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# Tau Cross Region

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Secular Franciscan Order for The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk

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## Minister's Message

Joan Geiger, ofs  
Regional Minister

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

May the peace and joy of the Easter Season be yours in abundance!

While reflecting on what to write in this newsletter, several similar events occurred recently that it became quite obvious about what I should write.

The first was attending the Mass to commemorate the 750<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the finding of the relics of St.

Anthony by St. Bonaventure.

Secondly, during this "Year of Faith" my parish, Our Lady of the Snows, has been offering the *Catholicism* series by Rev. Robert Barron. I was asked to facilitate Lesson 8, "A Vast Company of Witnesses: The Communion of Saints – God's friends in heaven and on earth." The last event was the election to the Papacy of Jorge Cardinal Bergoglio – a Jesuit, who chose the name "Francis." It seemed all too obvious that I was to write about the saints.

What impresses me most about St. Anthony is all he accomplished in his short life, dying at the age of 36. Fernando Martins de Bulhoes was born in Lisbon, Portugal on August 15, 1195. He was the son of noble ancestry, raised in a wealthy family, with the privilege of education. He joined the Augustinian Canons, but in 1219 came into contact with five Franciscan Friars who were on their

way to Morocco to preach the Gospel to the Muslims. Fernando was attracted to their simple, evangelical lifestyle. A year later, hearing that these five Friars were the first Franciscan martyrs, he was inspired by their example and desire for martyrdom. Fernando was granted permission to leave the Augustinian Order and admitted into the Order of Friars Minor adopting the name Anthony. On the occasion of an ordination, it was presumed that Dominicans, who were renowned for preaching, would deliver the sermon. Instead, Anthony was called upon and, enlightened by the Spirit, gave an eloquent and moving discourse. Anthony preached the Gospel in Northern Italy where he came into contact with Francis of Assisi. Francis distrusted theological studies, fearing it would lead the Brothers to abandoning their life of poverty. Francis did, however, trust Anthony, finding in him a kindred spirit for his vision. Anthony was charged with teaching the young members of the Order, preparing them for ordination. He was sent on preaching missions throughout all of Italy. His sermons had the impact of a spiritual revival. He quickly earned the reputation of a "Wonder Worker" and "Friend of the Poor." St. Anthony died on June 13, 1231 and was canonized less than a year later on May 30, 1232. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1946.

*Catholicism* series Lesson 8, "The

Communion of Saints," examines the lives of four women who were transfigured from the inside out. Each of their lives exemplified a cardinal virtue. St. Katharine Drexel, Foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indian and Colored People (Justice), St. Therese of Lisieux, Carmelite, known for her spiritual path, "the little way, (Prudence), St. Edith Stein, Carmelite, known for her heroic martyrdom (Fortitude) and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, Foundress of the Missionaries of Charity (Temperance). The Church teaches that a saint is someone who has demonstrated heroic virtue, someone who is a friend of God, someone who is in heaven. Saints are those who have allowed Jesus thoroughly to transfigure them from within. A saint is someone who allows God to live His life in him/her. It is an invasion of grace – the cooperation with God in our life. I realized in these women, as in St. Anthony, that there is not a single model for holiness. We should all aspire to be saints. To what is God's grace calling you?

Incidentally, the picture on the book cover and shown at the beginning of every *Catholicism* lesson is that of Sainte Chapelle (Holy Chapel). It is a Gothic Chapel in the heart of Paris. Its construction was sponsored by St. Louis IX of France, Patron of the Secular Franciscan Order. It was built to house Passion relics, most significantly, the Crown of Thorns.

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## Minister's Message continued

Fr. Barron refers to this Church as a sanctuary of prayer – where God is present and where our mind, heart and soul are elevated to thoughts of God .

Lastly, we celebrate the election and elevation to the Papacy of Pope Francis. Like St. Francis, he is a man of great humility and service to the poor. Bowing to ask for prayers from the thousands gathered in St. Peter's Square, dismissing the garbs of hierarchy, and donning a simple Cross, he demonstrated that he truly is a brother to us. His first "Angelus" sermon was on mercy. He said, "The real power of the Pope is to serve the most vulnerable." How ironic too, that his ordination to the Papacy was on March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph, a man who was attentive to God and who discreetly, silently and humbly protected Mary and the child Jesus. May the Universal Church be blessed in Pope Francis, successor to St. Peter, as he commences his duties to follow Christ, who is the Head of the Church.

Peace and all good,  
Joan

In the Spirit of St. Francis, we  
Welcome Pope Francis I



"This is what I want,  
a poor Church for the poor."

## Fr. Matt's Message

Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap.  
Regional Spiritual Assistant

### Vocations

A new Pope, and with the name Francis, Pope Francis,(who would have ever thought?) and Spring, Easter, new life, hope and Resurrection, and the promise of change, reform, conversion, renewal. What a time to be alive! What a time to be Franciscan!

But yet we face reality. We can be swept up in the joy and anticipation of the future for the Church and the Order. But then, we must also be realistic. This past Sunday, the first fraternity gathering I visited had two OFS members present. The second gathering I visited on that particular Sunday had six members present. During the week there was concern about a fraternity having a slate for its elections. Several fraternities were deactivated during the past year.

We pray, we put ads in the local diocesan paper, we send reminders to parishes and place announcements in the parish bulletin, we put fliers on bulletin boards; we speak to friends about the Order, and we ask ourselves, "Where is Spring, where is growth, new birth and renewal, and new hope?"

Is there something else, is there something missing? Perhaps asking ourselves, "What does the Order mean to me?" Do we really see our life as fulfilling a vocation, a distinct call? Do we believe in the validity of the message of St. Francis for our world today? In choosing the name *Francis*, our new Holy Father seems to say, "Yes!" Is our fraternity really a family and does the council foster such a spirit? Do we meet Christ in the Order and the fraternity? Has our profession deepened our Baptismal call? Has our profession made a difference in our

lives? Do others notice the difference? Do other candidates and inquirers learn from us? Do we have a good formation program? Are we welcoming? What is the format for our monthly gathering? Do we share? Is there an agenda? How much preparation goes into the monthly gathering? Is everyone participating? Does our spiritual assistant participate? Are we only anxious about getting new people and unconcerned about forming who we have? Do people see us as different? Do we exude a Franciscan spirit of peace, joy, simplicity and humility?

These can be tough questions to answer. They are not meant to foster guilt, but to put on our thinking caps. Is there, maybe, something more that can be done? Let us begin once again for up to now we have done but little.

### National Prayer for Vocations to the Franciscan Order

**O Good and Gracious God,  
God of mercy, compassion,  
generosity and love,  
As we live our lives today  
in the model of St. Francis,  
choosing daily to live the  
Gospel life.**

**Help us to help others hear  
your call.**

**Help us to help others  
to recognize their vocation  
as a Secular Franciscan  
that You have already  
planted in their heart.**

**Help us, so that together  
We all may work to bring  
the Gospel to life.**

**Amen**

## The Resurrection In History

Robert Messa, ofs  
Minister, Cure of Ars Frat.

St. Paul wrote, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:14).

The resurrection is so crucial to our faith that Christianity has little or no relevance without it. Pope Benedict XVI in the second volume of his *Jesus of Nazareth* books explains that Christianity is an historical religion based on real events with real people in the real world. It is not a mythological or esoteric religion. The method of exegesis he uses as one tool is called the historical-critical method which he uses from the perspective of faith. He subjects the study of Jesus to the same methods as would historians. He recognizes the danger that this type of study might leave Jesus as an historical figure in the past. But with a synthesis of this historical method with faith, we can more fully understand the meaning of events like Jesus' resurrection to prove the event actually occurred and,

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from that viewpoint, take Scripture and Tradition, the faith deposit of the Church, to realize the eschatological, eternal significance of the event in our salvation history, the "plot" of the Bible taken as a whole, the analogy of faith.

The importance of establishing the historicity of the resurrection cannot be overemphasized. The combination of our faith, the witness of Scripture, and historical insights portray sacred texts with the added benefit of historical methodology that the texts are opened up to reveal a way and a figure of Jesus that are worthy of belief. Also he says that in this exegesis the seeming contradictions of the New Testament writings exhibit a deep cohesiveness. (He talks about a number of points which validate the truth of the actual resurrection of Jesus as an historical event.) For instance, if the tomb in which Jesus was buried was not empty and someone had produced the actual body of Jesus as a dead man, there would have been no victory over death, no hope for the coming Kingdom. God's promises would not have been fulfilled. Even enemies of Christ, the Roman guards admit the fact of the empty tomb in Mt 28:11. Also, it is noteworthy that women were the first to discover the empty tomb, since their testimony was not permitted in court. If this were a hoax, women would surely not have been used as proof.

There was also a radical change in the behavior of the disciples after Jesus rose from the dead. The disciples boldly proclaimed their faith and his resurrection despite fears that they would be persecuted because of this

belief. Their faith led them to accept death. They would not have accepted death if Christ's resurrection were a hoax. They spoke rationally and debated rationally proving they were not insane or delusional. Paul, a fierce persecutor of the Christians and a prominent Jewish Pharisee, was radically converted to the faith after seeing a vision of the risen Christ (Acts Ch. 9).

Lastly the Sabbath, as practiced in Judaism, was observed on Saturday. After the resurrection, which happened on Sunday (the 8th day), the Christian worship day was changed to Sunday. The significance of this change to Sunday needs further explanation but it is being mentioned as another historical event in this context.

As a Franciscan, this method of creating an actual portrait of Jesus as an historical figure helps me bring Jesus even closer to my own heart and my own human experience. Jesus' humanity is further affirmed in the history of man as opposed to solely a mythological figure, a metaphor of God or a "spiritual mentor." Jesus is the uncreated actual face of God, and similarly a sacrament of God, to bestow on us the grace of the forgiveness of sin and to show us, in a real and human way, how to live the Kingdom of God on earth and be prepared for the last day and our own resurrection. This brought my heart closer to the Jesus that Francis of Assisi teaches us to imitate.



## Around the Region

### Anniversaries:

- 65 Years: Thomas Dolan, Il Poverello  
59 Years: Barbara Woesner,  
St. Lawrence of Brindisi  
57 Years: Robert Woessner,  
St. Lawrence of Brindisi  
55 Years: Mary Corber, St. Lawrence  
of Brindisi  
54 Years: Monica Dolan, Il Poverello  
52 Years: Ron Chirco, St. Lawrence  
of Brindisi  
51 Years: Dolores Chirco,  
St. Lawrence of Brindisi  
51 Years: Dorothy Rosenman,  
St. Lawrence of Brindisi

### Admissions:

- 1/17: Michael Renna, Holy Family  
Presider: Joan Geiger, Reg. Minister  
  
3/17: Dcn Thomas Page, St. Adalbert  
Minister: Constance Watz;  
Friar Witness: Fr. Herman Czaster,  
ofm, Conv.

### Professions:

- 1/6: Sylvia Murdolo, Minister, Robert  
Metz, Friar Witness, Fr. Matthias  
Wesnofske, ofm, Cap.  
  
1/20; Stephanie Martin, St. Mary  
Queen of Angels, Minister Frances  
Schmidt, Friar Witness: Fr. Matthias  
Wesnofske, ofm, Cap.

### An Early Reminder Save the Date!

We will have our regional picnic on  
Saturday, June 29. It will be held at  
Elwood Park, Huntington. Time: 10-4  
All invited; no charge.

Questions: call Frank Harnos at (631)  
834-1549 or Pete D'Amato at (631)  
331-7680

### Deaths:

- 1/19: William Sosnicki,  
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Frat.  
2/5: Joan Foley,  
St. Thomas More Fraternity.  
2/5: Edna Jordan,  
St. Helen Fraternity.  
2/13: Constance Donley,  
St. Bonaventure Fraternity.  
3/13: Danis Cascio,  
Holy Family, Newly F.G.  
3/25: Wendy Petruzzi,  
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Frat.

### Elections:

- 1/19: St. Helen Fraternity, Lorraine  
Arcella re-elected Minister.  
1/20: St. Louis Fraternity, Manuel G.  
Vasquez, elected Minister.  
2/16: Il Poverello Fraternity, Karen  
Marzovilla elected Minister.  
2/19: Bl. Josephine Leroux,  
Raymond Clarke elected Minister.  
3/17: St. Agnes of Assisi Fraternity,  
Daniel Volpe elected Minister.

### Activities:

- 12/1: Fourth Annual Advent Day of  
Recollection held at St. Anthony H.S.  
12/15: Greccio Service held at St.  
Adalbert Church & sponsored by St.  
Adalbert Fraternity.  
1/4: Epiphany Party sponsored by Bl.  
Raymond Lull Fraternity at St.  
Joseph's Church, Hewlett.  
1/13: St. Monica Fraternity  
celebrated their 76th Anniversary.  
1/13: Epiphany Party at St. Matthew  
Parish sponsored by New Pentecost  
Fraternity.

### Upcoming Events:

- 4/23-25: Tau Cross Regional  
Retreat see page 2.  
4/27: Regional Chapter of Elections  
to be held at Holy Family, 175-20  
74th Ave., Fresh Meadows, NY11336

4/4: First Monthly OFS East End  
Lunch 12:00 Noon at the Rocky Point  
Diner, Rte. 25A, Rocky Point. ALL  
INVITED!

4/27: HELP Suffolk Fair, at HELP  
Suffolk Facility on Brookhaven Ave.,  
N. Bellport. Sponsored by New  
Pentecost Fraternity. Interested in  
helping, contact Frank Harnos at  
631-499-0074 or Marty Walsh at  
516-931-1430.

6/29: Regional Picnic at Elwood Park,  
Huntington, L.I. 10:00-4:00 contacts  
see ad on this page.

7/20: Fourth Annual "Getting to Know  
You" Picnic at Forest Park, Queens,  
Grove #4. Sponsored by St. Helen  
Fraternity. See ad on page 5.

8/12-15: FLIC to be held at Mt.  
Alvernia Retreat Center Wappinger's  
Falls, NY. Cost is \$250. For info and  
registration, contact Bob Campbell at  
(516) 599-4256 or [arcyc@aol.com](mailto:arcyc@aol.com).



### TAU CROSS REGION

The TAU CROSS REGION is  
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accepted, they may be edited. Please  
submit copies by the 10th of the month  
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Please send items of interest (elections,  
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## New OFS Affiliates

Robert Campbell, ofs  
Bl. Raymond Lull Frat.

This February, Augusta VanDuzen, Minister of Blessed Raymond Lull Fraternity, welcomed Vincent Bergius and Bette Cassidy as AFFILIATES, with these words: "You are welcomed to love and to be loved as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. It is a joy to have you with us on our journey as we all strive to more faithfully live the Gospel life after the example of St. Francis of Assisi. I present you this Certificate of Affiliation and pray that our time together may be Spirit-filled and that we may, as did our Seraphic Father Francis, make Christ the inspiration and center of our lives with God and his people."

In 2006, the NAFRA Council approved an amendment to the National Statutes (Article 18.3) which states in part: "affiliate brothers and sisters will have no juridical bond with the Secular Franciscan Order... They may share the experiences and activities of the fraternity, without the right to vote."

Vincent and Bette are the first Affiliates in Tau Cross Region.



Affiliates Vincent Bergius (Below) and Bette Cassidy (Above) with Minister A. VanDuzen, L. Sandberg & Fr. Matt



## Celebrations



Thomas and Monica Dolan celebrate 100+ years as Franciscans



Newly elected council, Il Poverello  
Br. Etienne, OSF, S.A., L. Smith, K. Marzovilla, M. Blinn, K. & J. Coniker.

### WORTH A NOTE!

On 4/4: the First Monthly OFS East End Lunch, 12:00 Noon at the Rocky Point Diner, Rte. 25A, Rocky Point. ALL INVITED!

### It's a Getting to Know You Picnic July 20, Forest Park, Grove #4

St. Helen Fraternity will host it's fourth annual "Getting to Know You Picnic" on July 20, 2013 in Forest Park, Picnic Grove #4. We look forward to a day of Franciscan camaraderie and happiness. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate and we will all have a great time. If you are planning on joining us, please email me at [lorrainearcella@msn.com](mailto:lorrainearcella@msn.com) so that we will know how many people will be attending. We will be in the same grove as last year, near to the parking lot and rest rooms. Hope to see many of our Sister fraternities at the picnic. Have a joyous Spring and Happy Easter !

## Two More!



Elections at Bl. Josephine Leroux  
M. Logan, D. Watson, Sr. Betty Mullane, CSJ, R. Clarke, Marianne Bellucci



Admission at St. Adalbert Frat.  
Minister, C. Watz. Fr. H. Czaster, ofm, Conv., Dcn. T. Page, (admitted to fraternity), Formation Dir., C. Cangialosi

### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

#### Regarding the April Regional Chapter

This year our April Regional Chapter will be held in Mahoney Hall of Holy Family Church, 175-20 74th Ave, Fresh Meadows. We will not be using St. Adalbert's Parish Hall in Elmhurst as in previous years. Directions will be provided in a flyer to be sent to ministers. The date will be April 27.

Please keep in mind that fraternity attendance is especially important this year since we will be holding our regional elections on this date. All fraternity ministers or their appointed representatives must be present. Several members from the National Executive Council will also be there in order to conduct the election.

More information will follow later; however, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact a council member. Emails and phone numbers are available on page 3.

## Bill Sosnicki, ofm

### In Memoriam

Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap.  
Regional Spiritual Assistant



Not that long ago, I watched a movie on EWTN, an old movie, I guess, since it was in black and white. The movie was in French and it was subtitled. I was watching the television with my mother and I thought my mother would enjoy it since she has difficulty hearing and in the movie the words were translated on the screen and she could read them. The movie was excellent. It was called “The Passion of Bernadette.” The beginning of the movie was shown on a previous night. I just saw the second part of the movie but what I saw concerned St. Bernadette’s life in the convent and the last years of her life; her passion, her suffering and her death. I liked the movie because I liked Bernadette’s attitude toward death. She suffered very much from physical ailments, but also from the sisters with whom she lived, because these sisters felt a responsibility to keep Bernadette humble, since many people were already considering her a saint after the appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Lourdes. But Bernadette accepted her sufferings

joyfully, made jokes with the other sisters, was very frank about her own shortcomings, was honest, asking for nothing special, even though she had had wonderful experiences in conversing with the Mother of God.

St. Bernadette was not a Secular Franciscan, but she was, what at that time was called, a ‘corderbearer.’ She was too young to have been a Secular Franciscan before entering the convent. But her parents were Secular Franciscans, Third Order members, and when they entered the Order, Bernadette was chosen to be part of the ceremony in being a ‘corderbearer,’ the one chosen to carry the cord that would be placed around the waists of her parents to signify their entrance into the Order.

I watched this movie the week that Bill Sosnicki died. Many of you have fond memories of Bill. Bill was a popular member of the Secular Franciscan Order. He was elected Minister of his local fraternity, St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity in North Patchogue, and then he was elected to the Tau Cross Regional Council. No doubt, many thought, that one day he would be Minister of the Region. However, sickness intervened. Bill was very friendly, outgoing, energetic, always willing to help, always a smile on his face, concerned about others. But the greatest witness he gave all of us in living the Gospel Life, was his witnessing to the truth of the Gospel message of the Resurrection and eternal life. His spirit of hope and joy, his acceptance of his sufferings, his attitude not only toward his suffering but also towards his death, as he was well aware of its proximity for a considerable length of time. He was

actually preparing for his death and made arrangements for his funeral.

St. Bernadette received Extreme Unction three times. The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick was rare at the time and only given when death was imminent. She even joked with the sisters, who thought her end was near, and she would apologize for disappointing them after all their troubles, by recovering once again for a short time. When she died, she was considered a young woman; only thirty five years old. Bill, too, was considered young when he died. He knew he had cancer for quite a while, years in fact, but he always maintained a joyful, positive and hopeful attitude and when it seemed that the end was near, he continued to give that same witness. Many of us found Bill inspiring, but never so much so as after he was diagnosed with cancer and approached his final journey. His final witness was the most powerful and the most touching.



Ring in the valiant man  
and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier  
hand;  
Ring out the darkness  
of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is  
to be -

from *In Memoriam*, Tennyson