



August 2024

THE CALL

St. Thomas More Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order

From Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel

Minister: Andrea Bender, OFS; Vice Minister: Sita Chakrawarti, OFS; Secretary: Thomas Bender, OFS; Treasurer: Ann Wester, OFS; Formation Director: Janette Martin, OFS; Councilors-at-Large: Ann Corro, OFS, Michael Landrigan, OFS

Meeting – 1:00 pm. - Sunday, August 11, 2023 – Feast of St. Clare of Assisi

- We are donating food to a foodbank this month.
- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – We will be discussing Reflection 6 in *To Live as Francis Lived*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* – Evening Prayer II for the *Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time* – Though this is the Feast of St. Clare, the Sunday celebration has precedence for Seculars.
 - Verse for the Cantic of Mary and Concluding Prayer are from the *Proper of Seasons*
 - Psalms, reading, and intercessions are from the *Psalter, Week III, Sunday, Evening Prayer II*.
 - Hymn TBD
 - Please bring your breviary and hymnal.
- *Closing Prayers* – Ritual, p. 36.

Remote Access to the Monthly Meeting Info

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85418000041?pwd=d0pFSDREaDJmdjZpNWlqbll4T20rZz09>

Dial by your location

Phone: +1 301 715 8592 US

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

Minister's Notes

Ah Lord, God, I said, I do not know how to speak. I am too young! Jer 1:6 I don't think any of us qualify for the "I am too young" excuse. So, are there legitimate excuses for not putting your name forward to serve on council? Yes, but not as many as you might think.

How is your health? Fraternity council terms are three years. Before you use that excuse remember that Randy was first elected formation minister less than a week after cancer surgery. I have served as minister through deteriorating hip, hip surgery, recovery and now back to using a cane, How well do you reasonably

expect to be functioning in three plus years?

How is your spouse's health? This may be better framed as are you or do you expect to soon become the primary caregiver for someone that will require you to forgo monthly fraternity meetings? None of us has a crystal ball. Even if we did, as good Catholics, we shouldn't use it. I am speaking of reasonable expectations.

In the political sphere we have been given the example of a president who is choosing not to run for another term. Your choice is easier if you aren't already in the office.

Another possible excuse is I am tired of serving. Thank goodness God does not tire of loving us. However, our Regional Minister will confirm, as Secular Franciscans the length of time we serve is limited to two terms (6 years) It is time for a change-a new way of looking at things. There are exceptions made for small fraternities where 5-6 people rotate jobs where none have the luxury of not being on council. Can you afford that luxury?

Another reason is I don't come to meetings. Why don't you? Back when you were a candidate, monthly meetings were on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Though they shifted by one hour around the time of the pandemic to better meet the needs of the parish, that has not changed since I was a candidate. The monthly meeting comes as no surprise. Part of fraternity is connecting with other fraternity members. That happens primarily during fellowship time at a fraternity meeting. Zoom does not do this well. Are you choosing not to participate? The fraternity pays full fair share (toward administrative costs of regional, national, and international fraternities) for your non or lukewarm participation.

Part of that is on me. When we returned to in person meetings after the pandemic, I chose not to immediately drop anyone who was slow in returning. It took (takes) some people longer than others to be comfortable around each other's germs. I was not willing to penalize anyone.

So have I convinced you? Can I expect being

approached at the August meeting by people willing to stand for a council position? I would also like to hear that you considered it but are being realistic about your health, or age, or how long you expect to be in the area.

This month, July, we will all donate nonperishable food to a food bank. All our parish churches have some means of collecting food. It is either distributed directly from the church or goes to the St Lucy project. The St Lucy project gathers food from churches that do not have a distribution set up and supplement the food at those who do. St Charles gets boxes of food from St Lucy several times a year. There are also secular, county run distribution centers. Where you donate is not nearly as important as that you donate.

Pax et Bonum,

Andrea

Prayer Intentions

For...

- Peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East and the victims of the violence.
- Peace in Ukraine and protection for her Ukrainian and Ruthenian Rite Catholics.
- Elly Escobal, OFS - skin cancer surgery on 8/13
- Grace Coipuram, OFS
- Patricia Kennedy, mother of Joseph Kennedy, OFS who is recovering from congestive heart failure.
- Virginia Roccapriore, widow of Joseph Roccapriore, OFS.
- Louis, son of Clarissa, of STM Parish, for depression.
- The sister of a friend of April, who does not want her sister to pray for her.
- April's friend, whose husband avoids Church, and his ex-wife who never went to Church.
- The Poor Holy Souls in Purgatory.
- Religious freedom and for all persecuted for their belief in God.
- Prisoners, the sick, poor, hungry, lonely, homeless, unemployed and those with no one to pray for them.
- For the work of the Order of Malta in Bethlehem in this time of strife and war.
- The union of all Christians.

**PRAYER FOR THE ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA
REGIONAL CHAPTER OF MATS**

September 6-8, 2024

Most high and glorious God,
we ask for your blessing
upon our upcoming Chapter of Mats.

We thank you for our call to live the Gospel
following the example of our Seraphic Father Francis.

We thank you for those who have gone before us,
who preserved our charism throughout the centuries.

We thank you for our current leaders,
who serve us and help us to grow in our understanding
of our vocation.

And we thank you for future leaders,
the shepherds that are to come.

We ask you to send down your Holy Spirit upon us as
we journey toward our 2024 Chapter of Mats.

Prepare all of us, Lord, as we ask
for fraternal Love to love as you love;
Humility to listen to one another;
Wisdom to see the future you would have us build;
Courage to follow your direction; and
Grace to spread seeds of goodness and joy throughout
our time at Chapter and beyond.

Lord, as we anticipate coming together to celebrate
Where we were, where we are, and where we are called
to be as Secular Franciscans,
let us remember to see and treat all
“...as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.”¹

And so we pray,
Holy God, draw us together as a community,
take charge of our Chapter of Mats,
and lead us into the future.

Father, we adore you and give you all
praise, honor, and glory,
Through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
In union with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- The health, protection and guidance of all priests and bishops including Pope Francis.
- For vocations to all branches of the Franciscan family.

Professions

No professions in August

Birthdays of the Month

Elizabeth Shaeffer (15th)

Andrea Bender (21st)

Necrology

Edna Joyce – August 1990

Cora Weiss – August 26, 1999

Anne Smisko – August 2007

Elizabeth Young – August 2008

Joseph Roccapriore – August 22, 2017

Secretary's Notes

Our Minister, Andrea, working Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM, has succeeded in changing the Altius Moderamen from the Custody of the Holy Land to the OFM Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is a part of Fr. Jerome's duties to help us secure a spiritual assistant. Realizing that not that many friars are in the area, as a stopgap, he has offered us his monthly reflection for Secular Franciscans and so on page 4, please read *Transfiguration and Metamorphosis*. Each month we will have a new reflection from Fr. Jerome in *The Call*.

We have numerous notable feasts this month. Blessed Mother, St. Dominic, who is ranked a feast on our Franciscan Calendar, St. Maximillian Kolbe, OFM, Conv., St. Louis XI, co-patron of our order and St. Clare of Assisi. The first letter of St. Clare to

Peace and Good,

Randy

Transfiguration and Metamorphosis

This month we celebrate the Transfiguration of Christ; in Greek, the Metamorphosis of Christ.

St Anthony of Padua wanted his friar students to know some science so they would be able to use the natural phenomena God created to help explain our faith and our relationship with God. We know about the metamorphosis that transforms the caterpillar into a butterfly: the caterpillar entombs itself in a chrysalis, only to emerge later a completely different type of creature, the butterfly.

The Transfiguration of Christ is a different type of metamorphosis. The caterpillar's body breaks down and a new type of body is created from it within the chrysalis. But in the Transfiguration, while still appearing as "one like a son of man," his clothes become brilliant, whiter than any laundry could bleach them.

The Prophecy of Daniel describes "one like a son of man" descending from the heavens. The Jews knew this piece of Scripture as a description of the Messiah, hence Jesus took up the common title "Son of Man," literally a human being, as a way to modestly describe the Messiah who is also "Son of God."

In Christ, transfiguration allows divine light to shine through our mortal body. Maybe in an emotional or spiritual sense, we do break down and become composed again in a new way. Some people even see a physical kind of aura or peace in a person who is transfigured in Christ. For St Paul, "All of us with unveiled faces, reflecting the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, we are being transformed into that same image, from glory to glory by the action of the Spirit of God" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan, writes about this kind of "transfiguration" of St Paul in which we and all Christians may share, a transfiguration which is seen in a great inner **joy** and peace in the face of troubles (2 Corinthians 7:4), in giving **thanks and praise** to God without destructive criticism, in the "**untiring ability to start again**" (the series of times St Paul's life is

threatened throughout the last half of Acts, as at 14:19-21; see also Romans 5:3-5), and in a **liberty of spirit** which enables St Paul to act with confidence as Christ would act rather than conforming to social pressure or convention, "serving in love" (Galatians 5:1-13).

Perhaps each of these is a mini-examination of conscience for us this month. I encourage each of you to take a week to reflect on how you allow each of these aspects of transfiguration to shine in your being.

Week 1: How do I respond to the difficulties of life? Do I pause and turn to the Lord? Am I ever peaceful when things do not go my way? Am I able to "bless my enemies and do not curse them"?

Week 2: Am I beset by gossip or driven by a need to "vent" my frustrations? Can I renew or establish a habit in my heart to give thanks and praise to God, even for people whose words or actions prompt my frustration?

Week 3: Do I demonstrate an ability to start over, or is there a part of my life where I have given up? Is there someone I'm holding a grudge against, or am unable to be myself around? What is one thing I could do to share God's love in those situations, to trust in God and in God's ways even when I trust that another person will behave badly?

Week 4: Lord, help me to be free not to do things for my own comfort, but help me to be free enough to serve others out of love, without expecting anything in return. Help me, Lord, to see someone who needs help, and to have the courage to help them. If they offer anything in return, give me the courage to pass it on to someone else in more need than myself.

May the Lord grant you peace!

Jerome, ofm
National Spiritual Assistant
OFS Animator, OFM Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Chapter of Mats – Last Call

The registration team needs to be wrapping things up by August 15, 2024

This is the link to the events page on the Regional Website:

<https://saintmargaretofcortona.org/upcoming-events/>

Elly, April, Patrick, Sita, Ann Corro, Jan, Randy, Andrea and Christine from our Fraternity are registered to attend. Hope to see you there.

Saints of the Month

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Franciscan-Saints-2022-1-Catalog-by-Mary-Lou-Coffman-OFS.pdf>

August 2

Feast of St. Mary of the Angels of the Portiuncula - Plenary indulgence available

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12286a.htm>

August 4

Bl. Frédéric Janssoone, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (November 19, 1838-August 4, 1916)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frédéric_Janssoone

St. John Vianney, Priest, Third Order Secular (May 8, 1786-August 4, 1859)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08326c.htm>

August 6

Bl. Maria Francesca Rubatto, Founder, Capuchin Sisters of Mother Rubatto
(February 14, 1844-August 6, 1904)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Maria_Rubatto

August 7

Bls. Agathangelus and Cassian, Priests, OFM Capuchin, Martyrs (d. 1638)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-agathangel-and-cassian.html>

August 8

Holy Father St. Dominic, Founder of the Order of Preachers and Cordbearer
(August 8, 1170-August 6, 1221)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05106a.htm>

August 9

Bl. John of La Verna, Religious, Order of Friars Minor (1259-August 9, 1322)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-john-of-la-verna.html>

August 11

St. Clare of Assisi, Founder, Order of Poor Ladies (Poor Clares) (July 16, 1194-August 11, 1253)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04004a.htm>

August 13

Bl. Marco of Aviano, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (November 17, 1631-August 13, 1699)

<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0813-19.htm>

August 14

St. Maximilian Kolbe, OFM, Conventual, Martyr of Auschwitz (January 8, 1894-August 14, 1941)

<https://saintmaximiliankolbe.com/biography/>

August 16

Bl. Francis Chici of Pesaro. Third Order Secular, hermit (d. 1350)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-francis-cichi.html>

- August 17
St. Roch of Montpellier, Confessor, Third Order Secular (c. 1295-August 16, 1327)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-roch.html>
- August 18
Bl. John Louis Loir and Companions, Priests and Martyrs of Rochefort
<https://catholicsaints.info/martyrs-of-the-hulks-of-rochefort/>
- August 19
St. Louis of Toulouse, Bishop, Order of Friars Minor (February 9, 1274-August 19, 1297)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09385c.htm>
- August 21
St. Pius X, Pope, Third Order Secular June 2, 1835-August 20, 1914
<https://franciscansoflife.com/2015/08/22/st-pius-x-our-brother-giuseppe/>
- August 23
Bl. Bernard of Offida, Friar, OFM Capuchin (November 7, 1604-August 22, 1694)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-bernard-of-offida.html>
- August 25
Bl. Maria del Transito Cabanillas, Founder of the Franciscan Tertiary Missionary Sisters
(August 15, 1821-August 25, 1885)
https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/2002/documents/ns_lit_doc_20020414_transito_en.html
St. Louis IX, King of France, Patron of the Third Order Secular (April 15, 1214-August 25, 1270)
https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=1011
- September 1
St. Beatrice of Silva, Founder, Conceptionist Poor Clares (c. 1424-August 9, 1492)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrice_of_Silva
- September 2
Bls. Apollinaris of Posat, John Francis Burté, Severin Girault, Priests and companions, First and Third
Orders, Martyrs of Carmes (d. 1792)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/martyrs-de-carmes.html>
- September 4
St. Rose of Viterbo, Third Order Secular (c. 1233-March 6, 1251)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-rose-of-viterbo.html>
- September 6
Bl. Liberatus of Lauro, Priest, First Order (d. 1260)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-liberatus-of-lauro.html>
- September 7
Bl. Gentle of Matelica, Priest, First Order, martyr (d. September 5, 1340)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-gentle-of-matelica.html>
- September 8
Bl. John Tomachi and Sons, Third Order Secular, Martyrs (d. September 8, 1628)
<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-ioannes-tomachi/>
- September 9
Bl. Seraphina Sforza, Poor Clare Nun (1434-September 8, 1478)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-seraphina-sforza.html>
- September 10
Bl. Lucy de Freitas, Third Order Secular, martyr (d. 1622)
<https://joyfulspirit139.blogspot.com/2014/11/bl-lucy-de-freitas.html>

First Letter of St. Clare of Assisi to St. Agnes of Prague

To the esteemed and most holy virgin, the Lady Agnes, daughter of the most excellent and illustrious King of Bohemia: Clare, an unworthy servant of Jesus Christ and useless handmaid of the Cloistered Ladies of the Monastery of San Damiano, her subject and servant in all things, presents herself totally with a special reverent [prayer] that she attain the glory of everlasting happiness.

As I hear of the fame of Your holy conduct and irreproachable life, which is known not only to me but to the entire world as well, I greatly rejoice and exult in the Lord. I am not alone in rejoicing at such great news, but [I am joined by] all who serve and seek to serve Jesus Christ. For, though You, more than others, could have enjoyed the magnificence and honor and dignity of the world, and could have been married to the illustrious Caesar with splendor befitting You and His Excellency, You have rejected all these things and have chosen with Your whole heart and soul a life of holy poverty and destitution. Thus You took a spouse of a more noble lineage, Who will keep Your virginity ever unspotted and unsullied, the Lord Jesus Christ:

When You have loved [Him], You shall be chaste; when You have touched [Him], You shall become pure; when You have accepted [Him], You shall be a virgin.

*Whose power is stronger,
Whose generosity is more abundant,
Whose appearance more beautiful,
Whose love more tender,
Whose courtesy more gracious.
In Whose embrace You are already caught up;
Who has adorned Your breast with precious stones
And has placed priceless pearls in Your ears
and has surrounded You with sparkling gems
as though blossoms of springtime
and placed on Your head a golden crown
as a sign [to all] of Your holiness.*

Therefore, most beloved sister, or should I say, Lady worthy of great respect: because You are the spouse and the mother and the sister of my Lord Jesus Christ, and have been adorned resplendently with the sign of inviolable virginity and most holy poverty: Be strengthened in the holy service which You have undertaken out of an ardent desire for the Poor Crucified, Who for the sake of all of us took upon Himself the Passion of the Cross and delivered us from the power of the Prince of Darkness to whom we were enslaved because of the disobedience of our first parents, and so reconciled us to God the Father.

*O blessed poverty,
who bestows eternal riches on those who love and embrace her!*

*O holy poverty,
to those who possess and desire you
God promises the kingdom of heaven
and offers, indeed, eternal glory and blessed life!
O God-centered poverty,
whom the Lord Jesus Christ
Who ruled and now rules heaven and earth,
Who spoke and things were made,
condescended to embrace before all else!*

The foxes have dens, He says, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man, Christ, has nowhere to lay His head, but bowing His head gave up His spirit.

If so great and good a Lord, then, on coming into the Virgin's womb, chose to appear despised, needy, and poor in this world, so that people who were in utter poverty and want and in absolute need of heavenly nourishment might become rich in Him by possessing the kingdom of heaven, then rejoice and be glad! Be filled with a remarkable happiness and a spiritual joy! Contempt of the world has pleased You more than [its] honors, poverty more than earthly riches, and You have sought to store up greater treasures in heaven rather than on earth, where rust does not consume nor moth destroy nor thieves break in and steal. Your

reward, then, is very great in heaven! And You have truly merited to be called a sister, spouse, and mother of the Son of the Father of the Most High and of the glorious Virgin.

You know, I am sure, that the kingdom of heaven is promised and given by the Lord only to the poor: for he who loves temporal things loses the fruit of love. Such a person cannot serve God and Mammon, for either the one is loved and the other is hated, or the one is served and the other despised.

You also know that one who is clothed cannot fight with another who is naked, because he is more quickly thrown who gives his adversary a chance to get hold of him; and that one who lives in the glory of earth cannot rule with Christ in heaven.

Again, [you know] that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, you have cast aside Your garments, that is, earthly riches, so that You might not be overcome by the one fighting against You, [and] that You might enter the kingdom of heaven through the straight path and narrow gate.

What a great laudable exchange: to leave the things of time for those of eternity, to choose the things of heaven for the goods of earth, to receive the hundred-fold in place of one, and to possess a blessed and eternal life.

Because of this I have resolved, as best I can, to beg Your excellency and Your holiness by my humble prayers in the mercy of Christ, to be strengthened in His holy service, and to progress from good to better, from virtue to virtue, so that He Whom You serve with the total desire of Your soul may bestow on You the reward for which You long.

I also beg You in the Lord, as much as I can, to include in Your holy prayers me, Your servant, though unworthy, and the other sisters with me in the monastery, who are all devoted to You, so that by their help we may merit the mercy of Jesus Christ, and together with You may merit to enjoy the everlasting vision.

Farewell in the Lord. And pray for me

<https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/first-letter-of-clare-to-aqnes/> accessed 8/7/2024