

Tau Cross Region

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

Minister's Message

Raymond Clarke, ofs, Minister
Tau Cross Region

Who are Our Sisters and Brothers?

Considering the ever more cosmopolitan nature of our society, we would do well to explore the nature of our relationships. Particularly those that are new, as well as some long-term relationships with those who do not share our common culture and heritage. Take for example the more common approaches to forging relationships: children in kindergarten, unscathed by pre-conceived notions or slanted by news accounts, find commonality with their social peers through games, toys and playtime. While teenagers often gain favor with one another, as consequence of sports played together, common social interests (i.e. music, social media, etc.) and perhaps the appeal of the opposite gender. Adults, however, allow a great deal of factors, borne of experience and in many cases hearsay, ignorance and misinformation to form their impressions and often long-standing opinions of those new to their circle.

In God's infinite wisdom, the

world that he has placed in our care, is comprised of a multitude of different races, creeds, cultures and personalities. In appreciation of God's overwhelming generosity in offering up His son as a sacrifice for us all, we are thus instructed in John 15:17, "This I command: that you love one another." But what does it mean to "love one another?" Is this a call to globally love all people without condition? Or is there some fine filter that we use to screen those to whom we will choose to offer our love? Ah yes, a somewhat tricky question, especially in today's climate. Or is it? This question or perhaps, this dilemma, has plagued mankind since the earliest days of formal society.

Here in the United States, we enjoy a way of life that insures freedoms, envied throughout the world, to lawfully live, work and worship as we wish. It is also intrinsic among us to safeguard our families and protect what is ours, including our property and our way of life. In lawfully doing so, we are again asked, "Who are our sisters and brothers?" Would we continue to welcome, into our homes, those who would corrupt our children's morals, covet our spouses, show outright disrespect to us or even but their

feet on our furniture? These rhetorical questions are being asked of us increasingly today across an ever-widening range of social spheres.

One may think that this is a modern problem and some might think that his question was not considered in medieval times. Most might be surprised to know that St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the church's greatest theologians, certainly had many opinions on this subject. In St. Thomas' the *Summa Theologica*, one finds his analysis, based on biblical insights, are entirely applicable today. St. Thomas explains, and I paraphrase here, that relationships with foreigners can be complex, some hostile and some peaceful. The laws of the land should address both types of relationships with foreigners for the peace and good of the society. It is a right! Just as we reserve the right to invite or disinvite, into our homes, those who would otherwise cause disharmony, hostility or seek to undermine our thoughts and traditions. St. Thomas equally extolls that foreigners, *of good will*, should be welcomed and deserved to be treated with respect, courtesy. and charity.

On the other hand, St. Thomas

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goes on to cite references to the process of assimilation and acceptance. Early Jews, for example, treated foreigners differently depending on their homeland proximity to Israel. The further removed, the more suspicious and less trusting. This practice, for example, may seem extreme in our world but it does resemble similar, familiar behavior patterns in today's society

As fond as I am of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, who better can we turn to for more understanding of relationships and the peace that we should strive to achieve with foreigners, than our own St. Francis of Assisi. During the Fifth Crusade, St. Francis traveled to Egypt, where the crusaders were having the upper hand in battle. The fighting and senseless killing were such that even the Franciscan friars begged the Christian knights to end the bloodletting but to no avail. Yet Francis crossed the battle lines to meet with the sultan. Francis met with the sultan who treated him graciously. In the sultan, Francis encountered a holy man, who was devout in faith, longed for peace but had inherited a war that had gone on for decades. Moreover, Francis was impressed by the deeply religious people, who prayed piously five times a day. The crusaders were overwhelmingly coarse Europeans of the Middle Ages, lacking in social graces, refinement. Many were without any Christian moral convictions. While Moslems

that Francis encountered, were people of learning and refinement, and most importantly, a people of prayer. Francis was allowed to safely return to the camps of the crusaders where he related his experiences in the sultan's court.

Accounts of the meeting between Francis and the sultan vary. However, Francis' and the sultan's prayerful nature, desire for peace and mutual admiration are consistently reported in all accounts. One could say that, in the sultan, Francis found a kindred spirit, a brother even. One who, without the political trappings of the day and pre-conceived inaccurate perceptions of each other's' people, could have found a way to forge a lasting peace. Eventually, the long crusades came to an end. Few believe that the meeting between Francis and the sultan had anything to do with the cessation of hostilities. Nonetheless, bridges were spanned, new understandings were gained and two men from the most disparate of backgrounds found peace and understanding between them. The one God that we Christians, Muslims and Jews all pray to, loves us all. At the core of these monotheistic religions is God's command to love one another. Love, as we would love ourselves. Love as sisters and brothers. We are called to show that true religion can and will triumph over religious conflict and unfounded fears. If we are to obey God's directive, we must know who our sisters and brothers are.

Youfra Update

Jean A D'Onofrio, ofs , Holy Poverty
Regional Young & Young Adult
Animator

As our Region's contact person for Youth/Young Adults, I have been blessed over the years in rediscovering my college alma mater, SUNY @ Stony Brook, and have had the privilege of sharing Mass and other events with the students on the campus. Joanne Buonocore, the Campus Minister, offers a variety of prayer experiences for the students in addition to Sunday Mass, retreats, the Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, community projects, and special celebrations such as the Filipino Simbangabi.

This year, there will be 10 Stony Brook University students who will be spending their winter break with the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor in Ohio and Kentucky, and will share it when they return.

The Sisters, franforthepoor.org, have a ministry of hospitality, TAU house, to provide lodging, prayer time, Mass, recreation, and food for college students as they go out to one of over 25 various locales (soup kitchens, home for developmentally disabled, senior housing, habitat for humanity, etc). Our Region, as well as Holy Poverty, Our Lady of the Angels, Il Poverello Fraternities, and several individual Seculars have supported these Young Adults . I am grateful for their support!

In His Joy,
Jean

The Graces of the Franciscan Charism: Devotion to Family and Youth

Margaret Birth, ofs
St. Michael Fraternity

“In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for His Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.” – *Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order*, chapter 17

“To foster communion among members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups. It should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life of fraternity. The communion continues with deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them.” *Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order*, chapter 24

While these are the places in our Rule that most explicitly address the Secular Franciscan charisms of devotion to family and to youth, there are other

sections that touch on the kinds of attitudes we would do well to have in all of our relationships, familial and otherwise. For instance, chapters 1 and 2 describe Secular Franciscans in terms of being “family” to each other and to other Franciscans; chapter 12 focuses on our love for others; and chapter 13 talks about how, in seeing God our Creator reflected in His Creation, “Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.”

To make a joyful Christian family life and a joyful Secular Franciscan fraternity life takes both commitment and work. We need to remain ever mindful to treat one another with loving-kindness, generosity of spirit, mutual respect, and a willingness to be merciful and gracious and forgiving. Philippians 2:3-4 gives us good advice: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. / Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others” (NRSV). Because we are all imperfect, because we all sin from time to time, we need to remain conscious of the need for humility, and the need to try and understand others’ points of view; sometimes we are in the wrong, and they are in the right. But such awareness takes practice—with our family, with our fraternity, with our Church, and with society at large. It isn’t just our heart-attitudes that take practice. It is also our

actions and the activities we pursue. As parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even adult friends of youth, we need to not only encourage through words, but model and share lives of faith: marriages that show fidelity not as an obligation to be fulfilled but as an outgrowth of genuine affection and shared interests and activities, families whose members talk and listen to each other respectfully and spend time relaxing together, regular church attendance as a family, both the practice of individual prayer and the sharing of family prayer on a daily basis, catechesis at church and at home. When we treat each member of our family, our fraternity, our Church, and our world as the gift of God that they are, then all our lives can be transformed, in that ongoing transformation which is such a hallmark of Franciscan spirituality.

With this, as with all our Franciscan charisms, we seek to be identified with the joy to be found in living a life that is faithful to the Gospel of Christ in its many facets.



“The Best Three Days of the Year”

Anthony Da Vino, ofs
Regional Councilor

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As promised here is the article I composed to encourage attendance at the Retreat.

Everyone has those special days each year where they look forward with eager anticipation. As Franciscans such days may be Thanksgiving and Christmas and certainly Easter. For me it is a tough choice because the three days I look forward to most eagerly are the three days each year I spend at the Yearly Franciscan Regional Retreat. It is held each year in April at the Cormaria Retreat House in Sag Harbor. The magnificent mansion with its beautiful grounds can hardly be called a house. Since last we were there they have renovated and expanded. I can hardly wait to see the new designs and innovations..The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary treat us with great love and joy in their work, they make it both a treat and a retreat. Be prepared for the best three days of eating all year.

Most important, we Franciscans can not exist without our "Spiritual Food". This is why each of us is required to attend the yearly retreat. The Yearly Retreat is the culmination of our spiritual diet that keeps us, "Strong in the Lord" and "Alive in Christ.

This year at our retreat from April 18th. to 20th. we will

receive a most powerful portion. Our Retreat Master this year is Father Jerome Wolbert OFM of the Holy Dormition Franciscan Friary in Sybertsville PA. I have attended retreats with Father Jerome. Each time he has influenced me with what I call; a life altering impact on my Spirituality. I have been enriched by his insightful teachings and by just sitting together with him sharing a cup of coffee.

Because this years retreat is during Easter week, Father Jerome's topic for the retreat will be:

Bright Week: Celebrating Easter with Franciscan Saints

Saints Francis, Clare, Anthony, and Bonaventure will join us -- through their writings -- in our celebration of Bright Week, the eight-day celebration of Easter, the climax of our liturgical year. Our retreat will also explore prayers of the church and of our Franciscan tradition which open our hearts more fully to share in the Resurrection of Christ.

So dear Brothers and Sisters join me in looking forward to spending these three days in the presence of our Lord and these wonderful Saints.

Annual Regional Retreat:
Where: Cormaria Retreat House
Sag Harbo
When: Tues-Thurs, April 18-20
Cost: \$190 per person
**For more information
contact:** Bob Campbell at:
516 599-4256

A JPIC Moment

Frank Scotto, ofs
Regional Vice Minister
JPIC Animator

My Brothers and Sisters,

A few years ago, I read an article stating that ISIS had issued a 'FATWA' to exterminate disabled children. Thirty eight cases of babies killed it was reported. To think that even ISIS could stoop so low as to take the lives of innocent children.

I beg you all to join together with me in taking action as Franciscans, Americans, **as human beings.** So often, we respond when reading articles such as this asking: "What can I do?" Our politicians are trying to fight a 'political war' against an enemy that doesn't care. Well, pick up your phone and call your politicians demanding they push Washington for positive action. Find a pen in the house and write a letter today to Washington, to our Senators and Representatives who talk the talk but won't walk the walk.

How much more do we have to see? How much more must our brothers and sisters (and children) throughout the world suffer before a firm stand is taken?

The world has fallen victim to a depraved anthropocentrism. We have faced such a challenge in past years and took courage with the 'Right to Life' movement but now we are all faced with an even more sinister shadow.....*the right to exist.*

Those children are now shielded under the Lord's roof; but there are so many more that need protection. We can no longer ignore those in the periphery of our world. I sit in silent prayer with faith and hope that someday..... they will.

Around the Region

Admissions

- 1/22: Elaine Mastronardi,
1/22: Judith Ann Mastronardi,
St. Barnabas Fraternity
2/5: Stacie Butler,
Dr. Peter Suski,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Frat.

Profession

- 1/14: Rosa Pressolano, ofs
Poor Clare Fraternity
3/5 : Michael Rocco, ofs
Migdalia Vaca, ofs
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Frat.

Deaths

- 3/15: Frank DeVito, ofs
Cure of Ars Fraternity
3/15: Alice Boyle, ofs,
Il Poverello Fraternity

Elections

- 3/5: Manuel Vasques, ofs,
Minister, St. Louis Fraternity
3/12: Dolores Grosso, ofs,
Minister St. Monica Fraternity

Upcoming Events

- 6/23-6/25 **St. Adalbert Frat.**
Retreat at Mount Alvernia
Retreat Center, Wappingers
Falls
6/24 **Regional Picnic** at
Elwood Park, Huntington.
See Ad.
7/17: **Day of Recollection** at
Tabor Retreat Center. See Ad.
8/7-8/10 **F.L.I.C.** to be held at
Mount Alvernia Retreat Center,
Wappingers Falls, NY.



Joint Day of Recollection Bl. Raymond Lull and Our Lady of Atonement Fraternities

June 17, 2017

At Tabor Retreat Center
60 Anchor Ave.,
Oceanside NY 11572

Time: 9:30 am to 3:30 pm:

Fee: \$25.00 for breakfast
Bring your own lunch.

Info and Reservations:

Call or txt Louise M Sandberg
516 318 7798 or email her at:
Louisesandberg54@gmail.com
or contact:

Mary Cammarato
.....marymcam@msn.com



TAU CROSS REGION

The TAU CROSS REGION is published quarterly in January, April, July and in October. Articles by fraternity members are welcome. If accepted, they may be edited. Please submit copies by the 10th of the month prior to publication.

Please send items of interest (elections, professions, anniversaries, events, etc. to Regional Councilor Alicia D'Amato at P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email at: damato1@optonline.net.

Address correspondence to editor, Peter D'Amato, P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email: damato1@optonline.net. TEL: 631-331-7680

The Annual Region Wide Picnic

Sponsored by New Pentecost
and Our Lady Queen of Angels
Fraternities

When: Saturday, June 24

Where: Elwood Park
Cuba Hill Road
Elwood, NY.

All members and families are
welcome!

For Information contact:

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damato1@optonline.net or
631-331-7680

Frank Harnos at:
fharnos@aol.com or
631- 499-0074

NOTICE Tau Cross Region Annual Chapter

When: Saturday, April 22

Time: Registration 9:30 a.m.

Where: St. Adalbert's
5229 83rd Street
Elmhurst, NY 11373

All ministers or representatives
are expected to attend.

Guest Speaker:

Brother Tim Aller, ofm, Cap.
Accepting God's Love & Mercy

Breakfast: Provided

Lunch: Brown Bag

Information: Contact Ray
Clarke at 516-374-1521.



Newly elected council of St. Monica: L-R Peter Koch Treas, Dolores Grosso -Minister Jim Grosso – Formation, Louella Clark – Sec. Daphne DeMills - Vice Minister



Jim Grosso, FD, St. Monica Fraternity gives a presentation and . . . who is that in "seat 1" ? . . . Teacher's Pet: Ray Clarke ☺

Regional Executive Council:

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Councilor: Anthony DaVino (631)974-4097 leadmetotherock@aol.com

Spiritual Assistant: Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap. (631) 286-7921 ext 28; mwesnofl@aol.com



From the archives: Sept. 21, 2012 Name a face and win a cookie ☺ You know who you are!



Alicia D'



It takes a Village ☺



Fr. Matthias with Rosa Pessolano of Poor Clare Fraternity. Rosa was professed on 1/14. Father was the Friar Witness