



NEWSLETTER

Padre Pio Fraternity

Secular Franciscan Order of Central North Carolina

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September 2026

August Visitation

Last month, a team from the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region joined us for a once-in-three-years visit. They joined us at Oak City Cares on Saturday, August 22 and led our gathering meeting on August 23. We were blessed by the presence of our brother and sister Fr. Bill Robinson, OFM Conv., our pastoral visitor and Fran Acosta, OFS, of Charlotte, a regional councilor and our fraternal visitor and two observers in training for going out on similar visitations.

At our gathering, we spent time in small groups reflecting on the joy we find in fraternity and how it is a place where our spirits can grow. We shared with one another how we experience welcome and connection to our sisters and brothers. We were also encouraged to name obstacles to fuller participation and communication, and to generate ideas for formation and the identification of gifts so that we can share more generously when we are called to serve.



Our visitors inspired us to work with our fraternity leaders to continue to grow in our lives as secular franciscans and to shape our growing fraternity by the fullest participation we can offer.



Reflecting on the Quinquennial

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Imagine celebrating with 500 fellow Secular Franciscans four joyful days filled with inspiring keynote talks, prayer, daily Mass, group discussions, food, fun and laughter.

That sums up the 21st Quinquennial Congress of Secular Franciscans held July 29–30 in Lexington, KY. Five members of the Padre Pio Fraternity attended—Ellen Ferrone, Lee Cunningham, Marianne Norris, Michael Hancock, and myself.

All three keynote speeches were wonderful. The one that touched me most was when Fr. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv., invited Secular Franciscans to listen deeply to the Jubilee Prayer of St. Francis, written by Pope Leo XIV (see next page for the full text of the prayer).

Fr. Wayne explored three voices within the prayer: Pope Leo's, St. Francis of Assisi, and each of us who make the prayer our own. Together, they offer a reflection on the Franciscan call to peace, reconciliation and faithful Gospel living.

Pope Leo wrote the prayer for the 800th anniversary of the death, or Easter, of St. Francis. Fr. Wayne led listeners through it slowly, showing how its themes reflect the spirituality and teachings of Francis.

He highlighted Article 19 of the Secular Franciscan Rule, which calls members to be “bearers of peace” and reminds us that peace must continually be built. He also connected the prayer with Admonition 15, in which Francis reflects on Christ's words, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”



Five members of the Padre Pio fraternity were among more than 40 members of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region at the 21st Quinquennial Congress July 29–Aug. 2 in Lexington, KY.

Reflecting on the Quinquennial (continued)

For Francis, peace begins within the heart. A true peacemaker remains peaceful in spirit even amid suffering. That interior peace can then be carried into families, fraternities, communities and a divided world.

Fr. Wayne helped listeners hear the Jubilee Prayer not simply as words written for an anniversary, but as an invitation to conversion. As the presentation unfolded, Pope Leo's words became our words, and Francis' call became our call. The prayer asks how the Gospel of peace will take flesh in our lives.

In this way, Fr. Wayne's talk itself became a prayer. He invited those gathered to listen, reflect and enter the words. His presentation revealed what Pope Leo and St. Francis ask of the Franciscan family today: to be transformed by the Gospel and carry Christ's peace into the world.

Eight hundred years after the Easter of St. Francis, his voice continues to speak. Through the Jubilee Prayer and Fr. Wayne's reflection, Secular Franciscans were invited to add their voices and their lives to the continuing prayer for peace.

You can listen to Fr. Wayne's talk as well as the other two keynote presentations [here](#).



POPE LEO'S PRAYER TO SAINT FRANCIS

Saint Francis, our brother,
you who eight hundred years ago
went to meet Sister Death
as a man at peace,
intercede for us before the Lord.

You recognized true peace in the Crucifix of San Damiano, teach us to seek in Him
the source of all reconciliation that breaks down every wall.

You who, unarmed, crossed the lines of war and misunderstanding,
give us the courage to build bridges
where the world raises up boundaries.

In this time afflicted by conflict and division,
intercede for us
so that we may become peacemakers:
unarmed and disarming witnesses
of the peace that comes from Christ.

Amen.



coming soon

Fraternity Events

Annual Fraternity Picnic: Sept. 5,
More information below.

Gatherings: Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 22

Oak City Cares: Sept. 26, Oct. 24,
Nov. 28, and Dec. 26.

Ongoing until Sept. 20 – Prayerful
discussion of St. Michael's Lent via
Zoom.

Regional Event: ARG Sept. 11-13

Traveling Mass Saturday, Sept. 12,
at 9 am at Sacred Heart in downtown
Raleigh.

Transitus: October 3 at 8 pm in the
St. Mary of the Angels Chapel at St.
Francis of Assisi. Join this special
commemoration of the 800th
anniversary of Francis's death.

PICNIC

Saturday,
September 5,
11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Bond Park, Cary,
Sign up [HERE](#)



SEPTEMBER 23

Feast day

St. Pio of Pietrelcina

- Join us at 9 am mass in the chapel at St. Francis & head next door to the cafe for some coffee.
- Read Vatican News: Padre Pio's life or
- Franciscan Media: Who Was Padre Pio?

“You must have boundless faith in the divine goodness, for the victory is absolutely certain.

~ Padre Pio”

Around the Diocese

Hispanic Heritage Mass

Saturday, October 10 at 11:00am
Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral

Respect Life Mass

Friday, October 30 at 10:00am
Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral

Mass for Deceased Clergy

Wednesday, November 4 at
11:00am
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Newton
Grove

A Fall Opportunity to Grow in Contemplative Prayer

The St. Thomas Moore/Newman Center spiritual direction ministry will host a six-session series on the Contemplative Path of Prayer, led by spiritual directors affiliated with the ministry.

This series will be held on Thursdays, Oct. 8 - Nov. 12, **online** from 7 -8:30 p.m. You can register for this series [here](#).

Please send any questions by email to: cbaspiritualcompanion@gmail.com.



Congratulations to Sister Susanna Boylston, OSC

who made her profession in August at the Monastery of Saint Clare in Traveler's Rest, SC! Sister Susanna and her Franciscan contemplative sisters have a primary ministry of prayer for the needs of the world. She is pictured above with our own Lee Cunningham, OSF and Ellen Ferrone, OFS, who made the trip to celebrate this special day with Sister Susanna.

Sister Susanna, thank you for your prayers and your witness. We pray God will bless you always!

Franciscan Jubilee

The Global Franciscan Virtual Summit 2026 will host monthly virtual gatherings to celebrate the life of St. Francis throughout 2026. Individuals may register for these at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd-hanjUSj1OXVr6stw3ZQOdorvkyq2z8kp8mByydG21TB8ow/viewform>

Read and reflect on this piece by Fr. Jim Sabak, OFM: [Share God's Peace Like Francis](#).



[Franciscan Spirit Podcast](#)

[Franciscan Federation](#)

[Poco a Poco Podcast](#)

A Secular Franciscan Gifts Inventory ~ The St. Katharine Drexel Region of the Secular Franciscan Order



Happy Birthday

September 2 - Marie Roccoforte, OFS
September 7 - Merc Cooley, OFS
September 15 - Denise Mickalites, OFS
September 18 - Zubair Simonson, OFS
September 19 - Ellen Ferrone, OFS &
Ben Whitehouse, OFS
September 20 - Jeanne Casciere, OFS

Blessings on your anniversary

Joanne Jacovec, OFS professed September 23, 2000



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:
Fran Acosta OFS, Area 4
Travis Bongiorno, OFS, Area 5
Lee Cunningham, OFS, Area 5

BSSF Region Minister:
Ellen Ferrone, OFS

Apostolates

JPIC:
Theresa Flynn, OFS

Oak City Cares:
Mary Cockrill, OFS
Marianne Norris, OFS

CPO & Fraternity Library:
Maureen Copan, OFS

On-Going Formation:
Mercedes Cooley, OFS

Prayer Requests:
Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS

CPO & Fraternity Library:
Maureen Copan, OFS

Website:
Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Sunshine:
Laurie Wilburn, OFS

Facebook:
Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

Hospitality:
Valorie Davis, OFS,
Debra Marisa, OFS,
Maria Marge, OFS
Barbara Redzich
& Ann Wester, OFS

Newsletter:
Lori Zagiba