



July 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, July 12, 2026

St. Ann's Catholic Church

Room 105 (under the Church)

5300 10th St N, Arlington, VA 22205

We are collecting bath towels for the homeless

- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – In preparation for Ongoing Formation, review the *Secular Franciscan Rule* as always, with special emphasis on Articles 12 and 13. See Page 4 for related articles from the General Constitutions.

- For our "Go Around" and discussion, please think about these two questions. - - -

1) How do you personally understand the concept "Purity of Heart," and/or "set themselves free" as cited in Article 12?

2) Related to Article 13, how do you manage to love people who you don't find very lovable?

- *Fellowship*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* – Evening Prayer II for the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
 - Psalms/Reading/Responsory/Intercessions from Evening Prayer II for Sunday, Psalter Week III
 - Gospel Canticle Antiphon / Closing Prayer from the Proper of Seasons, Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.
 - Hymn TBD. Please bring your breviary and hymnal.
- *Closing Prayer* – Ritual, p. 36.

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Minister's Reflection



After all the feasts of last month that closed out the Easter season, we are now well into ordinary (after the numbers of the weeks) time, the longest season of the liturgical year, which lasts until Advent. This is not a boring season, however, as we still read through the Gospels and celebrate the Eucharist. We also have the feasts of the Assumption and All Saints, and, as Franciscans, the feasts of St Clare and St Francis during this time of year.

The Church provides variety for our human potential for boredom in the panoply that accompanies our worship. Rumer Godden quotes the real Benedictines of Stanbrook Abbey in England when she says in her novel In this House of Brede that the beauty of the liturgies and the rich colors of the vestments for each season provide satisfaction for our human senses as well as our spiritual senses. Medieval architecture and stained glass windows were designed to give glory to God, but they were also intended to educate and inspire a largely illiterate population, as they still do in our modern age. Today we can visit churches built in a wide assortment of styles, choose from masses offering several different musical genres, multiple languages, and even choose from among the various rites the Church allows, such as Ruthenian, Melkite, and Tridentine offered by the Fraternity of St Peter (FSSP) priests.

There are also a wide variety of callings and charisms within the Church family: Benedictines, Augustinians, Carmelites, Dominicans, not to mention Franciscans. Several of these have secular affiliates.

Vocations to the priesthood; regular religious life, cloistered or active; married; single; etc., all provide options for Catholics to discern how they can best follow and serve Our Lord.

And yet we are all called to be one body in communion with God and other persons. Fr Steven Oetjen makes this point in his Catholic Herald article from May 28. Just as “[t]he one God is a Triune God, a communion of three persons who exist eternally in a perfect communion of love...man, being made in God's image, is made for communion with other persons.” Humans are social beings, needing relationships with others as part of our humanity.

For us as Secular Franciscans, we, too, are called to that communion, with our Rule and St Francis as our guides. The basic unit of our life as Seculars is our fraternities. Our fraternity meetings are where we deepen our understanding of how to live our Franciscan charism, and share love, support, and learning with our brothers and sisters, so that we can emulate Francis' example of emptying himself to allow God to come in. Fr Oetjen could be quoting Francis in his conclusion that, “Precisely through a sincere gift of myself, I will find greater communion with other people, both divine and human...The persons of the Holy Trinity invite us to share eternally in that perfect communion of love.” Let us continue to pray together and encourage each other in our goals of following Francis as he leads us to God and to living from Gospel to life and life to Gospel. Amen.

Pax et bonum, Sita

Professions

None

Birthdays of the Month

July

Angela Gill (12th)
Patrick Birello (12th)
Joseph Kennedy (16th)

August

Elizabeth Shaeffer (15th)
Andrea Bender (21st)

Necrology

Hilma M. Boyd – July 14, 1989
Dorothy Furey – July 3, 2014

Prayer Intentions

For...

- For vocations to our Fraternity and all branches of the Franciscan family.
- *For a just peace with Iran, in the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan, and wherever there is violence.*
- For the victims of violence particularly from war 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.
- *For protection of Ukrainian and Ruthenian Rite Catholics and all Christians in peril.*
- For all of the youth in the world that experience exemplars like Ss. Pier Giorgio and Carlo Acutis that lead them to Christ.
- *For healing of the schism with the SSPX.*
- Grace Coipuram, OFS
- *Angela Gill, OFS who is undergoing chemo for cancer and her husband Anthony who has cysts on his pancreas.*
- In thanksgiving for successful cataract surgery for Ann Corro, OFS
- *For continued healing from a fall for Margaret, mother of Anne-Marie Pastorkovich and...*
- For Katherine, who has ALS
- *For Denise, who is having chemotherapy*
- For Donald, who is in memory care
- *Patrick Birello's back and leg issues.*
- For recovery for Ralph Palasek from the aftereffects of battling 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.
- *For the repose of Carmelita and Onfre Junior, cousins Elly Escobar, OFS.*
- For healing for April's back of her upper legs, knees, and lower legs.
- *For April's friend, Kathleen who suddenly passed away while she was planting in her garden.*
- *The sister of a friend of April, who does not want her sister to pray for her.*
- 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

Gil's reflection this month on page 4 is on Ss. Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin, OFS, the parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

With our celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Fr. Jerome's reflects on the meaning of freedom on page 5.

The Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore is celebrating the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St. Francis with a special exhibit of the missal that is believed to be the one that was opened three times for St. Francis and Bl. Bernard Quintvale to give them the basics of their way of life, a life of poverty mirroring the poor Christ. Details can be found on page 6.

This past month has been a very busy one for me. As treasurer for our St. Margaret of Cortona Region, having two retreats in one month has really upped my workload. Retreat planning and logistics generate a lot of stress for all involved. I found myself realizing how much we can behave in ways fashioned from our secular environments and not the Gospel. It reinforced the idea that our Rule is giving us critical insights into breaking those secular behaviors and replacing them with virtues extolled in the Gospels.

Peace and Good, Randy

In beautiful things St. Francis saw Beauty itself, and through His vestiges imprinted on creation he followed his Beloved everywhere, making from all things a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace Him who is utterly desirable.

St. Bonaventure, OFM



SAINTS LOUIS MARTIN AND ZÉLIE GUÉRIN - JULY 12

Saints Louis and Marie-Azelie Guerin Martin, the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux, were members of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS):

Saint Louis Martin (August 22, 1823 – July 29, 1894)

Saint Zélie Guérin (December 23, 1831 – August 28, 1877)

Born into a military family in Bordeaux, Louis trained to become a watchmaker. His desire to join a religious community went unfulfilled because he didn't know Latin. Moving to Normandy, he met the highly-skilled lace maker, Zélie Guérin, who also had been disappointed in her attempts to enter religious life. They married in 1858, and over the years were blessed with nine children, though two sons and two daughters died in infancy.

During their lives, Louis and Zélie were well-known, exemplary examples of the Secular Franciscan vocation. They held deeply embedded Gospel values and expressed them in both their professional and family lives. They instilled strong faith traditions in their five daughters, all of whom became consecrated religious nuns.

Louis managed the lace-making business that Zélie continued at home while raising their children. She died from breast cancer in 1877. Louis then moved the family to Lisieux to be near his brother and sister-in-law, who helped with the education of his five surviving girls. His health began to fail after his 15-year-old daughter entered the Monastery of Mount Carmel at Lisieux in 1888. Louis died in 1894, a few months after being committed to a sanitarium.

The home that Louis and Zélie created nurtured the sanctity of all their children, but especially their youngest, who is known to us as Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Louis and Zélie were beatified in 2008 and canonized by Pope Francis on October 18, 2015. They were the first married couple to be canonized together. The liturgical feast of Saints Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin is celebrated on July 12.

Reflection

In life, Louis and Zélie knew great joy and excruciating sorrow. They firmly believed that God was with them throughout every challenge that married life, parenting, and their occupations presented.

Gil Donahue, OFS

Spiritual Assistant, St. Thomas More Fraternity

General Constitutions

Articles Applying Directly to Articles 12 and 13 of the Rule

Article 18

2. *Rule 13.* They should deepen the true foundations of universal kinship and create a spirit of welcome and an atmosphere of fraternity everywhere. They should firmly commit themselves to oppose every form of exploitation, discrimination, and marginalization and against every attitude of indifference in relation to others.

3. *Rule 13.* They should work together with movements which promote the building of fraternity among peoples. They should commit themselves to “create worthy conditions of life” for all and to work for the freedom of all people.



What is Freedom?

When Jesus says that he came to “testify to the truth,” Pontius Pilate simply asks “What is truth?” We might think of this as a cynical question. But I think it is both cynical and honest. Pilate lived in a culture where even the values of the Roman Republic had already been dismantled.

Especially at this 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we do well to consider a similar question, “What is Freedom?” St Paul, after all, writes about the freedom we have in Christ.

Some argue that it is unpatriotic to question. The Founding Fathers give a different example. Anyone who studies history well knows that they had different ideas about the best way to construct government. The genius of the Constitution is therefore the checks and balances that make up the system.

Our governmental system is malleable (changeable, but not too easily), with different levels and different types of responsibilities spread around, so that no one person, group, or process has complete dominance. A broad sharing in the vote across the population is simply one check balancing several others.

The US Bishops write explicitly about the importance of our faith informing not just one but all of our decisions in the political sphere—not just our vote, but also how we talk and participate, and act responsibly to share in the governance and maintenance of our nation. While not founded explicitly on Christian principles, our government gives great leeway for us to bring our values and perspective to inform and persuade the nation that Christian principles are a good way even for non-Christians to live.

Thus, true freedom is not just about laws and government, but about the choices we exercise to make Christ truly present in all dimensions of our lives.

For your July reflection and discussion:

* Our freedom in Christ allows us to make choices that others see as unwise or too risky. Have you ever exercised this kind of freedom? Maybe even a family member or another Christian has criticized you for it.

* Many people see Christian activism as a merely conservative force on government. What is one way in which your faith invites you to see a situation differently from the way the major political parties talk about it?

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We'd love your feedback!

The Walters Art Museum - Opens Aug. 26, 2026

Divine Inspiration: The Legacy of the St. Francis Missal



St. Francis Missal, Italy, ca. 1200. Acquired by Henry Walters.

<https://art.thewalters.org/object/W.75/>

In August 2026, to commemorate the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi's death, the Walters Art Museum will once again showcase *The St. Francis Missal*, a legendary 12th-century manuscript that is believed to be a relic of touch of St. Francis.

Visitors will also experience over a dozen additional art objects that contextualize the book and explain its importance, including manuscripts; paintings; and works made of glass, ivory, and ceramic. The exhibition will include details of the Missal's two-year conservation in 2017 funded by the Mellon Foundation as well.

According to early accounts, in the year 1208 St. Francis and two of his followers were debating what God's plan for them might be. Unable to decide, they sought answers at the church of San Nicolò in Assisi. Francis opened the book on the altar three times at random. In every case, the text on the page urged renouncing earthly goods. This pivotal moment laid the foundation for the Franciscan order. The manuscript in the Walters collection, known today as the St. Francis Missal, is traditionally believed to be the very book consulted by St. Francis of Assisi and his companions.

An inscription in the Missal lends support to the legend that surrounds it, as the inscription chronicles the book's creation for the church of San Nicolò and also mentions the book's patron, Gerard of Ugo, who is documented in Assisi in the late 12th century. Due to the manuscript's possible contact with the saint, Franciscans worldwide consider the St. Francis Missal to be a relic of touch, and every year many make pilgrimages to Baltimore to be in its presence.

- **August 26, 2026–February 7, 2027**
- **Centre Street Building, Level 3, Manuscript Gallery**

Saints of the Month

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Franciscan-Saints-2022-1-Catalog-by-Mary-Lou-Coffman-OFS.pdf>

- July 1* St. Junipero Serra, Priest, Alcantarine Friars Minor, missionary (November 24, 1713-August 28, 1784)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/the-franciscan-saints-junipero-serra/>
Blesseds Marcello Maruzzo, Friar OFM (23 July 1929 – 1 July 1981) and Luis Navarro, OFS
(21 June 1950 – 1 July 1981) Martyrs of Guatemala
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcello_Maruzzo_and_Luis_Navarro
- July 3* Bl. Marie Anne Fontcuberta, Foundress, Franciscan Missionaries of the Mother of the Divine Shepherd
(January 13, 1827-July 3, 1886)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peregrina_Mogas_Fontcuberta
- July 4* St. Elizabeth of Portugal, Third Order Secular (1271-1336)
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Elizabeth-of-Portugal>
St. John Zhang Huan, Martyr, Franciscan seminarian (August 1838-July 9, 1900)
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/zhang-huan-john-st>
Bl. Modestino of Jesus and Mary, Priest, OFM of the Alcantarines (September 9, 1802-July 4, 1854)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domenico_Mazzarella
St. Peter Zhang Banniu, Martyr, Secular Franciscan (1849-August 1838-July 9, 1900)
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/zhang-banniu-peter-st>
- July 8* Ss. Gregory Grassi, Hermine Grivot and Companions, First Order and Third Order Religious and
Secular Franciscans, Martyrs of China (d. 1900)
<https://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0708-1042.htm>
- July 9* Bl. Marija of Jesus Crucified Petković, Foundress, Third Order Regular
(December 10, 1892-July 9, 1966)
https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20030606_petkovic_en.html
11 Martyrs of Damascus, Eight Franciscan Friars and Three Maronite Laymen (July 9, 1860)
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/damascus-martyrs>
St. Nicholas Pieck and Companions: Anthony Hornaer, Anthony of Weert, Cornelius, Francis,
Godfrey, Jerome, Nicasius, Peter, Theodoric, Willehad, Martyrs of Holland (d. 1572)
<https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11065b.htm>
St. Veronica Giuliani, Capuchin Poor Clare (December 27, 1660-July 9, 1727)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-veronica-giuliani.html>
- July 12* St. John Jones and John Wall, First Order, Martyrs of England (c. 1530-1598; 1620-1679)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saints-john-jones-and-john-wall>
Ss. Louis and Zelig Martin, Third Order Secular, First Spouses Canonized Together
<http://saintsresource.com/louis-and-zelig-martin/>
- July 13* Bl. Angeline of Marsciano, Foundress, Third Order Regular (1357-July 14, 1435)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angeline_of_Marsciano
- July 14* St. Francisco Solano, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Missionary (March 10, 1549-July 14, 1610)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Solanus
- July 15* Bl. Bernard of Baden, Third Order Secular (c. 1428-July 15, 1458)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-bernard-of-baden.html>
St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, Cardinal, Minister General Order Friars Minor, Doctor of the Church
(1221-July 15, 1274)
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Bonaventure>
- July 16* Canonization of St. Francis on July 16, 1228 by Pope Gregory IX
<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/bull-of-canonization-of-st-francis-of-assisi-mira-circa-nos-7860>
St. Marie-Madeleine Postel, Foundress, Third Order Regular (November 28, 1756-July 16, 1846)
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/postel-marie-madeleine-st>

July 18 St. Camillus de Lellis, Capuchin Novitiate before founding Ministers to the Sick (May 25, 1550-July 14, 1614)
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-camillus-de-lellis/>

July 19 Bl. Peter of Cresci, Priest, Third Order Secular (d. July 19, 1323)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-peter-cresci.html>
 Bl. Herman Stepien, First Order Conventual, Polish Martyr (October 21, 1910-July 19, 1943)
<https://carmelitesph.org/memorial-of-blessed-karol-herman-stepien/>

July 21 St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Priest, Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, Doctor of the Church (July 22, 1559-July 22, 1619)
<http://catholicism.org/saint-lawrence-of-brindisi-apostolic-doctor.html>

July 23 St. Kunigunde of Poland, Abbess, Poor Clare Sisters (March 5, 1224-July 24, 1292)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kunigunde_of_Poland

July 24 Bl. Louise of Savoy, Poor Clare Nun (December 28, 1461-July 25, 1503)
<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0724-23.htm>

July 25 Bl. Antonio Lucci, Bishop, OFM Conventual (August 2, 1682-July 25, 1752)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_Lucci

July 26 St. Bartolomea Capitanio, Third Order Secular before founding another order (January 13, 1807-July 26, 1833)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartolomea_Capitanio

July 27 Bl. Archangelo of Calatafimi, Religious, Friars Minor of the Observance (d. 1460)
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/archangelo-calatafimi-bl>
 Bl. Maria Maddalena Martinengo, Capuchin Poor Clare nun (October 5, 1687-July 27, 1737)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-mary-magdalene-martinengo.html>
 Bl. Nevolo of Faenza, Third Order Secular (13th Cent.-July 27, 1280)
<https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-nevolo-of-faenza/>

July 28 St. Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception, Franciscan Clarist Congregation (August 19, 1910-July 28, 1946)
http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/2008/ns_lit_doc_20081012_alfonsa_en.html
 Bl. Mary Teresa Kowalska, Capuchin Poor Clares, Martyr (d. 1941)
<https://www.capdox.capuchin.org.au/saints-blesseds/maria-teresa-kowalska/>

July 30 Bl. Bertrand de la Tour, Cardinal, Order of Friars Minor (c. 1262-1332)
<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0730-23.htm>
 Bl. Solanus Casey, Priest, OFM, Capuchin (November 25, 1870-July 31, 1957)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solanus_Casey

August 2 Feast of St. Mary of the Angels of the Portiuncula - Plenary indulgence available
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12286a.htm>

August 4 Bl. Frédéric Janssoone, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (November 19, 1838-August 4, 1916)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frédéric_Janssoone
 St. John Vianney, Priest, Third Order Secular (May 8, 1786-August 4, 1859)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08326c.htm>

August 6 Bl. Maria Francesca Rubatto, Founder, Capuchin Sisters of Mother Rubatto (February 14, 1844-August 6, 1904)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Maria_Rubatto

August 7 Bls. Agathangelus and Cassian, Priests, OFM Capuchin, Martyrs (d. 1638)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-agathangel-and-cassian.html>

August 8 Holy Father St. Dominic, Founder of the Order of Preachers and Cordbearer (August 8, 1170-August 6, 1221) <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05106a.htm>

August 9 Bl. John of La Verna, Religious, Order of Friars Minor (1259-August 9, 1322)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-john-of-la-verna.html>