

# Padre Pio Fraternity

August 2024

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
Secular Franciscan Order  
of Central  
North Carolina

## ***the little flowers of Padre Pio Fraternity***

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### **Minister's Memo**

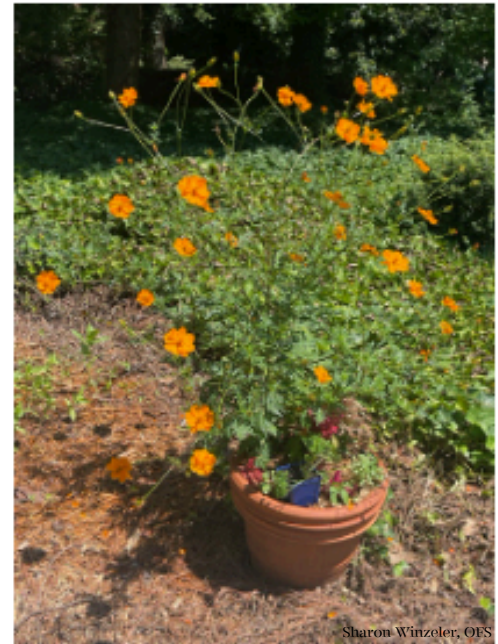
by Sharon Winzeler, OFS, Minister

Somehow one stray cosmos seed found its way into a clay planter in my front yard. Although I had sowed many packages of them, I didn't realize one made its way into the pot.

From one seed this stunning plant appeared in July, bringing me joy. It is as large as a bush.

I can't help but draw a comparison between the cosmos and our lives as Secular Franciscans.

God uses us to sow good seeds that often start out as tiny, sometimes unknown acts. Through His mercy and grace, they blossom into beautiful works. We do the best we can with what He gives us and aren't always aware of how powerful those acts are.



Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Take, for instance, Oak City Cares and Catholic Parish Outreach. Our fraternity supports both agencies with donations and service. Last weekend at OCC we fed nearly 200 hungry people--hearty meals seasoned with love.

We also donate \$150 worth of diapers each month to CPO. Since their needs are increasing, so are our donations. This month we asked members to donate extra diapers and you generously gave 872 additional diapers to CPO. Thank you for your generosity.

Our servers at Oak City go out into the dining room and talk to our guests, asking them if we can pray for them. Prayer requests are recorded and will be passed along to you. This month we will begin listing them in this newsletter. This is another way to spread seeds of Divine love.

As Franciscans, we follow the path that Jesus led, honoring the dignity of all people and living in solidarity through our presence, prayer, food and other donations. As we respond to the call to sow good seeds on earth for our Heavenly Father, we plant His hope, beauty and love in the lives of others. With the Lord's grace those seeds will flower, spreading the joy of salvation and making the journey more beautiful for all.

# Fraternity Council

Spiritual Assistant: Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM  
Minister: Sharon Winzeler, OFS  
Vice Minister: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS  
Formation Director: Gladys Whitehouse, OFS  
Treasurer: Janette Perez, OFS  
Secretary: Mary Cockrill, OFS

## Councilors:

Richard Hammer, OFS  
Travis Bongiorno, OFS  
Anne Evangelista, OFS

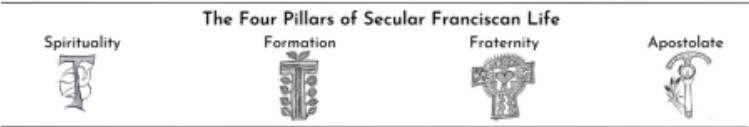
BSSF Region Minister: Ellen Ferrone, OFS  
Area 3 Councilors:  
Lee Cunningham, OFS &  
Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, OFS

Our Website: ofscentralnc.org  
Facebook: Padre Pio Fraternity Secular  
Franciscan Order of Central North Carolina

## Apostolates

JPIC: Theresa Flynn, OFS  
Newsletter & Facebook: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS  
Oak City Cares: MaryLou Holloway, OFS &  
Mary Cockrill, OFS  
On-going Formation Team:  
Mercedes Cooley, OFS  
Prayer Requests:  
Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS  
CPO & Fraternity Library: Maureen Copan, OFS  
Website: Sharon Winzeler, OFS  
Hospitality:  
Maureen McFadden, OFS & Alma Hammer, OFS  
Sunshine: Frank Peluso, OFS &  
Laurie Wilburn, OFS

We welcome those who would like to learn more about the Secular Franciscans. Join us for our monthly gatherings on the fourth Sunday of each month, beginning at 2:30 p.m.  
Location: Founders Room at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, North Carolina.



Save the dates:  
[Friday, Aug. 9-Aug. 11](#)  
ARG, Black Mountain, NC  
[Saturday, Aug. 24](#)  
Oak City Cares  
[Sunday, Aug. 25](#)  
Gathering  
[Saturday, Sept. 7](#)  
Fraternity picnic at Bond Park  
[Friday, Sept. 13](#)  
Observance of the Stigmata,  
Jazz and Gelato at St. Francis of Assisi.  
[Sunday, Sept. 22](#)  
Gathering  
[Saturday, Sept. 28](#)  
Oak City Cares  
[Thursday, Oct. 3](#)  
Transitus. at St. Francis of Assisi  
[Saturday, Oct. 26](#)  
Oak City Cares  
[Sunday, Oct. 27](#)  
Gathering–Come & See  
[Sunday, Nov. 17](#)  
Gathering  
[Saturday, Nov. 23](#)  
Oak City Cares  
[Saturday, Dec. 7](#)  
Retreat



Traditional Franciscan Calendar  
August Month of the Immaculate  
Heart of Mary

1. St. Alphonse de Liguori
2. Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula
3. St. Pierre-Julien Eymard
4. St. Dominic
5. B. Marie-Francoise de Jesus
6. Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ
7. Bl. Agathange et Cassien
8. St. Jean-Marie Vianney
10. St. Beatrice de Silva
11. Bl. Innocent XI, Pope
12. St. Clare of Assisi
13. Bl. Novellon de Faenza
15. Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady
16. Bl. Francois de Pesaro
17. St. Roch de Montpellier
18. Blessed Martyrs of Pontons de Rochefort
19. St. Jean Eudes
20. St. Louis d' Anjou
21. St. Jeanne-Francoise de Chantal
22. Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
23. Bl. Bernard d'Offide
24. St. Emilie de Vialar
25. St. Louis
26. Bl. Pierre de Benisa
27. St. Joseph Calasanz
28. Bl. Junipero Serra
29. Bl. Jean de Perouse
30. Bl. Juvenal Ancina
31. Bl. Aurele de Vinalesa

The Pope's Prayer Intentions for  
political leaders

We pray that political leaders be  
at the service of their own  
people, working for integral  
human development and for the  
common good, especially caring  
for the poor and those who have  
lost their jobs.

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*Happy Birthday*  
10 Henry Simms, OFS  
30 Lynn Oeser, OFS  
31 Valorie Davis, OFS

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**Profession Anniversary**

John Halada, OFS  
8/28/2005



# Sharing Our Blessings

by Deacon Phil Rz., OFS

Sharing Our Blessings – St. Clare, August 11, Foundress of the Poor Clares

Quote: “Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance! And transform your whole being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation!”

Contemporary accounts glow with admiration of her life in the convent of San Damiano in Assisi. She served the sick, waited on table, washed the feet of the begging nuns. She came from prayer, it was said, with her face so shining it dazzled those about her. She suffered serious illness for the last twenty-seven years of her life. Her influence was such that popes, cardinals, and bishops often came to consult her—she never left the walls of San Damiano. A well-known story concerns her prayer and trust. She had the Blessed Sacrament placed on the walls of the convent when it faced attack by invading Saracens. “Does it please you, O God, to deliver into the hands of these beasts the defenseless children I have nourished with your love? I beseech you, dear Lord, protect these whom I am now unable to protect.” To her sisters she said, “Don’t be afraid. Trust in Jesus.” The Saracens fled.

Excerpt from Light: A poem by Ilia Delio, O.S.F.:

Overflowing source of light  
The Trinity of beaming love  
Spilling over with de-light  
On the lovers of creation.  
Clare is among them  
She shines brilliantly  
On earth her shining deeds set her apart.  
On high the fullness of the divine light shines upon her.  
O the wonderful brilliance of blessed Clare  
This woman grew bright in the world,  
radiated in her religious life;  
shone like the sun in her home  
like a burst of lightning in the enclosure.  
She gave light to in life;  
She is radiant in death,  
She was brilliant on earth,  
She is resplendent in heaven!  
Oh how great is the power of light  
And how intense is the brilliance of its illumination!  
She shines on now  
Enlightens our hearts  
And shows us the way  
To be light  
To join with her  
In light  
For the life of the world.



# Meet the Inquirer

## Courtney Cantrell



Born and raised in Texas, I've always held a special reverence for St. Francis. Although I initially wanted him as my confirmation saint, I chose Joan of Arc instead due to gender guidelines. It turned out she was a Secular Franciscan, which deepened my spiritual connection. My journey led me to Assisi three times, and I studied Italian in college with the dream of visiting.

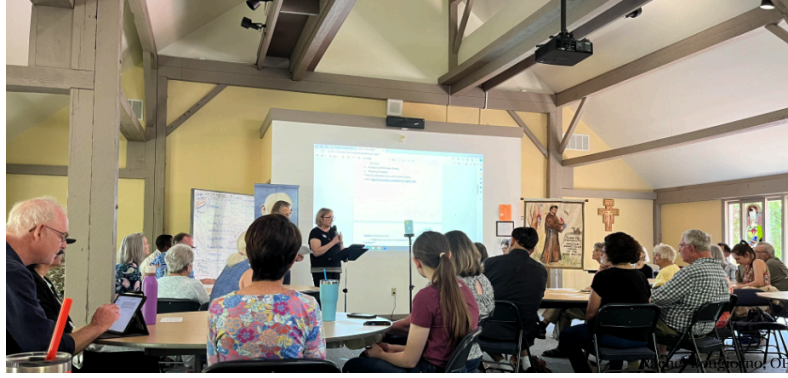
Around 2018, I embarked on a personal retreat at St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, where I discovered the Secular Franciscans. Initially thinking they were only in Greensboro, I delved deeper into their community. This search eventually led me to the Padre Pio fraternity, where I felt a profound sense of belonging.

My professional path took me from Florida for graduate school to a career in clinical psychology with the Air Force, which brought me to Washington, DC, and northern California. It was there that I met my husband, Dan, and we welcomed our daughters, Vivien and Susan. After Susan's birth, we settled in North Carolina in 2008, becoming active parishioners at St. Mary Magdalene in Apex.

Transitioning from state administration to private practice and policy consulting allowed me to craft a schedule that prioritizes family time. We share a passion for nature and animals, enjoying mountain hikes, beach outings, and fostering dogs for local rescues with our three beloved pets.

# Padre Pio Fraternity Gathering

## Sunday July 28, 2024



Presenters Mercedes Cooley, OFS and Marianne Norris shared with us the story of Saint Francis' stigmata. Marianne read to us an excerpt from the Little Flowers of Saint Francis, and we reflected upon some of Saint Bonaventure's writings in a video. It was notable to add, Saint Francis did not openly discuss what had happened to him and how it affected him daily but rather many learned of his sharing in the pain Jesus felt after his passing.

We were reminded that he was praying during the observation of Saint Michael's Lent, which he participated in faithfully every year, when his stigmata first appeared, and the seraphim gifted him with the closeness to Jesus he so fervently desired.

As a Fraternity we are invited to participate in this year's observance of Saint Michael's Lent in our own way or together in prayer via Zoom every Sunday from August 15, The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary until September 29, the Feast of the Holy Archangels. The Zoom will be held at 7p and last 30min to 45min. More details to come soon.

The video we viewed is available [here](#).

### Questions for discussion:

1. What struck you about the video and St. Bonaventure's description?
2. How does meditating on this great gift given to St. Francis help you to come closer to Christ?
3. Have you experienced God "wounding" you? How have you experienced Christ's suffering with you? Have you shared suffering with someone else?
4. What puzzles or surprises you about Francis's receiving the stigmata?
5. List some incidents in Francis's life or passages in his writings that help you to understand why God might have given Francis this gift.
6. What thoughts do you have as to how you can celebrate the 40 days of St. Michael's Lent?

### Coming Up

- Sept. 13 at St. Francis of Assisi. Observance of 800th anniversary of Stigmata followed by Jazz and Gelato. We have been asked to help.
- Friday, Dec. 13. Second Annual Feast of Nativity observance at St. Francis of Assisi.

**Starting Day: 15<sup>th</sup> August**  
(Solemnity of the  
Assumption of Mary)

**Final Day: 29<sup>th</sup> September**  
(Feast of the Holy Archangels  
– Saint Michael, Saint Gabriel,  
and Saint Raphael)

### Practical Recommendations:

- Light a blessed candle before a statue or image of Saint Michael, the Archangel.
- Make the sign of the Cross.
- Offer a particular sacrifice during the 40 days
- Seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation at some point during the 40 days.
- Offer this devotion to a special intention or grace you are seeking.



Thank you, Mary Cockrill OFS,  
for purchasing this brick in our  
honor at St. Francis Springs ❤️

# Prayer Requests from Oak City Cares

Ivory- Grow closer to God and healing of his body

Theo- Pray for his health

Tommy Brown- Pray for his wife in [the] nursing home and for his health

Rielle- Pray she finds a way to leave NC within a month

Landon- Pray for[a] job [for him]

Anthony- Pray for a relationship

Cynthia- That an opening at Cornerstone open up soon for her

Pam- Pray for her arthritis, health, money and [a] home for Marie and Donald her brother

Terrance- Health and finance

Maurice Tyson- Pray for strength in the Lord. Since getting back to Raleigh, he needs to find an apartment. He is living on the street.

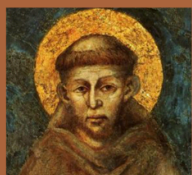
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Is God calling **you** to follow Jesus  
in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare?



The Secular Franciscans are a community of men and women, married, single, and clergy who seek to bring the gospel to life every day at home, at work, and in worship.

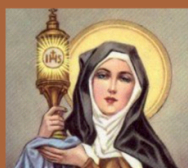


**COME AND SEE!**

Sunday, October 27

2:30pm

St. Francis of Assisi Parish



We are hosting a Come & See this Fall. Please let me know if you are interested in sharing your experience as a Secular Franciscan [or in Formation] with others. We will need at least three testimonials and extra help with snacks. Reach out to me via email, text or phone call. Your ideas are welcome! -Rachel

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## God Doesn't Get Burned Out

Exhaustion, burnout, and depression are not signs that you are doing God's will. God is gentle and loving. God desires to give you a deep sense of safety in God's love. Once you have allowed yourself to experience that love fully, you will be better able to discern who you are being sent to in God's name.