

Padre Pio Fraternity

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

the little flowers of Padre Pio Fraternity

Minister's Memo

February 2025

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS, Minister



Traveling down I-40 to the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill, I drove behind a semi with what looked like two Taus on its rear doors.

It reminded me of an excellent article Anna Rzewnicki sent me earlier this week about the origins of the Franciscan symbol that appears on the [St. Francis Springs website](#).

“The Tau is a T-shaped cross derived from the Greek letter “Tau” (τ) and the Hebrew letter “Tav” (ת). In ancient Hebrew, “Tav” was the last letter of the alphabet and was sometimes written as a cross (× or †). It appears in the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Ezekiel (9:4), where God commands His people to mark a Tav on the foreheads of the faithful as a sign of divine protection.”

“St. Francis was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), where Pope Innocent III spoke about the importance of the Tau as a symbol of Christian faith.”

“St. Francis was inspired to use the Tau because its simplicity reflected the core values of Franciscan life: humility, poverty, and service. He saw the Tau as a visual expression of the Way of the Cross, which involves embracing the suffering, brokenness, and vulnerability of humanity while striving to live in union with Christ.”

As humble Franciscans, we proudly wear our Taus to represent lives of simplicity, solidarity with the marginalized, daily conversation and the cross of daily life. And sometimes we will find reminders of our mission in unexpected places.

Saint of the Day February 2025

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1 Saint Ansgar	2 Presentation of the Lord
3 Saint Blaise	4 Saint Joseph of Leonissa	5 Saint Agatha	6 Saint Paul Miki and Companions	7 Saint Colette	8 Saint Josephine Bakhita	9 Saint Jerome Emiliani
10 Saint Scholastica	11 Our Lady of Lourdes	12 Saint Apollonia	13 Saint Giles Mary of Saint Joseph	14 Saints Cyril and Methodius	15 Saint Claude de la Colombière	16 Saint Gilbert of Sempringham
17 Seven Founders of the Servite Order	18 Blessed John of Fiesole	19 Saint Conrad of Piacenza	20 Saints Jacinta and Francisco Marto	21 Saint Peter Damian	22 Chair of Saint Peter	23 Saint Polycarp
24 Blessed Luke Belludi	25 Blessed Sebastian of Aparicio	26 Saint Maria Bertilla Boscardin	27 Saint Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows	28 Blessed Daniel Brottier		

Source: franciscanmedia.org

The Pope's Prayer Intentions February

Each year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. You are invited to answer the Holy Father's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month.

For vocations to the priesthood and religious life

Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

Source: uscch.org



- 2 .Joan Monti, OFS
- 4 Rachel Bongiorno, OFS
- 11 Michael Hancock, OFS
- 18 Marie Bianca, OFS
- 21 Nkem Okereke, OFS
- 28 Laurie Wilburn, OFS

Speak Gently In My Silence

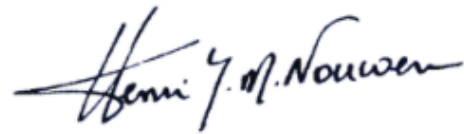
Dear Lord,

Speak gently in my silence.

When the loud outer noises of my surroundings and the loud inner noises of my fears keep pulling me away from you, help me to trust that you are still there even when I am unable to hear you. Give me ears to listen to your small, soft voice saying: "Come to me, you who are overburdened, and I will give you rest for I am gentle and humble of heart."

Let that loving voice be my guide.

Amen.



"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

– Matthew 11: 29



The month of The Holy Family



VOCATION PRAYER

O God, Who enlightens the minds and inflames the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Spirit, grant that through the same Spirit, I may know my true vocation in life, and may have the grace to follow it faithfully. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

TJP 103

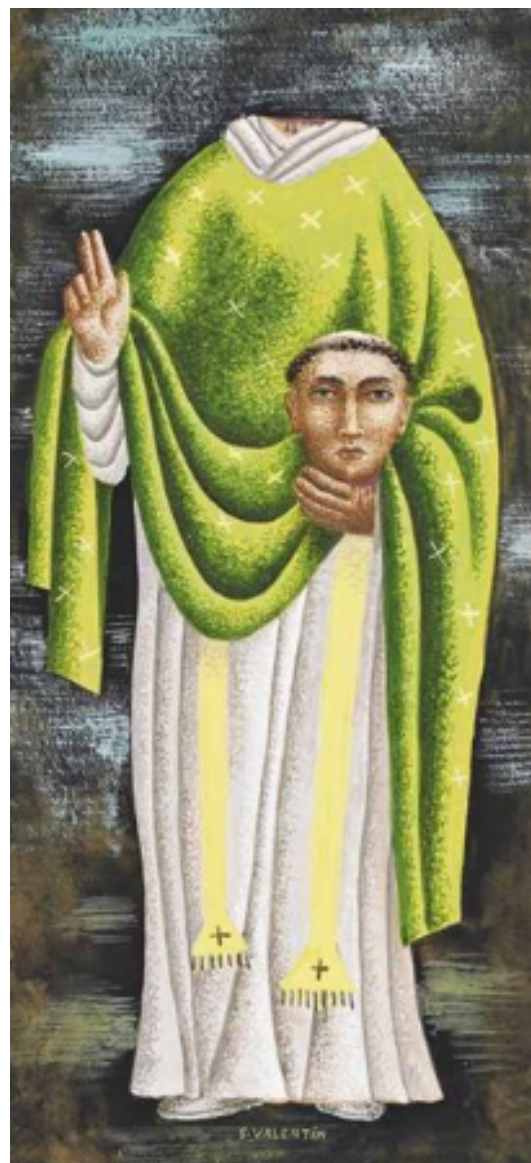
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Sharing Our Blessings – St. Valentine, February 14, Martyr, (d. 269) by Deacon Phil Rz.

The association of St. Valentine with pink hearts, boxes of chocolates, and the exchange of romantic fancies has no deep-rooted source in the character or life of the saint. The origin of “St. Valentine’s Day” – a day beloved of greeting card companies – is not entirely clear, but it seems to have taken root in England, a cold country where the signs of spring are eagerly anticipated. As far back as Chaucer it was commonly observed that birds began to pair and mate around the feast of St. Valentine, that is, from the middle of February. In any case, the Valentine whose name is oddly commemorated was apparently a Catholic priest in Rome who assisted martyrs during the persecution under Emperor Claudius II. He was eventually arrested and sent before the prefect of Rome. When he refused to renounce his faith, he was beaten and beheaded. Thus, by offering his heart, he proved himself a true devotee of the God of Love.

(Source: All saints: Daily reflections on saints, prophets, and witnesses for our time by Robert Ellsberg)



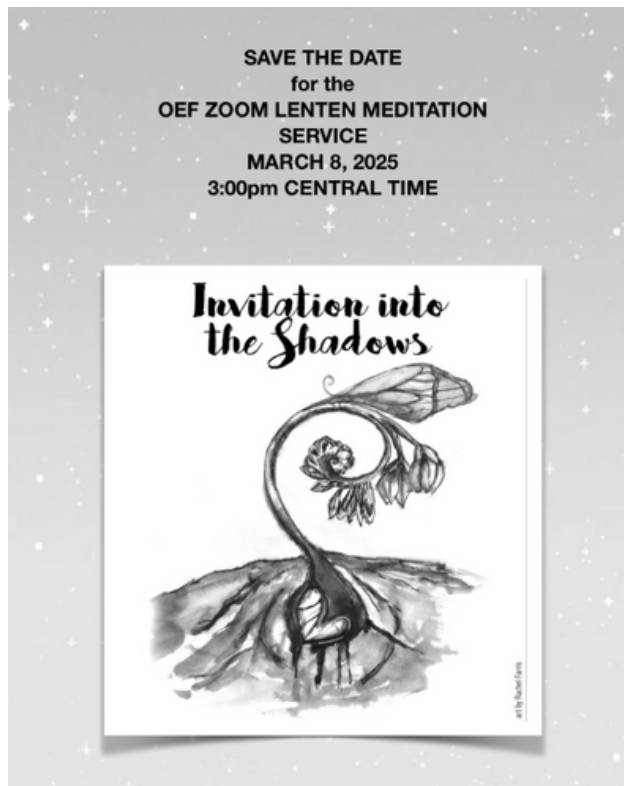
Source: wikiart.org

In the spiritual way the more one runs the less one feel fatigue; rather peace, prelude of eternal joy will take possession of us. We will be happy and strong in the measure in which, living in this endeavor, we will make Jesus live in us, mortifying ourselves.

Padre Pio

The OEF Lifelong Formation Team invites you to the OEF Lenten Zoom Service, March 8th at 3:00pm Central. Let us come together to pray with and for one another, assuring one another not to fear the darkness and its shadows, but to rest there for a while and draw strength from it, as if a good night's sleep allowed us to awaken, refreshed at morning's first light, prepared to go where the light of the spirit leads. A Zoom link will be provided as we get closer to the date.

Contact Marie Bianca, OFS, if interested



COMING SOON

Franciscan tradition

*Are you interested in reading the original documents of the first Franciscans?
Join our small group study!*

Featuring:

THE TREATISE ON THE MIRACLES
OF SAINT FRANCIS
BY
THOMAS OF CELANO
(1250–1252)

*Contact Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, for more details
RCHLRBSN@gmail.com*

Fraternity Council

Spiritual Assistant: Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM

Minister: Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Vice Minister: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

Formation Director: Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

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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:
Mary Cockrill, OFS & Marianne Norris, OFS

On-going Formation Team:
Mercedes Cooley, OFS

Prayer Requests:
Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS

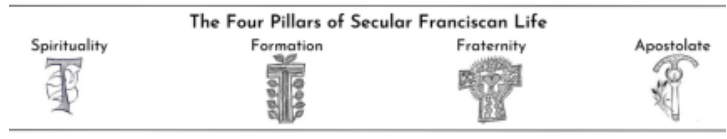
CPO & Fraternity Library: Maureen Copan, OFS

Website: Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Hospitality:
Maureen McFadden, OFS & Alma Hammer, OFS

Sunshine: 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: Clare Hall at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, North Carolina.



Dates to Remember

- Jan. 27: Last day to sign up for retreat at St. Francis Springs on April 2-4
- Feb. 8: Mini retreat with Lay Dominicans at Immaculate Conception Church, Durham.
- Feb. 15: Last day to cancel St. Francis Springs' retreat reservation.
- Feb. 23: Payment for retreat due: \$340/room for weekend. Payment goes to Janette Perez, our Treasurer.
- May 24: Permanent Profession of candidates. We will not have a gathering in May. The profession will serve as our meeting.