



The Padre Pio Fraternity

Secular Franciscan Fraternity

The Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region



The council wishes you a Merry Christmas

Council Members

Spiritual Assistant:
Gregory Spuhler, OFM Conv

Minister:
Frank Peluso, OFS

Vice Minister:
Suzanne Nelson, OFS

Formation Director:
Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Appointed Treasurer
Louis Coker, OFS

Secretary:
Maureen Copan, OFS

Appointed Councilors:
Victoria Romero, OFS
Marge Zombek, OFS

BSSF Region

Minister:
DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS

Area 3 Councilors :
Bob Pearson, OFS
Carolyn Peruzzi, OFS



November 18, 2017: Annual Fraternity Retreat at Avila Retreat Center in Durham

Carolyn D. Townes OFS, International & National JPIC Animator, and the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region's JPIC Animator facilitated the retreat. Carolyn is from Columbia, SC; the National JPIC Commission; the International Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation; and the Franciscan Action Network Commission. The topic was: "Mindful Communication." Twenty-six of us and three guests participated in her excellent presentation.

The topic was well received since dialogue and other forms of communication are important to our Franciscan charism in the world and with each other. Carolyn opened with Rule 19.

Father Joseph Madden, OFM Conv. celebrated the mass with Deacon Phil Rzewnicki assisting, Michael Hancock, OFS was the reader. Lynn Oeser, OFS led in the singing. She also hosted Carolyn for the two days she was here. Ellen Ferrone, OFS drove Carolyn back and forth to the airport. Thanks to all who participated in this special day, a day before the **first World Day of the Poor** which was observed on Sunday, Nov. 19, 2017.

The Attendees after Lunch in the Courtyard of Avila

Photo by Louis Coker, OFS





December Overview

The month of December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, which is celebrated on December 8. The first 24 days of December fall during the liturgical season known as Advent and are represented by the liturgical color purple. The remaining days of December mark the beginning of the Christmas season. The liturgical color changes to white or gold — a symbol of joy, purity and innocence.

The Holy Father's Intention for December 2017

The Elderly - That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.

(See also
www.apostleshipofprayer.net)

Franciscan Saints for December

2 Bl. Maria Angela Astorch,
Virgin
2 Bl. Rafael Chylinski
8 Immaculate Conception of the
Blessed Virgin Mary
10 Bl. Peter Tecelano (III Order)
12 Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Patron and Queen of the
Americas
13 Finding the Body of St.
Francis
15 Bl. Mary Frances Schervier,
virgin of III Order.
16 Bl. Honoratus Kozminski,
priest, I Ord.

25 Jesus Christ, the King
31 New Year's Eve

December Birthdays

Ida Irwin, OFS\
Dec 11th
Sister Mary Clare Sekine, OSC
Dec. 27th
(OSC Prayer Partner)
Sharon Winzeler
Dec. 28th



**Padre Pio loved to Carry an
Image of the Infant Jesus at
Christmas Mass**

**"Always humble yourself
lovingly before God and
man, because God speaks
to those who are truly
humble of heart, and
enriches them with His
gifts." St. Pio**



Padre Pio carrying a statue of the Infant Jesus at Christmas

Apostolates

For **CPO** or **Library**
E-mail Maureen Copan, OFS

For **Hospitality** E-mail
Marie Roccoforte, OFS

For **JPIC & Oak City
Outreach**, E-mail Ellen
Ferrone, OFS
(Oak City 11/26/16)

For **Prayer Requests**
E-mail Joe Travers, OFS

For the **Scrapbook**
E-mail Lee Cunningham,
OFS

For **Sunshine**
Call Marge Zombek, OFS

For the **Newsletter**
E-mail Frank Peluso, OFS

For the **Website**
E-mail Michael Hancock,
OFS.

For liturgical **Music**
Email Lynn Oeser, OFS

We are on the web at:
<http://ofscentralnc.org>

**Don't forget our
apostolates over the
Holidays**



I love you this much

"What you are is God's
gift to you, what you
become is your gift to
God." - H. von Balthasa



ST. FRANCIS' DEVOTION TO THE BABY JESUS

St. Francis of Assisi had a special devotion to the Child Jesus, and he is credited with creating the first nativity scene on Christmas Eve of the year 1223. St. Francis recreated the scene of Christ's birth in a special ritual and Mass he held inside of a cave in Greccio, Italy, inviting both his fellow friars and the townspeople to join in the celebration.

It is believed that St. Francis was first inspired by this idea after visiting the historical place of Christ's birth on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land—the humble stable in a Bethlehem cave. It is likely this event which deepened his devotion to the Child Jesus, who was born into the world in such poverty, humility, and simplicity.

In fact, Francis founded his new religious Order to imitate these very virtues. Later he told a friend why he desired to create the first nativity scene in his town: "I want to do something that will recall the memory of that Child who was born in Bethlehem, to see with bodily eyes the inconveniences of his infancy, how he lay in the manger, and how the ox and ass stood by."

He set up an empty manger (the feeding trough of farm animals which served as Jesus' crib) inside a cave, and even included a live ox and donkey beside the manger just as it was believed to have happened on that first Christmas night. Through these visual aids he wanted everyone to impress more deeply into their understanding how Christ came into the world in such poverty and simplicity. This was a typical perspective of St. Francis' unique charism of simple, poverty-centered spirituality.

It is also said that St. Francis—who was radically devoted to the virtue of evangelical poverty—was inspired to recreate the original nativity scene to overcome the rampant greed and materialism prevalent at that time in Italy. *From Catholic Online*



Padre Pio Moments

A woman said: "My first daughter, who was born in 1953, was rescued by Father Pio when she was eighteen months old. On the morning of January 6, 1955, my husband and I were in church attending the Holy Mass and our daughter was at home with her grandfather. There was an accident: she fell into a tub of boiling hot water. She was burned on her stomach and back. The doctor came in an hour and he said, 'take your daughter to a hospital immediately because she could die from her wounds'. For this reason, he did not give us any medicine. After the doctor left I started to pray for Father Pio's help. It was nearly noon. As I was getting myself ready to go to the Hospital, my daughter who was alone in the bedroom called me: 'Mommy, I don't have a wound anymore!' 'Who has taken your wounds?' I asked her out of curiosity. She answered: 'Padre Pio has come. He took my wounds by putting his whole hand on my burn.' Actually, there was no sign of burns on my daughter's body even though the doctor had told me my daughter was

Congratulations to our sister, **Laurie Wilburn, OFS** who made her permanent profession in Fayetteville, NC on November 15, 2017. Five of our members were able to travel to be there. We miss her!



{EDITOR'S CORNER}

**December 2, 2017: Rite of Permanent Profession**

On Saturday, 11:00 AM, we will celebrate the Rite of Permanent Profession in Our Lady of the Angels Chapel, followed by a 12:30 PM, Reception in Anthony Hall, Founders Room. Friends and family are welcome. Father Steve Kluge, OFM will celebrate the mass. Six candidates are to be professed.

Profession draws the candidate to our Franciscan spirit, which encompasses the values, attitudes and point of view of the Gospel and, service to others is what we are. Through spiritual conversion and ongoing formation, we are guided by the Holy Spirit to live out our Rule and Constitutions in the service of God. As Lester Bach OFM Cap. wrote, "Profession calls us to offer service to all people - in the church, in the world and in our fraternity life." We are encouraged by this to be caretakers of all of God's creation and act accordingly.

St. John Paul II stated, "By the profession of the evangelical counsels the characteristics of Jesus — the chaste, poor and obedient one — are made constantly visible in the midst of the world and the eyes of the faithful are directed towards the mystery of the Kingdom of God already at work in history, even as it awaits its full realization in heaven." It's the Holy Spirit who leads us in our Franciscan vocation. What a joy!

NOTE: We are asking you to donate to the clothing section of CPO. The items needed, in sizes 2T-6X for both girls and boys are: winter pajamas, socks, jackets, hats, underwear, pants, long sleeve tops, mittens, and sweaters. Bring donations to the December 2 Profession.



"It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish." - St. Teresa of Calcutta.

January 28, 2018 Chapter of Elections

The Region has the Padre Pio Fraternity scheduled for a Chapter of Elections on January 28, 2018. Bob Pearson, OFS, Area 3 Councilor, is to be the Fraternal Presider. Friar Greg Spuhler, OFM Conv. is to be the Ecclesiastical Witness. Also, Carmen Madero, OFS, BSSF Region Vice Minister, will be present to observe. A quorum of the professed must be present. Joe Travers, OFS and Marie Roccoforte, OFS have been our elections committee. Give them your nominations. Note: whomever you nominate must agree to serve. Remember these conditions:

- An individual **may** nominate himself/herself for an office.
- An individual **may** campaign for oneself for office.
- A local fraternity **must vote** for and not appoint a formation director
- The outgoing minister **cannot** be elected vice minister.
- An individual, who arrives after the Rite of Elections has begun, may begin voting at that time. The individual does **not** add their vote to previously accepted elections.
- A **proxy** can accept the election of the absent professed member
- Fraternities will provide a **stipend** to the Visitors for travel expenses and honoraria.
- Voting members **must** be present on the day and in the designated place of the elections.
- Voting by mail or proxy is **not** acceptable.
- The spiritual assistant does **not** vote in the election.

When making any decision of discernment ask yourself, "Is this the loving thing to do, to say, or to be."



To Wear and Bear the Tau



In final discernment to the calling of permanent profession to the Secular Franciscan order, I find myself contemplating the yoke of the TAU.

In the Life of St Francis, Bonaventure tells us that after denouncing his worldly inheritance Francis was given “The mean and rough tunic of a farm servant upon which with his own hand marked it with the sign of the Cross, with a piece of chalk that he chanced upon, thus making it a garment meant for a man crucified, poor, and half naked.”

Franciscans wear the TAU as a reminder of the poverty of Christ crucified. In Matthew 11:29:30, our Lord speaks: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

Christ invites us to take his yoke upon our shoulders. At the foot of the cross we stand in God’s eye, space and time. Our humanity flows in union with Love made flesh. Father, Son and Spirit know every speck of our being. Every weakness and flaw are exposed. In our nakedness, we abandon the illusions that feed our egos and we come to the stark reality of who we are. Our hope is in the poverty of knowing that in spite of it all we are loved, just as we are, beyond the limits of mortal comprehension.

The TAU has emerged as a trail marker in my Franciscan journey. I received my first TAU as a gift from my mother while I was still in orientation. She had found it at a shop in Assisi a year earlier while on a pilgrimage. “I thought that it was pretty”, she said, and she purchased it with no particular recipient in mind. By the Spirit it turned out to be for me.

During the inquiry phase of formation, I was sitting at a picnic table during my lunch hour one day. I was reading a biography on Francis when a piece of foliage in the shape of a TAU dropped from a tree and landed beside my hand giving me inspiration and encouragement. Shortly after the Rite Admission to the order I attended the Area Regional Gathering of the Brothers and Sisters of St Francis Region. National JPIC Animator, Carolyn Townes, challenged those in attendance to wear and bear the TAU at all times. “We are not only Christians,” she proclaimed, “we are Franciscan Christians. We are called to live the Gospel.” Inspired by her words, I committed myself to wear the TAU at all times.

Glancing in the mirror, the TAU hanging from my neck seemed obscure and unassuming, but in my moment to moment adventures in the secular world I have discovered that the symbol bears deep meaning to others who set their eyes upon it. Shortly after I began wearing the TAU, a co-worker had taken note. He shared with me that he had worked with Franciscan missionaries in Guatemala whose works of love had deeply inspired him.

Then there was an encounter during a meal at our Fraternity Apostolate at Oak City Outreach Center. I was visiting with some of our friends at a table when a gentleman inquired about the TAU. He and other guests had noticed that Franciscans wore the TAU and he had also noted the knots. There was a captive audience as I explained the TAU and the knots. A thoughtful and lively discussion of poverty and chastity ensued. At the end of the conversation, the gentleman asked me for the TAU that I was wearing. Without hesitation, I began to remove it and the entire table gasped. Almost instantly the man grabbed my wrist stating “No! I could never accept your cross. I was just testing your heart.”

Another time a disabled woman approached me in a parking lot asking for help. We spoke eye to eye. I was only able to help her in a small way. As our meeting came to a close, her gaze fell to the TAU. She gave pause, looked up, and we parted with an embrace.

On the weekend that Hurricane Irma ravaged the Caribbean, I attended a mass presided by a visiting missionary. As grace would have it, his apostolate just happened to serve the poor in that part of the world. He was vibrant and charismatic and gave a stirring homily on the readings of the day. He closed with a very brief mention of his charity and asked the assembly for generosity in prayer and for donations according to their hearts. While leaving the church I offered my hand to the missionary and expressed my gratitude for his service to the poor. His eyes fell and fixed on the TAU. He then looked into my eyes and said, “Please pray for me.”

The eyes of these encounters seem to uniformly reflect a recognition and trust of “Peace and All Goodness”. As I profess to live the Gospel, the journey ahead calls for continued abandonment and conversion to new and deeper realities of love and truth. The TAU represents the yoke that I joyfully take up. I wear it and bear it as a symbol and reminder of my commitment to my God and my All for the remainder of my days.

By S, Lynn Oeser, OFS

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” – St. Paul

Looking Ahead - Important Dates - Mark your calendars

- **December 2, 2017: Rite of Permanent Profession**, Saturday, 11:00 AM, Our Lady of the Angels Chapel, followed by a 12:30 PM, Reception in Anthony Hall, Founders Room
- **January 13, 2018 - Council Meeting**, Anthony Hall, Room 402. Planning for the New Council workshop.
- **January 28, 2018: - Chapter of Elections** - Friar Greg Spuhler, OFM Conv., Bob Pearson, OFS, and Carmen Madero, OFS.
- **February 25, 2018** - Rite of Extraction and guest speaker.
- **February 2018 2018:** Workshop and Retreat for Newly elected officers before February 26 (Date and place to be announced.)
- **May 5, 2018 PicnicBond Park in Cary**, in the Bueler Shelter from 11:30-1:30. Please bring a dish to share.-
- **May 19, 2018: Regional Formation Workshop, 9 am - 2 pm** in the Founders Room.

Friar Cookies for the Fair Trade Market - November 10-12



Friar Greg Spuhler, OFM Conv. led a group from our fraternity in making friar cookies at St. Andrew's Parish in Apex. From left to right in the pictures above, we see Chris Peffley, OFS, Suzie Nelson, OFS. and Maureen Copan, OFS in the kitchen, The middle shows Lee Cunningham, OFS and Jeanne Casciere working. To the right is Father Steve Kluge, OFM amused by the friar cookie at the Fair-Trade Market at St. Francis



Parish, With him is Friar Greg and Father Jim Sabac, OFM. We thank Ellen Ferrone, OFS who organized the event. The Market offered gifts made in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized respecting their right to dignified work and helping themselves out of poverty. The color picture to the left is Sharon Winzeler, OFS giving away cookies and to the right is Lee Cunningham, OFS also giving away the friar cookies.

Photos by Ellen Ferrone, OFS