

# Tau Cross Region

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

## Minister's Message

Raymond Clark, ofs,  
Minister, Tau Cross Region

### Is There a Certain Temperament Required to Reside in Heaven? -Conclusion

Sisters and Brothers,

In the first part of this message, I asked the question posed in this article's title. Well, I continue to ponder this question, as yet another reminder of my commitment to our Order and its way of life. You see, given the multiple of daily opportunities that I have to forget to see Jesus in everyone, I need to constantly remind myself that I should be preparing for a life in Heaven.

In preparing for a life in Heaven, we are to love God above all (*those who love the Lord, who do as the Lord Himself says in the Gospel: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and...thy neighbor as thyself.'*)(1) *Let us therefore love God and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind because He Himself, seeking that above all, says: 'The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth.'* For all who (*adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth.*)(1) "In spirit and in truth" also means seeing Jesus' suffering in each and every

one that we encounter. Seeing Jesus in others, is to see their earthly pain, disappointment and sorrows, just as Jesus exemplified during His time on earth. To be effective in our preparation for a life in Heaven, we must also make the conscious effort to shed ourselves of thoughts of material things and temptations. For such thoughts are the seeds of vainglory and lead us away from living lives of humility and service. (*We ought to hate our bodies with (their) vices and sins, because the Lord says in the Gospel that all vices and sins come from the heart ...*)(1) Even as we encounter unpleasantness in others, it is through humility and service that our eyes can be opened to see Jesus in others. Consequently, we can navigate our way through difficult interactions with others, as God wants us to, with understanding, serenity, forgiveness and love. It is, once again, yet another example of God's great wisdom that He has given us with this time on earth to work on being appropriate citizens of Heaven. God blesses us with a certain amount of time here on earth. We never really know just how much time that we have here. Hence, we must use our time wisely and effectively. One should not get the impression that the length of

years, that God grants to us, here on earth is an indication of how much time we need to learn to conform our lives to that of a citizen of Heaven. Rather our time should be used in service to others, who need examples of what it means to qualify for heavenly citizenship. We are furthermore blessed to be part of a family so inspired to live in the example of St. Francis, who, in turn, showed us how to incessantly prepare to become citizens of Heaven. Consequently, in living as St. Francis inspires us to, we learn to love living as God wants us to. Our life's service and humility should not be a chore. Instead, we are to live happily in submission to God's will and our commitments as Franciscans. If we really do want to get into Heaven, we need to attentively and assiduously re-examine our attitudes, impulses and actions. We must commit to finding ways to recognize those attitudes, impulses and actions that have no place in heaven and cast them away. We must confess, do penance and reform our lives and ways to that which is in true accordance with and in a manner acceptable and deserving to be in God's presence.

1. St. Francis'  
*Letter to All the Faithful*

## **Fr. Matthias' Message**

Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm Cap  
Regional Spiritual Assistant

### **Rebuild My Church**

We have been reminded so many times of our call as Franciscans, a call originally given to our founder, St. Francis himself, to "Rebuild my church, for it is falling into ruin." Has there ever been a time in our lives when this call has been more obvious and urgent?

The media today is filled with news and articles describing the failure of the Church with regard to sexual abuse. The sexual abuse scandal has dominated the news and it is not going to end. Many of these articles and speeches offer solutions and some of these solutions are outrageous and even extreme; e.g. the call for the resignation of the Pope, the end of the requirement for celibacy, etc. One solution offered is the idea of the laity taking over the Church. This would mean that bishops and priests would continue to administer the Sacraments, but the administration of dioceses, seminaries and Catholic schools would be the responsibility of the laity. Clergy would not administer finances. Accusations of sexual abuse would be given to lay boards, not to bishops. The laity would make the appointment of bishops and pastors or priest assignments. Such a solution seems almost ridiculous at first blush.

Bishops, on the other hand, seem to offer spiritual solutions; repentance, prayer, fasting, etc. which are all necessary and good. However, I can't help but think of the Secular Franciscan Order, and their call not only to practice prayer, fasting and repentance, but the radical transformation of the Order in the last forty years

where the Seculars have, in a sense, taken over their own Order. In the past, spiritual Assistants, friars ran the Third Order. The Spiritual Assistant called meetings, dominated the gatherings, and even in some cases, controlled the finances, actually collected the fair share and the monthly contributions. But things have changed with the new Rule. Yes, there are fewer fraternities in the United States, and there are fewer members. But the members are better formed. The Seculars give the formation and run the programs. A few fraternities, which have no Spiritual Assistant, seem to be doing well. The Seculars have picked up the reins and steered the fraternity and they have grown.

One example I want to highlight was the recent Regional Day of Mission and Identity, which was held. The Seculars provided the pastries and coffee, they sold religious items, they coordinated the registration and collected the offerings for the day. They also chose the venue, they planned the day, they made the schedule for the day and most importantly, all the talks were given by Seculars. There were three priests present, chosen by the Seculars, who gave Benediction, heard confessions and celebrated the Mass. But it was the Seculars who ran the day. One of the diocesan priests who was present was so impressed by the day he came to hear confessions but stayed for the rest of the day, attended talks and concelebrated at the Mass. He spoke so highly and wanted to know more about the Secular Franciscan Order.

Many of us can give similar examples of the running of council meetings, planning of fraternity gatherings, days of recollection and retreats, where

the Seculars have truly made the Order their Order. These efforts show the possibility of a rebuilding of the Church, a Church in which the Seculars, not the clergy or the friars are 'in charge' but it is the Seculars. Such a solution as mentioned above does not seem so ridiculous at second blush.

### **Things Franciscans Do...**

Louise Sandberg, ofs  
Minister, Bl. Raymond Lull Frat.

God is here with us as we do our best to do what Christ gives us to do as Francis instructed us. I live in gratitude for my fraternity, for St Francis and Pope Francis, and for a church which serves the poor. This year God gave me a mission to Uganda with Betty Lloyd OFS and her daughter, Tamara Stewart from Virginia, led by a Secular Franciscan, Stephen H. Smith, OFS. We dedicated a water source for a school where a child died of typhoid. Drink to the thirsty. We heard some of the children there were having just water for lunch. We fed the hungry and even collected enough to build a soup kitchen and feed the 580 children in that school for a year. We clothed the naked, visited and prayed for the sick, and extended our fraternity's prison ministry by visiting and praying for the imprisoned including men, women and children. And we prayed with women from the street for healing of their memories of abuse... God calls us daily. Maybe the call will be to a big mission, or maybe within our own family. We must wash whatever feet God brings us to. Amen

## Promise

Peter D'Amato, ofs  
Minister, O.L.Q.A. Fraternity

*I, by the grace of God, renew my baptismal promises and consecrate myself to the service of his Kingdom. Therefore, in my secular state, I promise to live all the days of my life the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order by observing its rule of life. May the grace of the Holy Spirit, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our holy father St. Francis, and the fraternal bonds of community always be my help, so that I may reach the goal of perfect Christian Love.*

*(formula for profession)*

We are people of the 'Promise,' children of the 'Covenant' God made with the patriarchs and fulfilled in Christ's life and death on the cross. Our act of commitment, our profession as Secular Franciscans is a public acknowledgement of our identity with Abraham and the Patriarchs in faith. It is not simply a renewal of our baptismal promises but a commitment to enter into them more deeply; to ask for that additional portion of the 'Spirit' for which Elisha yearned and Elijah questioned. But we believe that it must be so; for nothing is impossible with God to the man of faith!

By our profession we bind ourselves to this Divine Promise in a specific manner: that is to follow Christ as Francis of Assisi, our holy father, set down for us. We unite ourselves to the great Franciscan Family, its traditions and its spirituality. We redefine and intensify our relationship with God and His Church. This is our 'double portion'; our Franciscan

birthright. Cherish it!

Profession, then, is not a one act play. It is not an agreement, which we casually made once upon a time and, perhaps, renew as we wish. It is an ongoing, daily act of conversion; a lifelong striving for Christian perfection inspired by the vision of St. Francis and enabled by the Holy Spirit. It places upon us the responsibility to get to know our father Francis more intimately and to understand our Secular Franciscan way of life more thoroughly; for by this promise, we accept this way as our primary spiritual niche, our fraternal vehicle of sanctification. So, then, not only are we people of the Promise, we identify that Promise through our unique Franciscan charism. By it, we enter into a special relationship with Jesus and his Church; one that brings with it its own special graces; our double blessing.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, we celebrated James Goodwin's profession as a member of our fraternity. While this event is a cause for joy and celebration, it is also a chance for all of us to pause and contemplate its meaning and the progress of our own lives within our own Franciscan Community. It's an opportunity to dwell upon those words of commitment and rededicate ourselves to its spiritual ideals. May all of us renew our own pledge of fidelity to Church and Fraternity. Elisha asked for a double portion and maybe Elijah wondered. But I am thinking that it was James who was twice blessed for sure on a Saturday in Summer

**Yes, this is what I want !**

*(And) May whoever observes all this be filled in heaven with the blessing of the most high Father, and on earth with that of his beloved Son, together with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and all the powers of heaven and all the saints. (St. Francis of Assisi)*

## Crisis

Peter D'Amato, ofs.  
Editor, Tau Cross Newsletter

Recent revelations regarding the Church's managing of the issue of clerical abuse of minors raises many serious questions. In its long history the Catholic Church has been challenged by many serious crises but none, some say, which strike at the very core of its morality, its very heart. This demands serious reflection and a response from we in the pews.

As Secular Franciscans, who take to heart the words of Christ to Francis: "Rebuild my Church," these words become a special mandate to act, both personally and as an Order.

Below is a passage excerpted from the National Fraternity letter sent to us all. We should read this brief paragraph carefully and then move on to the full letter itself. At the bottom there is a link to that letter on the Internet.

Read and Reflect:

*We were founded as the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. All of us in our individual life, in our fraternities, in our regions and our national fraternity must do penance for this great sin. Some demons can only be cast out through prayer and fasting. (Mark 9:29) This is our call to action! Our Lord asked St. Francis to rebuild the Church which was falling into ruin. Are we called to do anything less as followers of Francis? Francis lived his vocation authentically as a living example of Gospel Life. We must do the same. Only by living an authentic Gospel life will our light shine and the Church be rebuilt.*

Please read on:

**<https://secularfranciscansusa.org/2018/08/26/a-message-to-secular-franciscans-regarding-the-recent-scandal-in-the-churches-of-pennsylvania/>**

## A YouFra Update

Jean D'Onofrio, ofs  
Regional Young & Young  
Adult Animator

Peace and Good ! Francis'  
greeting to all he met--

When you write Peace and Good as either an opening statement of greeting, or a closing in an email, you'll be noticed !! What a way to spread the Good News, and proclaim your vocation!

When you give out your email address for someone's I-phone, how about adding OFS after your last name? It won't mess up the contact list, and for sure, it'll be a conversation starter about what are those initials after you.

The Fall semester started at the Stony Brook Campus and I have introduced myself to the new full time priest chaplain there. Bishop Barres has taken a new direction in campus ministry and has also contracted with Focus missionaries so there are also 4 recent college graduates who are also working with the students. I offered my personal assistance as well as the Region's, and I hope that the work that was started by the previous student board will continue, but I don't know...

Finally, I'd like to thank Peter (and Alicia) for all their efforts with our newsletter and for always graciously including YYA information as a regular column! God Bless you !!!

In His Joy!, Jean



## Prayer for Healing Victims of Abuse

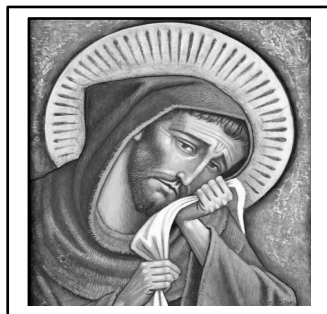
God of endless love  
ever caring, ever strong  
always present, always just;  
You gave your only Son  
to save us by the blood of his  
cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,  
join to your own suffering  
the pain of all who have been hurt  
in body, mind, and spirit  
by those who betrayed the trust  
placed in them.

Hear our cries as we agonize  
over the harm done to our  
brothers and sisters.  
Breathe wisdom into our prayers,  
soothe restless hearts with hope,  
steady shaken spirits with faith;  
Show us the way to justice and  
wholeness,  
enlightened by truth and enfolded  
in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,  
heal your people's wounds  
and transform our brokenness.  
Grant us courage and wisdom,  
humility, and grace, so that we  
may act with justice and find  
peace in you.

We ask this through Christ, our  
Lord. Amen



## Around the Region

### Admission Professions

#### Deaths

- 08/08:** Lori Peiper, ofs.  
St. Barnabas Fraternity  
**09/17:** Jennie Iannotti, ofs  
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity

#### Elections

- 07/22:** Nancy Courtemanche, ofs  
Elected Minister Cure of Ars  
Fraternity  
**09/07:** Louise Sandberg, ofs  
Re-elected Minister  
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity  
**09/17:** Corazon Bustamante, ofs  
Re-elected Minister  
St. Mary Queen of Angels Frat.

#### Activities

- 08/06-07:** F.L.I.C. held at.  
Mount Alvernia Retreat House  
Wappingers Falls  
**08/18:** Identity and Mission Conf.  
Held at St. Anthony H.S. Melville  
Sponsor  
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Frat.  
**08/18:** HELP Suffolk Fair,  
held at facility in Bellport  
Sponsor: New Pentecost Frat.

#### Upcoming Events

- 10/3 & 10/4:** Various Transitus  
Liturgies see page 5  
**12/01:** Advent Day of Retreat with  
Brother Richard Contino, ofsf to  
be held at St. Anthony H. S.  
See the Ad on Page 5



## Early Reminder:

### The Advent Day of Recollection

Saturday December 1

St. Anthony High School  
275 Wolf Hill Road  
Melville, NY

AM & PM Conferences with  
Brother Richard Contino OSF

AM: Breakfast

PM: Brown Bag Lunch

Fee will be \$15.00

Contact: Pete D'Amato, or

Alicia D'Amato  
at  
[damato1@optonline.net](mailto:damato1@optonline.net)  
(Preferred)  
or  
631-331-7680

## Fall Gathering

DATE: October 27: 9:30-3:00.  
St. Helen's Church Cafeteria.  
157-10 83<sup>rd</sup> Street.  
Howard Beach, NY

Parking across from Church

Mass

Guest Speakers

Agenda: TBA  
Breakfast Provided  
Brown Bag Lunch

All are welcome!

## TRANSITUS SERVICES

Thursday, 10/3 at 7P.M.  
St Adalbert (lower church)  
52-29 83<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Elmhurst, Queens, NY

Thursday, 10/3 at 7P.M.  
St Matthew's Chapel(school)  
35 N. Service Road.  
Dix Hills, NY

Thursday, 10/3 at 7 P.M.  
St. Joseph the Worker Church  
510 Narragansett Ave,  
East Patchogue, NY

Friday, 10/4 at 7:30 P.M.  
St. Joseph Church  
Church St.  
Kings Park, NY

## Seculars

### At Work...



### ...in Fraternity



## REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**Minister:** Raymond Clarke (516)  
374-1521; [ra.clarke899@gmail.com](mailto:ra.clarke899@gmail.com)

**Vice Minister:** Frank Scotto  
(917)771-4935; [fspilot@twc.com](mailto:fspilot@twc.com)

**Secretary:** Alicia D'Amato 631)  
331-7680; [damato1@optonline.net](mailto:damato1@optonline.net)

**Treasurer:** John Barry, 516-872-  
0812; [barygolf1@aol.com](mailto:barygolf1@aol.com)

**Formation Director:** G. Keenan,  
(631) 737-5029, [gkeenan238@optonline.net](mailto:gkeenan238@optonline.net)

**Councilor: Jean Thomas** (718)  
659-8223; [jthomas795@verizon.net](mailto:jthomas795@verizon.net)

**Councilor:** Augusta Van Duzen,  
(917)539-0385; [amvand@verizon.net](mailto:amvand@verizon.net)

**Councilor:** Anthony DaVino (631) 974-  
4097 [leadmetotherock@aol.com](mailto:leadmetotherock@aol.com)

**Spiritual Assistant:** Fr. Matthias  
Wesnofske, ofm, Cap. (631) 286-7921  
ext 28; [mwesnof1@aol.com](mailto:mwesnof1@aol.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 Alicia D'Amato at P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email at: [damato1@optonline.net](mailto:damato1@optonline.net). Address correspondence to editor, Peter D'Amato, P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email: [damato1@optonline.net](mailto:damato1@optonline.net). TEL: 631-331-7680



Holy Poverty Admissions: L-R Dcn Michael Metzдорff  
Betty Birkmier, Michael Gaffney, Teresa White, Pauline  
DiCicco, Minister, Bro. Vincent Adams, ofsf, SA



Ernie DeStefano and Marty Walsh  
At Cormaria Retreat



Doris Acham, Elizabeth Uqdah, Jerome Hendrix  
at the Retreat



Dollic De Freitas, ofs, Profession



Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity



Ceremony of Welcome: Maria Lussoro,  
(Formation D) Grace Callahan, Janet McEnany,  
(Sponsor) Dorothy Neal, (Sponsor) Geri Lecessi