



October 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 p.m. - Sunday, October 12, 2025

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church Hall
830 23rd St S, Arlington, VA 22202-2445

We are collecting socks for the homeless.

- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – Please continue to read our OFS Rule on a regular basis. For October, please concentrate, and meditate, especially on Article 4, which we will be discussing during our meeting. Please also think about our discussion questions:

How do you imitate Jesus in your life?

Where do you find inspiration?

Each of us will have an opportunity to respond to the questions during the Meeting!"

- *Fellowship*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* – Evening Prayer II for the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
 - Psalms, Reading and Intercessions from Psalter Week IV: Sunday, Evening Prayer II.
 - Antiphon for the Canticle of Mary and the Closing Prayer from the Proper of Seasons: Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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=d0pFSDREaDJmdjZpNWlqblllT20rZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

Dial by your location: Phone: +1 301 715 8592

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Minister's Notes

I have to admit to a guilty pleasure: I enjoy watching “Ancient Aliens.” Their theories require more than a grain of salt, but they go to some fascinating places that I will never see except on the TV screen. Sometimes their theories about “extraterrestrial gods” and the amazing ancient architecture and knowledge they discuss make me reflect on how everything really is a gift from Our Lord, who has given humans the powers of creativity, learning, and stewardship of His gifts.

One recent episode in particular started a train of reflection. In a discussion of good and evil forces, they talked with a Japanese scientist who has been doing experiments on water. His lab team has been applying positive and negative forces to vials of water in various ways, sometimes via kind or vicious words directed at the container, classical/soothing or dissonant music, happy or negative thoughts projected at the water. Then they flash freeze the water and examine its crystalline structure. According to the scientist, the water displays different properties, depending on whether it was subjected to positive or negative forces. The positively treated water formed perfect, lovely crystals; in contrast, the water subjected to negativity produced deformed, ugly crystals.

This made me think of St Francis and the “Canticle of the Creatures.” (See p. 5.) We celebrate St Francis’ feast this month, and we mark the 800th anniversary of the canticle. In that great song of praise, Francis called on all creation to join in praising Our Lord, and he thanked them, and the Lord, for the service they provide. Thus, here is an instance of

treating various things with respect and/or kindness.

I don’t mean that Francis ascribed animistic characters to the things around him. He did, however, preach that we should value everything – humans and both animate and inanimate beings – as part of God’s creation and gift, reflecting on God himself in them. Genesis tells us that God gave us all things for our use and enjoined humans to be stewards of them all. Francis combined his wonder at the Lord’s love and the beauty of creation into the “Canticle of the Creatures.” I think the studies I mentioned above would only have confirmed and strengthened his exhortation to treat all things with respect and dignity.

As we all know, Francis practiced what he preached. He called on the birds to join him in singing God’s praise, and he worked with the villagers and the wolf of Gubbio to get both sides to be respectful of the other. He is also reputed to have asked Brother Fire to be kind to him when they cauterized his eye.

In the modern JPIC prong of our charism, we acknowledge Francis as the patron saint of the environment in the “integrity of creation” part of “justice, peace, and integrity of creation.” We have an environmental lawyer in our fraternity who can speak to us about some of the ways in which humans are destroying God’s natural wonders; let’s think about asking Anne to talk to us about her work and how we can help. Whatever we decide on that score, let us take time to look around us, to see the beauty of God’s work, and to reflect on His love and generosity in sharing it all with us.

Pax et Bonum,

Sita

Professions

10/11/1998

Anna Claire Smith (Mary)

10/14/ 2001

April Garcia (Francis)

Birthdays of the Month

October

Ralph Palasek (6th)

Bernadette Lozano (23rd)

November

None

Necrology

William F East – October 1989

Leo J Hannon – October 1990

Maria Alicia Heusser – October 1994

Elmer V Dean – October 1994

Gerhard Lubbers – October 1994

Maude G Pierce – October 1996

Johanna Hannon – October 1996

Dorothy Renkes – October 1998

R. Marie Hopkins – October 7, 2013

Prayer Intentions

For...

- *For vocations to our Fraternity and all branches of the Franciscan family.*
- *For victims of violence and the conversion of those who use violence.*
- *For the upholding of human life from conception until natural death.*
- *The health, protection and guidance of Pope Leo XIV, all bishops, priests, deacons, friars and religious sisters.*
- *Peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East.*
- *A just peace in Ukraine and protection for her Ukrainian and Ruthenian Rite Catholics.*
- *Federal Employees negotiating this time of uncertainty and a speedy end to the shutdown.*
- *Angela Gill who is suffering from shortness of breath and awaiting a diagnosis of what is wrong.*
- *Grace Coipuram, OFS*
- *Patrick Birello's back and leg issues.*
- *For Ralph Palsek's, brother Robert Lawrence's family upon the death of his 45-year old son, Jeffrey Francis, of acute peritonitis and who left a 5-year old son, Damien James.*
- *For recovery for Ralph Palasek from an infection.*
- *For the repose of the soul of Liz's uncle, Richard Strawser, who passed away late September.*
- *Patricia Kennedy, mother of Joseph Kennedy, OFS who suffers from congestive heart failure.*
- *For Anne-Marie's mother-in-law who is home but still recovering from a serious infection.*
- *Louis, son of Clarissa, of STM Parish, and for all those suffering from depression.*
- *Liz's friend 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.*
- *For April's friend's mother, Adelaide and Christian, the grandson of a friend.*
- *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.*

Secretary's Notes

I did something different this month and inserted a table of contents before Sita's *Minister Notes*.

I do want to highlight the General Constitutions feature below. As Mike leads us through our study of the OFS Rule, I will continue to include the articles from the General Constitutions that help en flesh our Rule of Life. Articles 1-7 of the General Constitutions pertain to articles 1-3 of the OFS Rule. (Cont. p. 6.)

General Constitutions

Sections Applying Directly to Chapter 2 of the Rule

Article 8

1. Secular Franciscans commit themselves by their profession to live the Gospel according to Franciscan spirituality in their secular condition.
2. They seek to deepen, in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the OFS: - - - *Rule 7.* in a continually renewed journey of conversion and of formation; *Rule 4.* open to the challenges that come from society and from the Church's life situation, "going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel"; in the personal and communal dimensions of this journey. (Cont. p. 4.)

Article 9

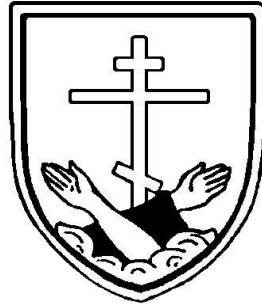
1. *Rule 5.* The spirituality of the Secular Franciscan is a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ⁹, rather than a detailed program to be put into practice.

2. *Rule 4.* The Secular Franciscan, committed to following the example and the teachings of Christ, must personally and assiduously study the Gospel

and Sacred Scripture. The fraternity and those responsible for it should foster love for the word of the Gospel and help the brothers and sisters to know and understand it as it is proclaimed by the Church with the assistance of the Spirit.¹⁰

⁹See Rule of 1221, Chap. 22; *Second Letter to All the Faithful* 51.

¹⁰See *Dei Verbum* 10.



Money

“I strictly forbid the brothers to receive money in any form either directly or through an intermediary” (St. Francis, Later Rule, 4).

St. Francis did not want to touch money. We usually describe him as wanting to be materially poor, but he had a deeper reason to shun coins. There were two systems of coinage in his day, as the economy was changing, and poorer people had reason to use currency again. The economy in Western Europe had become largely based on farming estates, but as merchants and artisans became more common, a common currency rose in use: the pecunia piccola, lower value coins used by those who were not noble or wealthy. This coinage was subject to periodic devaluation.

This contrasted with the pecunia grossa, which was spared the devaluation, but was a higher value coinage that poorer people could not afford. The friars, then, were refusing to participate in an unjust economic tool, coins, which were manipulated to restrict economic freedom of those who did not already have a high value portfolio of land or wealth. Poverty was certainly a consequence of this decision.

Personally, I wonder whether cryptocurrency like bitcoin is simply another way for those with large sums of currency to get out from under the regulation of the governmental currencies that everyone uses equally.

Reference: Michael F. Cusato, OFM, Francis of Assisi: His Life, Vision and Companions. Reaktion Books, 2023.

For your reflection:

* Is there something that you give up in order to distance yourself from something that hurts someone else? (But wouldn't necessarily hurt you.)

* What aspect of Franciscan poverty resonates with you? Or challenges you?

Jerome, ofm

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

The Canticle of the Creatures

By St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing,
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention your name.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun
Who is the day and through whom You give us light.
and he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be to You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be to You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.

From *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol. I: The Saint*. Edited by Regis J. Armstrong, J.A.Wayne Hellman, and William J. Short. (New York: New City Press, 1999) 113.

Secretary's Notes (Continued)

The Secular Franciscan Order. Articles 8-27 relate to articles 4-19 of the OFS Rule, The Way of Life. The articles of the General Constitutions relate directly to our day-to-day life as Secular Franciscans. Finally, articles 28-103 pertain to articles 20-25 of the OFS Rule, Life in Fraternity. Most of these latter articles cover things like the duties of fraternity servant leaders, elections, visitations, etc.

A thought related to *The Canticles of the Creatures* came from a talk given by Fr. Steven King, OFM, Conv. He drew the connection between the medieval understanding of the nature of created things and *The Canticle*. To someone living in Francis' time, everything that exists consisted in various degrees of wind, water, fire and earth much as the colors you see on a computer screen consist of various combinations of blue, yellow and red dots. St. Francis praising the components that make up all creation is celebrating all of creation.

Daniel P. Horan offers further insights into interpreting the Canticle. He writes,

... it's important to recall that Francis was seriously ill at the time he wrote this beautiful text. Contemporaneous sources and medieval hagiographies alike tell us that Francis suffered from a terrible eye infection, which caused him to be in incredible pain and nearly blind in the last years of his life. It is within this context that he proclaims: "Praise be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom you give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One."

The fact that exposure to sunlight almost certainly pained Francis raises a question for contemplation: What allowed him to recognize and celebrate the inherent goodness of creation, his interdependence with it and its intrinsic relationship with the Creator with such joy amid suffering?

The late British theologian Franciscan Fr. Eric Doyle wrote, "All beautiful words and music come from the mystery of personhood, welling up from the inner depths. It is therefore not so remarkable that Francis, though blind, was able to write a song about the beauty and unity of creation."

It wasn't necessarily about seeing the visual beauty of creation, but about recognizing the intrinsic goodness of God's community of which he was (and we are) already a part. Reflecting further, Doyle adds:

He was already one with himself and with the world, and the world was one in him. By the unity which he experienced, Francis found himself endowed with the sixth sense of heartsight, or what he himself once described as "the eyes of the spirit." ... The sun, the moon and the stars, the wind and the earth, the fire and the water were within him. And by the light of the inner sun, he saw the loveliness of everything.

This sense of unity and interdependence led Francis to call each element of the created world — sentient or otherwise — his "brother," "sister" and "mother." He understood in an intuitive, mystical way the truth of creaturely kinship. He did not see himself as a steward or landlord of nonhuman creation, but rather as a family member who cared for his siblings as they too cared for him...

The entire article can be read here: <https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/guest-voices/after-800-years-canticle-creatures-still-offers-radical-theological-vision>. Accessed 10/7/2025. (Cont.)

(Continued from P. 6.)

We certainly have a rich heritage in St. Francis. May our following St. Francis help us by the Holy Spirit to understand Jesus whom he love and served and Goud whom Jesus came to reveal as our Father.

Peace and Good,
Randy

Pope Leo XIV – Jubilee Audience – October 4, 2025

Catechesis. 6. *To Hope is to Choose. Clare of Assisi*

Summary of Catechesis:

Dear brothers and sisters, as we continue our Jubilee catecheses we reflect on the choice to hope. We heard in the Gospel passage today about the choice to serve God or to serve money. When we allow material possessions to rule over us, we can fall into spiritual sadness. When we choose God, however, we choose hope and a life of forgiveness and mercy. On this feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi, we look at his life and that of Saint Clare. They are models of those who understood the Gospel and chose a life of poverty as Jesus did. Their choice continues to inspire many to remember that the earth belongs to everyone. Let us pray to be a Church that serves God and the poor and opens the door of hope to the world.

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/audiences/2025/documents/20251004-udienza-giubilare.html> (accessed 10/08/2025)

Saints of the Month

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Franciscan-Saints-01-2023.pdf>

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>October 1</i> | Bl. Nicolas of Forca Palena, Priest, Third Order Regular (September 10, 1349-October 1, 1449)
https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-nicholas-of-forca.html |
| <i>October 3</i> | Commemoration of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi |
| <i>October 4</i> | Solemnity of our Seraphic Father Saint Francis
https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/solemnity-of-saint-francis.html |
| <i>October 5</i> | Bl. Felicia Meda, Order of Poor Clares (1378-September 30, 1444)
https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-felicia-meda.html |
| <i>October 6</i> | St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds, Third Order Secular (March 25, 1715-October 7, 1791)
https://www.mysticsofthechurch.com/2018/06/st-mary-frances-of-five-wounds-of-jesus.html |
| <i>October 10</i> | St. Daniel and Companions, Angelo, Domnus, Hugolinus, Leo, Nicholas, and Samuel
Priests, Order of Friars Minor, Martyrs of Morocco (d. October 10, 1227)
https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-daniel-and-companions.html
Bl. Marie-Angela Truszkowska, Founder, Third Order Regular (May 16, 1825-October 10, 1899)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela_Truszkowska |
| <i>October 11</i> | St. John XXIII, Pope, Third Order Secular (November 25, 1881-June 3, 1963)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_XXIII |
| <i>October 12</i> | St. Seraphin of Montegranaro, Religious, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (1540-October 12, 1604)
https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-seraphin-of-montegranaro.html |
| <i>October 13</i> | Bl. Honorat Kozminski, Friar, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (October 16, 1829-December 16, 1916)
https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/1216-23.htm |

- October 17* Bl. Balthazar of Chiavari, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (1420-October 17, 1492)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-balthassar-of-chiavari.html>
- October 18* Bl. James of Strepar, Archbishop, Order of Friars Minor, Conv. (c. 1340-October 1409)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-james-of-strepar.html>
- October 19* St. Peter of Alcántara, Priest, Franciscan Stricter Observance (1499-October 18, 1562)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11770c.htm>
- October 23* St. John Capistrano, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (June 24, 1386-October 23, 1456)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08452a.htm>
 Bl. Josephine Leroux, Poor Clare, martyr (January 23, 1747-October 23, 1794)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-josephine-leroux.html>
- October 25* Bl. Maria Jesus Ferragut, virgin and companions, Martyrs of Valencia [Maria Veronica Masiá, Maria Felicity Masiá Ferragut, Isabel Claduch Rovira, Milagros Ortells Gimeno], Poor Clares, d. 1936
<https://capuchinos.org/ingles1/blog/profile/b-maria-jesus-masia-ferragut-y-companeras-martires/>
- October 26* Bl. Bonaventure of Potenza, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Conventuals (d. October 26, 1711)
<http://hagiomajor.blogspot.com/2012/10/october-26-blessed-bonaventure-of.html>
- October 29* Bl. Thomas of Florence, Friar, Order of Friars Minor (1370-October 31, 1447)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-thomas-of-florence.html>
- October 30* Anniversary of the Dedication in Consecrated Churches of the Seraphic Order
 Bl. Angelo of Acri, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (October 19, 1669-October 30, 1739)
<https://saintscatholic.blogspot.com/2014/03/blessed-angelus-of-acri.html>
- October 31* Bl. Christophe of Romagne, Friar, Order of Friars Minor (c. 1172-October 31, 1272)
<http://ecole-franciscaine-de-paris.fr/christophe-de-romagne-bienheureux/>
- November 3* Bl. Helen Enselmini, Poor Clare Nun (1208-November 4, 1242)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-helen-enselmini.html>
- November 4* St. Charles Borromeo, Secular Franciscan Cardinal, Protector of the Friars Minor (October 2, 1538-November 3, 1584)
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Charles-Borromeo>
 Bl. Teresa Manganiello, Third Order Secular (January 1, 1849-November 4, 1876)
<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-teresa-manganiello/>
- November 5* Commemoration of All the Deceased of the Seraphic Order
<https://faustynka.livejournal.com/12261.html>
- November 6* Bls. Alfonso López, Priest, and Companions, Martyrs of the Civil War in Spain (Died 1934, 1936-1939)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_the_Spanish_Civil_War
 Bl. Marguerite de Lorraine, Poor Clare Nun (1463-November 2, 1521)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09655a.htm>
- November 7* St. Didacus of Alcalá, Friar, Order of Friars Minor, Observant (c. 1400-November 12, 1463)
<https://www.sdcatholic.org/diocese/bishops/saintdidacus.aspx>
 Bl. Raynier of Arezzo, Friar, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1304)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-raynier-of-arezzo.html>
- November 8* Bl. John Duns Scotus, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Doctor of the Church (c. 1266-November 1308)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-john-duns-scotus.html>
- November 9* Bl. Gabriel Ferretti, Priest, First Order (1385-November 12, 1456)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-gabriel-ferretti.html>