

Padre Pio Fraternity

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region
Secular Franciscan Order of
Central
North Carolina

the little flowers of Padre Pio Fraternity

Minister's Memo

February 2024

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS, *Minister*

This month I'll step aside and let the words of Maddie Price speak to you about the value of serving at our apostolate Oak City Cares. Maddie, 13-year-old daughter of inquirer John Price, wrote an essay on her Christmas experience of working at Oak City. I'm so happy that John and some of you bring family members to our events. It helps us deepen all of our relationships. Here is Maddie's essay.

God can communicate with us in many ways. I think God's main way of communicating with us is by sending people to teach us things. The Trinity can communicate with us through encounters, interactions, people, and our consciences. Sometimes, the experience can be positive and helpful, but other times it can be a call to action or something we need to learn from. One experience that I had when I was positive that the Holy Spirit was present was when my family and I went to serve at Oak City Cares. This experience was both helpful and a call to action for me. It felt awesome to serve my community, but also put things in perspective for me. For a little background, at Oak City, I was in charge of handing out gift bags. (I was serving around the holidays.) The bags had necessities in them, but their contents were not identical. A couple of times, a grown man would come up to my brother (11) and me (13) and ask for deodorant/toothpaste. This was heartbreaking. First, think about how embarrassing it must have been to ask some middle schoolers for something you need for everyday life. It also showed me how much I take for granted. Think about not being able to use toothpaste when you wake up in the morning. Something else that really touched me was the people I was serving alongside. One of the women I was serving with baked cookies for the visitors and sometimes did their laundry. I realize that when writing this, I have made the residents sound all sad and gloomy. They were, in fact, the opposite. They played music and danced with each other. There were so many positive encounters with the residents, and they are normal, just like you and me; they have just had one unexpected life turn. In conclusion, God has communicated with me many times in many different ways, and I think it's important that we recognize when He is trying to tell us something.

Padre Pio Fraternity Epiphany Party 2024



Fraternity Council

Spiritual Assistant: Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM

Minister: Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Vice Minister: Dave Shick, OFS

Formation Director: Charlotte Witosky, OFS

Treasurer: Zubair Simonson, OFS

Secretary: Michael Hancock, OFS

Councilors:

Joan Monti, OFS

Jeanne Casciere, OFS

Chris Peffley, OFS

BSSF Region Minister: Ellen Ferrone, OFS

Area 3 Councilors:

Lee Cunningham, OFS &

Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, OFS

Our website: ofscentralnc.org

Facebook: Padre Pio Fraternity Secular Franciscan
Order of Central North Carolina

Apostolates

JPIC & Newsletter: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

Oak City Cares:

MaryLou Holloway, OFS & Mary Cockrill, OFS

On-going Formation Team:

Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

Prayer Requests:

Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS

CPO & Fraternity Library: Maureen Copan, OFS

Website:

Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Hospitality:

Maureen McFadden, OFS & Alma Hammer, OFS

Sunshine: Frank Peluso, OFS & Laurie Wilburn

We welcome those who would like to learn more about the Secular Franciscans. Join us for our monthly gatherings on the fourth Sunday of each month, beginning at 2:30 p.m. Location: Founders Room at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, North Carolina.

Happy Birthday

2 Joan Monti, OFS

4 Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

11 Michael Hancock, OFS

18 Marie Bianca, OFS

21 Nkem Okereke, OFS

21 Israel Pattison

28 Laurie Wilburn, OFS

Profession Anniversary

Carolyn Townes, OFS

February 13, 2000

The Pope's Prayer Intentions for February

For the terminally ill

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

Padre Pio Fraternity Rite of Extraction 2024



An Important Note for Upcoming Elections by Frank Peluso, OFS

We would like to thank the Nomination Committee for their work and all those who have accepted nominations so far. The elections committee consisted of Jeannette Cottone, OFS, John Halada, OFS, Michael Hancock, OFS, Joan Monti, OFS, Suzie Nelson, OFS and Chris Peffley, OFS. Those who have accepted so far (The February gathering will allow additional floor nominations; remember you can also nominate yourself, if you wish): Minister: Richard Hammer, OFS and Sharon Winzeler, OFS; Vice Minister: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, Brian Denison, OFS, David Schick, OFS, and Henry Simms, OFS; Secretary: Mary Cockrill, OFS, and Anne Evangelista, OFS; Treasurer: Mary Cockrill, OFS, Mary Lou Holloway, Janette Perez, OFS, and Zubair Simonson, OFS; Formation Director: Richard Hammer, OFS and Gladys Whitehouse, OFS; Counselor: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, Travis Bongiorno, OFS, Jeanette Cottone, OFS, Theresa Flynn, OFS, Richard Hammer, OFS, Chris Peffley OFS, DN. Phil Rzewnicki, OFS, Ben Whitehouse, OFS, Gladys Whitehouse, OFS, and Char Witoski, OFS. Please do NOT vote for your friends unless they are the ones who are most qualified for that position. Pray on it. Please say this prayer daily before the March elections:

Prayer for the Election of a new Council:

Oh, my dear God, we pray for the guidance of your Most Holy Spirit as we review in our minds the personal attributes required by the various Council positions. Illumine for us our own strengths, and those of our fellow members, that YOU may inspire us to recognize who it is YOU desire to serve YOUR fraternity.

Dear Francis, we also ask for your guidance as we seek a new Council. Lead us to those who will help us to grow in your virtues — affectionate, humble, polite, peacemakers and ardent lovers of our Crucified Lord. Help each of us to discover "What is ours to do." Not our will Lord, but Thy will be done. Amen.

Reflection Questions from The National Secular Franciscan Website:

1. What might have been our Lord's first test of Servant Leadership with Simon Peter?
2. What might have been our Lord's second test of Servant Leadership with Simon Peter? How are the first two tests different?
3. What might Peter have learned from trying to walk on the water?
4. What might Peter have learned from the Lord's question, "Who do you say that I am?"
5. What might all Servant Leaders learn from Peter's question on how often he should forgive his brother who sins against him?
6. What might have been our Lord's final test of Servant Leadership with Simon Peter?
7. Why is this final test perhaps the most important of all?

Did you know?

By Frank Peluso, OFS

Did you know that poets often aim to convey truths most often about the human question that transcend mere facts. My mother's favorite poem was "A Psalm of Life" written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1839). In the stanza that reads, "Lives of great men all remind us; we can make our lives sublime, and, departing, leave behind us - footprints on the sands of time..." In fact, the entire poem reminds me of our January "Rite of Extraction." We choose our saint, virtue and saying. So, what are we going to do with it? We pray that with the help of the Holy Spirit, may the saint given us will inspire us to exercise Christian virtue, and to follow Jesus more closely. This is such a sacrosanct tradition of our Franciscan family. To imitate the saints is to love as God has loved you. To live that love in your life and with your neighbors. All Christians are called to be saints. Saints are persons who lived boldly virtuous lives and offered their life for others. Something we strive to do by helping the poor and homeless through Oak City Cares and Catholic Parish Outreach Food Pantry. Catholic Charities in Raleigh can provide up to a week's worth of food items and groceries to residents of Wake County through Catholic Parish Outreach pantry. In order to receive food from the charity an individual needs to be referred by a social service agency or a church and they also need to bring a completed referral form with them. The Catholic Parish Outreach is located at 2013 N. Raleigh Blvd. A number of our members do volunteer work there. See Maureen Copan, OFS, Gladys Whitehouse, OFS or Brian Denison, OFS for more information. Oak City Cares is a hub for connecting individuals and families who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness, to coordinated services that create a path to stable housing and renewed hope. Their staff coordinates services offered by human service professionals, medical providers, and other specialists from multiple partners at one location. Guests of Oak City Cares are provided with access to showers, laundry, a hospitality area with coffee, computers, and cell phone charging stations. Volunteers play important roles by helping people feel a sense of connection to a community, helping to renew hope. See Mary Cockrill, OFS or Mary Lou Holloway, OFS for additional information. Our Rule #14. *Secular Franciscans together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone "who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself, let them exercise their responsibilities competently in Christian spirit of service.* I always need to ask myself am I there yet?



Surrender Yourself Completely to God's Love

I am growing in the awareness that God wants my whole life, not just part of it. It is not enough to give just so much time and attention to God and keep the rest for myself. It is not enough to pray often and deeply and then move from there to my own projects

To return to God means to return to God with all that I am and all that I have. I cannot return to God with just half of my being. As I reflected this morning again on the story of the prodigal son and tried to experience myself in the embrace of the father, I suddenly felt a certain resistance to being embraced so fully and totally. I experienced not only a desire to be embraced, but also a fear of losing my independence. I realized that God's love is a jealous love. God wants not just a part of me, but all of me. Only when I surrender myself completely to God's love can I expect to be free from endless distractions, ready to hear the voice of love, and able to recognize my own unique call.

Here is some important information for you to add to your calendars:

1. At 6 p.m. on Friday, March 15, Bishop Luis Zarama will accept a relic of St. Oscar Romero at Immaculate Conception Church in Durham. Duke University is donating the relic to IC. The ceremony is open to the public and Fr. Hugh encourages us to attend.
2. Our fraternity will lead the Stations of the Cross at St. Francis of Assisi Church at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 22. If you want to be a leader or cross-bearer, please email me. I have a copy of the stations and can send them to you.
3. Fr. Steve Kluge, OFM, will present on what it means for us to be called Secular Franciscans at our retreat at St. Francis Springs. I hope to see you all there.

Sharon Winzeler, OFS Minister