



# “THE FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS”

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



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## Our MINISTER'S MUSINGS

by

*Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*

### Franciscan Jubilee Year 1/10/2026 to 1/10/2027



**In** January 2026 the Catholic Church began a very rare Commemoration: **800 years since the passing of St. Francis of Assisi**. This runs from **January 10, 2026 to January 10, 2027**. It is a formally proclaimed **Jubilee Year** announced by the Franciscan General Curia and established by decree of the Vatican's Apostolic Penitentiary which grants plenary indulgence under the unusual conditions. What a true blessing for us as Secular Franciscans!

**The** jubilee centers on Francis' final hours at the Porziuncola, the small chapel within today's Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi. Early Franciscan sources recount how Francis asked to be placed on the bare earth, relinquishing even his habit, and died praising God – a final uncompromising witness to evangelical poverty!

**In** its official announcement, the Order of the Friars Minor explains that the jubilee invites (us) the faithful to follow Francis in living the Gospel *sine glossa*, without evasion or self-protection. The indulgence attached to the jubilee is open to all the faithful who meet the customary conditions and participate in pilgrimages or liturgical celebrations at Franciscan churches and shrines.

#### How to Get this Plenary Indulgence (one for oneself and one for the deceased):

- **Sacramental confession** to be in God's grace (eight days before or after)
- Participation in **Mass and Eucharistic Communion**
- **Visit** in the form of a pilgrimage to any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis anywhere in the world, where one renews one's profession of faith, through the recitation of the **Creed**, to reaffirm one's Christian identity
- **Recite the Lord's Prayer**, to reaffirm the dignity of children of God, received in Baptism
- **Pray for the Intentions of the Holy Father**, to reaffirm belonging to the Church whose foundation and visible center of unity is the Roman Pontiff

**The elderly, the sick and those, who for serious reasons cannot leave home, will also be able to obtain the plenary indulgence by spiritually joining the Jubilee celebrations and offering their prayers, pains or sufferings to God!**

**The** 2026-2027 year is the only celebration explicitly designated a **Jubilee** with a defined beginning and end, and a universal concession recognized by the Holy See. Pope Leo XIV explains that St. Francis appeals to even non-Catholics as a model for seeking peace in a world so plagued with conflict. Francis' death came not in triumph but in surrender. His final gesture – letting go of everything, even the garment that marked his religious life – continues to resonate in a world shaped by conflict, ecological strain, and anxiety about security!

**May** the example and spiritual legacy of St. Francis of Assisi, strong in faith, steadfast in hope and ardent in active charity towards his neighbor, inspire in everyone the importance of trusting in the Lord, of living a life faithful to the Gospel, and accepting and illuminating every circumstance and action of life with faith and prayer. We are called to frame this jubilee as a call to conversion, simplicity and peace! Please take an active part in this exceptional **Jubilee Year of St. Francis** and may this be for each one of us a providential occasion for sanctification and evangelical witness in the contemporary world for the glory of God and the good of the whole Church!

#### Sources:

Aleteia (Daniel Esparza 1/14/26)

The Holy See Letter of the Holy Father Leo XIV 1/10/26

OFM Conventuals Statement 1/13/2026

## IN MEMORIAM



### **Kathleen Marie Lawrence Duffy (OFS)**

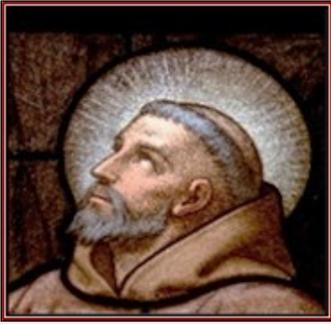
**Kathleen** Marie Lawrence Duffy (OFS), passed away on November 27, 2025. She was 74 years of age, and was a 37-year resident of Davidsonville, MD. Known as “Smoochie” to her college friends, Kathleen was born on October 26, 1951 in Glen Cove, graduated from Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Syosset, NY in 1969, and received a B.S. from Mt. St. Vincent College in the Bronx, NY in 1973. She went on to establish a career as a Medical Technologist with St. Francis Hospital in NY, and then started her own laboratory serving local medical practices and hospitals on Long Island.

**After** Kathleen moved to Maryland with her husband Dennis, Kathy worked in education as well as retail. Her personable and outgoing nature often led to chatting-up, if not out-right befriending, people in her checkout line, much to the consternation of managers. Substituting for Anne Arundel County public schools gave her the opportunity to provide relief for teachers in need of a break, especially on a long-term basis. She could often be found in the Art room of Davidsonville Elementary, and in the classrooms of Central Special.

**Kathleen** was a devoted parishioner at Holy Family Catholic Church for decades. She started the daycare program for the parish, as well as the annual blood drive. Kathy also worked tirelessly for those in need as a driving force for the parish’s relief program for inmates of Jessup prison, collections for the Lighthouse Shelter in Annapolis, and activities for the winter relief homeless shelter program. On multiple occasions she opened her home to teenagers escaping abusive situations, and provided safety and security for extended periods. She once hired a private detective to find the birth mother of a young pregnant runaway and was able to reunite them in time for the delivery.

**Kathleen** had a great passion for singing and was in the choir from pre-school through college, and most-affectionately with Holy Family. Singing the midnight mass on Christmas Eve with her friends in the choir was a highlight for her and something she prepared for all year. As her four children grew up and demanded less of her time and spiritual guidance, Kathy was able to focus on her own spirituality: participating weekly in Nocturnal Adoration, retreats, Bible study, and was among the first members of the Pope St. John XXIII Secular Franciscan Fraternity at Holy Family Catholic Church (SFO) in 2008!





## FRANCISCAN FEATURE

*(Franciscan Jubilee Year January 10, 2026 – January 10, 2027)*

### Chapter 14: Of His Patience, and of His Death

**But** he himself knew long before his death when it should be, and, when the day of his departure was at hand, said to the Brethren that he was about to put off the tabernacle of his body, even as it had been revealed to him of Christ. When, therefore, during the two years after the impression of the sacred stigmata, to wit, in the twentieth year from his conversion, he had been shaped by many trial blows of painful sicknesses... **he asked to be borne to Saint Mary of the Little Portion, that he might yield up the breath of life there, where he had received the breath of grace.** When he had been brought thither...that he might give an ensample of the truth that he had naught in common with the world...in that most severe weakness that followed after all his sickness, he prostrated himself in fervour of spirit all naked on the naked earth, that in that last hour, wherein the foe might still rise up against him, he might wrestle in his nakedness with that naked spirit. As he lay thus on the ground, his habit of haircloth laid aside, he lifted his face, as was his wont, toward heaven, and, wholly absorbed in that glory, covered with his left hand the wound in his right side, that it might not be seen, and said to the Brethren, **"I have done what was mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours."** While the companions of the Saint were weeping, stricken with keen pangs of pity, one of them, whom the man of God had said should be his Warden, knowing by divine inspiration his wish, rose in haste, and taking an habit, with the cord and breeches, brought it to the little poor one of Christ, saying, "These I lend to you, as to a beggar, and do you receive them at the bidding of holy obedience." At this the holy man rejoiced, and exulted in gladness of heart, for that he saw that he had kept faith with the Lady Poverty even to the end, and raising his hands to heaven, he glorified his Christ for that, freed from all burdens, he was going unhindered to Him. For all this he had done in his zeal for poverty, being minded to possess not even an habit, unless it were lent him by another. He was verily minded in all things to be made like to Christ Crucified, Who had hung on the Cross in poverty, and grief, and nakedness. Wherefore, as at the outset of his conversion he had stood naked before the Bishop, so in the ending of his life he was minded to quit the world naked. He charged the Brethren that stood around him, on their loving obedience, that when they saw that he was dead, they should leave him lying naked on the ground for so long time as a man would take leisurely to compass the distance of a thousand paces... Then as all the Brethren sat around him, he stretched his hands over them, crossing his arms in the likeness of the Cross, for that he did ever love that sign, and he blessed all the Brethren, present and absent alike, in the might and in the Name of the Crucified. He added, moreover, "Be strong, all you my sons, in the fear of the Lord, and abide therein for ever. And, since temptation will come, and trials draw nigh, blessed are they who shall continue in the works that they have begun. I for my part make haste to go to God, to Whose grace I commend you all." When he had made an end of gentle exhortations after this wise, this man most beloved of God asked them to bring him the book of the Gospels, and to read to him from the Gospel according to John, beginning at that place, "Before the feast of the Passover." Then he himself, as best he could, brake forth into the words of that Psalm, "I cried to the Lord with my voice, with my voice to the Lord did I make my supplication," and went through even to the end, saying, "The righteous shall compass me about, for You shalt deal bountifully with me." At length, when all the mysteries had been fulfilled in him, and his most holy spirit was freed from the flesh, and absorbed into the boundless depths of the divine glory, **the blessed man fell on sleep in the Lord.** One of his Brethren and disciples saw that blessed soul, under the likeness of a star exceeding bright, borne on a dazzling cloudlet over many waters, mounting in a straight course to heaven, as though it were radiant with the dazzling whiteness of his exalted sanctity, and filled with the riches of divine wisdom and grace alike, by the which the holy man was found worthy to enter the abode of light and peace, where with Christ he resteth for evermore. Moreover, a Brother named Augustine, who was then Minister of the Brethren in Terra di Lavoro, an holy and upright man, having come to his last hour, and some time previously having lost the power of speech, in the hearing of them that stood by did on a sudden cry out and say, "Tarry for me, Father, tarry for me, lo, even now I am coming with thee!" When the Brethren asked and marvelled much to whom he thus boldly spake, he made answer, "Did you not see our Father, Francis, who goeth to heaven?" And forthwith his holy soul, departing from the body, followed the most holy Father.

**Saint Bonaventure:** The Life of St. Francis of Assisi (pages 115-119)  
(St. Bonaventure (from the "Lengenda Sancti Francisci")

## CARING FOR CREATION by *Chris Gordon, OFS*

**Caring for Creation** means snow too. **Oh, how I love going for a walk in the snow through the woods!**

**The** glistening snow on the branches and the crunching underfoot. Maddie and Sophie get so excited running and chasing each other. What I have also learned is to be able to see what they “see” with their noses all year round!



**They** are trotting along enjoying the snow and suddenly stop. They gather themselves into a circle of great interest. They look up and down and off into the distance. I go over and see what they’re seeing with their noses. There are tracks in the snow. Looks like a raccoon has been walking by. Hmm. Wonder if he’s nearby watching us. A little further up the trail a small bird has been hopping along, looking for some seeds fallen earlier in the year, under the drifting snow. We see deer tracks and the hopping tracks of a rabbit before the walk is over. For a little while, I could see what they can see all year long. Truly a blessing to spend a few hours with God’s Creation!

**Be** kind to yourself and when you can, help another!



## PRAYING FOR PETS by *Sonia Balboni*

**Francis** embodied God's infinite love for all creation. This included animals ... he went out of his way to protect them! Francis referred to animals as his brothers and sisters, and even lectured them about obedience to God. In turn, animals listened ... once a flock of birds sat still while Francis gave them a talk, only to fly away after Francis dismissed them. As Franciscans, we are called to love all God's creations as Francis did, which of course includes animals.

Prayer is one way we can express our love for animals, and through our prayers we can show others that all creatures deserve God's love!

**Last** Fall, high school junior and animal lover, **Adam Balboni**, wanted to comfort people who are experiencing the loss or illness of a pet. He approached the chapter council with an idea: Create a service where people can request and receive a prayer for a pet. That is how **Prayers for Pets** got its start. Adam worked with chapter vice minister Joe O'Dea to get the ball rolling. Joe gave Adam his wisdom about prayer, and in particular, how to compose the appropriate prayer for each situation. Joe worked with Adam to launch a page on the chapter website, explaining Francis' views on animals, and offering people the chance to request a prayer for their pet or beloved animal.

**Prayers for Pets** is in its early days. Soon, more content will be added to the site, including curated prayers that could be appropriate for different pets' circumstances. Currently, friends and family of the OFS are requesting prayers, but in time it is hoped that the service will expand, including offering prayers to pet owners through veterinary offices and animal hospitals, among others.

**You** are invited to visit the site here to request prayers or provide comments: **Prayers for Pets - St John XXIII**. If you are interested in learning more about Franciscan theology regarding pets, consider reading, **I Will See You in Heaven**, by Fr. Jack Wintz, OFM. Thanks for your support!



## **SEEDS OF FAITH**

by  
*Nina Teti, OFS*



## **Jubilee Year of St. Francis**

**As** death drew near to St. Francis, he summoned for Clara and her nuns and Lady Giacoma di Settesoli, who had often befriended him. While the brothers stood about him singing the "Canticle of the Sun," with the **new stanza** he had lately given them, praise of Sister Death, he repeated

**Psalm: 141, "I cried to the Lord with my voice: with my voice I made supplication to the Lord."**

**At** his request he was stripped of his clothing and laid for a while on the ground that dying he might rest in the arms of Lady Poverty. Back on his pallet once more, he called for bread and broke it and to each one present gave a piece in token of their love. The Gospel for Holy Thursday, the story of the Lord's Passion as told by St. John, was read aloud.

**As darkness fell on Saturday, October 3, 1226, Francis died. 800 years ago.**

**He** had asked to be buried in the criminals' cemetery in the Colle d'Inferno, but early the next morning a crowd of his fellow citizens came down and bore his body to the church of St. George in Assisi. Here it remained for two years, during which time a process of canonization was being carried through. In 1228 the first stone was laid for the beautiful basilica built in his honor. In 1230 his body was secretly removed to it, in fear that the Perugians might send a raiding party to steal it, buried so deep that not until 1818, was it discovered beneath the high altar of the lower church.

**He preached very little the later years of his life, but the message was always most noted...**

**Love one another and follow Lady Poverty... Reverence the Eucharist..to love and honor the clergy**

Library: **Short Biography of St. Francis – Catholic Culture**

## FAITH JOURNEY WITNESS STATEMENTS



*Genevieve Dulio*



**A**t the age of 3 I was mesmerized by the old-fashioned flip clock that would always show me some version of the numbers 123. “Stating this is my favorite day”, I always used this as time to center in prayer: “In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. Later, I found a crucifix in my home in Philly, and eventually collected 27 of them, only to discover that they were the **Franciscan San Damiano cross**.

I lost my mother when I was 33, which was devastating!

**A**fter this, I became very interested in and devoted to the Bible, reminding me at all times that **God is good all the time, no matter the circumstances**. His love never fails. I take time every morning to listen to His Word, asking the Holy Spirit to help me imitate Jesus and live Gospel teachings!

**I**n a bible study I was facilitating in 2020, I met Pat Sullivan, who introduced me to our Liturgy of the Hours at 4:30 PM. Every day since then, I have been going to that time of prayer. It helped me walk through a very hard time when my husband passed away in 2019 at 4:30 PM, pondering how to tell our children!

**God** centered me using the numbers 123, to praise and thank Him! “This is my favorite time of day”! My favorite time is praising God, and I am happy on His path! I am grateful for my twins, and their birthday is January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

I am truly grateful for you all, and the gifts He gives me learning the Franciscan Way!

*Chris Gordon, OFS*



**Chris** was brought up Catholic by Catholic parents, attended Catholic school, and went to Mass every Sunday until about 16, when he was just “too busy” to attend regularly. “Cars and Skirts” were the distraction, but he always had that desire and patience to help people! This went on for years before he met his wife, who went to church **EVERY** Sunday. The Church gave me more structure and more ways to help. God doesn’t need us, but asks us to express our love for Him by serving others! At a time when I was having some trouble with alcohol, Fr. Andy told me about the Third Order Franciscans at St. Conrad’s. I joined; then several years later a Chapter opened here at Holy Family. At first I thought there was only one Rule, but there are actually 26. I am surrounded by good people who want to know God, and we will all grow together learning the **next right thing to do as part of this Franciscan Fraternity!**



# Prayer Shawl Ministry

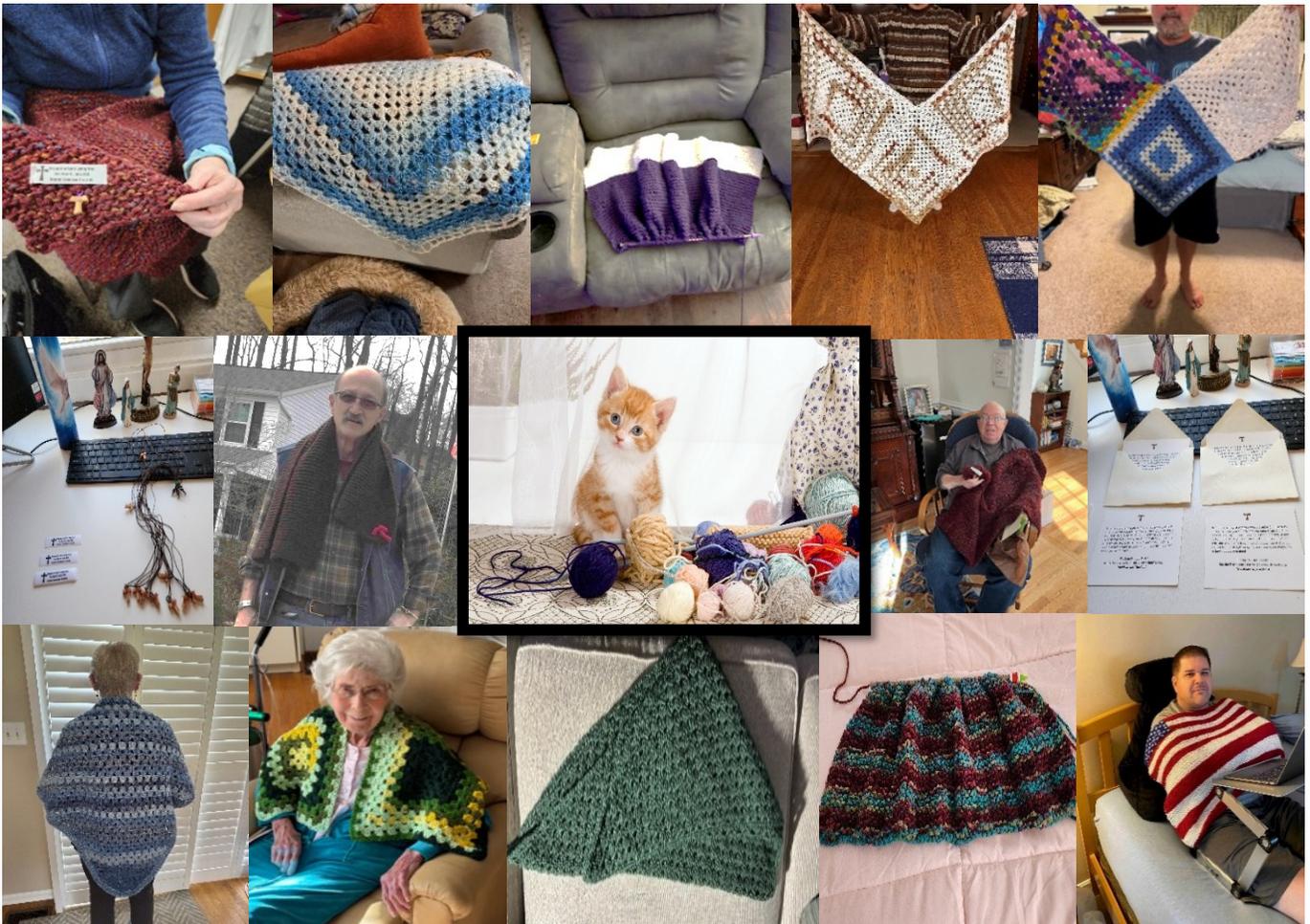


by

*Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS*



**The Prayer Shawl Ministry of the Pope St. John XXIII Secular Franciscan Fraternity** was born out of love and a desire to reach out to those who are ill, suffering or who have had a loss in their lives! The members of this ministry, through knitting, crocheting or using a loom, make prayer shawls and lap shawls/lapghans for members/families of our Fraternity or significant others. As the shawls are made, we pray for the recipient. Each item will have a special prayer tag and a Tau cross attached. A notecard will be sent with each shawl to show our love and support for them. To date, we have made fifteen shawls, and they have been warmly and graciously received. We have several other ones in progress. This is a true labor of love and a passion for the members. If you know anyone who would benefit from receiving a prayer shawl, please contact **Ann Marie Pessagno** [ampessagno@yahoo.com](mailto:ampessagno@yahoo.com) and we will get it done! At this moment, we are limiting distribution to Fraternity members/families and those associated with our Fraternity, but if you know of someone in need, please let us know. This ministry is open to **all** Fraternity members. Please join us and certainly please pray for all!

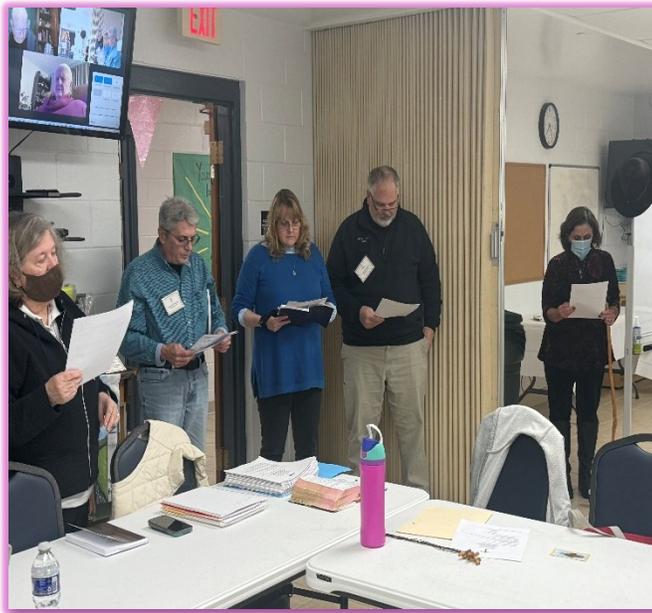


## **FORMATION FORUM** by *Jeanne Catrow, OFS*

**“Justice comes before charity.” (Pope St. John XXIII)**

**We** welcome the year 2026 with praise and gratitude for all the blessings our fraternity has received.

**We** began the year with a **Rite of Admission** for four new candidates. **Kathie Taylor, Ed Muir, Teresa Love,** and **Eric Love** received their **TAU Cross** at our January Fraternity Meeting. We congratulate them and acknowledge their hard work and diligent study toward their Franciscan Profession. These candidates are beginning the study of the Rule, specifically Articles 1-3, and are starting to recognize the importance of going from **Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel**. Please pray for their continued discernment and promptings of the Spirit!



**Our** other candidates, **Jean Schaefer, Genevieve DiUlio,** and **Sonia Balboni** are a truly inspired Formation group, and we are blessed by them! This group has been discussing justice as it applies to Franciscan life, as well as the gift of work and the importance of a just wage in the workplace! They are each walking this Franciscan journey with **commitment** and a **prayerful attitude**. It is hoped that Jean, Gen, and Sonia will say an astounding **“YES”** to our Franciscan Fraternity, and celebrate their Profession in the Fall, 2026! As always, prayers are appreciated as we walk this journey with them. **AND...**We are excited to begin a new class of aspirants on **Wednesday, March 18**. What a blessing they will be to us! The Holy Spirit has moved several people to consider joining us and to learn more about our dear St. Francis and St. Clare, and how to live this charism in the secular world. **Dear Lord, thy will be done!**

**Be at peace, my brothers and sisters**

# FRATERNITY SNAPSHOTS

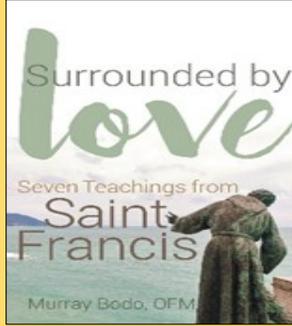
(ongoing Fraternity activities)

## We are here for you!

**USCCB Updates  
(Michael O'Rourke)**



**Seven Teachings Book Discussion**



**Bingo  
Basket**



**Live Nativity Presentation**



**Transitus**



**Blessing of Animals  
(Father Jendrick)**



**Winter Relief**



## 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

Tony Mazzuco	January 30	<b>HAPPY BIRTHDAY</b>	Ann Marie Pessagno	March 14
Nina Teti	February 19		Eugene (Duke) Jones	March 27
Joe O'Dea	February 21		Jean Schaefer	May 22

## TREASURY TIDBITS – DECEMBER 2025

December 31, 2024 Ending Balance Forward			<b>\$7,508.79</b>
January - December 2025 Deposits		<b>\$9,150.04</b>	
January – December 2025 Withdrawals	<b>\$8,432.55</b>		
December 31, 2025 Ending Balance			<b>\$8,226.28</b>

**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.**

Is the Holy Spirit calling you to be the next Treasurer of our Fraternity?  
Professed Franciscans, the position will be open at the October Council Elections.

**Thank you for your generous donations! Pax et bonum!**

## SAVE THE DATES

<b>Youth Confirmation Class</b>	<b>Monday, March 2, 2026 with Ann Marie Pessagno/Ron Van Nest</b>
<b>Day of Reflection</b>	<b>Rescheduled with Father Jude Winkler, OFM Conv to Saturday, April 18, 2026 from 09:30 AM – 02:30 PM at the Shrine of St. Anthony, Ellicott City, Maryland (cost \$35.00)</b>
<b>Pentecost Dinner</b>	<b>May 23, 2026</b>
<b>Annual Retreat for All</b>	<b>June 26-28, 2026 at Priestfield Retreat Center in West Virginia</b>
<b>Profession</b>	<b>October 24, 2026 (Tentative Date)</b>
<b>Council Elections</b>	<b>November 2026</b>

**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](mailto:ampessagno@yahoo.com)) or our **Vice Minister**, Joe O'Dea, OFS ([remaincalmtoday@yahoo.com](mailto:remaincalmtoday@yahoo.com)). All are welcome!

