds of humanity as opposed to the culture of indifference and greed marking human relations today and working together for peace. Regarding this last aspect, Cardinal Ayuso recalled that this should be an imperative, especially for religious believers.

Vatican Council II teachings

Cardinal Tagle also highlighted the continuity of Pope Francis' encyclical with Vatican II, and in particular with its Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* and its Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*. "Fratelli tutti is not an accident in the path of the Magisterium of the Church, both in its social and ecclesiological teachings", he said.

Reception of Fratelli Tutti in the Muslim world

For his part, Sultan Al Remeithi spoke about the reception of the *Fratelli tutti* in the Muslim world. In his address to the conference on November 9, he explained that Muslims have been encouraged to accept Pope Francis' call for fraternity by the two Islamic principles of "knowledge", and of "righteous and pious cooperation".

The impact of Fratelli Tutti

In his closing remarks, Father Spadaro highlighted the cultural, social, and political impact of *Fratelli tutti*, noting how the encyclical has aroused much interest in many different cultural contexts across the world and has stimulated re-thinking ways of living together in peace and fraternity in our modern world. According to Father Spadaro, the fact that this reflection has been spearheaded by a spiritual leader and not by a political leader should give people a lot to think about.

Ecumenical & Interfaith Project

Tau is participating in an underwear collection for local Afghan refugees, in partnership with the First Baptist Church of Herndon (details elsewhere in this newsletter). As you may be aware, 99.7% of the population of Afghanistan are Muslims. This project, then, is both an ecumenical and interreligious effort,

There will be other opportunities to help the Afghan refugees going forward — more news to come.

Also, a big thanks to Sally White for coordinating; it just so happens that her next door neighbor is a member of the First Baptist Church of Herndon!

PRAYER INTENTIONS

HEAR US, LORD!

Please keep the following intentions in your prayers:

Milleson; Bill Brewster and his son Richard Lee; Cynthia Filan-Kim's sister; Sally White and her husband Gary; Richard & Carole Clarke and their grandsons Liam and Rory; Helen Broxmeyer and her daughter Susan; and Irene Naveau. For the patients and Sisters at the Missionaries of Charity Gift of Peace House. For the people affected by Coronavirus and their caregivers. For the Mother of Mercy Free Medical Clinic and its patients. For all peoples who suffer persecution. For the country of Myanmar and its citizens. For the victims of natural disasters. For refugees and migrant workers. For all those who are in need of our prayers who have been inadvertently omitted from this list.

Please send prayer requests to Kimberley Heatherington, OFS.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God..

Philippians 4:6,7



REFLECTIONS

Christmas Stories, Poems, and Prayers

Sally's Favorite Christmas Memory

It was Christmas Eve 1959 and my father and mother had just returned from one of the Palestine refugee camps where my father had held a medical clinic. My parents were tired. My brother and sister and I were wondering why we were in a divided city with occasional gunfire from the Israeli army and why we were in an old sheik's palace, the American Colony, with only two hours of heat a day. We wanted to be back in Kansas with our secular Christmas activities, our normal food, not lamb and rice, for Christmas. I was fourteen and the oldest of my siblings who do not to this day remember our Christmas in Jerusalem, Jordan.

The UN driver assigned to us picked us up late at night for our trip to a Christmas Eve event. He drove out of the city and over the tree barren hills on a very rough and high road in the pitch black dark of night. I remember being frightened of the other drivers and the high road with no guard rails. We arrived at a big field on a hillside with thousands of people standing in the dark. The sky was filled with bright stars and it was cold. We were given candles. Everyone stood in silence and looked down on a small town, Bethlehem.

*We were told at Midnight to light our candles. At once with thousands of candle lights the voices of people rose to the heavens singing in their native languages *Silent Night*. Their voices seemed to travel to the stars and my Christmas forever ceased to be secular and became a season of wonder for me. I understood at that point that whatever I did in life, it would be a life of service to others. I did know that I would become a Catholic or be professed as a Secular Franciscan. But I knew on that night I had been touched by the Holy Spirit and was forever changed.*

Christmas Manger Prayer

O God, whose mighty Son was born in Bethlehem those days long ago, lead us to that same poor place, where Mary laid her tiny Child. And as we look on in wonder and praise, make us welcome him in all new life, see him in the poor, and care for his handiwork the earth, the sky and the sea. O God, bless us again in your great love. We pray for this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Advent & Christmas Prayers - \(acatholic.org\)](http://acatholic.org)

Candy Cane

Author Unknown

Look at a candy cane, what do you see?
Stripes that are red like the blood shed for me!
White for my Savior, Who's sinless and pure!
"J" is for Jesus, My Lord that's for sure!
Turn it around and a staff you will see,
Jesus, my Shepherd, is coming for me!



[50+ Best Christian Christmas Poems | Love Lives On](#)

CALENDAR

Upcoming Activities and Events

December is the Month of the Incarnation *

- Dec 1 – Richard Clarke’s Profession
- Dec 3 – Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle
Feast of St. Francis Xavier
Sylvia Capurso’s Profession
- Dec 5 – Bill Bouffard’s, Jim Haynes’, & Liz Welborn’s Profession
Second Sunday of Advent
Tau Fraternity Gathering
- Dec 6 – St. Nicholas
- Dec 8 – Solemnity of The Immaculate Conception – Holy Day of Obligation
Frank Bowen’s Profession (25th anniversary)
- Dec 12 – Discovery of the tomb of St. Francis,
Feast of Our Lady of Guadeloupe
Third Sunday of Advent
Missionaries of Charity Hospice Apostolate Food Drop Off
- Dec 13 – Memorial of St. Lucy
- Dec 15 – Mary Queen of the Seraphic Order
- Dec 19 - 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 31 – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

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

DECEMBER 2021

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JANUARY 2022

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SAVE THE DATE

What: Tau Annual Retreat

When: May 20 - 22, 2022

Where: Holy Cross Abbey; Berryville, VA

NEXT TAU GATHERING

December 5, 2021

SCHEDULE

1:30 pm – 1:32 pm Opening Prayer **TBD**
1:32 pm – 2:20 pm Christmas Party
2:20 pm – 2:35 pm Angelus & Liturgy of the Hours
2:35 pm – 3:00 pm Business Meeting
3:00 pm Closing Prayer

If you wish to eat during the party, please bring your own individually wrapped food.

St. Joseph Church
Room 205

Initial
Formation
Leader needed
in January!
Contact Walter
Gawlak, OFS

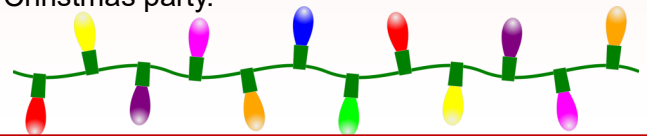
INITIAL FORMATION:

Senior Candidates: Chapters 24 and 31 in *The Franciscan Journey*

Candidates: Chapter 11 in *The Franciscan Journey*

ONGOING FORMATION:

In lieu of on-going formation, we will enjoy a Christmas party.



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

Second Sunday of Advent

Hymn: #2 – Brightness of the Father's Glory:
pg. 1508 – Divine Office podcast

Psalms: Week 2 Evening Prayer II: pgs. 787

Everything else: Second Sunday of Advent,
Evening Prayer II: pg. 68

Readers: TBD**

**Contact Kimberley Heatherington, OFS to volunteer for:

- ◆ Opening Prayer
- ◆ Scripture Reading and Responsory
- ◆ Presentation