



Portiuncula

St. Francis Fraternity Secular Franciscans
4121 Harewood Rd. N.E. • Washington D.C. 20017-1593

April 2025

Minister's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope this message finds you well. For our meeting this month, we will have the election of our new fraternity council. A special thanks to Dee Calisto and Michele Dunne who were part of the nominating committee. The election will take place on Saturday, April 26th at our normally scheduled meeting time after mass with the friars. Please make every effort to attend our fraternity this month as we will need a quorum to continue with election. Just a reminder that only professed members are eligible to vote. This is our election slate at the moment however, nominations will also be welcomed from the floor.

Minister: Christy Helm

Vice Minister: Chris Tan, Frank Howard

Treasurer: Joe Massi, Frank Howard

Secretary: Jan Benton, Michele Dunne

Formation Director: Jan Benton, Michele Dunne

Councilor: Francoise Bidiki, Ouida Morrison, Mary Okumu

I wanted to confirm with you that our pilgrimage for the Year of Hope will be on Saturday, September 6th. We will visit the Cathedral of the Assumption in Baltimore and the Shrine to St. Anthony in Ellicott City. A bus will be rented to allow for all who wish to participate. Please email me or Jan if you wish to come, we would like to get an idea of how many we can expect. I think it will be a lovely day.

Peace and All Good

Christy

April Meeting Schedule

8:30-9:15 Mass with Friars
9:15-? Fraternity election of New Council
of the St. Francis Fraternity

Keep in Prayer

Our Inquirers and Candidates,
as they continue to discern their vocation.

Fraternity and family members, friars, and friends who
are sick.

People throughout the world suffering from
displacement, Covid, starvation, and violence.

All of our deceased brothers and sisters and family
members.

Peace in the world.

From Our Rule of Life

Article #8

As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let
prayer and contemplation be the soul of all
they are and do.

Let them participate in the sacramental life of the
Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in
liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the
Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

April Franciscan Calendar

3. St. Luigi Scrosoppi of Udine, Priest, Third Order Secular, d. 1884. **5.** St. Maria Crescentia Hoss, Third Order Regular, d. 1744 **7.** Bl. Maria Assunta Pallotta, Third Order Regular, d. 1905, **16.** St. Benedict Joseph Labre, Third Order Secular, Cord bearer, d. 1783, **25.** St. Pedro de San Jose Betancur, Third Order Secular, d. 1667, **27.** St. Zita of Luca, Secular Franciscan, d. 1272, **28.** Bl. Luchesio and Buonadonna, First Third Order Secular Franciscans, d. 1260, **30.** St. Joseph Benedict Cottolengo, Third Order Secular, d. 1842

Bl. Mary Assunta Pallotta (1878-1905)

Blessed Mary Assunta Pallotta was born in Italy in 1878. Even as a child she evidenced a very strong, even passionate, love of God. She had but two years of education and then at age eleven her father left the family to pursue work and she became the sole provider for the family! Even with all of the household duties to attend to, Mary Assunta was dedicated to prayer. She expressed her desire to enter the convent to her local pastor and at the age of 19 she left her home to become a Franciscan Missionary of Mary. She professed her vows in 1900 and was granted permission to join the China missions, arriving in June of 1904. There she willingly embraced even the most menial tasks in the community. It was in March of 1905 that she was diagnosed with typhus. On April 7, 1905, at the age of 27, Mary Assunta died. Instantly, miracles were attributed to her intercession.

Reminders

- ◆ If you are unable to attend a fraternity meeting, please let a council member know.
- ◆ If you have any questions or ideas to share ahead of our fraternity meeting, please let a council member know.
- ◆ Attendance at our fraternity meetings is important and every effort should be made to attend the meeting. After all, meeting together is part of our vocation.
- ◆ If you are unable to attend our fraternity meeting in person, you may contribute to the common fund, by sending a check made out to *Secular Franciscans* to

Joe Massi
PO Box 284
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Fraternity Council Members

Christy Helm	Minister
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Selma DeLeon	Secretary
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Josephine Awich	Councilor
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Br. Ryan Schmeltzer, OFM Cap.	Spiritual Asst.
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Celebrating Birthdays

Wishing our brothers a very happy birthday with many blessings.

Mike Maher	April 4
Virginia Lyons	April 9

Profession Anniversaries

Happy Anniversary to our brothers and sisters who professed to the OFS way of life.

Selma DeLeon	April 13
Christyann Helm	April 13
Lynn Myrick	April 13
Chris Tantisunthorn	April 13
Joel Vaughn	April 13
Carola Cerezo-Allen	April 15
Maureen Enders.	April 20
Joe Massi	April 20
Dee Calisto	April 21
Mary Liepold	April 21
Jan Benton	April 25

Ongoing Formation a

These are a few offerings from the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University

FOUR-SESSION SEMINAR

July 7-10, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (EST)
Cost: \$40 plus purchase of book

Fr. Liam Kelly, OFM, PhD. “Poverty, Peacemaking and the Sacred: A Girardian Reading of the Early Franciscan Movement.”

Fr. Liam will take participants through his new book (by the same name), offering a vibrant and fresh reading of Francis and his movement in a way, as one reviewer

noted, “that speaks persuasively to contemporary people wrestling with questions of belonging, desire, rivalry, and hope.”

Register for the Four-Session Seminar

Get your copy of **Poverty, Peacemaking, and the Sacred: A Girardian Reading of the Early Franciscan Movement**

THURSDAYS WITH ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI: A SUMMER BOOK CLUB

June 12, 2025; June 19, 2025; June 26, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (EST)

All sessions will be held by Zoom

Cost: \$25 plus purchase of book

Dr. Andrew Belfield, PhD, Assistant Professor at St. Bonaventure University, will lead participants through a reading of three chapters of a wonderful new biography of St. Francis of Assisi by Volker Leppin, *St. Francis of Assisi: The Life of a Restless Saint*. Published in 2025, this book offers an invigorating and accessible look at the times and concerns of Francis and his movement from its inception to his death. Dr. Belfield is a popular new professor at the University and will bring his superb knowledge of the medieval world to life in three sessions.

Register for the Thursday with Francis of Assisi: A Summer Book Club

SECULAR FRANCISCANS SUMMER PROGRAM

**“The Franciscan Way of Bold Hope:
Caring When It’s Hardest to Care”**

**David B. Couturier, O.F.M. Cap., Director of the
Franciscan Institute**

June 14, 21, 28, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (EST)

All sessions will be held by Zoom

We are living in a time when the great democracies of the world are pulling back from their great commitment to care for those who are most vulnerable in society today.

Some have called it a “crisis of care.” As Secular

Franciscans, we have been caring directly and communally for the poor since the Order was first founded by Francis of Assisi in the 13th century. This three-part series will review the history and spirituality of Franciscan “caring when it’s hardest to care.” The Zoom presentations will be:

1. "The Courage to Care: Embracing Hope in Difficult Times"

Exploring the Secular Franciscan call to love and serve even when faced with suffering, division, or despair.

2. "Wounded Healers: A Franciscan Theology of Disability and Care"

Seeing disability through the lens of Franciscan spirituality—how vulnerability, interdependence, and dignity shape a compassionate practice of care.

3. "Franciscan Transformative Care: Rebuilding Communities of Hope"

Drawing from the Franciscan tradition to create healing, inclusive, and hope-filled communities—especially in times of crisis and marginalization.

A Zoom link will be provided to all those who register for this program. [Register for the "Franciscan Way of Bold Hope: Caring When It Is Hardest To Care"](#)

Reflection

As we prepare to celebrate Christ's salvific in his Passion and Resurrection, Clare of Assisi offers a reflection on the significance of these events. In her Second Letter to Agnes, she writes:

... embrace the poor Christ
 Look upon Him Who became contemptible for
 you, and follow Him, making yourself
 contemptible in this world
 For Him.
 ...gaze,
 consider,
 contemplate
 desiring to imitate...,

(Who) though more beautiful than the children of men became, for your salvation, the lowest of men, was despised, struck, scourged untold times throughout His entire body, and then died amid the suffering of the Cross.

St. Clare of Assisi, *The Second Letter to Agnes of Prague*, 49.
