



The Little Flower Fraternity Secular Franciscan Order St. Margaret of Cortona Region

April 2025 Newsletter
Next Meeting: April 12, 2025

Sisters & Brothers of Penance,

This is my final message to you as your Servant Minister. I want to thank every brother and sister in the Fraternity for your support during my term of service. I also want to thank the members of the Servant Leadership Council for their efforts during this period as the Fraternity continued to grow as a Franciscan community within our beloved Church and Order. Thank you all once again. You are always and shall continue to be in my prayers as the Little Flower Fraternity moves forward under the guidance of a new Servant Leadership Council.

The Parable of the Donkey.

One day a farmer's donkey fell into a well. The animal cried loudly for hours, while the farmer tried to find something way to extricate him from the well. After much thought, the farmer decided that the donkey was old and the well was already dry and needed to be covered anyway so he concluded it really wasn't worth pulling the donkey out of the well.

The farmer invited all his neighbors to come help him. Handing each neighbor a shovel he explained to the group what the plan was and they began to throw dirt into the well. Now that donkey might have been stubborn but he was not dumb and as he realized what was happening he cried out horribly loud. Then, to everyone's surprise, he suddenly quieted down after a few shovelfuls of dirt had been thrown into the well.

The farmer looked down into the well and was amazed at what he saw. With each shovelful of dirt, the donkey was doing something incredible. It was shaking off the dirt and stepping on top of it. Very soon everyone was surprised to see the donkey reach the mouth of the well, step over the edge and trot out of the well to live the rest of his days in peace.

Life is going to throw dirt at you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the hole is to shake it off and use it to step up. Each of our problems is a step up. We can get out of the deepest holes if we don't give up.

Use the dirt life throws at you to move forward in life.

These are the five rules to happiness in life.

1. Free your heart from hate.
2. Free your mind of distractions.
3. Simplify your life.
4. Give more and expect less.
5. Love more and shake off the dirt of life, because in this life you have to be a solution, not the problem!

Our April 12, 2025 gathering is our Fraternity Servant Leadership Council elections. Please plan to attend so your voice on the new Council will be heard. The agenda is prayer, elections, and installation of the new Council.

Peace,

Phillip Francis Pucher, OFS

Servant Minister, Little Flower Fraternity OFS



Connect and Reflect

- **Caring for Each Other**
The Health and Heartbeat of Your Fraternity

Living in Fraternal Life to Fulfill the Franciscan Vision and Mission

All OFS members are heartily welcomed!

When: June 27-29, 2022

Where: Priest Field Pastoral Center, 4030 Middleway Pike,
Kearneysville, WV 25430 <https://priestfield.org/>

Time: Beginning at 3:00pm Friday and ending Sunday 11:00am

Cost: Shared room \$270.00 Private Room \$300.00
(all board and meals included)

The Catholic Men's Fellowship

The Catholic Men's Fellowship is hosting its Annual Conference on April 5, 2025 8 AM to 3 PM at St. Joseph Fullerton. Featured speakers include Matt Birk, Superbowl Champion and Retired Baltimore Raven, and Matt Hartfiel, VP of Paradisus Dei and Program Director of "That Man is You."

Lenten Bible Study Course

Join Fr. Jude Winkler, OFM Conv. at the Shrine of St. Anthony for a bible study course this Lenten Season! This four-session course will examine some of the most important themes described in the Gospel of St. John as well as some of the most significant passages! Wednesdays March 26, April 2, 9, and 16, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. These sessions will be live streamed! Free Will Offering! Please bring a bible! For more questions call, 410-531-2800 or email at info@ShrineofStAnthony.org. More information here: <https://www.shrineofstanthony.org/gospel-of-john-1-retreat-registration>.

Divine Mercy Sunday is coming..... April 27, 2025

This feast is celebrated at many churches, and in particular, 2 of the places in town that are celebrating and that have Holy Doors are the Shrine of St. Anthony and Holy Rosary Church!

Activities at the Shrine: 12-3:30 PM

Mass, Confession, Adoration, and the Chaplet

Activities at Holy Rosary Church: to be announced, but Mass, confession, a procession, blessing of gifts purchased from the gift shop, and the Chaplet are sure to be part of the day. Also, be reminded that there are relics of Saint John Paul II's blood, as well as relics of St. Faustina and Blessed Michael Sopocko (St. Faustina's confessor and spiritual director) at the church. (Also, if you have ever been there, it is a beautiful place!!)

Joan Kane will send more info if it becomes available to me, or you can check on your own on the web.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU CAN GAIN A PLENARY INDULGENCE FOR YOURSELF, TO INCLUDE REMISSION OF ALL TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT DUE TO SIN WHEN YOU MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INDULGENCE. IN THIS WAY, YOUR SOUL IS PURIFIED AS IT WAS ON YOUR BAPTISMAL DAY. A GREAT GIFT!!!!

CONDITIONS FOR THE PLENARY INDULGENCE ARE THESE:

- Be in a state of grace, having confessed all mortal sins
- Be completely detached from any affection for sin, even venial sin
- Sacramental confession within 20 days before or after Divine Mercy Sunday
- Eucharistic Communion on Divine Mercy Sunday or within a few days before or after
- Pray for the Pope's intentions
- Participate in prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy
- Recite the Our Father and Creed in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, or participate in services honoring the Divine Mercy devotion.



PASSION WALK AT ST. JOSEPH CHURCH

Come experience the Passion of Christ in a unique and moving way. Our Parish Hall will again be transformed, into the last days of Christ. Come walk with Him in a free, meditative, hands on, self-guided walk.

Experience the Last Supper, stay awake with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, be immersed into the crowd as Pilate condemns Jesus to death, kneel by the scourging pillar, walk the Via Dolorosa, and feel the weight of the Cross, reflect at the crucifixion, enter the tomb & more...

This walk is open to adults, families & students

— **April 7th - 14th** —

April 7th from 9am - 9:30pm

April 8th from 4pm - 9:30pm

April 9th from 4pm - 9:30pm

April 10th from 4pm - 9:30pm

April 11th-13th from 9am - 9:30pm

April 14th from 9am - 6pm

Little Flower Fraternity at the Movies!



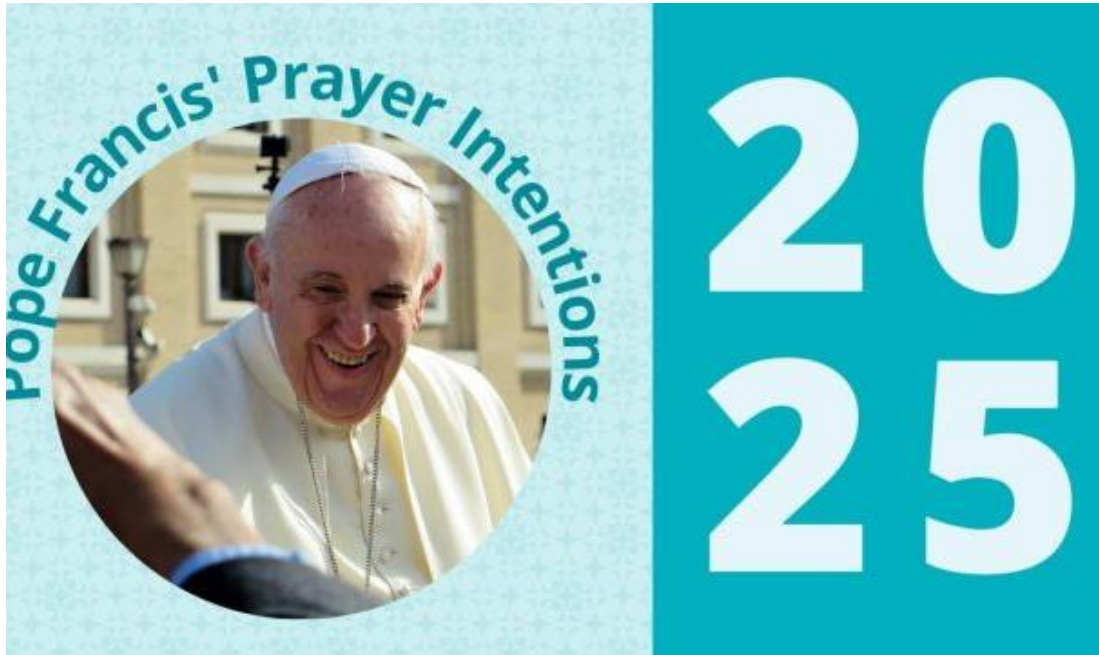
Start popping the popcorn! Last month the Little Flower Fraternity attended a matinee showing of *The Last Supper*. Save the date! This month we have secured complementary tickets to see *Carlo Acutis: Road Map to Reality* on Monday, April 28th at 7 PM at the AMC Theater in White Marsh. (7 PM is the only time that this movie plays.) Please come and bring a friend!

“Roadmap to Reality” explores the life of Acutis and the lessons he offers young people regarding the challenges of the digital world. The documentary blends live action, animation, and documentary-style interviews with Acutis’ family, friends, tech experts, and scholars to tackle urgent questions about artificial intelligence and the technological world we live in.



Prayer Requests from Dennis, OFS

Thomas J. Curry III (brother of Jaci Curry, OFS)-
RIP, Linda Herilla OFS, Marcia Bentz(Dennis
Bernardo's OFS close friend), Jimmy Stephens(Phil
Pucher's OFS close friend), Art Gusbar-RIP, John
Watkins, Mike Huether, OFS, Pam Crews, OFS
(minister of a VA Fraternity) and her husband, Lynn
Dabrowski, Terry Rinker, OFS (Minister of
Immaculata Fraternity in Fredericksburg, VA) and
family, Luther and Sean Curry (sons of Jaci Curry,
OFS), Eileen Von Birgeten--RIP(sister of Maureen
Korzelius, OFS), Kathleen Hale, OFS, Loretta
Lemmons. OFS



Let us pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

Little Flower Fraternity Celebrations for April

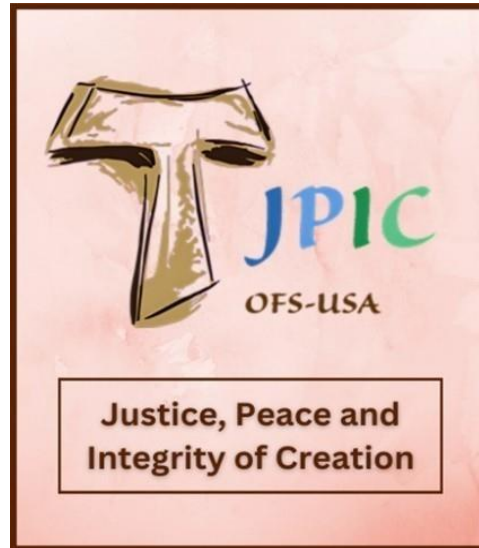
Professions for April:

Phil Puncher: 4/27

Maria Mercaldo and Barbara Bruno: 4/22

April Birthdays:

Phil Pucher: 4/1 and Maria Mercaldo 4/22



Franciscans are called to protect the integrity of creation!

JPIC Message from Teresa Knauff, OFS:

Did you know some of the sounds you hear when you are outside are not insects but rather frogs and toads? Spend some time in coming weeks listening to the symphony God brings to us through these marvelous creatures.

A reflection as we end Lent.

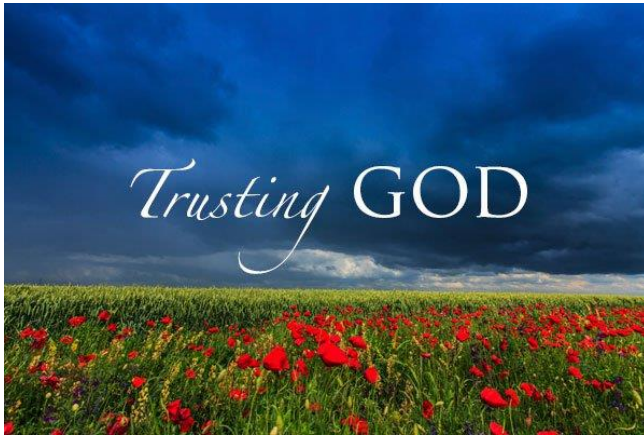
There is a remarkable interconnection between Secular Franciscan spirituality and Lenten observance, fundamentally rooted in its identity as the "Order of Penance." This distinctive title, deliberately chosen by St. Francis himself, makes it unique among religious orders and establishes its essential character as a penitential community meant to transform both individual souls and society at large.

The penitential nature of the Secular Franciscan finds its fullest expression during the Lenten season, when the regular spiritual practices of Secular Franciscans naturally align with and intensify the Church's call to penance. Secular Franciscans, who already embrace a year-round commitment to penitential life, discover in Lent a special period to deepen their spiritual practices and renew their dedication to the Franciscan way of life. This includes wearing a distinctive Franciscan sign as constant reminders of their commitment, observing prescribed days of fasting, maintaining moderation in dress and entertainment, and incorporating self-denial into their daily routines.

During Lent, Secular Franciscans are called to enhance these regular practices through increased prayer, deeper meditation particularly on Christ's Passion, and more intensive engagement in works of charity. This intensified penitential practice is not meant to be burdensome but rather liberating, serving as a powerful counter-witness to worldly excess and materialism. This spiritual approach provides lay people with a practical structure for sanctification in their daily lives while creating a supportive community for spiritual growth.

This connection between Secular Franciscan spirituality and Lenten observance creates a powerful synergy that deepens both experiences. For Secular Franciscans, Lent becomes not just a seasonal observance but a culminating period that highlights and intensifies their year-round commitment to penitential life. This unique relationship makes the Secular Franciscan especially relevant during the Lenten season while simultaneously giving special meaning to Lenten practices for its members, who understand themselves as part of a centuries-old tradition of bringing the spirit of penance into the secular world.

In our modern context, this penitential spirituality addresses contemporary challenges by offering a practical counter to materialism and self-indulgence while providing lay people with concrete means of sanctification in their daily lives. The integration of Secular Franciscan spirituality with Lenten observance creates a comprehensive approach to spiritual growth that remains both timeless in its principles and timely in its application.



A reflection:
Dennis Bernardo,
OFS

See It God's Way

If you become God's servant,
You must give up worldly ways.
You need to trust in Jesus,
And don't forget to pray.
If you do things God's way,
What blessings you'll receive.
It only takes a moment,
To trust and to believe.

By Donna Knapp Walrath

Treasurer's Report

March 31, 2025

TREASURER'S REPORT

BEGINNING BALANCE \$3750.69

EXPENSES:

Postage Stamps \$73.00

Infirmarian \$65.00 SFA

Hall Rental March \$75.00

EXPENSES TOTAL \$213.00

DEPOSITS: Deposit #1 \$345.00

Deposit #2 \$70.00

DEPOSITS TOTAL \$415.00

FINAL MARCH BALANCE \$3952.69



“Remember that
when you leave
this earth, you
can take with you
nothing that you
have received –
only what you
have given.”
—St. Francis of
Assisi