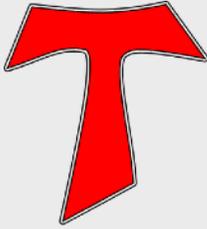


TAU SHALOM

Emerging Fraternity | Secular Franciscan Order | La Crosse, WI



Upcoming Dates

Wednesday 27 May,
6:00 pm Regular Meeting

Saturday 13 June,
9:00 am. Business Meeting

Prayer Intentions

For all who are suffering financial distress as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. May St. Joseph, who provided for the Holy Family by the work of his hands, be their powerful intercessor.

We pray also for those who are ill and those who have died, for farmers and all who labor to supply our material and spiritual needs.



Minister's Message

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I surely miss each one of you as we continue to practice social distancing and other changes to our normal life routines due to the Covid-19 virus. I miss our in-person formation meetings. I miss our hugs, laughter, smiles, and of course our plentiful feasts!!

However, what I exceedingly miss now more than ever before is Jesus Christ at the celebration of the Mass truly present in the Eucharist: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. I learned a while back that I am a person who could be labeled as HEP. A "Highly Emotional Person". This is especially true during Mass when I approach the alter to receive Holy Communion. My chest is heavy, my eyes become tearful, my hands sometimes shake. I had just prayed my prayer before Communion: "Dear Lord, may this your true body and blood keep me safe for all eternity and may I please Lord be transformed into what I now consume".

I had a protestant friend tell me once that if us Catholics really believed in the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, we'd

Meeting Information



Initial formation and welcoming ceremonies are back on! We are encouraged to continue our formation journey during these days of the Covid-19 outbreak. Please see the Formation Station article in this newsletter for your "assignment."

We continue to meet via video and teleconference for prayer, check in and formation. Watch for communication on how to connect to the conferences.

all fall on our knees and tremble with fear and joy as we walked down the isles towards the front of church. I must say that he is correct in his observation. We should approach the altar with fear and trembling, but do we really?

Our dear brother St. Francis had this to say about the Eucharist. In the Letter to the Entire Order Francis writes in poetic vein: "Let everyone be struck with fear, let the whole world tremble, and let the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest! O wonderful loftiness and stupendous dignity! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! The lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles himself that for our salvation he hides himself under an ordinary piece of bread! Brothers, look at the humility of God, and pour out your hearts before him! Humble yourselves that you may be exalted by him! Hold nothing back of yourselves for yourselves, that he who gives himself totally to you may receive you totally!"

YES, I truly miss you all ...

Your humble servant and minister,

Kevin, OFS

Spiritual Assistant's Message

Peace and all good!

These are days of a pandemic. These are days of prayer and surrender to the care of God.

When the Franciscan directors of the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program met last week, one of our Franciscan scholars offered a reflection on why this pandemic is a "Franciscan moment". He pointed out that the response may be in the first lines of the Francis' testament to his friars:

"This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became

a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me. After that I did not wait long before leaving the world.”

One must reflect on the intensity of these lines since it seems Francis is saying he embraced his own vulnerability. The lepers were “infected” and disconnected from society – there was nothing anyone could do for them except to keep them isolated.

I trembled when I heard the short 25 minute reflection. I wondered why was God wanting me to hear this? Maybe Francis re-captured his connectivity with compassion for a group of people who were quarantined from humanity.

I will spend more time gazing upon the Cross of San Damiano from which I know I will hear those resounding words “Repair my House”.

Lord, enlighten the darkness of our minds....

Father Conrad, O.F.M.

JPIC Corner

Each year, Franciscans gather at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days’ annual conference to build relationships, hear about advocacy opportunities and take action together. Because of the pandemic, the in-person gathering was cancelled and the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) hosted a virtual gathering to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. A full recording of the event as well as links to the presentation handouts can be found at [\(FAN EAD\)](#).

The Franciscan Action Network (<https://franciscanaction.org/>) is an organization that brings together all parts of the Franciscan family to work on social justice issues. Specifically the four pillars of; peace making, care for creation, poverty, and human rights.

Inspired by the Gospel of Jesus, and the example of Saints Francis and Clare, the Franciscan Action Network is a collective Franciscan voice seeking to transform United States public policy related to peace making, care for creation, poverty, and human rights. Franciscan Action Network Mission

On Friday, April 24th, I was able to attend a Zoom meeting where Franciscan Sister of Rochester, MN, Joan Brown, OSF, Executive Director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light was the guest speaker. Sr. Joan’s talk was inspiring and challenging as she declared society to be in an “evolutionary, transformational moment” and called for us to be repairers of the world. She pointed out that we are in a kind of collective dark night or liminal place and we must act with intentionality...understanding that the way we have done things in the past may not be the way we should do things in the future.

Part of Sister Joan’s talk focused on the Canticle of Creation. Specifically:

1. The deeper meaning of the paradigm/worldview shift of Sister, Brother and kinship
2. Be Praised and gratitude
3. Sister Death who is a reality all around us and within us
4. Community - the whole message of the Canticle

The next FAN Zoom meeting will be a Laudato Si' Webinar in celebration of the 5th anniversary of the encyclical's release. It will be held **Tuesday, May 19th at 2pm CST**. [Please click here to register](#). I invite you all to register and attend.

“Life is a banquet, even with a crust of bread, if it is shared in community.” Dorothy Day

John Ott, OFS



“Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.”

Laudato Si', #12

Formation Station

Hello Franciscan Sisters and Brothers! A quick update on initial and ongoing formation for the fraternity. National forwarded a document to all regions and fraternities called *Guidelines for Fraternal Life During Social Distancing*. I fully expect for us to go over those details at the next meeting, but in regards to formation, initial and ongoing formation **can continue** in this virtual format. With that being said we will be looking at Chapter 16 – *When you pray...* (pgs. 176-188) from the Franciscan Journey booklet.

As we are reminded of our conversations on Rule 8 from our last meeting, I point to several sections of chapter 16 that are particularly note worthy to our reflection and future conversations:

•Pg. 177 – Passage from *God is Love* by Benedict XVI: “...Clearly, the Christian who prays does not claim to be able to change God’s plans or correct what he has foreseen. Rather, he seeks an encounter with the Father of Jesus Christ, asking God to be present with the consolations of the Spirit to him and his work...”

•Pg. 178 – Constitutions address a number of issues in regard to personal and public prayer (summarized):

- Contemplation is a normal prayerful stance for Franciscans...
- We grow in dedication of the Church as a product of our OFS prayer. Unity is an ultimate reality.
- The Eucharist is the center of our lives. We are called to be constantly present at the gathering of parish Eucharist.
- Liturgy of the Hours unites us to the prayer of the Church.
- The Ritual of the SFO offers models of prayer and rites for celebrations.

•Pg. 179 – 182: These pages reflect on how prayer unites us to the Love of God and Jesus, how we are called into life of the trinity, and the several beautiful models of prayer that can be used to reach that spiritual intimacy with our creator.

○ And lastly, please place extra attention to the section on the Eucharist in on pages 183 – 186. Several points to note:

- We are called to Full and Active Participation in the Liturgy.
- A deeper union with Christ, a closer identity with all the faithful, a commitment to the poor, and a pledge of future glory are the first fruits of Holy Communion.
- The Eucharist is a unifying communal celebration.

Chapter 16 gives us much food for thought on our own prayer life and our dedication to the Eucharist as Franciscans. The word that continuously made itself visible to me during this chapter was UNION. We are all being drawn into the life of the trinity. Our dedication to prayer and the sacrament of the Eucharist changes who we are. It makes us more like Christ. The process not only unites me to Christ, but to each and every other person on this journey. St. Francis did this well and all the Franciscans in the world try to follow suit. So may we continue to be deeply united to each other and may we continuously meet in prayer through the Holy Spirit!

Questions for personal consideration/reflection:

- a. What do you consider to be the most important in seeking to become more contemplative in your life? What are some personal obstacles to developing a contemplative spirit?
- b. Give your definition of the purpose of prayer.
- c. Explain why the Eucharist is so important in the life of a Christian who is also a Franciscan?

Emilio Alvarez, OFS

a Poem for Our Times

Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

—Lynn Ungar 3/11/20

Thank you to Ray for submitting this poem to the newsletter, and for obtaining permission from the author to include it.

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order - Article 8

As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

[In addition to continual spiritual renewal] the other precondition is to make worship of the Father as central in our own lives as it was in Christ's. The Secular Franciscan, then, communicates and unites with the Lord through the sacraments (again, especially the Eucharist), the liturgy of the hours, contemplation, and any other expression of prayer.

from The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order with Catechism and Instructions (1981)

Birthdays and Profession Anniversaries

Fr Conrad Targonski - anniversary of ordination May 31, 1975

from our Treasurer

Even though we are not meeting in person, and there is no basket to be passed, you may still contribute financially to our fraternity! Checks may be made payable to "Secular Franciscan Order, Tau Shalom" and sent to:

Frederick Ellis
1320 Pinecrest Lane, #13
Onalaska, WI 54650-3479



Grace Notes

We Need Each Other

My dear brothers and sisters,

During this time of pandemic many things, both spiritual and temporal, have been taken from us. From the comfort of going to Mass to the comfort of family and friends. The virus knows no distinction between rich or poor, health or disease, male or female, or even between believers and unbelievers. We are all in the same boat, or some may say in the same ark. But Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant and in Her we have our life boat. She is the One who leads us to Jesus, Her Son and Our Lord. She is crying for all the unbelief that we find ourselves in; our belief in God who loves us even still, and is calling out to us in love--an Eternal Love that knows no bounds. He, it is, who is calling us back to His Divine Mercy; back to a life of boundless love--Love for God and love for each other. Let us open ourselves up to this love. Let us pray for one another for that is true peace. Peace in our hearts and peace in our world.

We will get through this evil but, even in the mist of it, will we be made new or will we perish? We have the choice!

So let us pray for one another, especially now, that God's Will will be done in our lives for His Greater Glory. For only in His Love will we find contentment and true peace, a peace that only He can give, not as the world gives; but as only HE can give!!



Pax et Bonum,

Frederick, OFS