



February 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 Landrigan, OFS; Councilor-at-Large: Ann Corro, OFS, Spiritual Assistant: Gil Donahue, OFS

Meeting – 2:00 p.m. - Sunday, February 8, 2026

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

We are collecting towels for the Lamb Center

- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – Read through our Rule, as hopefully you do regularly, and concentrate especially on Article 8, which addresses our prayer life and sacramental life. Also, in our Ritual, read over Appendix II, Pages 103 and 104 which discuss various options for satisfying this call to prayer.

FOR OUR DISCUSSION, THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Give a brief summary of what forms of prayer you used to fulfill this article of our rule, and how you use it in a given day.
- 2) Can you think of some way the fraternity could be of help in furthering the use of the Liturgy of the Hours among our members. And, if you can, suggest some specific assistance or training that could be offered during fraternity meetings.

- *Fellowship*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* – Evening Prayer II for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time with the celebration of Anne-Marie Pastorkovich, OFS' the Twenty-five Anniversary of her Profession as a Secular Franciscan - Please bring you hymnal. The Liturgy will be provided as a handout.
- *Closing Prayer* – Ritual, p. 36.

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Minister's Reflection



First of all, condolences to Jan Martin on the loss of her sister Cindy. You are in our thoughts and prayers, Jan.

Secondly, I hope all of you came through the storm and long cold spell safe and well. I have been praying to Our Blessed Mother and St Francis to watch over all of us, especially the homeless and those who lost power, had house and/or car damage, and any who were snowed in without sufficient food or medications.

By the time you read this, I will have been iced in for a week. I shoveled snow around the property perimeter, including clearing off my car, on Sunday. Then the sleet started, and everything frozen solid, making it impossible for me to leave my front porch. But I was well stocked on food for both me and the cat, I always had enough to do, and the new windows I had installed in December came into their own keeping us warm. Friends and neighbors called regularly to check on me. Two neighbors performed the herculean task of clearing my car and the area around it again, including removing the ice wall at the entrance to the driveway that the snowplow created. (They didn't get the path to the car, but that's ok, because they did the hardest work, and I was content to await the thaw to get back out to shovel the paths myself.)

I spent a lot of my time thanking God for all the love and blessings He showers upon me. There are a lot of pop culture tracts and articles on practicing thankfulness, but, much to my surprise, I could find

neither “gratitude” nor “thankfulness” in the indexes of either *Francis and Clare: the Complete Documents* or my older copy of the catechism. Perhaps both Francis and the catechists considered them to be such basic concepts, so essential for our faith, that they didn't see a need for a separate section on them. Francis' writings are full of prayers of thanksgiving, not least the Canticum of the Creatures. For once, pop culture actually got it right, tapping into a deeper truth that Francis knew and expressed so profoundly and beautifully: giving God thanks and praise and accepting His love and blessings lead to a sense of peace and joy and an urge to share that love and joy with others – to be a channel of His peace and a herald of His love.

As Lent starts this month, I also spent part of my time thinking about it. What was I going to do for Lent? Do I want to lose weight during the season? Absolutely. Francis and Clare fasted and prayed even more ardently than usual during Lent. But the above reflections reminded me of what the OFM who was our college chaplain used to say at the start of Lent (before planning the “Christmas in Lent”/St Patrick's Day party) He told us to think about doing something different from the usual giving up of relatively easy things, e.g., chocolate. He suggested starting something or maybe finding a boyfriend or girlfriend. He wasn't proposing sin, but, rather, encouraging us to open ourselves to something new, especially new ways of seeing the people around us, of loving someone, especially God.

I am hoping that reminding myself of the discipline it will take to diet and exercise more effectively will remind me of the asceticism Francis and Clare practiced out of their love for God and of the hardships Our Lord endured out of love for us. I pray that my gratitude for His love and blessings will help me to persevere and find new ways to share that love with those around me. None of this will be heroic, but small ways are also valid. What are some of the things you are thinking of?

May we all have a blessed, fruitful Lent and so come to a joyful celebration of Easter. Amen.

Pax et Bonum,
Sita

Professions

February 11, 2001

Anne-Marie Pastorkovich (Jeanne d'Arc)

Birthdays of the Month

Ann Corro (5th)

Kully Dooley (14th)

March

Elly Escobal (16th)

Necrology

Dcn. James F Ambury, MD (Min.) – Feb. 7, 2005

Kathleen Kuhn – Feb. 2008

M Richard McKone – Feb. 3, 2009

Maria Cassidy – February 11, 2023

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
- The repose of the soul of Jan Martin, OFS' sister, Cindy Furia, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday morning, January 24.
- Angela Gill, OFS who has started chemo for cancer and her husband Anthony who has cysts on his pancreas.
- 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.
- 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, recovering from brain surgery.
- The sister of a friend of April, who does not want

her sister to pray for her.

- April's friend Dale's whose mother turned 105 last year and for Brian, Dale's husband who was attacked and robbed when he was going home from 7-Eleven.
- April's friend who has been overseas and never came back to the States.
- 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 celebrate Anne-Marie Pastorkovich, OFS' 25th anniversary of her profession as a Secular Franciscan. This is truly something to celebrate.

Next, the Zoom link is no longer in The Call. I will create a new link and send it out separately. I submit our newsletter to the Region's website: <https://saintmargaretofcortona.org/>. Zoom notified me that the link was visible on the Internet and this is a security risk for which this change is the remediation.

On Page 4 is an invitation to attend a Day of Reflection at St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity on March 14th; *Ravaged by Grace: How Our Loving God Rescues Us, Restores Us, Heals Us, and Brings Us Home*.

We remember this month Deacon James Ambury, MD, OFS who was the first member of our Fraternity. As well as remembering Kathleen Kuhn, OFS, Richard McCone, OFS and Maria Cassidy, OFS.

Last Sunday we heard the Beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew. Page 8 has Pope Benedict XVI's reflection on St. Francis, poverty of spirit and the Secular Franciscan. Peace and Good, Randy



Spiritual Assistant's Corner



BL. JACOBA – FEBRUARY 8

Blessed Jacoba (or Jacopa) di Settesoli (c. 1190-1238), a Roman lay woman of an aristocratic family, became a close friend and supporter of St. Francis.

"Lady Jacoba" was born in the vicinity of Rome around the year 1190 into an aristocratic family of Norman origin. As a young woman she married Graziano Frangipane de' Settesoli, a wealthy Roman nobleman. They had two sons, but Graziano died young, by 1217, leaving Jacoba as administrator of his extensive properties. According to tradition, she met Francis early in her widowhood to seek his guidance. He urged her to remain in her current way of life and serve God in that way. In any case, they built a close, sympathetic relationship, and she often extended hospitality to Francis and his brothers. According to tradition, she was one of the first members of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance (today's Secular Franciscans) in Rome.

Jacoba is best known for her loving presence to Francis as he was nearing death. Francis had written her to come to him, but before the letter was even sent, she arrived at the Portiuncula on her own, bringing a burial shroud and the almond cookies that Francis was so fond of. She cared for Francis in those last days and helped prepare his body for burial.

She became a major benefactor of the construction of the basilica of San Francesco in Assisi; she herself moved to Assisi in the 1230s. The most common opinion is that Jacoba died in Assisi on February 8, 1239, although some historians say there is evidence that she lived until 1273. In any case, she was buried near the tomb of St. Francis in Assisi. Her remains were moved to the newer crypt church in 1933.

Day of Reflection

Sponsored by the St. Margaret of Cortona Region and SFA Fraternity in Triangle, VA

Theme: *Ravaged by Grace: How Our Loving God Rescues Us, Restores Us, Heals Us, and Brings Us Home*
Speaker/Facilitator: Dr. Mary C. Moorman, Professor of Theology, Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Professor Moorman will lead two 90-minute reflections and discussion sessions via Zoom focusing on *God's Perfect Love and Man's Living Lifnim Mishurat Hadin (Inside the Line of Law)*, and *How Grace Turns Forgiveness into Redemptive Suffering*.

Lunch will be provided. Please join us in this opportunity for reflection as we embrace our call to radical love and conversion.

When: Saturday March 14, 2026 10:15am to 2:45pm

Where: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church School Cafeteria
18825 Fuller Heights Rd, Triangle, VA 22172

Cost: \$20 which includes lunch is payable on the registration link below.:

Registration Link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409094DAAA72EAAF94-61990790-sfafraternity>

Registration Deadline: February 27, 2026

If you would like more information contact Clarence Neason Jr., OFS Minister at cneasonjr@gmail.com.

Schedule of the Day:

10:15 am - Opening Remarks & Prayer

Clarence Neason Jr. OFS Minister and Jim O'Shaughnessy OFS Formation Director

10:30 am - First Presentation: Gods Perfect Love and Man's Living Lifnim Mishurat (Inside the Line of Law)

12:00 pm - Lunch and Reflection Time

1:00 pm - Dr. Mary Moorman presents How Grace Turns Forgiveness into Redemptive Suffering

2:30 pm - Closing Remarks and Prayer



Two Old Women

Velma Wallis tells an Athabaskan story about two old women who are left behind by their tribe. The tribe hasn't been able to find enough food recently, and the leader makes the difficult decision to leave these old women behind. One woman's family sneaks them a couple of things to help them survive. The other woman has enough determination to encourage both of them: "If we are going to die, my friend, let us die trying, not sitting!"

The women realize that their complaining about the good old days "when it was really no better" convinced the younger people that they no longer had anything useful to contribute, that they "are like babies." Fortunately, they were able to set traps, remember where the fish are plentiful, and make blankets, gloves, and snowshoes.

I would rather you read the story for yourself—only 123 pages in a large font. But I was struck by the conversion of these women, which was only possible because of the betrayal by their people.

Examples like this might help us see how the Cross can be the Tree of Life—not only because of what Christ does, but also because in Christ we can unite our crosses to the Cross of Christ. St Paul speaks of "what is lacking in the suffering of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). In order to accept the salvation Christ offers, we must also accept—not simply tolerate—the betrayal and humiliation in our own lives. Perhaps there are times even to seek it out—not to inflict anything on ourselves, but to be courageous enough to risk our own comfort and status in order to share something splendid with those who need it.

Love. Which is the fullness of Life. Which is Christ, the very presence of God.

For your February reflection and discussion:

* Friar Michael Cusato (page 42) describes the humility or minority of the early friars as a decision to live among the poor and dispossessed of their society in imitation of Jesus Christ and the disciples. Is there a decision that you have made to let go of something that you had the right and ability to have, in order to dwell among or share with those who had less?

* Similarly (page 44), doing penance for the early Franciscans was about walking away from activities and attitudes that divide us or perpetuate the suffering of those who have less (in money or status, as examples). How have you allowed your Franciscan profession, going between Gospel and Life, to change the attitude you have toward someone, the way you behave toward them?

For your reading:

Two Old Women: An Alaskan Legend of Betrayal, Courage, and Survival. Written by Velma Wallis. Published in 1993; republished in 2013.

Francis of Assisi: His Life, Vision and Companions. Written by Michael Cusato, OFM. Published in 2023.

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>

- 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 Alpandere, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin (June 25, 1864- February 9, 1956)
https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/leopold-of-alpandere/
- February 10 Bl. Aloysius Stepinac, Bishop, Martyr, Third Order Secular (May 8, 1898 – February 10, 1960)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aloysius_Stepinac
Bl. Clare of Rimini, Poor Clare (1282-February 10, 1346)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-clare-of-rimini.html>
- February 13 St. Eustochium of Messine, Poor Clare Nun (March 25, 1434 - January 20, 1485)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-eustochium.html>
- February 15 Translation of the Relics of St. Anthony
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/relics-of-st-anthony.html>
- February 16 Bl. Philippa Mareri, Poor Clare Nun, (1190/1200-1236)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-philippa-mareri.html>
St. Veridiana, Virgin, Third Order Secular (1182-1242)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-veridiana.html>
- February 17 Bl. Luke Belludi, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (1200-c. 1285)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-luke-belludi.html>
- February 18 St. Bernadette Soubirous, Corderbearer (January 7, 1844-April 16, 1879)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-bernadette-soubirous.html>
- February 19 St. Conrad de Plaisance, Hermit, Third Order Secular, (d. February 19, 1351)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-conrad-de-plaisance.html>
- February 20 Bl. Peter of Treja, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (d. November 20, 1304)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-peter-of-treja.html>
- February 22 Feast of the Chair of St. Peter
<https://mcgrathblog.nd.edu/the-feast-of-the-chair-of-st.-peter-and-how-to-observe-it>
- February 25 Bl. Sebastian of Aparicio, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor
(January 20, 1502-February 25, 1600)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-sebastian-of-aparicio.html>

- February 26 Bl. Antonia of Florence, Third Order Secular (1400-February 29, 1472)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-antonia-of-florence.html>
 Bl. Isabelle of France, Virgin, Poor Clare (March 1224- February 23, 1270)
https://www.traditioninaction.org/SOD/j236sd_IsabelleFrance_01_25.html
- February 27 Bl. Jeremiah of Vallachia, Lay Brother Capuchin Friars (1556-1625)
https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/blessed-jeremiah-of-valacchia/
 Bl. Jose Tous y Soler, Priest, First Order Capuchin (March 31, 1811-February 27, 1871)
https://www.capuchin.org/saints_blessed/jose-tous-y-soler/
 Bl. Louise Albertoni, Third Order Secular (1533)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-louise-albertoni.html>
- March 2 St. Agnes of Prague, Virgin, Poor Clare (1205-March 6, 1282)
<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-agnes-of-prague/>
- March 3 Bls. Liberatus Weiss, Samuele Marzorati and Michele Pio Fasoli, Martyrs of Gondar, Ethiopia,
 Priests, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1716)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Laurentius_Weiss_and_companions
 Bl. Innocent of Berzo, Priest, First Order Capuchin (March 19, 1844-March 3, 1890)
<https://www.capdox.capuchin.org.au/saints-blesseds/blessed-innocenzo-da-berzo/>
- March 5 St. John-Joseph of the Cross, Priest, Alcantarine Franciscan (August 15, 1654-March 5, 1839)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-john-joseph-of-the-cross/>
- March 6 St. Colette de Corbie, Foundress: Colettine Poor Clares (February 13, 1381-March 6, 1447)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-colette-de-corbie.html>
- March 7 Bl. Christopher of Milan, Priest, First Order Franciscan (d. 1485)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-christopher-of-milan.html>
- March 9 St. Catherine of Bologna, Poor Clare Sister (September 8, 1413-March 9, 1463)
<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages/saint-catherine-of-bologna/>
 St. Frances of Rome, Franciscan Third Order Secular, Oblates of St. Benedict
 (1384-March 9, 1440)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-frances-of-rome.html>

General Constitutions

Sections Applying Directly to Article 8 of the Rule

Article 12

3. *Rule 8.* The brothers and sisters should love meeting God as His children and they should let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. They should seek to discover the presence of the Father in their own heart, in nature, and in the history of humanity in which His plan of salvation is fulfilled. The contemplation of this mystery will prepare them to collaborate in this loving plan.

Article 14

2. *Rule 8.* The Eucharist is the centre of the life of the Church. Christ unites us to himself and to one another as a single body in it. Therefore, the Eucharist should be the centre of the life of the fraternity. The brothers and sisters should participate in the Eucharist as frequently as possible, being mindful of the respect and love shown by Francis, who, in the Eucharist, lived all the mysteries of the life of Christ.

St. Francis and the First Beatitude

Excerpted from *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*
by

Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)

But it may be a good idea-before we continue our meditation on the text-to turn for a moment to the figure whom the history of faith offers us as the most intensely lived illustration of this Beatitude: Francis of Assisi. The saints are the true interpreters of Holy Scripture. The meaning of a given passage of the Bible becomes most intelligible in those human beings who have been totally transfixed by it and have lived it out. Interpretation of Scripture can never be a purely academic affair, and it cannot be relegated to the purely historical. Scripture is full of potential for the future, a potential that can only be opened up when someone "lives through" and "suffers through" the sacred text. Francis of Assisi was gripped in an utterly radical way by the promise of the first Beatitude, to the point that he even gave away his garments and let himself be clothed anew by the bishop, the representative of God's fatherly goodness, through which the lilies of the field were clad in robes finer than Solomons (cf. Mt 6:28-29). For Francis, this extreme humility was above all freedom for service, freedom for mission, ultimate trust in God, who cares not only for the flowers of the field but specifically for his human children. It was a corrective to the Church of his day, which, through the feudal system, had lost the freedom and dynamism of missionary outreach. It was the deepest possible openness to Christ, to whom Francis was perfectly

configured by the wounds of the stigmata, so perfectly that from then on he truly no longer lived as himself, but as one reborn, totally from and in Christ. For he did not want to found a religious order: He simply wanted to gather the People of God to listen anew to the Word-without evading the seriousness of God's call by means of learned commentaries.

By creating the Third Order, though, Francis did accept the distinction between radical commitment and the necessity of living in the World. The point of the Third Order is to accept with humility the task of one's secular profession and its requirements, wherever one happens to be, while directing one's whole life to that deep interior communion with Christ that Francis showed us. "To own goods as if you owned nothing" (cf. I Cor 7:29ff.)- to master this inner tension, which is perhaps the more difficult challenge, and, sustained by those pledged to follow Christ radically, truly to live it out ever anew-that is what the third orders are for. And they open up for us what this Beatitude can mean for all. It is above all by looking at Francis of Assisi that we see dearly what the words "Kingdom of God" mean. Francis stood totally within the Church, and at the same time it is in figures such as he that the Church grows toward the goal that lies in the future and yet is already present: The Kingdom of God is drawing near

Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian J. Walker, New York: Doubleday, 2007, pp. 78-9.