



August 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, August 9, 2026

St. Ann's Catholic Church

Room 105 (under the Church)

5300 10th St N, Arlington, VA 22205

We are collecting socks for the needy

- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – We are taking a break from studying our Rule this month. It has been months since New Years Resolutions. Andrea will lead us reflect on a set of meditations by Pope St. John XXIII, Secular Franciscan entitled *Only for Today* (p. 8 of *The Call*). Pope St. John XXIII is not asking us to take on something for the rest of our lives – just quietly one day at a time.

For ongoing formation this month, we will take turns reading these ten resolutions and figure out if any particular one(s) strike you. Something that you could do today, only for today. Maybe you have a resolution of your own to share!

- *Fellowship*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* – Evening Prayer II for the Nineteenth 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, Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.
 - Hymn TBD. Please bring your breviary and hymnal.
- *Closing Prayer* – Ritual, p. 36.

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Minister's Reflection



I recently participated in a program on Pope Leo XIV's encyclical, "Magnifica Humanitas, organized by Tom White, our Regional Formation Director. While one of the main topics is Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology in the digital age, there is a lot more to it. Because I found the document fascinating and thought-provoking, I would like to share my impressions with you.

Pope Leo begins by tracing the history of Catholic Social Doctrine (CSD – also known as Catholic Social Teaching) from his namesake Pope Leo XIII's "Rerum Novarum" to Pope Francis' "Fratelli Tutti." According to Pope Leo, each pope wrote about the challenges of his own age. Thus, their focus on CSD varies to suit the situations they dealt with.

The Pope calls on all Catholics – and all persons – to look at the problems facing our world from the perspective of working for the common good, respecting the dignity of every human being, promoting social justice and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, and caring for all of creation. In seeking solutions to today's problems, Pope Leo draws on the foundations of Vatican II, saying that the Church does not have answers to these questions. Science, scholars, and other faiths all have truths and ideas to contribute. While we do not have to agree with every idea from every side, we are to respect our interlocutors and enter into honest dialogue and cooperation with them to build a better

world. We must be willing to find solutions that can evolve so that we can adapt to the changing circumstances and challenges that come with new developments in technology. And we must not be afraid to speak truth to power, when necessary, even within the Church, to combat contemporary evils.

Pope Leo notes that science and technology, including AI, are not evil per se. Science is based on the beautiful laws of nature that God created to define our world, and technological developments and AI have been created by brilliant human minds that are also part of God's creation. It is how we use or misuse these tools that can be good or evil. We must also be aware of the massive toll on our natural resources and environment that building and storing digital platforms and other forms of technology require.

While these products can make life easier in a variety of ways, we must also be aware of their dangers. The greatest is the dehumanization of large segments of the population. People are reduced to data points; many who produce the materials needed to build and run these platforms live in oppressive, dangerous conditions; and the (mis)information programmed into them can be polarizing and dehumanizing. Both adults and children can become addicted to social media and video games and to using potentially biased databases for quick research, resulting in isolation and the loss of critical thinking and social skills. Warfare has never been easier, as we can fire missiles from thousands of miles away, never seeing the casualties, the human victims, except as statistics of our success or failure.

Pope Leo points out that we must never forget that these tools are indeed just that: tools. They cannot love. They cannot provide a hug or a smile. They cannot laugh with us in joy or cry with us in sorrow, as they cannot feel these emotions. I am reminded of Psalm 115: "pagan idols are silver and gold [titanium and tungsten may be more expensive today]; they have eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but they cannot hear; they have mouths, but they cannot speak...all who worship them will come to be like them."

The Pope calls on Catholics to cooperate with scientists, governments, other religious leaders, school

heads, and families in respectful, thoughtful dialogue to explore the ethics of the use and abuse of these great technological tools. We must work together to develop regulations and guidelines grounded in CSD to safeguard the environment and the dignity of all human beings and to find ways to use technology for the common good. This must be done in such a way as to build in the flexibility needed to evolve as technology itself evolves, looking ahead to protect tomorrow's world as well as today's. He reminds Catholics to do this rooted in the Gospel, the Church, the Eucharist, love, and prayer.

This is our calling and charism as Franciscans. Respectful dialogue and cooperation with those who hold other truths, even when we don't agree with everything they say: this is Francis with the Sultan. Articles 13-19 of our Rule call us to respect the human dignity of all persons and to care for our environment. We are called to stand in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed; as the equals of all human beings, we are not better or above the lowest on the economic food chain. By the same token, that same sense of equality should give us the strength and courage to speak truth to those with wealth and power, campaigning for social justice and for protection of humanity and the world around us. The Rule is not rigidly prescriptive, allowing us to adapt our ways of following it to serve the needs of our changing times. And we are firmly exhorted in our Rule to do all this rooted in the Gospel, the Eucharist, love, and prayer.

During the month of August, we celebrate the feasts of two strong, faithful women who can serve as examples and guides for us – Our Blessed Mother and St Clare. Mary braved the dangers of the flight into Egypt and stood by her son at his crucifixion, then adapted and expanded her ability to love to become the mother of us all. St Clare had the strength and courage to demand poverty for her order and to badger the popes of her day until one of them finally approved her visionary Rule. May the prayers and intercessions of these two great women help us to find the courage and love we need to work – in whatever ways suit each of us – to safeguard our children, all human beings, and the natural world, both now and for generations to come. Amen.

Pax et bonum, Sita

Professions

No professions in August

Birthdays of the Month

August

Elizabeth Shaeffer (15th)

Andrea Bender (21st)

September - None

Necrology

Edna Joyce – August 1990

Cora Weiss – August 26, 1999

Anne Smisko – August 2007

Elizabeth Young – August 2008

Joseph Roccapriore – August 22, 2017

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 youth in the world that they may experience exemplars like Ss. Pier Giorgio and Carlo Acutis that lead them to Christ.
- *For healing of the schism with the SSPX.*
- **For the repose of the soul of Lisa Martin, Jan Martin's sister.**
- *Grace Coipuram, OFS*
- Angela Gill, OFS who is undergoing chemo for cancer and her husband Anthony who has cysts on his pancreas.
- *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.*
- Liz's friend Dan who has Parkinson's Disease.

- *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.*
- 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 Frank, the leader of our luminaries group.
- *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 5 is on a particularly important Secular Franciscan priest, St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests.

Fr. Jerome's reflects devotion to Mary on page 6 as we celebrate her Assumption.

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 below (page 4).

Peace and Good, Randy

The Walters Art Museum - Opens Aug. 26, 2026 through February 7, 2027



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 the touch of St. Francis.

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.

Centre Street Building, Level 3, Manuscript Gallery



Spiritual Assistant's Corner



SAINT JOHN VIANNEY (MAY 8, 1786 – AUGUST 4, 1859) - AUGUST 4

Many Secular Franciscans may be surprised that this patron saint of parish priests was one of us—a Secular Franciscan. Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney, known as John in English, was born May 8, 1786 in Dardilly, France and was baptized the same day. He was the fourth of six children born to Matthieu and Marie Vianney. He was a champion of the poor as a Third Order Franciscan and a recipient of the coveted French Legion of Honor. Vianney's remarkable sanctity and commitment to his small rural parish in France drew over 100,000 pilgrims each year. People journeyed from all over Europe to attend his Masses or sit in his confessional where he spent up to 16 hours a day hearing penitents.

John was raised in a Catholic home, and the family often helped the poor and housed St. Benedict Joseph Labre when he made his pilgrimage to Rome. At 13-years-old, John made his first communion and prepared for his confirmation in secrecy (this was an anti-clerical period in Revolutionary France). In 1802, the Catholic Church was reestablished in France and religious freedom and peace spread throughout the country. He attended a minor seminary, Abbe Balley, in 1812 and was eventually ordained a deacon in June and a priest on August 12, 1815. Three years later, Fr. John Vianney was appointed parish priest of the Ars parish.

He spent 11 to twelve hours each day working to reconcile people with God. In the summer months, he often worked 16-hour days and refused to retire. His fame spread until people began to travel to him in 1827. Within thirty years, it is said he received up to 20,000 pilgrims each year. He died in 1859, leaving behind a legacy of faith and was viewed as the champion of the poor. On October 3, 1873, Pope Pius IX proclaimed Fr. Vianney as "venerable" and on January 8, 1905, Pope Pius X beatified him. St. John Vianney was canonized on May 31, 1925. His feast day was declared August 9 but it was changed twice before it fell to August 4.

St. John Vianney would often say: "Private prayer is like straw scattered here and there: If you set it on fire, it makes a lot of little flames. But gather these straws into a bundle and light them, and you get a mighty fire, rising like a column into the sky; public prayer is like that."

Prayer of St. John Vianney

I love You, O my God, and my only desire is to love You until the last breath of my life.
I love You, O my infinitely lovable God, and I would rather die loving You, than live without loving You.
I love You, Lord and the only grace I ask is to love You eternally...
My God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love You,
I want my heart to repeat it to You as often as I draw breath.

Gil Donahue, OFS

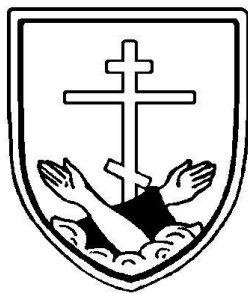
Spiritual Assistant, St. Thomas More Fraternity

Saint Clare of Assisi Quotes

"We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become. If we love things, we become a thing. If we love nothing, we become nothing."

"We are to become vessels of God's compassionate love for others."

"Therefore, let us be very careful that, if we have set out on the path of the Lord, we do not at any time turn away from it through our own fault and ignorance."



Devotion to Mary

Many years ago, I was in a rectory that occasionally received calls from a man who had many questions about his faith. He asked at one point whether it was necessary to pray the Hail Mary. He just didn't feel like it was important.

I never met the man in person, but his question stuck with me. So often we Catholics take for granted that of course we pray to Mary. Of course, we love her and venerate her. Of course, we do not worship her because she is not God. Yet these are not easy things for some people.

This month (August 15), we celebrate the Dormition or Falling-Asleep of the Mother of God. It is sufficiently important that in the Byzantine tradition, we celebrate for 8 days. Not many feasts get that much time. We remember that Mary fell asleep in the Lord—a way of speaking that derives from Jesus' words about earthly death (John 11:11, Matthew 9:24)—and that Jesus took her body and soul to heaven.

But our love for Mary cannot simply remain as a distant veneration of someone holy. Mary is our Mother, the Mother of the Church, and as such we are her sons and daughters, called to live in the same family tradition of holiness. St. Francis encourages us, "the saints have accomplished great things, and we want only to receive glory and honor by recounting them" (Admonition VI). Let us begin to live in her example, in union with Christ, for (again, as St Francis reminds us) up to now we have done little or nothing.

For your August reflection and discussion:

* What is something you know about how Mary lived that encourages you in your own striving for holiness?

* What Marian devotions are important to you? How do these devotional prayers help you to live a more holy life?

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We'd love your feedback!

Saints of the Month

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

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

- August 4 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>
- August 11 St. Clare of Assisi, Founder, Order of Poor Ladies (Poor Clares)
(July 16, 1194-August 11, 1253)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04004a.htm>
- August 13 Bl. Marco of Aviano, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin
(November 17, 1631-August 13, 1699)
<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0813-19.htm>
- August 14 St. Maximilian Kolbe, OFM, Conventual, Martyr of Auschwitz
(January 8, 1894-August 14, 1941)
<https://saintmaximiliankolbe.com/biography/>
- August 16 Bl. Francis Chici of Pesaro. Third Order Secular, hermit (d. 1350)
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-francis-cichi.html>
- August 17 St. Roch of Montpellier, Confessor, Third Order Secular (c. 1295-August 16, 1327)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-roch.html>
- August 18 Bl. John Louis Loir and Companions, Priests and Martyrs of Rochefort
<https://catholicsaints.info/martyrs-of-the-hulks-of-rochefort/>
- August 19 St. Louis of Toulouse, Bishop, Order of Friars Minor (February 9, 1274-August 19, 1297)
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09385c.htm>
- August 21 St. Pius X, Pope, Third Order Secular June 2, 1835-August 20, 1914
<https://franciscansoflife.com/2015/08/22/st-pius-x-our-brother-giuseppe/>
- August 23 Bl. Bernard of Offida, Friar, OFM Capuchin (November 7, 1604-August 22, 1694)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-bernard-of-offida.html>
- August 25 Bl. Maria del Transito Cabanillas, Founder of the Franciscan Tertiary Missionary Sisters
(August 15, 1821-August 25, 1885)
https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/2002/documents/ns_lit_doc_20020414_transito_en.html
- St. Louis IX, King of France, Patron of the Third Order Secular
(April 15, 1214-August 25, 1270)
https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=1011
- September 1 St. Beatrice of Silva, Founder, Conceptionist Poor Clares (c. 1424-August 9, 1492)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrice_of_Silva
- September 2 Bls. Apollinaris of Posat, John Francis Burté, Severin Girault, Priests and companions,
First and Third Orders, Martyrs of Carmes (d. 1792)
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/martyrs-de-carmes.html>

September 4	St. Rose of Viterbo, Third Order Secular (c. 1233-March 6, 1251) https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-rose-of-viterbo.html
September 6	Bl. Liberatus of Lauro, Priest, First Order (d. 1260) https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-liberatus-of-lauro.html
September 7	Bl. Gentle of Matelica, Priest, First Order, martyr (d. September 5, 1340) https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-gentle-of-matelica.html
September 8	Bl. John Tomachi and Sons, Third Order Secular, Martyrs (d. September 8, 1628) https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-ioannes-tomachi/
September 9	Bl. Seraphina Sforza, Poor Clare Nun (1434-September 8, 1478) https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-seraphina-sforza.html
September 10	Bl. Lucy de Freitas, Third Order Secular, martyr (d. 1622) https://joyfulspirit139.blogspot.com/2014/11/bl-lucy-de-freitas.html

Only For Today

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|---|---|
| <p>1. Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once.</p> <p>2. Only for today, I will take the greatest care of my appearance: I will dress modestly; I will not raise my voice; I will be courteous in my behavior; I will not criticize anyone; I will not claim to improve or to discipline anyone except myself.</p> <p>3. Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one.</p> <p>4. Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes.</p> <p>5. Only for today, I will devote ten minutes of my time to some good reading, remembering that just as food is necessary to the life of the body, so good reading is necessary to the life of the soul.</p> | <p>6. Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it.</p> <p>7. Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.</p> <p>8. Only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it. And I will be on guard against two evils: hastiness and indecision.</p> <p>9. Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good providence of God cares for me as no one else who exists in this world.</p> <p>10. Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness. Indeed, for twelve hours I can certainly do what might cause me consternation were I to believe I had to do it all my life.</p> |
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Pope St. John XXIII