

"THE FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS"



THE POPE ST. JOHN XXIII SECULAR FRANCISCAN FRATERNITY
Davidsonville, Maryland

Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi, Thursday, October 3, 2025

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Our MINISTER'S MUSINGS

by *Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*

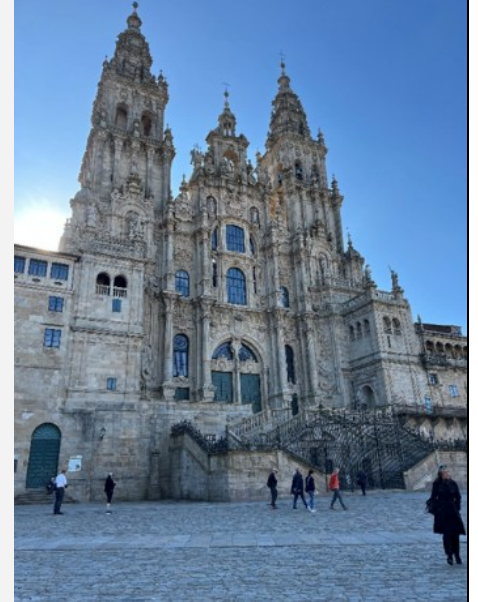
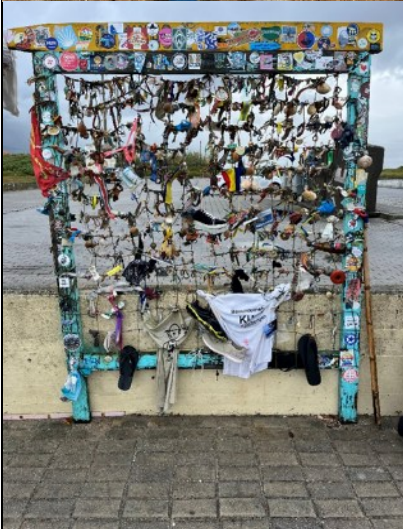
“The Journey Is Long and Exhausting but Amazing”

In May, with family and good friends, I walked the Portuguese Camino Costal Route from Porto Portugal to Santiago de Compostela approximately one hundred and seventy miles from 5/11/25 to 5/22/25. Honestly, I am a daily walker, but the thought of walking between twelve and eighteen miles a day was a bit frightening and unrealistic to me. I really wasn't sure that I could do it! The eight of us arrived with a bit of anxiety and excitement for what was ahead. We spent the first couple of days in Porto Portugal just exploring the town. It was a wonderful time of friendship and just plain fun. On 5/11/25 we set out on our adventure. Surprisingly we all fell into different roles quickly and it was special to walk with each other and to laugh and hear life stories. My sister Peggy took on the role of the navigator with her competitive husband Dave and they kept us on track. We walked on sand, gravel, rocks, hills, beaches and through dense forests. Through it all we challenged each other, supported one another, and sometimes embellished distances. Toward the end of every day, you just wanted to **BE THERE!** My sister Peggy's favorite line was, “just a few more kilometers.” It wasn't exactly truthful, but it was what we needed to hear to put the next foot in front of the other and keep going. Along the roads we prayed, listened to music and podcasts and just enjoyed each other's company. We met children, older couples, a group of singing young adults and many different types of animals. The scenery was spectacular and breathtaking. So many pilgrims travel the roads all wishing each other, “**Buen Camino!**” When we reached our lodgings for the night we would gather in fellowship, have a snack and drink and reminisce about the day. Our team was ruthless with one another so there was much kidding. At night I would fall into bed and relish the time we had to sleep and rest. The next day came early, and we were all ready to do it again. When we arrived at our last stop, we had about sixteen miles to go to get to Santiago. Truthfully, I was pretty banged up along with a few of us and five of us decided to taxi to the finish line. For me this would have been unheard of in the past. I do not quit!!! I just got in the taxi and handed it to God. We arrived in Santiago to get our certificates and behold there was a catholic Mass for pilgrims. Father Mandy gave us the most beautiful welcome and spoke about what it meant to walk the Camino. It was at that moment that I said, “**Thank you God, I needed this today!**” You knew what was best!

This experience was amazing and will stay with me forever. It made me think of my faith so much. Our road that we are on as Secular Franciscans is a long and difficult road! It is filled with hardship and trying times. It can be exhausting and exasperating. It can also be amazing and beautiful. No matter what I will not give up! I will get up every day and ask and listen to what God wants of me that day. Somedays it's easier than others. I

trust that He will show me what He wants of me. As Father Mandy said, “**Your Camino has not ended! Go home and continue the walk.....**”

“The only thing every achieved in life without effort is failure” - St. Francis of Assisi



"The Fall of Man"



Have we learned all we need to know about the story of the fall of man? Maybe not as much as we think. Catholics are called to be united in matters of faith, yet even some devout Catholics take the side of the world on some beliefs instead of Church teaching. God told Adam, "You may eat freely of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall die." (*Gn 2:16-17*)

Was God clear to Adam? Adam was charged with telling Eve. Did He tell Eve exactly what God had said? Hopefully. Then comes the serpent and plays words with Eve. "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of **any** tree of the garden'? And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, **neither shall you touch it**, lest you die." But the Serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (*Gn 3: 1-5*) The evil one purposely misquoted God to get Eve to think God was an arbitrary tyrant out for His own purposes. Eve falls for it, adding ...shall not touch it, lest we die! The devil sees she has bought into his lie so he assures her she will not die, and she finds comfort in his deception. When the devil spoke to Jesus himself, Jesus did not converse with him. He quoted scripture only.

We can call balls and strikes for Adam and Eve, but can we look at our own lives or beliefs and do the same? When we know scripture, and the world tells us how to think about an issue, how often do we fall for it? The world is at war with the Church on its teachings; teaching a contrary gospel that leads its adherents away from God. God gave us his bride, the Church, to teach us. However, some follow the world and don't think they've strayed from the straight path.

What's the remedy? All moral issues can be found in a simple scripture. In our humility we look for it, and ask God for His help and wisdom with a heart ready to change what we think for love of Him, and He will show us where we let worldly wisdom in that is ever poised to modify, or refute scripture to our destruction. St. Paul says, "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (*1 Cor 1:20*)

The fall of man is not a once and done story; it's always relevant. God calls us to obey Him even when we don't understand. The evil one is always looking to deceive us through bad reasoning that sounds good. If we stick to scripture, how can we fall? Let's not stop with ourselves, but talk with your Catholic friends, find out what their thoughts are on moral matters. Where they have sided with the world on matters, you can help bring them back. That's exciting. *Dominis Vobiscum!*

“Vocations to the OFS”



St. Francis of Assisi



St. Bonaventure

Have you ever asked friends to consider joining the Franciscans and have them say in reply, “I would join, but I'm not holy enough?” Well, in my way of thinking, none of us are holy enough! But we're here, thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit! We are all sinners in recovery, seeking Heaven with Jesus as our guide and focus of our effort. And we're in it together!

Another consideration is people not wanting to be a part of our group because of the belief or behavior of one or more people in the Fraternity who are already professed. That creates an uncomfortable situation. I think we have to ask ourselves, “Is the person being observed practicing his/her Catholic faith?” If not, perhaps the Council should discuss the matter and pray over the solution. If the person is a practicing Catholic, then that thinking reminds me of the difference between **Saint Francis of Assisi** and **Saint Bonaventure**. These two men were about **as far apart in some of their major thinking** as you can be!

Francis was always of the attitude of not having anything that was pleasurable, even a meal! Francis would go to the fire and get ashes from it and put them on his meat so he would not enjoy it. On the other hand, **Saint Bonaventure** would say, “This is a beautiful piece of meat because God gave it to us and we should thank Him and enjoy it.” He would probably have a glass of great wine with it as well and say, “*Salut!*” **Both are Franciscans! Both very good men and both Saints in our Franciscan family, a big tent!**

So people can join us with diverse opinions and still be accepted, so long as **we all keep Jesus Christ at the center of our thinking. *Pax et bonum!***

SEEDS OF FAITH by *Nina Teti, OFS*



On the Royal Journey of the Cross

“Anyone who wishes to follow Me must deny self, take up The cross, and follow Me” - Matthew 16:24

Why are you afraid to take up your cross, since it is the only way to the Kingdom of Heaven? In the cross is salvation and life; in the cross is defense against our enemies. Through the cross heavenly sweetness is poured into our souls, our minds are strengthened, and we experience spiritual joy!

Wherever you journey, you take yourself with you, and will always meet yourself face to face. In every step you take, you will find the cross...you must be patient if you desire interior peace and to merit a crown in heaven!

If you reject one cross, be sure that you will find another, perhaps a heavier one!

This reflection is from the **IMITATION OF CHRIST**, Chapter 12. This book is my daily source of journeying.

Dear friends ... Safe voyage!

CARING FOR CREATION by *Chris Gordon, OFS*

Caring for Creation means danger too! This time of year you could find this member of the nightshade family sneaking into your garden. It is sometimes called a **Carolina horsenettle**. Often when I see a plant I don't recognize or even one that I do, if it's not where its wanted, it's gotta go. This little prickly friend with its pretty white flowers is a beauty in its own way, but be careful!

There are tiny thorns on the stems and even the oak shaped leaves. So you might think, oh I'll just get my gloves. These little devils will certainly pierce your average garden gloves so it's time to get out the leather. If you don't have any leather gloves, it's best to get some pliers and pull them up by the roots. Believe it or not, I got a finger infection from an embedded thorn. No worries, it's all better!

“Forgive yourself and if you can, forgive someone else”!





The Camino is the Way by *Barbara Henry, OFS*

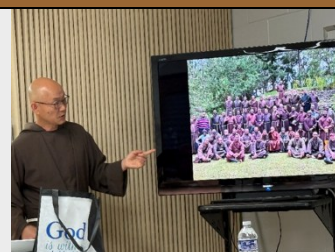
Hiking the Camino de Santiago through Portugal and Spain this past May was one of the most difficult challenges I have ever faced, but it was also so extremely rewarding. I encountered people from different countries, nationalities, ages, and abilities along the path who were walking for a variety of reasons: adventure, vacation, or something more personal. Walking the Camino **gave me hope that although we are all different, we can walk the same path, one foot in front of the other, taking the next step to do the next right thing.** Reaching the Catedral de Santiago de Compostela mirrors our arrival in heaven, where we are reunited with the Lord, the Virgin Mary, angels, saints, and fellow pilgrims from our earthly journey. ***Buen Camino!***



ONGOING FRATERNITY FORMATION



Brother Thomas, OFM Cap - August 6, 2025



Brother Thomas, OFM Cap spoke about his mission work in Papua New Guinea at our fraternity meeting on **Wednesday August 6, 2025**. Brother Thomas was trained and licensed as a nurse in the United States, and he gained his citizenship here in 2021. He spent a total of fifteen years in Papua New Guinea working as a nurse and providing medical care in a clinic. All medical needs are addressed by nurses, as there are no doctors in Papua New Guinea. Along with his talk, Brother Thomas showed a beautiful slide show of scenery, tribal people, clear waters, forests and exotic birds and tribal customs from the island!

Colonized by Germany (Papua) the northern portion of the island, and Great Britain (New Guinea) the southern end, it was then passed on to Australia by the United Nations. They are now a free, independent state with over 846 tribes, many speaking their own tribal languages along with English -- Tok Pisin (a creole language and most widely spoken), Hiri Moto (a local southern dialect) and sign language! Catholicism arrived in the 1880's and in 1985 a contingent of 6 Capuchin friars were sent to start mission work. The book, ***Only the Beginning***, by Father Blaine Burkey, OFM Cap, gives the history of the Capuchin work. A free downloadable copy can be had at: <https://www.capuchins.org/documents/OnlyTheBeginning>. The brothers went to share religious education, give medical care, and teach farming, especially how to raise horses, sheep and cows as the people lacked a steady source of protein in their diets.

Many other religious orders have come and gone in Papua New Guinea, such as nuns and indigenous brothers from Kenya and India. Now local men are studying to become friars. The diocese was established in 1965, as the parishes are very far apart. Many parts of the country are dangerous with warring tribes -- they build roadblocks and carry weapons. While political chaos reigns, the **seeds of faith remain!**

FORMATION FORUM by *Jeanne Catrow, OFS*

“Walk the way of the Lord in simplicity, do not torment your spirit” - St. Padre Pio

“The journey is essential to the dream” - St. Francis of Assisi



Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity continues to be blessed as we journey into the Fall of 2025. **Michael O'Rourke, Barbara Henry, Shawn Dickey, and Elizabeth Brownlee** professed their Franciscan vocation on **June 28, 2025** at a ceremony presided over by **Father Patrick Monahan**, assisted by **Brother Michael Meza** and **Brother Thomas**. It was fortunate we could livestream the Mass for those who could not join us in person. A beautiful celebration followed the Mass, and in true Franciscan spirit, was enjoyed by the entire community. Our newly professed are a true gift to our fraternity, and we look forward to witnessing their service as they fulfill their commitment to **“rebuild the Church”**!

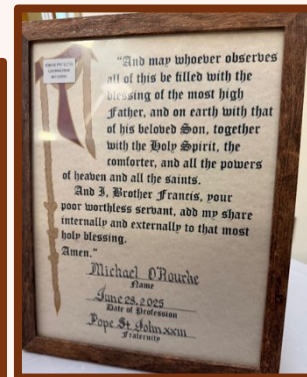
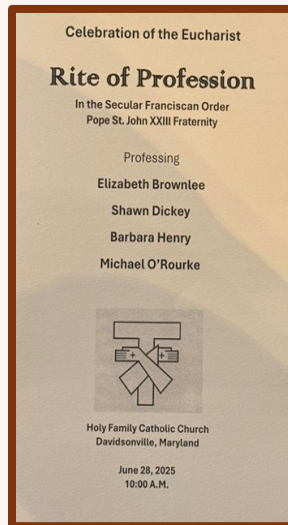
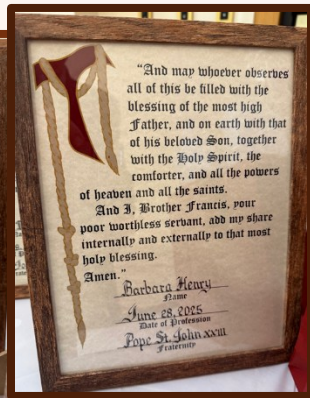
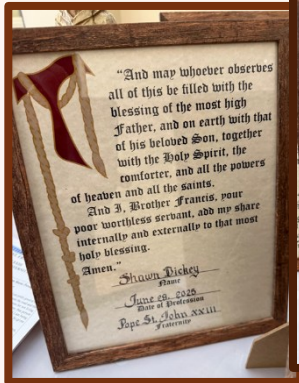
Our fraternity has **3** candidates currently on their journey to profession: **Sonia Balboni, Jean Schaefer, and Genevieve DiUlio**. They are all actively studying the **Rule of the Seculars**, and have most recently been concentrating on Rules 11, 12, and 13, learning about the need for simplicity and purity of heart in their daily lives. Their commitment to becoming a Secular Franciscan is evident by the lively discussions and ability to expound on the topics presented. These dynamic women are discerning an apostolate they would like to participate in as a group. Please continue to pray for them.

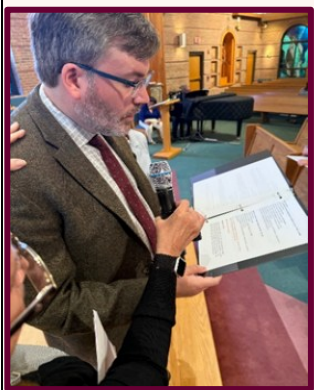
Our 5 Inquirers continue their studies toward Admission and meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month. The group includes **Teresa Love, Paul Becht, Ed Muir, Kathie Taylor, and Eric Love**. They have been reading some of the writings and stories of St. Francis and St. Clare, and have most recently delved into the OFS history, including how our Rule was developed. They too are considering an apostolate they can work on together. Please pray for them as they discern their calling to the Franciscan way of life.

It should be mentioned that the Council positions are for 3 years, with the opportunity to hold an office for an additional 3 years. The office of **Director of Formation (and Treasurer!)** has been held for 8+ years, and it is **my intention to have someone else fill this position**. Please prayerfully consider being a servant leader by forming those who are called to our Fraternity. I will certainly offer my assistance. Any questions, please contact me. **Election for Fraternity Council will be held next Fall**. May your Franciscan journey always lead you back to our Lord and Savior!

PROFESSION

JUNE 28, 2025







PROFESSION ANNIVERSARIES

Tony Mazzuco	June 20, 1976		Chris Gordon	February 1, 2020
Jeanne Catrow	May 8, 1979		Ann Marie Pessagno	February 1, 2020
John Cobis	June 12, 2005		Nina Teti	February 1, 2020
Kathy Brady	September 17, 2016		Eugene (Duke) Jones	February 26, 2022
Kathy Duffy	September 17, 2016		Joe O'Dea	February 26, 2022
Judy Hool	September 17, 2016		Theresa Tucker	February 26, 2022
Sandy Horvath	September 17, 2016		Penny (Joyce) Jones	May 13, 2023
David Littleton	September 17, 2016		Patricia Sullivan	May 13, 2023
John Treichel	September 17, 2016		Elizabeth Brownlee	June 28, 2025
Ron Van Nest	September 17, 2016		Shawn Dickey	June 28, 2025
Marie Waleryszak	September 17, 2016		Barbara Henry	June 28, 2025
Laura Benso	November 17, 2018		Michael O'Rourke	June 28, 2025
Mary Rohde	November 17, 2018			

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Kathy Duffy	October 26		Jeanne Catrow	November 7
Marie Waleryszak	November 1		Ron Van Nest	November 7
Judy Hool	November 2		Eric Love	November 17
Elizabeth Brownlee	November 3		Kathie Taylor	January 5
Sonia Balboni	November 7		Teresa Love	January 27

TREASURY TIDBITS – AUGUST 2025

December 31, 2024 Ending Balance	\$7,508.79
January - August 2025 Deposits	\$6,130.00
January – August 2025 Withdrawals	\$4,570.42
August 31, 2025 Ending Balance	\$9,068.37

***Rule 25: The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order:** Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the Fraternity and the needs of worship, of the apostolate and of charity, ALL the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means. Local fraternities should contribute toward the expenses of the higher Fraternity Councils.

Our Fraternity will carefully and prayerfully manage the charitable contributions to serve our community.

Thank you for your generous donations! Pax et bonum!

SAVE THE DATES

Transitus Celebrations - October 3, 2025	(Check St. Anthony's Shrine in Ellicot City and Franciscan Monastery of Holy Land DC for times)
October 4, 2025	Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
October 4, 2025	Blessing of Animals Holy Family Church - 11AM
December 4, 2025	Franciscan Sponsored Winter Relief Dinner - 4:30PM
December 14, 2025	Franciscan Christmas Gathering at Kathy Brady's Home - 1PM-5PM
December 20, 2025	Live Manger at Holy Family Church after 5PM Mass
February 7, 2026	Franciscan Sponsored Wine and Cheese at Holy Family after 5PM Mass
March 2, 2026	Youth Confirmation Class at Holy Family Church - 7PM
May 23, 2026	Pentecost Dinner at Holy Family after 5PM Mass

Attention: If you are interested in learning more about Secular Franciscans and our Franciscan ministry of living out the Gospel in our daily secular lives, or attending any of our monthly Secular Franciscan Fraternity meetings to learn more about us here at Holy Family Catholic Church, please contact our **Minister**, Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS (ampessagno@yahoo.com) or our **Vice Minister**, Joe O'Dea, OFS (remaincalmtoday@yahoo.com). All are welcome!

