



April 2025

THE CALL

St. Thomas More Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order

From Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel

Minister: Sita Chakrawarti, OFS; Vice Minister: Janette Martin, OFS; Secretary: Thomas Bender, OFS; Treasurer: Joseph Kennedy, OFS; Formation Director: Michael Landrigan, OFS; Councilor-at-Large: Ann Corro, OFS,

Meeting – 2:00 pm. - Sunday, April 13, 2024

- We are non—perishable food for those afflicted with food insecurity.
- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – A discussion on the process of ongoing formation and topics to cover in the future led by our new formation director, Mike Landrigan, OFS. This is an opportunity for the whole fraternity to have input into the format and content of ongoing formation in our fraternity.
- *Fellowship*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* – Evening Prayer II for Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
 - Psalms from the Psalter: Sunday, Week II
 - Short Reading, Magnificat Antiphon, Intercessions and Closing Prayer from the Proper of Seasons for Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)
 - 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=d0pFSDREaDJmdjZpNWlqblI4T20rZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

Dial by your location

Phone: +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

Minister's Notes

First of all, as I begin this first reflection as your minister, I would like to thank all of you for your faith in me in electing me to this position. Secondly, I would like to thank Andrea for her six years as a great minister. She set a very high bar, and I hope and pray that I can follow her example.

Our April meeting is on Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week. This is the first time this year that we hear the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and truly come face to face with his crucifixion. We are still in Lent, and my thoughts and prayers still have Lenten direction. They are a combination of thoughts from one of Fr John's (at St Ann) sermons; passages from John Burns' Lift Up Your Heart, a series of meditation on St Francis de Sales' Introduction to the Devout Life, which I am reading as part of a program at St Agnes; reflections from Fr Russel's formation presentation this month; and a discussion on our Franciscan vocation from the Spiritual Assistant class.

Fr John played on the words "fast" and "feast" – how one letter can make such a difference! He suggested that we use both during Lent as a way of growing closer to God: for example, fast on complaining, feast on gratitude; fast on apathy, feast on prayer and contemplation of how our Lord was nailed to the cross for us. Francis de Sales also suggests that we consider how we are guilty of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, a death he freely accepted out of redeeming love for us.

Our Franciscan charism calls us to take this even further. Francis and Clare spent hours meditating before our Lord on the cross, until they were able to shed their worldliness and become filled with God's love. Franciscan theology is based on this idea, saying that, while Jesus definitely came to earth to redeem our sins by dying, and rising, for us, he would have taken on human form anyway, because he loves us and wanted to share in our humanity.

From the starting point of emptying himself of worldly desires and embracing Lady Poverty, Francis was free to explore the mission Christ gave him: by fasting on his own will, he was able to

feast on God's call. Embracing the leper, rebuilding the Church, visiting the Sultan, dealing with the wolf of Gubbio, preaching to the birds, founding three orders, up to receiving the stigmata – these are all aspects of Francis' life and charism. Many people see only the "birdbath Francis," as a classmate put it, the cute Francis playing with birds and bunnies, but there is a much deeper, harder reality to being Franciscan. It is this deeper call that we have professed.

So let us use Lent, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week to reflect on our lives as Franciscans. What was it that initially attracted us to follow Francis? What was it that we actually professed in our own minds and hearts? Have our ideas changed over time? What keeps us Franciscans? How do we put that into practice?

This is something I would like us to explore together. We are also going to study our Rule together in the next few months, so that we can take a fresh look at what we are called to as Seculars. May this journey through Lent and our Franciscan life help us to fast on our own worldliness to bring us to a feast of community and sharing God's love.

Pax et Bonum,
Sita

Prayer Intentions

For...

- Healing for Pope Francis.
- *Peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East and the victims of the violence.*
- A just peace in Ukraine and protection for her Ukrainian and Ruthenian Rite Catholics.
- *Federal Employees negotiating this time of uncertainty.*
- *Andrew, Ann Wester's son-in-law, John's cousin, who fell in a roofing accident is home but facing a long recovery before he can return to work.*
- Healing for Andrea Bender, OFS.
- *Healing for Pat Riggles, OFS for a broken hip*
- *Ann Corro's sister-in-law Mary Corro who is in rehab with serious health issues.*
- *Grace Coipuram, OFS*
- *Liz Shaeffer's niece, Sarah as she recovers from two*

abdominal surgeries that left her with colostomy bag for an indeterminate time.

- *Patricia Kennedy, mother of Joseph Kennedy, OFS who is recovering from congestive heart failure.*
- *Louis, son of Clarissa, of STM Parish, and for all those suffering from depression.*
- *Friends of Liz, Mark who is undergoing chemo for stage 4 melanoma and Dan who has Parkinson's Disease.*
- *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 grandson of April's friend and another friend with suddenly worsening dementia.*
- *The Poor Holy Souls in Purgatory.*
- *Religious freedom and for all persecuted for their belief in God.*
- *Prisoners, the sick, poor, hungry, lonely, the elderly and their caregivers, homeless, unemployed, the dying and those with no one to pray for them.*
- *The work of the Order of Malta in Bethlehem in this time of strife and war.*
- *The union of all Christians and the salvation of all.*
- *The health, protection and guidance all bishops and priests.*
- *For vocations to all branches of the Franciscan family.*

Professions

4/25/82 - Ann Corro (Mary)

Birthdays of the Month

Randy Bender (10th)

April Garcia (16th)

May

Janette Martin (3rd)

Anne-Marie Pastorkovich (16th)

Anna Claire Smith (20th)

Michael Landrigan (22nd)

Necrology

Seán O'Reilly - April 19, 1982

Theresa Stephens – April 4, 1989

Alfred E Warren – April 30, 1994

George W Frazier, Jr – April 2000

Mildred M Cate – April 30, 2004

Raymond J Sweeney – April 7, 2014

Julia Anne McKone – April 2, 2018

Dennis E Webb – April 26, 2018

Secretary's Notes

First, our meeting in April is on Palm Sunday but our meeting in May is moving to May 18th, the third Sunday of May because the second Sunday of May is Mother's Day. So, our **May meeting is on May 18, 2025!**

In this issue of *The Call*, we have Sita's first Minister's Notes on Page 1. We had perfect attendance of active members for the election plus Andrea and Terrence. It was great to see Terrence. For those not present, our new council is

Minister: Sita Chakrawarti, OFS

Vice-Minister: Jan Martin, OFS

Secretary: Randy Bender, OFS

Treasurer: Joseph Kennedy, OFS

Formation Director: Michael Landrigan, OFS

Councilor-at-Large: Ann Corro, OFS

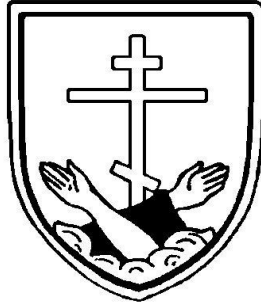
Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM's reflection on *Details*. These are things that we can gloss over but have great importance when heeded. For me personally, I can find some of the gifts imbedded in Andrea and I's impending move to Front Royal, but it still is a painful process. This reflection is on page 4.

Given that we are meeting on Palm Sunday, and we hear St. Luke's account of Our Lord's Passion, page 5 has a reflection related to us by Tom Bello, OFS on *The (Still) Four Basic C's of the Franciscan Charism*. This reflection helps us to situate the Cross in the context of our whole life of following Christ in the spirit of St. Francis.

The Saints of the Month feature begins on page 6 and we have a couple of special ones. First, on April 28th, we celebrate Blessed Luchesio and Buonadonna. They were the first members of our order. April 23rd is the memorial for Blessed Giles of Assisi who was the third member to join what would become the Friars Minor and was noted as upholder of Franciscan poverty and for being a mystic. His perhaps most famous quote is, "No man can attain to the knowledge of God but by humility. The way to mount high is to descend."

Requiescat in Pace, Dennis.

Peace and Good, Randy



Details

This is the month of Holy Week, commemorating the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. One of the details of our faith that is critically important is that Jesus really did suffer, die, and ... rise from the dead. St Paul reminds us that we are the greatest of fools if this isn't real: Christianity is not merely a philosophy of how to live well. While some of the details in the Gospels might not be exactly precise, the "Big Details"—the reality of Jesus, fully man and fully God, actually doing Great Deeds that pointed to his Divinity—are really true and give the signs that helped us open our hearts to the difficult message of the Good News, our salvation not in comfort but in a life of faith which impels us to love even our enemies and to love even to the point of suffering.

There are some small details in our shared life in the Franciscan family which have preoccupied me recently. Points of law have implications about who is eligible for positions (not just who can "do it"), who is suitable to take on certain responsibilities. And these point to other details that affect even more people. The details pile up against each other. Some people aren't detail people, but I see the importance of these little choices and the effects they have radiating out to others. No matter the choice you make sometimes, there are negative side effects, but people notice most the negatives in changing from the way things are.

Can we, following Christ in the footsteps of St Francis, embrace the humiliation of attending to the important but sometimes small details?

For your reflection:

- Look for a "detail" (in any sense you want to take this) about Lent that you haven't paid much attention to in recent years. Reflect on that detail. Find a way to appreciate it.
- Is there something in your life that changed, that you wish hadn't? Look for a detail that you can appreciate.

A couple of answers (if you have room for this)—one is mine, another from a famous author:

- My "detail" for Lent is **fasting**. The last several years, I haven't given it much thought. I follow the laws of the Church, but had stopped treating the Lenten fasting as a prayer. This year, as I age, I realize I don't need as much food. In response to this reflection, I am trying to make my time of not eating or fasting from certain foods a time of awareness of God and of his people who have less than I do, a time of prayer and attention.
- Corrie and Betsie Ten Boom were imprisoned for hiding Jews after the Nazis took over the Netherlands in the 1940s. Reading the Bible while captives, they came across the verse "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). They wondered how this could be true in their circumstances at Ravensbrück. During an **infestation** in their cabin, they realized that **the guards gave them more space**, they were able to pray and read the Bible. Indeed there was reason to give thanks for the pests!

Jerome, ofm

National Spiritual Assistant, OFS Animator, OFM Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe - ofs.assistant@friars.us

We'd love your feedback! email jeromeofm@gmail.com

The (Still) Four Basic C's of the Franciscan Charism

From a reflection related by Tom Bello, OFS, TAU-USA, Spring 2015, Issue 83

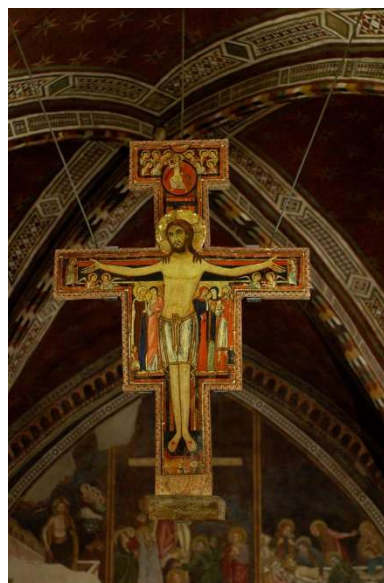
During one of our discussions, Friar Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Capuchin, the only Friar I know who has, as his responsibilities, one National Fraternity, two Regional Fraternities and, I believe, seven Local Fraternities, as well as managing correspondence instruction for Spiritual Assistant Training. Well, Friar Matthias said something to the effect that despite all the “new scholarship” and “new insights” into Franciscan spirituality, he still felt that what he had learned and always believed and taught was true: that the four basic aspects of the Franciscan Charism were the Crib, the Cross, the Cup and Creation.

Not blessed with a tape recorder at the time or anything approaching “total recall,” permit me to expand Friar Matthias’s remarks in my own words, with apologies to him, especially if I get something wrong!



The first C is the Crib. In my mind’s eye, I can still see the Giotto fresco of St. Francis preparing the Christmas crib or, in Italian, “presepe” at Greccio, hanging above me to the right as I faced the altar at the Upper Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi as we celebrated the Installation Mass for the newly elected officers of the International Fraternity in November 2014. This fresco painting and the work of St. Francis to prepare and celebrate the birth of Christ have influenced every subsequent nativity scene in your house or local Church.

The Franciscan Charism with the Crib is our firm foundational Franciscan faith in the Incarnation; namely, that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, humbling Himself out of love for God and for all Creation.



The second C is the Cross. Of course, Jesus’ love did not stop at the Crib. Jesus’ love for us carried all the way to the Cross, to his laying down his life for all of us. “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13). Again, in my mind’s eye, I can see above and before me the original

San Damiano Cross hanging in the Church of Santa Chiara in Assisi. This Cross, so important to both Sts. Francis and Clare, depicts a loving, relational sacrifice shared with God’s Creation: angels, humans and even a rooster! Christ hangs bleeding on the Cross, yes, but His eyes are open, and His face shows that perfect joy of suffering accepted for the love of God and the love of all of us.

That love and sharing extend to the third C, which is the Cup. The Cup of the Eucharist, the Blood and Body of Christ, keep us close to the Christ of the Crib, the Christ of the Incarnation, and the Christ of the Cross. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass not only represents the Passion and Death of Christ, but also continues His loving, giving presence among us, Emmanuel, the God Who will never leave us.

As Saint Francis often said, “I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood” (Secular Franciscan Rule #5).

This presence of Christ in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist continues in the fourth C, which is Creation. Again, I can see in my mind’s eye, to the right, as I

exit toward the front doors of the Upper Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, the great Giotto fresco of St. Francis preaching to the birds. This love of Francis for all of God's Creation is a love of God in all Creation.



Thus, in the Franciscan Charism, the 4 C's are interrelated, not unlike the inter-relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Crib leads to Cross, which leads to Cup, which continues Christ's Presence in all Creation, physically begun at the Incarnation.

A fifth and uniting C would be Christ Himself because all the 4 C's focus on Christ. Christ is the center. Christ came among us poor and laid in a Crib.

Christ lived among us, loving us, even to dying on the Cross for us. Christ continues to live with us both in His most bodily form in the Cup of the Holy Eucharist, and also in all of Creation, as both author and ultimate goal.

Indeed, a sixth C would be Christ's example of Conversion. As we can read in Philippians 2:6-8: though Christ was in the form of God, Christ did not deem equality with God as something to be grasped. Rather He emptied Himself and became like us, human in appearance. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a Cross.

So each of us is called, as followers of Christ in the footsteps of Ss. Francis and Clare, to daily, ongoing conversion, to a daily striving to model our thoughts and deeds to those of Christ (see Secular Franciscan Rule #7).

Friar Matthias said all this much better, and other Franciscan scholars have written longer and more clearly on each of these aspects, but I have tried to share the four foundational C's of our great Franciscan Charism, reinforced so strongly for me in the great art seen so recently in Assisi and in the Celebration of the Holy Mass there by our friars and Pope Francis.

Saints of the Month

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

April 1

Bl. Henry Alfieri of Asti, Vicar General and Minister of the Order of Friars Minor (1315-1405)
<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0401-25.htm>

April 2

Bl. Elisabetta Vendramini, Foundress, Third Order Sisters of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (April 9, 1790-April 2, 1860)
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/vendramini-elisabetta-bl>
 St. Francis of Paola, Founder, Order of Minims (March 27, 1416-April 2, 1507)
<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0402-20.htm>

April 3

St. Luigi Scrosoppi of Udine, Priest, Third Order Secular (August 4, 1804-April 3, 1884)
<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-luigi-scrosoppi-of-udine/>

April 4

St. Benedict Larcari (the Moor) of San Fratello, Friar, Order of Friars Minor (1526-April 4, 1589)
<https://catholicreadings.org/saint-benedict-the-black-saint-of-the-day-april-4/>

April 7

Bl. Maria Assunta Pallotta, Third Order Regular (August 20, 1878-April 7, 1905)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Assunta_Pallotta

April 8

Bl. Julian of St. Augustine, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (c. 1550-April 8, 1606)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-julian-of-saint-augustine.html>

April 9

Bl. Thomas of Tolentino and Companions, Priest, Martyrs of India, Order of Friars Minor
(Fr. James of Padua, Br. Demetrius of Tiflis, Fr. Peter of Siena) (d. 1321)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/thomas-of-tolentino-and-companions.html>

April 10

Bl. Boniface Zukowski, Order of Friars Minor, Conventual, Martyr (January 13, 1913-April 10, 1942)
<http://catholicsaints.info/blessed-boniface-zukowski/>

April 11

Bl. Angelo of Chivasso, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (1411-1495)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-angelo-of-chivasso.html>

April 15

Bl. Gandolph of Binasco, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (d. April 3, 1260)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-gandolph.html>

April 16

St. Benedict Joseph Labré, Third Order Secular, Cordbearer (March 15, 1748-April 16, 1783)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict_Joseph_Labre

April 18

Bl. Andre Hibernon, Friar, Order of Friars Minor (1534-April 18, 1602)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-andrew-of-hibernon.html>
Bl. James Oldo, Priest, Secular Franciscan Order (1364-April 18, 1404)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-james-oldo.html>

April 19

Bl. Conrad of Ascoli, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (1234-April 19, 1289)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-conrad-of-ascoli.html>

April 21

St. Conrad of Parzham, Friar, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (December 22, 1818-April 21, 1894)
<http://www.salvemariaregina.info/Martyrologies/Konrad.html>

April 22

Bl. Francis of Fabriano, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (September 2, 1251-April 22, 1322)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Fabriano

April 23

Bl. Giles of Assisi, Friar, Order of Friars Minor (c.1190-April 23, 1262)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-giles-of-assisi.html>

April 24

St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Capuchin Priest, Protomartyr of the Sacred Congregation of the
Propagation of the Faith (1577-April 24, 1622)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-fidelis-of-sigmaringen>

April 25

St. Pedro de San Jose Betancur, Third Order Secular, Founder (March 21, 1626-April 25, 1667)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_of_Saint_Joseph_de_Betancur

April 27

St. Zita of Luca, Secular Franciscan (ca. 1212-April 27, 1272)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-zita.html>

April 28

Bl. Luchesio and Buonadonna. First Third Order Secular Franciscans (both died April 28, 1260)
<https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/catholic/saints/1/luchesio-and-buonadonna.aspx>

April 29

Bl. Benedict of Urbino, Priest, Order of Friars Minor Capuchin (d. 1625)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/benedict-of-urbino.html>

April 30

St. Joseph Benedict Cottolengo, Third Order Secular, Founder (May 3, 1786-April 30, 1842)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-joseph-benedict-cottolengo.html>

May 1

St. Riccardo Pampuri, Confessor, was a tertiary before joining another religious institute (August 2, 1897-March 1, 1930)

https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_19891101_pampuri_en.html

Bl. Vivaldo of San Gimignano, Franciscan Friar, Hermit (1260-1320)

<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0501-30.htm>

May 3

Bl. Edward Joseph Rosaz, Priest, Founder, Third Order Secular and Regular (February 15, 1830-May 3, 1903)

<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0504-23.htm>

May 4

Bl. Thomas Bullaker, Bl. Henry Heath, Bl. Arthur Bell, Bl. John Woodcock, and Bl. Charles Meehan
Franciscan Martyrs of England and Wales, First Order

<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0504-34.htm>

Bl. Ladislav de Gielniow, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (c. 1440-May 4, 1505)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-ladislav-of-gielniow.html>

Bl. Ceferino Giménez Malla, Third Order Secular, Martyr, First Gypsy to be declared Blessed (August 26, 1861-August 8, 1936)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceferino_Gim%C3%A9nez_Malla

Bl. Tommaso da Olera, Friar, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (1563-May 3, 1631)

<https://anastpaul.com/2020/05/04/saint-of-the-day-4-may-blessed-tommaso-da-olera-ofm-cap-1563-1631/>

May 5

Bl. Benvenuto Mareni, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor, Conventual (d. May 5, 1269)

<http://catholicsaints.info/blessed-benvenuto-mareni/>

May 6

Bl. Anne-Rose Gattorno Founder, Franciscan Third Order Regular (October 14, 1831-May 6, 1900)

https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20000409_beat-Gattorno_en.html

Bl. Catherine Troiani, Third Order Regular, Missionary (1813-May 6, 1887)

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=7113

May 7

Bl. Agnellus of Pisa, Order of Friars Minor, First Minister Provincial in England (1195-1236)

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

May 8

St. Amato Ronconi, Third Order Secular (c. 1225-May 8, 1292)

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