



Monthly NEWSLETTER

Secular Franciscan Order of Central North Carolina

PADRE PIO FRATERNITY ofscentralnc.org **AUGUST 1, 2025**

— *A Snapshot from the Life of St. Francis* —

SAINT FRANCIS & THE WOLF

Finding Harmony even in the Face of Fear and Agression

The story of St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio is a well-known legend about St. Francis of Assisi taming a wolf that was terrorizing the town of Gubbio.

The wolf's reign of terror in Gubbio, driven by hunger, had been attacking livestock and people, causing fear and chaos and leading to a climate of fear and even starvation as people avoided going outside.

St. Francis, known for his love of all creatures, heard of the wolf's plight and the town's suffering and chose to intervene and confront the wolf.

During his visit to Gubbio, St. Francis then went out to meet the wolf. (You can find an account of this event in *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, a 14th-century collection of stories about Francis and his companions.) According to the story, when the wolf saw St. Francis, he came charging at the saint with his mouth open, ready to attack.

When the wolf charged at



St. Francis is best known for his love of all creatures and for bringing a sense of peace and unity to all around him, with the help of God's Grace.

him, St. Francis made the sign of the cross and commanded the wolf to stop by saying, "Come here, Brother Wolf. I command you on behalf of Christ that you do no harm to me or to anyone." As soon as St. Francis did this, notes *The Little Flowers*, "the fearsome

wolf closed his mouth and stopped running; and once the command was given, it came meekly as a lamb, and threw itself at the feet of St. Francis" and, surprisingly, became docile, laying

See FRANCIS, PAGE 4 ➡➡

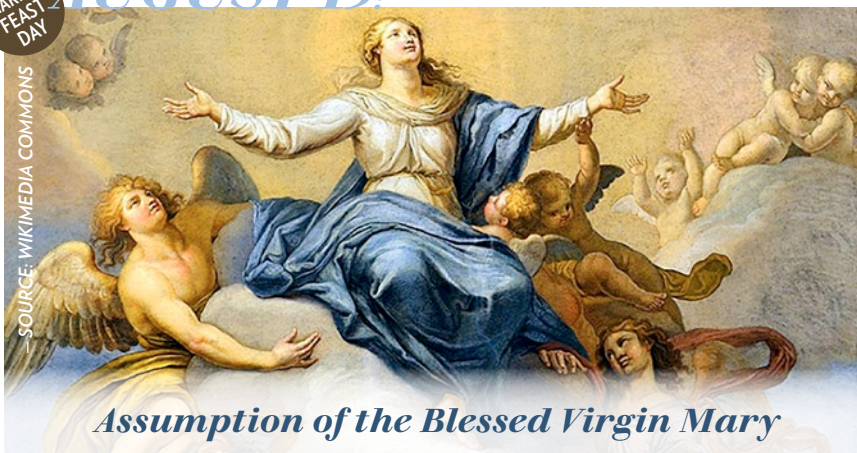
— OUR HEAVENLY FAMILY: THE SAINTS —

Saint of the Day // August 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI	2 SAINT EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLI
3 SAINT PETER JULIAN EYMARD	4 SAINT JOHN VIANNEY	5 DEDICATION OF SAINT MARY MAJOR BASILICA	6 TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD	7 SAINT CAJETAN	8 SAINT DOMINIC	9 SAINT TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS
10 SAINT LAWRENCE	11 SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI	12 SAINT JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL	13 BLESSED MICHAEL J. MCGIVNEY	14 SAINT MAXIMILIAN MARY KOLBE	15 ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	16 SAINT STEPHEN OF HUNGARY
17 SAINT JOAN OF THE CROSS	18 SAINT LOUIS OF TOULOUSE	19 SAINT JOHN EUDES	20 SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX	21 SAINT PIUS X	22 QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	23 SAINT ROSE OF LIMA
24 SAINT BARTHOLOMEW	25 SAINT LOUIS OF FRANCE	26 SAINT JOSEPH CALASANZ	27 SAINT MONICA	28 SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO	29 MARTYRDOM OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST	30 SAINT JEANNE JUGAN
31 SAINTS JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA AND NICODEMUS						

— SOURCE: FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG

MARIAN FEAST DAY
AUGUST 15



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Detail | Ceiling of the Assumption of Mary in Santa Maria Immacolata a via Veneto, Rome.

REFLECTION

In the light of the **Assumption of Mary**, it is easy to pray her Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) with new meaning. In her glory she proclaims the greatness of the Lord and finds joy in God her savior. God has done marvels to her and she leads others to recognize God's holiness. She is the lowly handmaid who deeply revered her God and has been raised to the heights. From her position of strength she will help the lowly and the poor find justice on earth, and she will challenge the rich and powerful to distrust wealth and power as a source of happiness.

— SOURCE: FRANCISCANMEDIA.ORG

— COLUMN —

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY OF OUR LORD



DEACON PHIL
RZEWNICKI, OFS
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SHARING OUR BLESSINGS

Around 11 million individuals in the U.S. were estimated to be undocumented in 2021, representing approximately 22% of all the foreign-born population in the country. Agriculture is recognized as one of the sectors with the highest proportion of undocumented workers. Since the 1990s, the composition of the farm labor force harvesting crops has fluctuated among U.S. born workers, foreign-born naturalized workers, legal foreign farmworkers, and undocumented individuals. On average, the latter group has comprised around 40 - 49% of the farm labor force over the last three decades. This reliance is even more pronounced in crop production, such as hand raised crop production such as fruits and vegetables, where nearly 57% of workers are immigrants.

Immigrant farm laborers have been part and parcel of the North American agricultural landscape for

See BLESSINGS, PAGE 4 ➡

FRANCISCAN
SIGHTINGS

[WORKS OF MERCY]



Photo by Laurie Wilburn

From left, Christine Skall and Laurie Wilburn recently volunteered at The Bread Basket in Sanford, NC. Christine and Laurie are both parishioners at Saint Stephen The First Martyr Catholic Church in Sanford.

Small Acts of Kindness Make a Huge Difference


✧ WRITTEN BY CHRISTINE SKALL ✧

Laurie Wilburn and Christine Skall, both parishioners at St. Stephen The First Martyr Catholic Church in Sanford, recently volunteered at The Bread Basket to help feed the hungry in the area.

St. Stephen Bread Basket workers are part of an ecumenical group in Sanford who have joined together to help feed the hungry in the local area. The Bread Basket is located at 140 East Chisolm Street.

St. Stephen Church is responsible for providing cooks, servers, and cleanup crew for the midday meal on three days every month: the first

Mondays, second Thursdays, and third Wednesdays each month and normally work from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

All volunteers are welcome. No training is needed for servers, and Saint Stephen will gladly train anyone interested in cooking. Volunteers usually work only one of the three days per month. 

“ THE DEEDS YOU DO
MAY BE THE ONLY
SERMON SOME PERSONS
WILL HEAR TODAY. ”

— ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

FRANCIS ++++++

➤ Continued from PAGE 1

down at St. Francis' feet.

St. Francis then negotiated a peace agreement between the wolf and the townspeople.

He scolded Brother Wolf for destroying and killing the creatures of God and told him gently, "The whole town is complaining about you, but I want to make peace between you and the people. And so I promise that I will have food given to you regularly, Brother Wolf, by the people of this town so that you will no longer suffer hunger. And I want you, Brother Wolf, to promise that you will never harm any human person or animal." The wolf showed agreement by simply bowing his head.

Francis then asked the people of the town if they would promise to provide food for wolf regularly, and they in turn all agreed that they would do so. Finally, St. Francis asked the wolf to give a guarantee in front of all of the people that he would no longer inflict harm upon the people of Gubbio or its animals. And the wolf did as he asked. And thus, the wolf would no longer attack anyone and, in return, the townspeople would provide the wolf with food, thus making peace between the wolf and the townspeople.

The wolf, now a tame creature, lived peacefully among the people of Gubbio until it eventually died of old age, and the townspeople mourned its passing.

The story is often interpreted as a powerful symbol of peace, forgiveness, and the interconnectedness of all living things, highlighting St. Francis's ability to find harmony even in the face of fear and aggression. 🐾

BLESSINGS ++++++

➤ Continued from PAGE 3

more than a century. What few outside agriculture realize, however, is just how critical their role is in feeding a hungry world.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE CLEANING INDUSTRY

The cleaning industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the cleaning industry employs over 10 million people, and that number is expected to grow by 14% by 2028. Immigrants make up a significant portion of the cleaning workforce, with some estimates suggesting that they account for up to 30% of all cleaning workers.

There are a number of reasons why immigrants are drawn to the cleaning industry. For many immigrants, cleaning jobs offer flexible hours and the opportunity to work independently. Cleaning jobs are also often seen as a stepping stone to other, more lucrative jobs. In addition, immigrants may be more likely to accept lower wages and less desirable working conditions than native-born workers. (There have recently been steps taken to improve more just wages.) They are responsible for keeping our businesses, schools,

hospitals, and homes clean and sanitary. They also play a vital role in the hospitality industry, providing cleaning services to hotels, restaurants, and other businesses that cater to tourists.

In addition to their hard work and dedication, immigrants bring a unique set of skills and perspectives to the cleaning industry. They are often multilingual and have experience working in different cultures. This makes them well-suited to working in a variety of settings and with a variety of clients. (Some stores provide their workers with translation apps. so they can assist customers.) The contributions of immigrants to the cleaning industry are often overlooked and undervalued. This is unfortunate, as immigrants play a vital role in keeping our communities clean and healthy. We need to do more to recognize and appreciate the work of immigrants in the cleaning industry.

Just to clue you in on a favorite apostolate of mine:

CASA JUAN DIEGO, Houston Catholic Worker, P.O. Box 70113, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77270.

They do a lot of good work for our southern border brother and sister immigrants. 🏠



Artwork by Christine Skall



[WORKS & MERCY]

A Great Week to be a Franciscan in The Padre Pio Fraternity


✦ WRITTEN BY SHARON WINZELER ✦

This was a great week to be a Franciscan in the Padre Pio fraternity. Last Monday, we served a dinner of potatoes and all the fixings, along with chicken nuggets, to 25 beautiful teenagers and adults who were part of Mission Mercy at St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

After dinner, we spoke with the students about their work at the Hispanic Center in downtown Raleigh and described our lives as Secular Franciscans to them.

One of the young men asked, “Are Secular Franciscans all women?” He noted that last year and this year, women served the meal. Perhaps next time we can gather some of our male Secular Franciscans to join us in the fun — and it was fun!

On Wednesday, 30 of us, plus some friends and spouses, joined in the pilgrimage to Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral. It was a wonderful tour, and afterward some folks met for lunch at the Farmer’s Market.

They had to divide our 30-some members in half for the tour. 

“FOR IT IS IN GIVING
THAT WE RECEIVE.”

— ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



Photo by Padre Pio Fraternity

25 teenagers and adults, part of Mission Mercy at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, attended a dinner at the parish and listened to a talk about their work at the Hispanic Center in Downtown Raleigh, and also about our lives as Secular Franciscans.



Photo by Padre Pio Fraternity

30 of our Secular Franciscans enjoyed a pilgrimage to Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral last Wednesday. The photo shows only half of the large group.

Important DATES

SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AND AROUND THE PADRE PIO FRATERNITY. Take note of upcoming important events and remember upcoming Birthdays and Profession Anniversaries.

Upcoming EVENTS



Photo by Padre Pio Fraternity

The Annual Regional Gathering will be held Aug. 8-10 at Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC.

**AUG
8-10**

ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING

A time for prayer, a time for fellowship, a time to learn, a time to share, and a time for joy. Registration should have been completed by July 8. The time has come to gather together all the Secular Franciscans of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region for our Annual Regional Gathering (ARG). This year we are marking two important anniversaries. First, with all Franciscans throughout the world we are celebrating the 800th anniversary of St. Francis receiving the stigmata. Locally we will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of our BSSF region. This year we will also have our triennial visitation from the national fraternity. Our fraternal visitor is Josh Molitor, OFS, and our pastoral visitor is Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM. ➔ Ridgecrest Conference Center, Black Mountain, NC

**SEP
13**

PADRE PIO PICNIC

A wonderful time to be had at Bond Park with fellow fraternity members and family. Don't miss out on this special time to relax and get to know your Franciscan family a little more. ➔ Bond Park, Cary, NC

**VARIOUS
DATES**

GATHERINGS

These are the upcoming regular monthly Fraternity gatherings on the 4th Sunday of each month. Note that there will not be a meeting in December for the Christmas week. UPCOMING DATES: Aug. 24, Sept. 28 (visitation), Oct. 26, Nov. 16 ➔ St. Francis of Assisi Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613. www.stfrancisraleigh.org. 919-847-8205.

**VARIOUS
DATES**

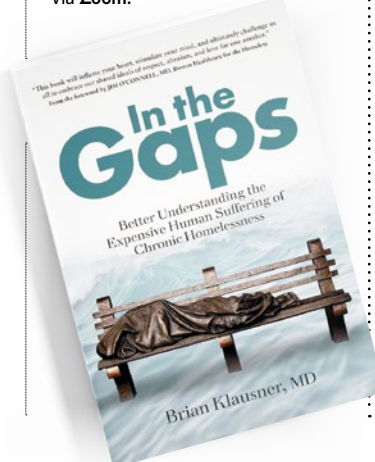
OAK CITY CARES

The Padre Pio Fraternity contributes to, and helps to serve, the Saturday mid-day meal for hundreds of clients of Oak City Outreach in the downtown Raleigh area. Fraternity members may sign up to bring food items, help to serve and converse with the outreach center's participants. This ministry is coordinated by Fraternity member Ellen Ferrone. UPCOMING DATES: Aug. 23, Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 23, Dec. 27 ➔ Oak City Outreach Center, 215 S Person St., Raleigh, NC 27601. 919-847-8205.

**VARIOUS
DATES**

BOOK CLUB

Padre Pio Fraternity will read and discuss *In the Gaps* by Dr. Brian Klausner via Zoom on Tuesday nights at 7pm. The Zoom sessions will once again will be led by Mike Evangelista, OFS. Contact Theresa Flynn, OFS, for more information at theresa.flynn41@yahoo.com. UPCOMING DATES: Sept. 16, Oct. 14, Nov. 18. ➔ Meetings are via Zoom.



Anniversaries of PROFESSION

8/28/2005

JOHN HALADA, OFS



JOHN HALADA, OFS

Happy BIRTHDAY

**AUG
10**

HENRY SIMMS, OFS

**AUG
31**

VALORIE DAVIS, OFS



HENRY SIMMS, OFS



VALORIE DAVIS, OFS

Padre Pio Fraternity GATHERING

NOTES

A RECAP OF THE MOST RECENT FRATERNITY GATHERING. Highlights and discussion points from the July Fraternity Gathering are noted below.

Gathering HIGHLIGHTS

— WRITTEN BY —
SHARON WINZELER, OFS

At our July 27 Secular Franciscan gathering, we were led into a deeply moving reflection by our brother John Halada, OFS, who invited us to explore how we as followers of St. Francis might accompany those living with Alzheimer's disease.

With reverence and compassion, he framed his presentation around three soul-searching questions:

- If you had Alzheimer's, how would you like to be treated?
- Who am I when I have forgotten who I think I am? Who will tell my story when I can't?
- What would St. Francis of Assisi,



John Halada, OFS, right, gives a talk to the Padre Pio Fraternity at the July Fraternity Gathering on "Alzheimers, God and Us."

St. Clare, or Padre Pio say to someone with Alzheimer's who is losing himself or herself?

These questions drew us into the mystery of identity, memory, and the enduring presence of God's love even when earthly faculties fade. We were reminded that Alzheimer's can take away abilities—walking, talking, remembering—but it cannot strip a



person of their dignity, or of their belovedness in God's eyes.

John shared the story of his wife Gail who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2017.

He explained how

TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 If you had Dementia/Alzheimers, how would you like to be treated?
- 2 Who am I, when I have forgotten who I think I am? Who will tell my story, when I can't?
- 3 What would Francis or Clare or Padre Pio say to a person with Alzheimers, who is losing themselves?

“BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS FROM GOD, AND WHOEVER LOVES HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS GOD”

— 1 JOHN 4:7

she continues to witness to a deep and abiding faith. Though her words are few, she speaks with quiet power: “God is love”

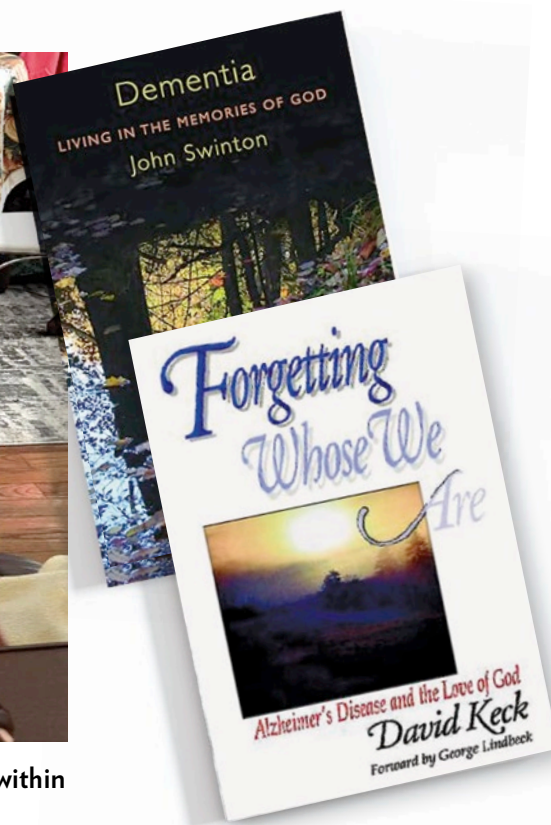
See **GATHERING**,
NEXT PAGE ➡

GATHERING

➡ *Continued from* **PAGE 7**



Gail Halada, above, who suffers with Alzheimers, reveals the sacred within her suffering. She is the wife of John Halada, OFS, pictured below.



and “God is watching over me.”

For Gail, there is a promise that even when memory fades, God remains. In her expressions, in her eyes, in the emotions that still find a way to shine through, Gail reveals the sacred within the suffering.

John also highlighted the tension families often face when a parent suffers from Alzheimer's. One child may continue to see the mother or father they have always known, visiting often and offering love; another may see only the disease and withdraw. This contrast is a heavy burden for caregivers to carry, yet it underscores the importance of seeing the whole person, not just the diagnosis.

We were urged to be storytellers. “It’s important that someone is around to tell the stories of the Alzheimer’s patient,” John said. “God doesn’t forget about the patient—and neither should we.” His words echoed



the Franciscan conviction that every life has sacred worth. "If God remembers me," he said, "my vanishing self will be preserved."

The presentation concluded with an invitation: to sit in small groups and reflect on these questions together in the spirit of Conversations in

the Spirit—listening deeply,
speaking from the heart, allowing
space for silence and prayer.

John also recommended two books to further explore the spirituality of memory loss and presence. Those books are *Dementia, Living in the Memories of God* by John Swinton and *Forgetting Who We Are* by David Keck.

We left the meeting not only more informed, but more inspired to walk gently with those who live in the shadow of forgetting. St. Francis and St. Clare would surely see the face of Christ in Gail—and remind us that love, not memory, is the true measure of the soul.

Everyone is welcome to participate in the meal service the fraternity sponsors each week for Gail and John. It's a good time to visit and see their love in action. You can sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409094FAEA922AA8-meals/>

[FROM THE FRATERNITY]

— DID YOU KNOW? —

GROUND RULES FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION



1 Speak only for yourself about beliefs, feelings and responses. It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc. My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: *Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.* JAMES 1:19

2 Respect and receive what others offer, even if you disagree. MATTHEW 7:12 *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*

3 Listen much more than talk. Avoid cross talk, interrupting, speaking for others, speaking for an extended amount of time or trying to "fix" another person's beliefs or feelings. *Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.* PROVERBS 16:20

4 Honor the different ways God compassionately works in each of us. The Holy Spirit is the true guide of all holy conversion and reflection. Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment—words, actions, and non-verbal communication. LUKE 6:31 *Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

5 Don't be afraid of "sacred" silence. Use it to invoke and listen to the Holy Spirit in our midst. ECCL 3:7

(There is) the time for tearing and the time for mending, the time for silence and the time for talk.

6 Maintain complete confidentiality. What is shared in our group stays in our group. *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.* JAMES 1:19

7 Recognize that all of our group members are encouraged to share only what and when they are ready to share. DON'T MONOPOLIZE DISCUSSION. Make certain that other get a chance to speak. PROVERBS 17:27 *Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.*

8 No cross talking or private conversations.

SFO Rule 19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.

— PROVIDED BY FRANK PELUSO, OFS

WITH GRATITUDE,
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
PRAYERS...

FRANK
PELUSO,
OFS

"I wish to thank all our members for their prayers. My doctor said most people my age (92) never survive a heart attack. I attribute my still being here to your prayers, and I am doing fine, thank you. I also wanted to show my appreciation for those who have come to visit me at Magnolia Glen. I do like it here. There are many nice people here. This morning one of my friends noticed the Tau cross and got excited. She was so happy to see it and she talked about her experience in Assisi. Others have asked me why I have been wearing that "T". Always a good chance to talk about the Tau and the Franciscan Order. It is also good to see Denise, Jeannette, Mary Ann, Doug, Eileen, as well as others take turns as Eucharistic ministers. They are much appreciated by the residents here." — Frank Peluso, OFS



Photo by Dave Shick

[PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS]

— HENRI NOUWEN SPIRITUALITY —



The Pope's PRAYER INTENTIONS

FOR MUTUAL COEXISTENCE

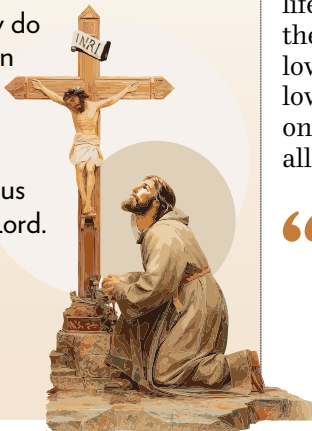
Let us pray that societies where coexistence seems more difficult might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious, or ideological reasons.

— SOURCE: USCCB.ORG

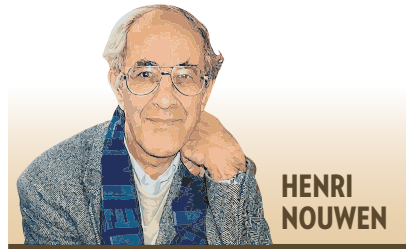
A Prayer of *Saint Francis*

Most High and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of our hearts and give us a true faith, a certain hope and a perfect love. Give us a sense of the divine and knowledge of Yourself, so that we may do everything in fulfillment of Your Holy Will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN



EVERLASTING LOVE



DAILY MEDITATION

Dear friends, I want you to hear this: what is said of Jesus is said of you. I know this can be hard to affirm. You are the beloved daughter or son of God. Can you believe it? Can you hear it not only in your head through your physical ears but in your gut, hear it so that your whole life can be turned around? Go to the scriptures and read: "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have written your name on the palm of my hand from all eternity. I have molded you

in the depths of the earth and knitted you in your mother's womb. I love you. I embrace you. You are mine and I am yours and you belong to me." You have to hear this, because if you can hear this divine voice speak to you from all eternity, then your life will become more and more the life of the beloved, because that is who you are.

“ SEE WHAT GREAT LOVE THE FATHER HAS LAVISHED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD! AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE! ”

— 1 JOHN 3:1

“ To pray, that is, to listen to the voice of The One who calls us the “beloved”, is to learn that that voice excludes no one. Where I dwell, God dwells with me and where God dwells with me I find all my sisters and brothers. And so intimacy with God and solidarity with all people are two aspects of dwelling in the present moment that can never be separated. ”

— HENRI NOUWEN

Litany of The Most Precious Blood

The Anima Christi

Artwork by Christine Skall

[PRAYERS & DEVOTIONS cont.]

OUR LADY'S *Fifteen Promises* FOR PRAYING THE ROSARY

Besides the Indulgences attached to the Rosary, Our Lady revealed to St. Dominic and Blessed Alan de la Roche additional benefits for those who devoutly pray the Rosary. Our Lady's promise is shown in darker blue text in the text that follows. Additional explanation on and doctrinal connections to each promise is shown following in the smaller text font. Note that the Rosary is the prayer (non-Liturgical) with the most published Magisterial / Papal documents expounding on its excellence. Vatican II's summary on Our Lady is contained in Lumen Gentium chapter VIII.

1. WHOSOEVER SHALL FAITHFULLY SERVE ME BY THE RECITATION OF THE ROSARY SHALL RECEIVE SIGNAL GRACES.

Signal Graces are those special and unique Graces to help sanctify us in our state in life. See the remaining promises for an explanation for which these will consist. St. Louis de Montfort states emphatically that the best and fastest way to union with Our Lord is via Our Lady [*True Devotion to Mary, chapter four*].

2. I PROMISE MY SPECIAL PROTECTION AND THE GREATEST GRACES TO ALL THOSE WHO SHALL RECITE THE ROSARY.

Our Lady is our Advocate and the channel of all God's Grace to us. Our Lady is simply highlighting that She will watch especially over us who pray the Rosary. (*see Lumen Gentium chapter VIII - Our Lady #62*) [a great more detail is available on this topic in *True Devotion to Mary, chapter four, by St. Louis de Montfort*]



Our Lady of The Rosary: Italian
Painter Carlo Ceresa, 1609-1679

Our Lady holding the Holy Rosary and Our Lord. Our Lady gives the Holy Rosary to St. Dominic.

3. THE ROSARY SHALL BE A POWERFUL ARMOR AGAINST HELL, IT WILL DESTROY VICE, DECREASE SIN AND DEFEAT HERESIES.

This promise, along with the next, is simply the reminder on how fervent prayer will help us all grow in holiness by avoiding sin, especially a prayer with the excellence of the Rosary. An increase in holiness necessarily requires a reduction

in sin, vice, and doctrinal errors (heresies). If only the Modernists could be convinced to pray the Rosary! (*see Lumen Gentium chapter V - The Call to Holiness #42*) St. Louis de Montfort states "Since Mary alone crushed all heresies, as we are told by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (*Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary*)..." [*True Devotion to Mary #167*]

See ROSARY, PAGE 13 ➡

ROSARY ††††††††††††††††††††††††††††††††††

➡ Continued from **PAGE 12**

4. IT WILL CAUSE GOOD WORKS TO FLOURISH; IT WILL OBTAIN FOR SOULS THE ABUNDANT MERCY OF GOD; IT WILL WITHDRAW THE HEARTS OF MEN FROM THE LOVE OF THE WORLD AND ITS VANITIES, AND WILL LIFT THEM TO THE DESIRE FOR ETERNAL THINGS. OH, THAT SOULS WOULD SANCTIFY THEMSELVES BY THIS MEANS.

This promise, along with the previous, is the positive part, that being to live in virtue. Becoming holy is not only avoiding sin, but also growing in virtue. (*see Lumen Gentium chapter V - The Call to Holiness #42*)

5. THE SOUL WHICH
RECOMMENDS ITSELF TO ME
BY THE RECITATION OF THE
ROSARY SHALL NOT PERISH.

Since Our Lady is our Mother and Advocate, She always assists those who call on Her implicitly by praying the Rosary. The Church reminds us of this in the Memorare prayer, "... never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession, was left unaided ..."

6. WHOSOEVER SHALL RECITE THE ROSARY DEVOUTLY, APPLYING HIMSELF TO THE CONSIDERATION OF ITS SACRED MYSTERIES SHALL NEVER BE CONQUERED BY MISFORTUNE. GOD WILL NOT CHASTISE HIM IN HIS JUSTICE, HE SHALL NOT PERISH BY AN UNPROVIDED DEATH; IF HE BE JUST HE SHALL REMAIN IN THE GRACE OF GOD, AND BECOME WORTHY OF ETERNAL LIFE.

This promise highlights the magnitude of Graces that the Rosary brings to whomever prays it. One will draw down God's Mercy rather than His Justice and will have a final chance to repent (see promise #7). One will not be conquered by misfortune means that Our Lady will obtain for the person sufficient Graces to handle said misfortune (i.e. carry the Crosses allowed by God) without falling

REMINDER: THESE PROMISES MEAN THAT, BY FAITHFULLY AND DEVOUTLY PRAYING THE ROSARY, OUR LADY WILL OBTAIN FOR US THE NECESSARY GRACES TO OBTAIN SAID PROMISES. IT IS STILL UP TO EACH INDIVIDUAL SOUL TO RESPOND TO THOSE GRACES IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SALVATION.

into despair. As Sacred Scripture tells us, “For my yoke is sweet and my burden light.” (*Matthew 11:30*)

**7. WHOEVER SHALL HAVE A TRUE
DEVOTION FOR THE ROSARY
SHALL NOT DIE WITHOUT THE
SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH.**

This promise highlights the benefits of obtaining the most possible Graces at the hour of death via the Sacraments of Confession, Eucharist, and Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick). Being properly disposed while receiving these Sacraments near death ensures one's salvation (although perhaps with a detour through Purgatory) since a final repentance is possible.

8. THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL TO RECITE THE ROSARY SHALL HAVE DURING THEIR LIFE AND AT THEIR DEATH THE LIGHT OF GOD AND THE PLENITUDE OF HIS GRACES; AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH THEY SHALL PARTICIPATE IN THE MERITS OF THE SAINTS IN PARADISE.

Our Lady highlights the great quantity of Graces obtain through praying the Rosary, which assist us during life and at the moment of death. The merits of the Saints are the gift of God's rewards to those persons who responded to His Grace that they obtained during life, and so Our Lady indicates that She will

provide a share of that to us at death. With this promise and #7 above, Our Lady is providing the means for the person to have a very holy death.

9. I SHALL DELIVER FROM
PURGATORY THOSE WHO HAVE
BEEN DEVOTED TO THE ROSARY.

Should one require Purgatorial cleansing after death, Our Lady will make a special effort to obtain our release from Purgatory through Her intercession as Advocate.

10. THE FAITHFUL CHILDREN OF THE ROSARY SHALL MERIT A HIGH DEGREE OF GLORY IN HEAVEN.

This promise is a logical consequence of promises #3 and #4 since anyone who truly lives a holier life on earth will obtain a higher place in Heaven. The closer one is to God while living on earth, the closer that person is to Him also in Heaven. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states “Spiritual progress tends toward ever more union with Christ.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 1414*)

**11. YOU SHALL OBTAIN
ALL YOU ASK OF ME BY
RECITATION OF THE ROSARY.**

This promise emphasizes Our Lady's role as our Advocate and Mediatrix of all Graces. Of course, all requests are subject to God's Most Perfect Will. God will always grant our request if it is beneficial for our soul, and Our Lady will only intercede for us when our request is good for our salvation. (*see Lumen Gentium chapter VIII - Our Lady* #62)

12. ALL THOSE WHO
PROPAGATE THE HOLY
ROSARY SHALL BE AIDED BY
ME IN THEIR NECESSITIES.

If one promotes the praying of the Rosary, Our Lady emphasizes Her Maternal care for us by obtaining many Graces (i.e. spiritual necessities) and also material necessities (neither excess nor luxury), all subject to the Will of God of course.

13. I HAVE OBTAINED FROM
MY DIVINE SON THAT ALL THE
ADVOCATES OF THE ROSARY
SHALL HAVE FOR INTERCESSORS
THE ENTIRE CELESTIAL COURT

See **ROSARY, PAGE 14 ➡➡**

ROSARY

➡ *Continued from* **PAGE 13**

**DURING THEIR LIFE AND AT
THE HOUR OF DEATH.**

Since Our Lady is our Advocate, She brings us additional assistance during our life and at our death from all the saints in Heaven (the Communion of Saints). *See paragraphs 954 through 959 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

14. ALL WHO RECITE THE ROSARY
ARE MY SONS, AND BROTHERS
OF MY ONLY SON JESUS CHRIST.

Since the Rosary is a most excellent prayer focused on Jesus and His Life and activities in salvation history, it brings us closer to Our Lord and Our Lady. Doctrinally, Our Lady is our Mother and Jesus is our Eldest Brother, besides being our God. (*see Lumen Gentium chapter VIII - Our Lady #62*)

15. DEVOTION TO MY ROSARY IS A GREAT SIGN OF PREDESTINATION.

Predestination in this context means that, by the sign which is present to a person from the action of devoutly praying the Rosary, God has pre-ordained your salvation. Absolute certainty of salvation can only be truly known if God reveals it to a person because, although we are given sufficient Grace during life, our salvation depends upon our response to said Grace. (See Summa Theologica, Question 23 for a detailed theological explanation). Said another way, if God has guaranteed a person's salvation but has not revealed it to Him, God would want that person to pray the Rosary because of all the benefits and Graces obtained. Therefore the person gets a hint by devotion to the Rosary. This is not to say that praying the Rosary guarantees salvation - by no means. In looking at promises #3 and #4 above, praying the Rosary helps one to live a holy life, which is itself a great sign that a soul is on the road to salvation. (*See also paragraphs 381, 488, 600, 2782 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.*) *In fact, St. Louis de Montfort says even more strongly that "an infallible and unmistakable sign by which we can distinguish a heretic, a man of false doctrine, an enemy of God, from one of God's true friends is that the hardened sinner and heretic show nothing but contempt and indifference to Our Lady..." [True Devotion to Mary, #30]*



SPECIAL NOTE: The Sacrifice of the Mass is the most important prayer in the life of a Catholic. The Holy Rosary Prayer is very powerful but it is second to the Holy Mass. One should pray and concentrate during Holy Mass on the good news for the day, the words of consecration, Holy Communion; every part of the Mass is so important. One should not pray the Rosary during Holy Mass. Praying the Rosary before or after Holy Mass is most advantageous.

"You shall obtain all you ask of me by recitation of the Rosary..."

Artwork by Christine Skall

[MEET A FELLOW FRANCISCAN]

EACH MONTH WE GET TO KNOW ONE OF OUR FRATERNITY MEMBERS A LITTLE BETTER :)

Christine Skall

A “little girl” by heart who clings to the loving hand of Jesus & never wants to let go, and wants to make Him smile

1 In two minutes or less, tell us a little about your background (family, occupation, heritage, etc.).

I am a Lebanese/German mix, was born in Puerto rico, grew up in South Africa and am married to an amazing man, Robert Skall.

2 Tell us a little about your faith and your relationship with God.

God is My All and Everything. I cannot imagine even a second without the Presence of Jesus right next to me — just the mere thought would make me feel unbearably lonely. He is always with me, as is sweet Mama Mary.

3 Why did you feel called to become a Secular Franciscan?

I feel strongly called to this vocation because becoming more like St. Francis in every aspect of my life, with the help and guidance of The Holy Spirit and Sweet Mama Mary, is an essential part of my spiritual journey and this is an important next step for me in deepening my relationship with Our Blessed Lord. All I want is to follow His Will, surrender ALL to Him, become ever closer to Him with the help, direction and guidance of Our Blessed Mother Mary (she always brings us straight to Jesus!) and pray that He will use me in whatever way He so wishes to bring others

closer to Him. As long as I feel I am making Jesus happy, than I am happy, and right now I feel that this important step will make Him smile as He nudges me forward :)

4 What stage are you at in your Franciscan journey? (Are you a visitor, orientee, inquirer, candidate or are you already professed and when?)

I am an Inquirer as of March 2025. I (re)joined the Fraternity in July, 2024.

5 What do you feel you gain from being a part of the Secular Franciscan community?

I am in community with others who also very much love Our Blessed and Most Loving Lord. As a team, we can help eachother on our journey towards heaven, and thus also help everyone else around us, within our families and “out in the world”.

6 What do you feel that you can offer to the Secular Franciscan community?

I pray that The Holy Spirit will use me in whatever way He so wishes, to work and shine through me to others in our community. All I desire is to be His little instrument.



Christine Skall and her husband, Robert.
Photo by Christine Skall

7 What do you feel, as a Franciscan, that you can offer to others out there?

Learn how to truly preach without even having to use words, and let the Holy Spirit use me as His little tool to draw others closer towards God.

See SKALL, PAGE 19 ➡➡

“AS LONG AS I FEEL I AM MAKING JESUS HAPPY, THAN I AM HAPPY.”

CHRISTINE SKALL
CHILD OF GOD, WIFE,
SISTER, DOG PARENT

NEW MONTHLY
SERIES!

[BOOK STUDY]

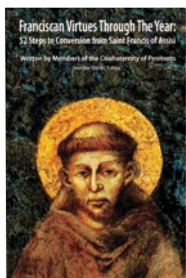
FRANCISCAN VIRTUES THROUGH THE YEAR

52 Steps to Conversion from Saint Francis of Assisi

PART 1



[EDITOR'S NOTE. "Confraternity of Penitents", the publisher of "Franciscan Virtues Through The Year", has kindly given us permission to "republish" this book in our newsletter. We will be publishing "one virtue" (one chapter) a month in each newsletter until we have completed the book. I felt it was really worth sharing and meditating on each of these virtues over the course of the year and hope you will enjoy "reading" through this book. If you would like to purchase the book so that you can read it in its entirety it is available from Amazon.com and franciscanthirdorderpenitents.com.]



INTRODUCTION

How CAN WE have Franciscan virtues? Aren't all virtues virtuous? How could some virtues be Franciscan and others not be?

Truly all virtues are Franciscan virtues. St. Francis intended to follow Jesus, and Jesus taught us to follow Him by practicing the virtues. The Franciscan virtues are those virtues, which St. Francis of Assisi specifically embraced in his life.

This study is intended to take you through the year by studying one virtue at a time [*one virtue per monthly newsletter, in our case**]. If you are a member of a Franciscan Order, your Order may wish to use these virtues as a helpful part of your formation process. Each virtue contains specific suggestions for you to follow so that you

can understand how the virtue is implemented in your Order's Rule and Constitutions.

You will notice how brief the reflections are. This is because the Holy Spirit must be your primary instructor as you study and practice the virtues. Each reflection contains quiet meditative time on the virtue and a series of questions to prompt your dialog with the Holy Spirit. May you be a receptive student!

In order to complete this study, you will need a Bible, particularly the New Testament. You will also need a journal which can be a simple notebook, preferably with lined paper. If you are a member of a Religious Order, you will also need a copy of your Rule of Life and Constitutions.

See VIRTUES, PAGE 17 ➡

* NOTE FROM EDITOR

[BOOK STUDY cont.]

VIRTUES ++++++

➔ Continued from PAGE 16

VIRTUE 1: ATTENTIVENESS

CHAPTER 1: ATTENTIVENESS

SCRIPTURE: “Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” (*Matthew 25:13*)

WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS

“Reflect and see that the day of death is approaching. With all possible respect, therefore, I beg you not to forget the Lord because of this world’s cares and preoccupations and not to turn away from His commandments, for all those who leave Him in oblivion and turn away from His commandments are cursed and will be left in oblivion by Him.” (Saint Francis of Assisi: A Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples, 1220)

INCIDENT FROM THE LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS

One time when blessed Francis was at that same place, a certain brother, a spiritual man, an elder in religion, was staying there. He was very sick and weak. Considering him, blessed Francis was moved to piety towards him. The brothers back then, sick and healthy, with cheerfulness and patience took poverty for abundance. They did



Be attentive to the person who is speaking to you and truly listen to what they have to say.

not take medicines in their illnesses, but more willingly did what was contrary to the body. Blessed Francis said to himself: “If that brother would eat some ripe grapes early in the morning, I believe it would help him.”

One day, therefore, he secretly got up early in the morning, and called that brother and took him into the vineyard which is near that same church. He chose a vine that had grapes that were good and ready for eating. Sitting down with that brother next to the vine, he began to eat some grapes so that the brother would not be ashamed to eat alone, and while they were eating them, that brother praised the Lord God. As long as he lived,

he always recalled among the brothers, with great devotion and flowing tears, the mercy the holy father had done to him. (The Assisi Compilation, Section 53).

HAVE you EVER typed a response to someone in an email while chatting on your phone to someone else?

St. Francis never had this temptation, but this is a good example of someone lacking the virtue of attentiveness.

Attentiveness is a broad virtue. It means not only paying attention to the person to whom we are speaking, but also paying attention to whatever task we are doing or whatever ministry God has given us to perform. Attentiveness means attention to God in prayer, without letting our minds be distracted about other things. It means focusing on God and seeing all things in relation to Him. This is the message that Francis was trying to get across to all the governing authorities of his day. He was telling them not to be so caught up in the things of this world that they seldom if ever paid attention to spiritual matters and their final demise. It was

See VIRTUES, PAGE 18 ➔



[BOOK STUDY cont.]

VIRTUES++++++

➔ Continued from PAGE 17

just as easy in Francis's day as it is today to get caught up in matters of the world and to forget about God, or to put Him aside until we have "more time."

Spend a minimum of five minutes meditating on the Virtue of Attentiveness. Do not write anything during this time. Merely begin your time by praying, "Lord, help me to understand the Virtue of Attentiveness and where I need it in my life."

At the end of your meditation time, ask yourself:

Who or what needs my attention? Am I attentive to that person and that situation? If so, how am I attentive? If not, how can I become more attentive?

Am I attentive to how God is moving in my life? If so, how am I attentive to this? If not, how can I do better?

Find another section in Scripture which illustrates the Virtue of Attentiveness.

Find a statement of Jesus or an incident in His life that deals with the Virtue of Attentiveness. Write these into your journal.

If you are a member of a Religious Order, find one place in your Rule or Constitutions which calls for the Virtue of Attentiveness. Explain why you chose this section.

Practice the Virtue of Attentiveness this week. Record in your journal any memorable insights or happenings.



Each evening, examine your day for the times when you were attentive and for the times when you lacked attentiveness. Pray each night, "Lord, make me attentive to Your Presence and Your actions in my life, in the lives of others, and in the world around me. Amen."

At the end of the week, record in your journal what you have learned from this exercise.

— SOURCE: "FRANCISCAN VIRTUES THROUGH THE YEAR" written by Members of the Confraternity of Penitents

St. Francis Quote

“Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of overcoming self.”

— COLUMN —



CHRISTINE SKALL
talyiana@gmail.com

HI FROM THE EDITOR

FROM ME TO YOU: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Hi everyone :) Thank you for giving me such a big welcome to your Fraternity after my move here from Georgia. It has been really wonderful meeting everyone and I felt SO much at home at my first Fraternity gathering here in NC. I was among so many people who greatly loved our beautiful faith, just as I do.

With all of my heart I love Jesus, Sweet Mama Mary, Saint Joseph, and our wonderful heavenly family. I have a very special devotion to the Rosary too, and carry it with me everywhere. By the way, if anyone needs a Rosary, please contact me and I will be happy to get you set up with one :) I will be sharing a lot more about my personal journey with Jesus and Mary as time goes on.

Soon after the June Gathering, an email from Rachel landed up in my inbox — she was requesting help from someone to step up and take over the newsletter.

See INTRO, PAGE 19 ➔

INTRO ++++++

➔ Continued from **PAGE 18**

Well, the timing couldn't have been more perfect apparently because I felt both the Holy Spirit and my Guardian Angel give me a HUGE shove to jump right in and volunteer to do this. Before I had a chance to even give it a second thought I found myself writing back to Rachel and suddenly... here I am putting together the August edition of the newsletter. Well, I love what I do (I do graphic design for a living) and I **ESPECIALLY** love using my talents for Our Lord... that is when I am **SUPER** happy :)

So... I have worked really hard at this first edition and I hope that everyone will enjoy it :) In addition, I decided to create a special logo for our specific Fraternity as well... I thought it would be extra special for us to have both St. Padre Pio and St. Francis in our logo, kneeling at the foot of The Cross.

Also, what I would love to do each month is feature our patron saint, Saint Francis, on the front page. Perhaps feature something about his life, or his devotion, or something related. After all, it IS Saint Francis and his devotion to Our Lord, and his way of living, that we are trying to imitate.

Also, as suggested by a fellow Secular Franciscan, it would be wonderful to revisit having a "Profile Page" each month featuring one of our Fraternity members and that way we can get to know each other

a little more. I understand that this has been done a little in previous editions but somehow fell away, so I would love to pick it right back up. It was suggested that we start with new members first, so unfortunately my original plan (which was to interview a good friend in our fraternity) didn't work out because she is already a longtime member and will have to be featured further on down the line once we are through featuring the newer members, so — because I am running out of time now — I will have to feature myself...UGH!!! But, it is what it is and here we are, so when you turn to the "Meet a Fellow Franciscan" page you are going to see my face there **AGAIN** (here is where I wish I could insert the "rolling your eyes" icon :))

LAST, but not least, I had come across this amazing book about Franciscan virtues and, after contacting the publisher, was given full permission to "republish" it in our newsletter, one virtue at a time. I hope you will enjoy this. One can never read too much about how to grow in virtue... I know I need to **REALLY** learn a LOT when it comes to virtues.

Anyway, I have taken enough space in here for now, that's for sure. May God bless each one of you, and your loved ones, in such a very special way, and may Mama Mary shower you with an abundance of God's Graces. ✚

SKALL ++++++

➔ Continued from **PAGE 15**

8 We already know you love Saint Francis. Do you have another favourite Saint? Why does that Saint appeal to you?

I love Saint Joseph tremendously also. When I think of Him I think of this completely unselfish man, such a strong man both interiorly and exteriorly that loved and cared for his family unconditionally and followed God's Will without hesitation, completely and unreservedly. I recently reconsecrated myself to him also.

9 If you would like to, please name some other favourite Saints.

Pope Saint John Paul II, Saint Padre Pio (and many more.)

10 Share a favourite quotation from one of the Saints that has meant a lot to you.

"Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure!" That is a quote by Pope Saint John Paul II and I think that this quote says it ALL, it truly does. ✚



Artwork by Christine Skall

[HELPING THOSE IN NEED]



St. Francis Quote...

“Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received—only what you have given.”

Artwork by Christine Skall

[WHO'S WHO]

GET TO KNOW WHO'S WHO
IN OUR FRATERNITY.

EACH AND VERY MEMBER IS
AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR
"FRATERNITY UNIT" AS A WHOLE :)

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FACEBOOK: Padre Pio Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order of
Central North Carolina

St. Francis Quote

“A single sunbeam is
enough to drive away
many shadows.”

Artwork by Christine Skall

[JOIN US]

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.

DO YOU WANT TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN FRATERNITY LIFE?
**Your Fraternity Council is organizing mini committees based on the Four
Pillars!** Sign up today and have your ideas be heard! Contact Sharon or Rachel for
more information. swinzeler@gmail.com or rchlrbnsn@gmail.com



THE FOUR PILLARS OF
SECULAR FRANCISCAN LIFE

ATTENTION!

Is there something you
would like to have shared
with our Fraternity? Send your
articles, photographs and non-
copyrighted content to have it
featured in our monthly newsletter.
Email it to me! talyiana@gmail.com
Any and all content must be submitted
by the 15th of each month at the
latest, to be included in the
next newsletter.