



January 2026

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 Landigan, OFS; Councilor-at-Large: Ann Corro, OFS,

Meeting – 2:00 p.m. - Sunday, January 11, 2026

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

We are collecting children's hats, gloves and scarves for the Mother of Light Center.

- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – Hopefully, we are all in the habit of reading through our OFS Rule on some regular basis. Do read it again in preparation for Ongoing Formation, Especially concentrate on Articles 6 and 7 which will be highlighted during our meeting. Here are questions we will discuss that relate to these articles: --
 - (Article 6) In what ways has profession in this Order changed you, or supported you, and your Spiritual life?
 - (Article 7) As a member of the Order, what are your thoughts on Conversion, Metanoia, or being a Penitent?
- *Fellowship*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* –Evening Prayer II for the Baptism of the Lord – Volunteers Needed!
Hymn - TBD (Please bring your hymnal and breviary)
Psalms – Evening Prayer II for the Solemnity of Epiphany
Antiphons/ Short Reading/Intercessions/ Antiphon for the Magnificat/Closing Prayer – Proper of Seasons: Evening Prayer II of Baptism of the Lord
- Closing Prayer – Ritual, p. 36.

Remote Access to the Monthly Meeting Info

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85418000041?pwd=d0pFSDREaDJmdjZpNWlqbI4T20rZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041 - Passcode: 668951

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

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Minister's Reflection

I hope you all had a joyous Christmas, and I wish you and your families a blessed New Year.

I try to write these reflections at least two weeks before our fraternity meetings, so that Randy can put them in the Call. For some reason, however, this month I was totally clueless; I had no ideas at all about what I was going to say. Granted, Christmas is a busy time for musicians, and a bad case of laryngitis didn't help, but I usually have an inkling of an idea as I pray about the topic each month. During Advent and Christmas, I read *St Bonaventure's Treatise on the Government of the Soul* and *his Spiritual Exercises*, and I started reading Peter Kreeft's *The God Who Loves You*, both of which are very rewarding, but I still had no ideas. Finally, the Holy Spirit hit me with the obvious, what I'd been reading about, what the whole month of December and the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God are about: God is love.

These three words really say it all. It's such a simple yet profound truth. It's so simple and profound that it can be hard for our imperfect human nature to grasp. So how do we deal with this idea?

Bonaventure exhorts us to holiness. He tells us to offer God a heart that is humble, devoted, and spotless. Our hearts are made humble by respect, obedience in our actions, and by glorifying God's name in our words and our whole being. Everything we do should be for the glory of God. We show our

devotion via fervent prayer and meditation and acts of grace. Bonaventure tells us to keep our hearts spotless by avoiding sin; when we do sin, we are to seek reconciliation and remorse, because we have transgressed against Jesus, who came to earth and allowed himself to be crucified for us.

Francis lays the foundation for this in his meditation on the Our Father (*Francis and Clare, the Complete Documents*, pp 104-106). He prays that we may love God with our whole being. All our thoughts, desires, and actions should be directed towards loving and serving Him and in loving our neighbors as ourselves, to being channels of peace and heralds of God's love. He asks for forgiveness of our sins through Christ's passion and Our Blessed Mother's intercession.

So, we are called to love God and to show our love for Him in our life, in our actions and prayers, in how we treat each other. (This is our Rule.) So far the action is all on our side: what we do to show that we love God. We pay lip service to the idea that God loves us, but do we really take that in? God is love, which translates into a love for us. That love brought Him to earth in the form of a baby, whose birth we just celebrated, to share in our humanity and to die for our sins. Peter Kreeft quotes the great theologian Karl Barth as saying that his most profound idea was that God loves him.

The Hindus say that it is more blessed to receive than to give, but we are taught the opposite. It can be very hard to accept gifts, let alone love, from someone. In our human relationships, we have been hurt by those we love. We see our human, sinful nature and think we are not worthy of love, human or divine. Thus, we may not be open to accepting love, even from God.

All of our prayers and charity should bring us to recognize that God loves each one of us and to opening ourselves to His love. While trying to share His love with others, we need to take time to let God love us. This is another simple but profound truth that is easier said than done and comprehended. Let us make it one of our New Year's resolutions to try.

Pax et Bonum,
Sita

Professions

None in January

Birthdays of the Month

Terrence Lisbeth (25th)

Christine Plunkett (27th)

February

Ann Corro (5th)

Kully Dooley (14th)

Necrology

James G R Rowe – January 1980

Dorothy Klinetop – January 12, 1982

John J Reilly – January 19, 1983

Sharon Smith – January 1985

Agnes L Warren – January 1986

Margaret Ambury – January 3, 1987

Mary Kimm – January 1991

Lillis R Wempe – January 1994

Frances Ambury – January 22, 2001

Vincent Klaus – January 1, 2006

Robert Victor Bailey – January 12, 2011

Prayer Intentions

For...

● For vocations to our Fraternity and all branches of the Franciscan family.

● For victims of violence particularly the two National Guard Soldiers shot (one mortally) in DC and the conversion of the violent.

● 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.

● Grace Coipuram, OFS

● Mary Ann Caruso, OFS who has a bad respiratory infection.

● Angela Gill, OFS who has started chemo for cancer and her husband Anthony who has cysts on his pancreas.

● the repose of the soul of Steve Connair, husband of Karen Connair, OFS, St. John the Beloved Apostle Fraternity.

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● Patrick Birello's back and leg issues.

● For Ralph Palsek's, grand-nephew Damien James and family after the death of his father Robert Lawrence.

● For recovery for Ralph Palasek from an infection.

● 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.

● For Liz Shaeffer, OFS' niece, Liz Williamson, 35, mother of two, who had a stroke on New Years Day with surgery to remove the clot.

● 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 salvation of all.

Secretary's Notes

This Sunday we close out the Christmas Season. I would like to finish the celebration with a quote from Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI's *'In the Beginning... A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall'*, "God created the universe in order to become a human being and pour out his love upon us and to invite us to love him in return." He seems to take Bl. Duns Scotus' contention that Jesus would have become Incarnate regardless of the Fall of Adam and Eve to its logical conclusion.

Our Spiritual Assistant, Gil Donahue, OFS has begun a series for us on Secular Franciscan Saints. His first article on (Secretary's Notes continue on p. 8.)

For this new year, I would like to call our attention to some of the many renowned Secular Franciscan saints. My thought is to feature one such saint each month, together with a reflection, most of which are culled from materials found on the Franciscan Media website.

SAINT ANGELA OF FOLIGNO - JANUARY 7

Some saints show marks of holiness very early. Not Saint Angela of Foligno! Born of a leading family in Foligno, Italy, she became immersed in the quest for wealth and social position. As a wife and mother, she continued this life of distraction.

Around the age of 40, she recognized the emptiness of her life and sought God's help in the Sacrament of Penance. Her Franciscan confessor helped Angela to seek God's pardon for her previous life and to dedicate herself to prayer and the works of charity.

Shortly after her conversion, her husband and children died. Selling most of her possessions, she entered the Secular Franciscan Order. She was alternately absorbed by meditating on the crucified Christ and by serving the poor of Foligno as a nurse and beggar for their needs. Other women joined her in a religious community.

At her confessor's advice, Angela wrote her *Book of Visions and Instructions*. In it she recalls some of the temptations she suffered after her conversion; she also expresses her thanks to God for the Incarnation of Jesus. This book and her life earned for Angela the title "Teacher of Theologians."

She was beatified in 1693 and canonized in 2013. Reflection People who live in the United States today can understand Saint Angela's temptation to increase her sense of self-worth by accumulating money, fame or power. Striving to possess more and more, she became more and more self-centered. When she realized she was priceless because she was created and loved by God, she became very penitential and very charitable to the poor. What had seemed foolish early in her life now became very important. The path of self-emptying she followed is the path all holy men and women must follow. The liturgical feast of Saint Angela of Foligno is celebrated on January 7.

©Gil Donahue, OFS - Spiritual Assistant; January 2, 2026

Day of Reflection for Inquirers and Candidates to the Secular Franciscan Order

EMBRACING THE GOSPEL LIFE: *Conversion, Commitment, Faith, Service*

Especially designed for Candidates and Inquirers! All OFS professed members are also invited!

Br. Michael Meza, OFM-Cap is our presenter for the day.

The presentation will give much food for thought about how your life changes after profession to the Secular Franciscan Order. This event is also good for current professed members to refresh their commitment to our OFS life.

Date: Saturday, February 7, 2026 - **Time:** 9:30 am to 4:00 pm - **Cost:** \$50 Lunch included

Place: Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land 1400 Quincy St. NE, Washington DC

ALL ARE WELCOME!

To register, click this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/2025DayofReflectionCandidatesInquirers#/>
REGISTRATION - Deadline January 30, 2026

Please note that payment can be made electronically on this page or a check can be written and mailed in. A registration is not confirmed until payment is received. Feel free to contact Rita Colleran at rlcolleran10@gmail.com or 703-310-9958 if you have any questions.



New Year's Resolutions

This month we celebrate the Theophany and Baptism of Our LORD—the Son of God manifested to the world. We see the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus like a dove. We hear the voice of the Father, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him.”

We tend to judge people by their past—or refuse to enforce healthy boundaries for those who habitually hurt others—just because both these choices are easier, but Jesus shares himself with everyone, without compromise. He doesn’t satisfy the pious types. Instead, he offers new life to those who have been imprisoned by unhealthy relationships, greed, illness and disfigurement. He shares the Tree of Life with those who recognize and want refuge from the destruction and sickness they have experienced.

Often people don’t recognize Jesus, they reject the Tree of Life (see last month’s essay). It isn’t in praise and comfort that we find salvation but in taking up our Cross, refusing revenge, giving to “the least of these.” When, like Francis, we embrace like family those we are bitter toward, our hearts also find what is bitter is made sweet.

May each of you also “Listen to Him” and welcome a sweeter New Year!

For your January reflection and discussion:

* The best habits are easy to see “yes, I’m doing it,” or “no, I’m not doing it.” Are your resolutions this year grand “I’ll do better” words, or are you resolved to make one concrete (even if small) change, instilling a good, clear habit?

* What is one good habit that you realize would be wise to adopt, but you are too timid to actually try to keep?

* What is one good habit that you would like to start practicing this New Year?

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

We'd love your feedback!

Saints of the Month

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

January 1 Mary, Mother of God
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2017-12/gospel-reflection-mary-mother-of-god.html>

January 3 Most Holy Name of Jesus
<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=6850>

January 4 Bl. Christina of Tuscany, Virgin, Third Order Secular (d. 1310)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-christina-of-tuscany.html>

January 5 Bl. Didacus Joseph of Cadiz, Priest, First Order, Capuchin (1743-1801)
https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/didacus-joseph-of-cadiz/#
Bl. Ruggiero da Todi, Religious, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1237)
<http://catholic.net/op/articles/1513/cat/1205/ruggiero-da-todi-.html#>

January 6 St. Charles of Sezze, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (October 19, 1613 – January 6, 1670)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_of_Sezze

January 7 St. Angela of Foligno, Widow, Third Order Secular (1248-January 3, 1309)
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/saints/01/04/st--angela-of-foligno--franciscan.html>

January 8 Bl. Eurosia Fabris Barban, Third Order Secular (September 27, 1866-January 8, 1932)
<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0108-18.htm>

January 9 Bl. Giles of Laurenzana, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (1443-January 10, 1518)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-giles-of-lorenzana.html>

January 10 Bl. Gregory X, Pope, Third Order Secular (c. 1210-January 10, 1276)
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/gregory-x-pope-bl>

January 11 Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ (date for 2025)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism_of_the_Lord
St Thomas of Cori, Priest, First Order Friars Minor (1655-1720)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-thomas-of-cori.html>

January 12 St. Bernard of Corleone, Priest, First Order Capuchin (1605-1667)
https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/bernard-of-corleone/

January 14 Bl. Odoric de Pordenone, Priest, First Order (1286-1331)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-odoric-of-pordenone.html>

January 15 Bl. James of Pieve, Third Order Secular, Martyr (13th Cent.-January 15, 1304)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-james-of-pieve.html>

January 16 Sts. Berard de'Leopardi of Calvi, Peter de'Bonanti of Sangemini, Otto de'Petricchi, Accursio Vacuzio and Adjutus of Narni, Protomartyrs of the Franciscan Order (d. 1220)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-berard-and-companions/>

January 17 Bl. Giuseppe Tovinii, Third Order Secular (1841-1897)
<http://www.papalartifacts.com/portfolio-item/blessed-giuseppe-tovini/>
Bl. Matthew of Girgenti, Bishop, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1451)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-matthew-of-girgenti.html#>

January 20 Bl. Jean-Baptiste Triquerie, Priest, First Order Conventual (martyred 1794)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-jean-baptiste-triquerie.html>
St. Eustochia Calafato, Virgin, Poor Clares (March 25, 1434–January 20, 1485)
<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-eustochia-calafato/>

January 22 Bl. Joseph Nascimbeni, Priest, Third Order Secular (1851-1922)
<https://theblackcordelias.wordpress.com/2009/01/22/blessed-giuseppe-nascimbeni-january-22/>
St. Vincent Pallotti, Priest, Third Order Secular, Founder Pallottine Fathers
(April 21, 1795-January 22, 1850)
<https://catholicism.org/saint-vincent-pallotti.html>

January 23 St. Marianne Cope, Third Order Regular (January 23, 1838-August 9, 1918)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-marianne-cope>

January 24 Bl. Paula Gambara-Costa, Widow, Third Order Secular (March 3, 1463-January 24, 1515)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-paula-gambara-costa.html>

January 27 St. Angela Merici, Founder, Third Order Regular (March 21, 1474-January 27, 1540)
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Angela-Merici>

January 27 Bl. Paul Joseph Nardini, Priest, Third Order Secular, Founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Family (July 25, 1821-January 27, 1862)
https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20061022_nardini_en.html

January 28 Bl. Bienvenu de Recanati, Priest, First Order (1289)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-benvenuto-of-recanati.html>

January 29 St. Francis de Sales, Bishop, Doctor of the Church, Cordbearer
 (August 21, 1567-December 28, 1622)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_de_Sales

Bl. Francesco Zirano, Priest and Martyr, OFM Conv. (1565–January 25, 1603)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Zirano

Brother Juniper, OFM, Servant of God (d. 1258)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/servant-of-god-brother-juniper/>

January 30 St. Hyacintha de Mariscotti, Third Order Regular (1585-January 30, 1640)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-hyacintha-de-mariscotti.html>

January 31 St. John Bosco, Priest, Third Order Secular (August 16, 1815-January 31, 1888)
<http://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-john-bosco/>

Bl. Louisa Albertoni, Third Order Secular (1473-January 31, 1533)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-louise-albertoni.html>

February 3 Bl. Andrew of Segni, First Order Lay Brother (1240-February 1, 1302)
<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-andrew-of-segni/>

February 4 St. Joseph de Leonisse, Priest, First Order Capuchin (January 8, 1556-February 4, 1612)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-joseph-of-leonisse.html>

February 5 St. Jane of Valois, Founder, Franciscan Order of the Annonciades (1464-1505)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-jane-of-valois.html>

February 6 Martyrs of Japan, First Order Priests, Lay Brothers, and Third Order Secular (m. 1597)
<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0206-468.htm>

February 7 St. Giles Mary of St. Joseph, Lay Brother, Martyrs, Order of Friars Minor
 (November 16, 1729–February 7, 1812)
<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0208-49.htm>

Bl. Pope Pius IX, Pope, Third Order Secular (May 13, 1792-February 7, 1878)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12134b.htm>

St. Giovanni of Triora, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Martyr (March 15, 1760, February 7, 1816)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-john-of-triora.html>

February 8 Bl. Anthony of Stroncone, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (1391-February 7, 1471)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-anthony-of-stroncone.html>

Bl. Jacoba de Settesoli, Third Order Secular (1190-February 8, 1273)
<https://franciscans.sg/blessed-lady-jacoba-of-settesoli-1190-1273/>

February 9 Bl. Leopold of Alpandeire, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (June 25, 1864- February 9, 1956)
https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/leopold-of-alpandeire/

February 10 Bl. Aloysius Stepinac, Bishop, Martyr, Third Order Secular (May 8, 1898 – February 10, 1960)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloysius_Sstepinac

Bl. Clare of Rimini, Poor Clare (1282-February 10, 1346)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-clare-of-rimini.html>

Secretary's Notes (Continued from p. 3.)

St. Angela of Foligno is on p. 4. Please check out the blurb on the Day of Reflection for Inquires and Candidates on page 4 as well. Below are the portions of articles from our *General Constitutions* that refer back to Articles 6 and 7 of *The Rule*. It is interesting that Article 7 is referenced earlier in *The Constitutions* than Article 6 and that Article 6 is the last one referenced in the *General Constitutions*.

Peace and Good, Randy

General Constitutions

Sections Applying Directly to Articles 6 and 7 of the Rule

Article 8

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.

Article 13

1. *Rule 7*. Secular Franciscans, called in earlier times "the brothers and sisters of penance", propose to live in the spirit of continual conversion. Some means to cultivate this characteristic of the Franciscan vocation, individually, and in fraternity, are: listening to and celebrating the Word of God; review of life; spiritual retreats; the help of a spiritual adviser, and penitential celebrations. They should approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently and participate in the communal celebration of it, whether in the Fraternity, or with the whole people of God¹².

Article 17

1. *Rule 6*. Called to work together in building up the Church as the sacrament of salvation for all and, through their baptism and profession, made "witnesses and instruments of her mission", Secular Franciscans proclaim Christ by their life and words. Their preferred apostolate is personal witness¹⁷ in the environment in which they live and service for building up the Kingdom of God within the situations of this world.

Article 53

2. *Rule 6*; 8. The fraternity should come together periodically, also as a Church community to celebrate the Eucharist in a climate which strengthens the fraternal bond and characterises the identity of the Franciscan family. Where, for whatever reason, this particular celebration may not be possible, they should participate in the celebration of the larger Church community.

Article 99

1. *Rule 6*. As a living part of the people of God and inspired by the Seraphic Father, Secular Franciscans, "living in full communion with the Pope and the bishops", should seek to know, and deepen the knowledge of, the doctrine proposed by the teaching Magisterium of the Church through its more important documents, and they should be attentive to the presence of the Holy Spirit who gives life to the faith and charity of the people of God⁴⁴. They should collaborate in the initiatives promoted by the Holy See, in a particular way in those areas in which they are called to work by virtue of their Secular Franciscan vocation.

¹² Ordo Poenitentiae, Praenotanda 22 ff. 1

¹⁷ See Rule 1221, 17:3, Omn p. 44 (1 FA:ED, ER, p. 75); Legend of the Three Companions 36, Omn p. 925 (2 FA:ED, p. 89f); Second Letter to All the Faithful 53, Omn p. 96 (1 FA:ED, 2LtF, p. 49).

⁴⁴ Lumen Gentium 12.