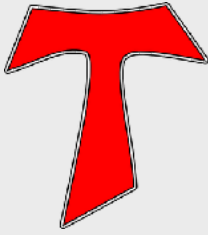


TAU SHALOM

Emerging Fraternity | Secular Franciscan Order | La Crosse, WI



Upcoming Dates

Wednesday 23 Sept.
Regular Meeting, with
initial Formation

Saturday 3 Oct. Transitus
of St Francis, following 5
pm Mass

Sunday 4 Oct. Feast of St.
Francis, during regular
masses

Saturday 10 Oct.
Business Meeting, with
ongoing Formation

Prayer Intentions

For all who are suffering
due to the COVID-19
pandemic

For the US General Election
in November, that elected
candidates will be the
choice of the Holy Spirit.



Minister's Message

Pax et Bonum my dear sisters and brothers of Tau Shalom!

This month I defer my minister's message to the late Deacon Tom Bellow, former Minister of the National Secular Franciscan Order. What follows are excerpts from a minister's message he wrote to the entire order. At the end of his article he lists several possible apostolates that Tau Shalom could consider.

"In my last article, I listed and elaborated the four marks of a Franciscan Gathering: "Prayer, Formation, Fraternal Sharing and Necessary Business, and in this order!". In this article, please permit me to go back to the primary focus and expand forward to the four marks of a vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity at the Local, Regional, National or International Level.



Upcoming Meeting Information

We continue to meet virtually, using the Zoom platform. Please refer to the email from Emilio with information about logging into the Zoom meeting.

From our Treasurer

Even though we're not meeting in person, please continue to support Tau Shalom with your financial contributions. Checks may be made payable to "Secular Franciscan Order, Tau Shalom." Send your contributions to:

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

Thus, we should first **pray** at every fraternity gathering because the primary focus or reason for the existence of a fraternity is "the salvation of souls," where we are working with the great grace of God to achieve our individual salvation AND, at the same time, the salvation of our families, our fraternity, our friends, indeed, all souls. We pray first because spirituality is the First mark of a vibrant fraternity.

Formation is our Second mark, both in individual meetings and in the fraternity as a whole. Of course, the grace of God can save souls not well-formed, but a well-formed mind and heart humble and open to that grace make the Spirit's work a lot easier! Our fraternities need to pray for, work and focus on, true Secular Franciscan formation.

This formation is a threefold process of information to effect formation in a process of continual transformation. We take pertinent information from the Gospels, from Holy Mother Church, from the lives of Francis and Clare and all the Franciscan saints, from our own SFO Rule and General Constitutions, to structure and effect formation. With the grace of God, this formation, if effective, achieves "that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls 'conversion.' Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily" (SFO Rule 7).

Formation must deepen and expand our understanding of our Catholic faith, our vocation within fraternity, our Franciscan charism and, finally, our Gospel witnessing out in the world. With the love and mercy of God, the example of Jesus Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of this Trinitarian process of information, formation and transformation should yield better Catholics, Franciscans, workers, spouses, parents, citizens; in short, better people. Thus, formation must lead to the salvation of souls.

Third, we are called to **fraternal sharing**, to social time together, because we are called to be family, the Third mark of every vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity. With our Baptisms, we are already sisters and brothers of the same "Our Father." Our Professions summon us into fraternity, into a spiritual family. One Secular Franciscan is never enough; there must be at least five of us to canonically establish a fraternity. Our individual holiness must be built by service to

that fraternity, service to our brothers and sisters in need, starting with “not turning your back on your own” (Isaiah, 58:7).

We cannot serve our brothers and sisters in need if we do not know what those needs are. We cannot know those needs if we do not know who our brothers and sisters are. We cannot know who our brothers and sisters are without true Secular Franciscan fellowship, spending time with one another, sharing with one another, breaking bread with one another, praying with one another. Salvation for all is salvation for each of us individually. Fourth and finally, a fraternity must witness to Christ and to the Gospels. We are to be a “community of love” (SFO Rule 22) to all in the world.

This witnessing may well involve some form of sacrifice or suffering because in its original meaning, a “martyr” was a “witness.” We witness to save the world and save ourselves; again, this is our fraternity’s primary “business,” but the witnessing itself may take many forms.”

Your Fraternity may adopt a family through the Franciscan Family Apostolate, run by a Secular Franciscan – <http://www.openhearts.org>

You may adopt a missionary through the Franciscan Mission Service – <http://franciscanmissionservice.org/default.aspx>

If you are concerned with national issues, you might contact the Franciscan Action Network – <http://www.franciscanaction.org>

If you want to work with international issues, you might contact Franciscans International – <http://www.franciscansinternational.org>

You may get involved through your parish outreach or a local soup kitchen, hospital or detention center. These and so many other apostolates are great as long as the fraternity realizes that the apostolate exists to build up the fraternity, not the fraternity to build up the apostolate. Nor is it necessary that every fraternity have an external apostolate. Witnessing may work best in our caring for our own – not losing anyone who can no longer attend meetings or even those who have fallen away, but still seek help, still seek conversion. Spirituality, Formation, Family and Witnessing all for the sake of “the salvation of souls” offer us the Primary Focus and Four Marks of a vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity. May God give us the grace, the Living Presence of Christ and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit when we gather to worship, to form, to share, to witness in Christ’s Name, always striving to keep our fraternities and our souls alive and focused on salvation. We pray and live in the Peace and Love of our Risen Savior. Tom”

Your humble servant and minister,

Kevin, OFS

Spiritual Assistant's Message

We are entering upon the "season of St Francis". The Feast of the Stigmata on the 17th of September begins a solemn remembrance of Francis's adherence to the Cross. The Transitus, celebrated on October 3, invites us to reflect on our faithfulness to Franciscan life and its reward in eternal life.

And in this year of 2020, the year which we will remember as the year of the pandemic, Holy Father Pope Francis offers us another Franciscan flavored comfort: a letter of hope and healing, his third encyclical named *FRATELLI TUTTI*.

The name "We are all brothers {and sisters}" is taken from the Admonitions of Saint Francis. These are 28 short reminders to the friars about observance of the ascetical life. Replete with a knowledge of human nature and with practical good sense, they are used by Pope Francis to encourage the world to pursue equality and good will among all people in the face of violence and COVID-19.

The Admonition used by the Holy Father is below:

"Look at the Good Shepherd, my brothers (fratelli tutti). To save his sheep he endured the agony of the Cross. They followed him in persecutions, in ignominy, hunger, and thirst, in humiliations and temptations, and so on. And for this God rewarded them with eternal life. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves; the saints endured all that, but we who are servants of God try to win honor and glory by recounting and making known what they have done" (Admonition 6)

We look forward to the encyclical's publication on feast of the transitus of St Francis and will be signed at his tomb.

Fr Conrad OFM

JPIC Corner

Lacy and I took the opportunity this past week to immerse ourselves in the immense beauty of God's creation. We sailed from Bayfield through the Apostle Islands where we explored hidden caves and beaches that were just breathtaking. Our guide on this trip was passionate about the natural world and was excited to share his knowledge.

The immensity of Lake Superior is hard to fathom until I was looking out on it. The lake stretched for hundreds of miles ahead and hundreds of feet below. As we moved through the water, I thought each and every one of you, who are so special to me, and the gifts you bring to our group and to the world

Just as our Rule tells us to "respect all creatures, animate and inanimate" (18) we also are called to build "a more fraternal and evangelical world" (14). I am beginning to see the strong connection between the two. There is so much strife and division in the world today it is easy to forget the

majesty of God's creation. Taking time away helped to put into perspective things that are really important.

This experience has prompted me to rededicate myself to the natural world around me in all its splendor, big and small. It is easy to forget and disconnect...this is a wonderful reminder.

John Ott, OFS

“The beauty of the fall is unbelievable in this part of the country. I can only say with the psalmist: ‘The hills are girded with joy, they shout for joy, yes, they sing’ (see Psalms 65:12-13).”

-Henri Nouwen



Formation Station

Hello Sisters and Brothers! This month we are diving into chapter 20 of our Franciscan Journey Book. Chapter 20 focuses on article 12 of the rule and is titled Freedom to Love. Article 12 states: Witnessing to the good yet to come, and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.

Freedom to Love - I have always been interested in the definition of freedom and now-a-days the word freedom tends to be mentioned often in our society, especially when talking about our rights or within the conversation of politics. For myself, I remember asking questions early on in my life that referenced our gift of free will from God and the implications of who we would be without it.

The chapter asks very important questions about our ability to understand this definition of freedom. As it is stated in the Compendium - Catechism of the Catholic Church (#363) - “Freedom is the power given by God to act or not to act, to do this or to do that, and so perform deliberate actions on one’s own responsibility. Freedom characterizes properly human acts. The more one

does what is good, the freer one becomes. Freedom attains its proper perfection when it is directed toward God, the highest good and our beatitude. Freedom implies also the possibility of choosing between good and evil. The choices of evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to the slavery of sin."

It can sometimes be confusing to the non-Christian or the non-believer when we tell them that we become "freer" when we follow the "rules" of the Church or of our faith. Individuals can often see our faith as restraining or controlling, but quite the opposite occurs. Once I realized that behind the "rules" of our faith was an understanding of how to be in proper relationship with God, our brothers and sisters, ourselves, and creation things dramatically changed for me. Even more so when I specifically was given the freedom and opportunity to choose "yes!" to this Secular Franciscan Profession. As it says on pg. 221 of the manual, "*Profession* is our free response to the call of the Holy Spirit to commit ourselves to the Franciscan spirit. We freely choose to live within the framework of Franciscanism. The freedom to follow Francis' spirit becomes part of our personal identity. Our trust in and love for God continues to grow and bring peace and joy in its wake. It moves us to love one another just as Jesus loves us."

So let us continue to dedicate ourselves to a deeper understanding how we define freedom by looking at it in the context of God's deep love for us. Let us continue to use Saints Francis and Clare as a model of how we can respond to God as they responded unconditionally. Continue this reflection by reading the short reflection located at the bottom of pg. 222 and on pg. 225 of the chapter. Please review the questions on pg. 224 and come prepared to join our discussion on how our profession as Secular Franciscans is our free unique response to love God completely and unconditionally.

Peace always,

Emilio Alvarez, OFS

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order - Article 12

Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.

The result of simple living in gospel poverty is freedom to seek and share the great treasure of the kingdom: loving God and neighbor.

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

Birthdays and Profession Anniversaries

Tony Seger - Birthday September 14

Emilio Alvarez - Birthday September 15

John Abendroth - Anniversary of Profession September 17, 2005
Mary Seger - Birthday September 20
Emilio Alvarez - Anniversary of Profession September 24, 2018
Peggy Dubois - Anniversary of Profession September 24, 2018
Kevin Dubois - Anniversary of Profession September 24, 2018
John Ott - Anniversary of Profession September 24, 2018
Charlie Peters - Anniversary of Profession September 24, 2018
John Ott - Birthday October 15
Mary Seger - Anniversary of Profession October 21, 1984

From the National Fraternity...

It was unanimously decided to cancel the 2021 Quinquennial (The "Q", that was scheduled to be held in August 2021 at Phoenix, AZ).

In addition, the National Fraternity Council (National Executive Council and Regional Ministers) voted to postpone the Quinquennial until summer 2023.

All of these decisions were made because of the uncertainty associated with the Pandemic.

From the International Fraternity...

A message of Hope and Joy from the OFS Presidency

<https://ciofs.info/2020/08/28/message-from-ofs-presidency-hope-and-joy/>

Grace Notes

Mary Magdalene

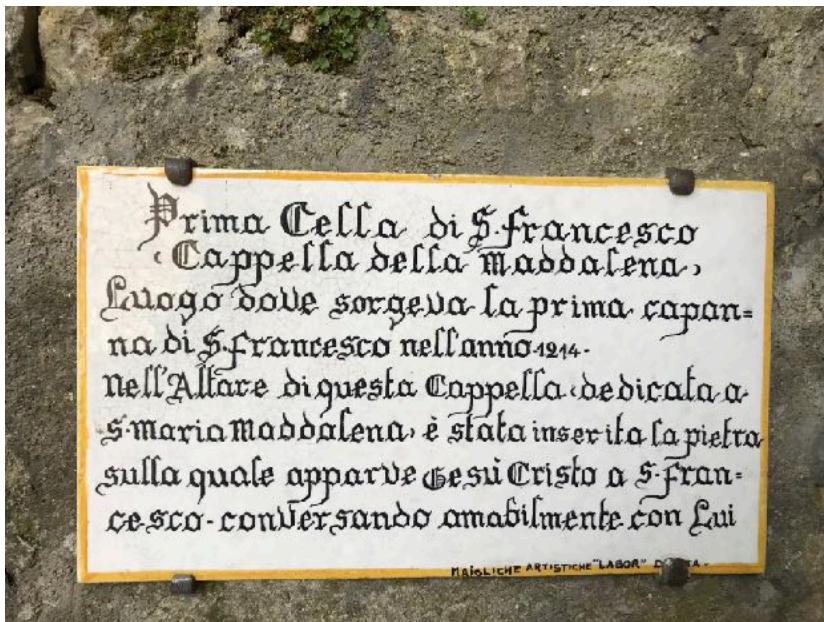
Who was this somewhat mysterious biblical character, prominent in the Gospels, frequent companion and assistant to Jesus and often called "The Apostle to the Apostles?" St Francis of Assisi had great devotion to St. Mary Magdalene, and established chapels in her honor at many of the locations where he lived and prayed. I believe his devotion to her was because he freely accepted his feminine side, and had no problem embracing Mary Magdalene, shining a light on her unique and personal friendship with Jesus as He walked on this earth.

We find that the root meaning of the word "apostle" is "one who is sent out" and Mary was clearly sent out. She was the first person recorded in the Gospels to encounter the Risen Christ and receive His command to "Go, tell my brothers...".

We hold Mary Magdalene to be a great sinner, "out of whom Jesus cast seven devils" and she has traditionally been considered to be a prostitute, although no evidence exists to support that notion. Is there some reason that when a woman is called a "great sinner" our minds run immediately to sexual sin? Wow - seven devils - that's the mark of a truly evil person, isn't it?

Maybe we should focus not on her sin, but on the fact that she was thoroughly cleansed by Jesus of the taint of evil in our world. Although not free from original sin as was Mary, our Blessed Mother, Mary Magdalene was delivered from sin and she lived her life from then on in the complete and unfettered freedom of a daughter of the King. As we all should do, and could do, if only we had the eyes to see it, the renewed mind to comprehend it and the heart to accept it. We might consider that we are all steeped in the wrong attitudes of our culture, the bad tendencies of our nature and of our innermost fears. These are our seven devils. Out of these, Jesus delivers us in order for us to walk beautifully in His light, in the freedom of the daughters and sons of God.

Mary Magdalene shines in the pages of the New Testament as an example from which we may take courage and follow. And like her, we may become apostles, ones who are sent "to go and tell His brothers and sisters."



"The first cell of St Francis, the chapel of St Mary Magdalene

The place where the first hut of Saint Francis arose in the year 1214. On the altar of this chapel dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene, the connecting rock was where Jesus Christ appeared to Saint Francis and conversed amicably" with him "

Location: La Verna. Tuscany, Italy