



Our Lady of the Rosary Secular Franciscan Fraternity Williamsburg, Virginia

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2021

September Formation



This month we will be starting to study Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, on Fraternity and Social Friendship. Please read the Introduction and Chapter 1 and answer the questions to those chapters in the study guide. All should have received an email with a copy of the guide.

FRATELLI TUTTI

POPE FRANCIS



We will also have a short presentation by Cindy Holland.

It hasn't worked out so far, but if there is time, we will discuss the article printed in the July newsletter about the Obligations of a Secular Franciscan (see below).

Important Dates:

9/19 Fraternity Meeting 1:00pm

9/24 Paul Reardon — Birthday

Live A Life Worthy of Your Call

Secular Franciscan Order – USA
National Theme - 2021



What are the Obligations of a Secular Franciscan?

Daily

- You join in the prayer of the Church by reciting a form of Liturgical prayer, suitable for Secular Franciscans.
- You try to attend Mass as often as you can.
- You say morning and night prayers.
- You say prayers before and after every meal.
- You examine your conscience nightly.
- You pray for those in need: sick, suffering, dying...
- Become an example to others through your lifestyle.
- Wear a symbol of your commitment -- a 'T' shaped Tau Cross.

Monthly

- Attend regular Fraternity meetings...
- Participate in prayers & Mass.
- Lead a discussion if you wish.
- Contribute to the Fraternity common fund for the missions, unwed mothers, and charitable causes, needy, poor...
- Try to attend a monthly Holy Hour.
- Get to confession if needed, or confess often for the grace of the sacrament.

You and Secular Franciscans

Secular Franciscans are an Order of the Church, that is, a Lay Institute. Fraternities must have

Canonical Approbation (by Canon Law) to exist. Secular Franciscans are 100% with the Church, the

Holy Father and the Magisterium. In short, it is a vocation to a Way of Life.

- You have to be called to serve.
- You learn your calling by attending meetings.
- You will never know if you are called unless you try.

Visit our website at olsrfo.weebly.com



Did you know?

Why was the TAU special to St. Francis? Why do Secular Franciscans wear the TAU Cross?



- **TAU, as a symbol of sanctity, comes from Ezekiel 9:4**
"Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a TAU on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it." It is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and looks very much like the letter "T".
- Franciscan scholarship points to St. Francis's being present at the Lateran Council in 1215
- **He would have heard** Pope Innocent III announce that every Catholic should take the TAU Cross as the symbol of their Passover
- **He would have heard** that the elect, the chosen will be marked with the sign of the TAU (Ezekiel 9:4)
- **He would have heard** the pope say that the TAU has the form as the Cross on which our Lord was crucified and that those who had mortified their flesh and conformed their life to that of Christ crucified will obtain mercy.
- From then on, **the TAU became Francis's own coat of arms** and he often used it in his writings as his personal signature.



If you wish to continue your monthly fraternity donation please send your check to treasurer, Barbara Massey, 862 Ventnor Drive, Newport News, VA 23608-8927. **Please make checks payable to SFO.**



Franciscan
JUBILEE

20th Quinquennial Congress Come Join for a Jubilee Celebration of Franciscan Joy

August 3-7, 2022
Phoenix, AZ

Registration is now open!

For more information and to register go to our national

website at: <https://secularfranciscanusa.org/>

A Franciscan Reflection on the Stigmata of St. Francis

By Jack Wintz, OFM from Franciscan Spirit Blog May 13, 2020

The Greek word *stigma* means “a scar left by a hot iron: brand,” according to *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Eleventh Edition). *Stigmata*—the plural form of the same Greek word—can also mean “bodily marks resembling the wounds of the crucified Christ.” This provides a basic background for understanding the mysterious phenomenon of the stigmata in Christian history.

I begin my reflections on the mystery of the stigmata by confessing that the first person I think of as having such bodily marks, apart from Jesus, is St. Francis of Assisi, who died in 1226. As the founder of the Franciscan Order, St. Francis is certainly a primary shaper of Franciscan spirituality. St. Francis, therefore, is a preeminent focal point in helping us contemplate the meaning of the wounds of Christ and of his own wounds and thus to come to a Franciscan understanding of suffering.

The crucified Christ appears to Francis

On two separate, dramatic occasions, Francis had a vision of Jesus, wounded in hands, feet and side, suffering on a cross. If we look carefully at the two visions we will see them as closely interrelated. Both visions are described in St. Bonaventure’s *Life of St. Francis*. It’s helpful to remember that Bonaventure, as a Franciscan theologian and spiritual writer, often described God as a God of overflowing goodness and love.

The first vision happened to Francis shortly after his conversion from a rather worldly life. After that experience, Bonaventure tells us: “One day, while Francis was praying in a secluded spot and became totally absorbed in God through his extreme fervor, Jesus Christ appeared to him fastened to the cross. Francis’ *soul melted* at the sight, and the memory of Christ’s passion was so impressed on the innermost recesses of his heart that from that hour, whenever Christ’s crucifixion came to mind, he could scarcely contain his tears and sighs.”

Bonaventure points out that from that time on Francis began “rendering humble service to lepers with human concern and devoted kindness....He visited their houses frequently, and generously distributed alms to them and with great compassion kissed their hands and their mouths.”

Francis’ vision on Mount La Verna

About two years before his death, St. Francis had a second vision of Christ fastened to the cross. Here is how St. Bonaventure sets the scene in his *Life of St. Francis*: “On a certain morning about the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross [September 14], while Francis was praying on the mountainside, he saw a Seraph with six fiery and shining wings descend from the height of heaven. And when in swift flight the Seraph had reached a spot in the air near the man of God, there appeared between the wings the figure of a man crucified, with his hands and feet extended in the form of a cross and fastened to a cross. Two of the wings were lifted above his head, two were extended for flight and two covered his whole body.

“When Francis saw this, he was overwhelmed and his whole body was flooded with a mixture of joy and sorrow. He rejoiced because of gracious way Christ looked upon him under the appearance of the Seraph, but the fact that he was fastened to a cross *pierced his soul with a sword* of compassionate sorrow.”

This is a good place to say a word about the Seraph. Seraphs are those angels closest to God, burning with love as they bow before the Most High God, shouting “Holy, holy, holy!” (see Isaiah 6:2-3.) Their fiery wings, as depicted here, suggest the flaming intensity of God’s love that Christ communicated to Francis, which in turn, set Francis’ heart afire. The word *seraphic* is often used to describe Francis’ passionate style of relating to God and is often applied to the whole Franciscan Order, which is sometimes called the Seraphic Order.

The meaning of the Stigmata

As suggested earlier, St. Francis is an important key for us in unlocking the meaning of Christ’s Stigmata. September is a good month to contemplate the meaning of the Stigmata for any of us who consider ourselves followers of St. Francis. As many of us know, Franciscans celebrate the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi each year on September 17, which is an estimated date of his receiving the wounds of Christ at Mount La Verna in 1224, two years before his death.

When St. Francis saw in his vision of the Crucified Christ the incredible outpouring of God's love upon him, he was inspired to respond with the same kind of overflowing love. We too contemplate that vision and try to respond in the same spirit.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you and adore you. Like Francis, we are amazed that you held nothing back from us in pouring yourself out for us so totally through your holy wounds on the cross. We ask you to breathe forth your Holy Spirit into us and set our hearts on fire, so that, with the Spirit's help, we might respond more fully to you. Amen.

September – Month of the Holy Cross



1. Bl Joachim de Albocacer, Priest, Capuchin religious, martyr 1936
2. Bl. Martyrs de Carmes, d. 1792
3. St. Pius X, Pope, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1914
4. St. Rose of Viterbo, Virgin, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1252 Plenary Indulgence for cordbearers
5. Bl. Gentil de Matelica, Priest, religious of the Franciscan 1st Order, martyr 1340
6. Bl. Liberatus of Lauro, Priest, religious of the Franciscan 1st Order, d. 1258
7. Bl. Eugenie Picco, Virgin, religious of the Third-Order Regular [living in community, under a Rule], d. 1921
8. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
9. Bl. Seraphina Sforza, Virgin, of the Franciscan 2nd-Order; a "Poor Clare" sister, d. 1478
10. Bl. Martyrs of Japan, religious of the Franciscan 1st Order and Franciscan Third Order Seculars, d. 1622-1632
11. Bl. Bonaventure of Barcelona, lay brother, religious of the Franciscan 1st Order, d. 1684
12. Feast of the Name of Holy Mary
13. Bl. Apollinaire Franco, Priest, religious of the Franciscan 1st Order, martyr 1622
14. Exaltation of the Holy Cross
15. Feast of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows
16. Bl. Roland de Medicis, Confessor, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1386
17. Feast of the Stigmatization of St. Francis of Assisi
18. St. Joseph de Cupertino, Priest, Conventual, d. 1664
19. Bl. Louis Alleman, Bishop, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1450
20. St. Francis Mary of Camporosso, lay brother, Capuchin religious, d. 1866
21. Bl. Elizabeth Amodei, Virgin, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1498
22. St. Ignatius of Santhia, Priest, Capuchin religious, d. 1773
23. St. Pio of Peitrelcina, Priest, Capuchin religious, d. 1968
24. St. Pacific of San Severino, Priest, religious of the Franciscan 1st Order, d. 1721
25. St. Nicholas de Flue, Confessor, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1487
26. Bl. Lucy of Caltagirone, Virgin, religious of the Third-Order Regular [living in community, under a Rule], d. 1400
27. St. Elzear of Sabran, Confessor, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1323
28. Bl Bernadin of Feltre, Priest, religious of the Franciscan 1st Order, d. 1494
29. Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel
30. Bl. Charles of Blois, Confessor, Franciscan Third Order Secular, d. 1364

