



“FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO GOSPEL” ST. CLARE FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

St. Clare Fraternity, Stafford Springs, CT

January 2026

MAY GOD GIVE YOU PEACE!

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Our February 28, 2026 gathering will be a Fraternal Visitation by Joe Krans, our regional vice minister. Chris Jeffcoat, the area councilor for the region, will accompany Joe.

During the visitation, Joe and Chris will meet with the Fraternity Council at 8:30 a.m., and with the entire fraternity at our regular time of 10:00 a.m.

We encourage all members to plan to attend this time of connection between our fraternity and our region.



**“What does it matter
where we go?**

**Wherever we go, won’t we be
serving God there?”**

Blessed Solanus Casey

FRATERNITY LIFE

Monthly Gatherings:

Fraternity Gathering
Saturday, January 24, 2026—10 a.m.
St. Edward Parish Center
Hospitality— Barbara

Fraternity Gathering
Fraternal Visitation
Saturday, February 28, 2026—10 a.m.
St. Edward Parish Center
Hospitality—volunteer needed

Please remember our Common Fund



St. Clare of Assisi, Patroness of our Fraternity

OUR FRATERNITY COUNCIL:

Minister: Sandy Comarella, OFS

Vice-Minister: Zofia Fitzgerald OFS

Secretary: Nancy Rudek, OFS

Treasurer: Joe Comarella, OFS

Formation Director: Diane Garabedian,
OFS

Councilor: Barbara Peirola, OFS

Spiritual Assistant:

Father John Koziol, OFM Conv

CONTACT US:

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POPE LEO'S

PRAYER INTENTIONS

January 2026

FOR PRAYER WITH THE WORD OF GOD

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

February 2026

FOR CHILDREN WITH INCURABLE DISEASES

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

OFS INTENTIONS

January 2026

For the national fraternities of Haiti, Mozambique, Lebanon and Rwanda.

February 2026

For the national fraternities of Uruguay and South Africa.

Thoughts from your minister:

Friends,

After celebrating the Epiphany, I always find that following my star is so easy the first week of January. The star is bright and the night is clear. Life seems to be going so well. I can see God's hand in nature, in the beauty of the morning, the fresh snow, of waking up feeling good, in praise and gratitude.

I can even see the star in times of darkness and fear - bad health, death, loss of a job or a relationship, a natural disaster. It's for me easy to turn to the Lord looking for comfort and strength.

But when life is just plain okay? When the coffee maker works, the car starts, the mail comes on time, when life is lukewarm? I get lost in ordinary time. I don't always remember to say thank you; my prayers are a little drier. How can I keep that Star, my light of faith shining when the sky is just plain overcast, when time is ordinary?

Our faith tells us that the door of hope never closes. Four days after the last Jubilee door of 2025 closed, Pope Leo blessed us with a year-long jubilee celebration of our Poverello, our Little Poor One. Just as the Magi travelled from the East, searching the skies and following their star to Bethlehem, we've spent the past three years travelling with St. Francis from Greccio, to the Stigmata at La Verna, through the "Canticle of the Creatures", searching for the Portiuncula in October. Let us keep that Star in our gaze as it leads us to the Easter of St. Francis.

Grace, peace and hope,

Sandy



FRATERNITY MATTERS

A REMINDER: Our monthly gatherings are a "privileged time" of fraternity and community. A time for us to share and grow together in our Franciscan vocation. If you cannot attend a gathering, and are not permanently excused, please contact one of the council members to let us know you will not be attending so that your absence may be appropriately recorded. Thank you.

MAY WE BE INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE Continue to pray for peace in the Ukraine and the Holy Land, Haiti, the Sudan and all those places in the world torn apart by war, civil unrest, violence and fear. Please also for peace and unity in our country.

FEAST DAYS

*January 23—Marianne Cope
(Carolyn)*

*January 29—Servant of God Brother
Juniper*

January 30—Hyacinth of Mariscotti

*February 8—Blessed Jacoba
Settesoli (Rich)*

WE PRAY FOR:

*Vocations to all branches of the
Franciscan family, especially to the
vocation of priesthood and the OFS*

*Healing for fraternity members Ma-
rie, Nancy R., Nancy L., DeDe ,
Rich, Lynn, Greta , Anne, Marion,
Carolyn, Pat, Charlotte, Mabel , Al-
bert*

*Healing for : Father Jude, Brother
Vincent, Ginny, Tom Stauffer,
Ronald C., David D., Bob G., La-
raine D., Koren, Mary, Clare, Kerry,
Jared, Kevin, Tracey*

*For an end to the war in Ukraine and
in all places affected by war, violence
and destruction caused by war.*

*For the Confirmation students at St.
Edward Church*

*For an end to the gun violence in our
country*

For all migrants and refugees

*Peace, healing and justice in our
country and in the world*

In thanksgiving for all our blessings.

AMEN.

If you have names that you would like
added to the prayer list, please contact
Corinne.

FORMATION

Pope Leo XIV proclaims Franciscan Jubilee Year for the 800th anniversary of the Death of St. Francis of Assisi

During 2026, the Franciscan family—First Order Friars, Poor Clare Sisters, the religious of the Third Order Regular, and we, the Secular Franciscans, celebrate **The Easter of St. Francis**, the passing of Francis from this world into the Eternal Life of the God he loved and served.

In recognition of this most special moment in the life of the Franciscan movement, Pope Leo has proclaimed a Jubilee Year!!!! What an awesome gift! Below is the decree issued by Pope Leo.

As a fraternity, we will look for ways throughout the year to celebrate the life of our father, Francis, and to reinvigorate our commitment to the Franciscan way of life.

From the OFM Conventual website:

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has arranged that, from the 10th January, 2026 to the 10th January, 2027, this Year of St. Francis will be celebrated, during which all the Christian faithful are invited to follow the example of the Saint of Assisi, becoming models of holiness of life and constant witnesses of peace. The Apostolic Penitentiary grants the plenary indulgence under the usual conditions to those who participate devoutly in this extraordinary jubilee, which represents an ideal continuation of the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025.

(cont. pg. 4)

OUR RULE of LIFE

PROLOGUE: EARLIER EXHORTATION OF SAINT FRANCIS TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE

Chapter Two: Concerning those who do not do Penance

But all those men and women who are not doing penance and do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and live in vices and sin and yield to evil concupiscence and to the wicked desires of the flesh, and do not observe what they have promised to the Lord, and are slaves to the world, in their bodies, by carnal desires and the anxieties and cares of this life (cf. *Jn.* 8,41); slaves of the devil whose sons they are and whose works they do.

REFLECTION: To what in my life am I a slave? How can I free myself?

Jubilee Year for the 800th anniversary of the Death of St. Francis of Assisi *(cont.)*

This Jubilee Year is addressed especially to members of the Franciscan Families of the First, Second and Third Regular and Secular Orders, as well as to Institutes of Consecrated Life, Societies of Apostolic Life and Associations that observe the Rule of St. Francis or are inspired by its spirituality. However, the grace of this special year is also extended to all the faithful without distinction who, with their spirits removed from sin, visit in the form of a pilgrimage any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis in any part of the world. The elderly, the sick and those who for serious reasons cannot leave home will also be able to obtain the plenary indulgence by spiritually joining the Jubilee celebrations and offering their prayers, pains or sufferings to God.

In this time of celebration that culminates eight hundred years of Franciscan memory, we cordially invite all the faithful to take an active part in this exceptional Jubilee. May the shining example of St. Francis, who knew how to make himself poor and humble in order to be true alter Christus on earth, inspire our hearts to live with authentic Christian charity towards our neighbor and with sincere longings for concord and peace among peoples. Following in the footsteps of the Poverello of Assisi, let us transform the hope that made us pilgrims during the Holy Year into fervor and zeal of effective charity. May this Year of St Francis be for each one of us a providential occasion for sanctification and evangelical witness in the contemporary world, for the glory of God and the good of the whole Church.

Conditions for receiving the Indulgence (for oneself or for the deceased)

- Sacramental confession to be in God's grace (in the eight days before or after);
- Participation in Mass and Eucharistic Communion;
- To visit in the form of a pilgrimage any Franciscan church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis anywhere in the world, where one renews one's profession of faith, through the recitation of the Creed, to reaffirm one's Christian identity;
- The recitation of the Lord's Prayer, to reaffirm the dignity of children of God, received in Baptism;
- To pray for the intentions of the Holy Father, to reaffirm belonging to the Church, whose foundation and visible center of unity is the Roman Pontiff.

Prayer to the Franciscan family from the letter by Pope Leo (see pg. 5)

In this Year of Grace, I wish to offer you a prayer that Saint Francis of Assisi may continue to instill in all of us perfect joy and harmony:

*Saint Francis, our brother, you who eight hundred years ago
went to meet Sister Death as a man at peace,
intercede for us before the Lord.*

*You recognized true peace in the Crucifix of San Damiano,
teach us to seek in Him the source of all reconciliation
that breaks down every wall.*

*You who, unarmed, crossed the lines of war
and misunderstanding,
give us the courage to build bridges
where the world raises up boundaries.*

*In this time afflicted by conflict and division,
intercede for us so that we may become peacemakers:
unarmed and disarming witnesses of the peace that comes from Christ.*

Amen

**LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV
TO THE MINISTERS GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE EIGHTH CENTENARY
OF THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

To the Ministers General of the Conference of the Franciscan Family

“Our Sister Death”, exclaimed Saint Francis on 3 October 1226 in Porziuncola, as he went towards her as a man finally at peace. Eight centuries have passed since the death of the *Poverello* of Assisi, who wrote the word of Christ’s salvation indelibly in the hearts of the people of his time.

In commemorating the significant anniversary of the eighth centenary of his passing, I wish to join spiritually with the entire Franciscan Family and with all those who will take part in the commemorative events, hoping that the message of peace may find a profound echo in the Church and society today.

At the beginning of his evangelical life, he heard a call: “The Lord revealed to me that we should say this greeting: “May the Lord give you peace”[1]. With these essential words, he conveys to his friars and to every believer the inner wonder that the Gospel had brought into his life: peace is the sum of all God’s gifts, a gift that comes from above. What an illusion it would be to think that it can be built by human efforts alone! And yet it is an active gift, to be welcomed and lived every day[2].

It is the same greeting that, on the evening of Easter, the Risen Lord addresses to his disciples, afraid and locked in the Upper Room: “Peace be with you” [3]. It is not a formula of courtesy, but the certain proclamation of Christ’s victory over death. Like the voice of the Angels on Christmas night – “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those whom he loves” [4] – so the peace that the Seraphic Father proclaims is the peace that Christ himself made resound between heaven and earth.

In this age, marked by so many seemingly interminable wars, by internal and social divisions that create mistrust and fear, he continues to speak. Not because he offers technical solutions, but because his life points to the authentic source of peace.

The Franciscan vision of peace is not limited to the relations between human beings, but also embraces the whole of creation. Francis, who calls the sun “brother” and the moon “sister”, who recognizes in every creature a reflection of divine beauty, reminds us that peace must be extended to the entire family of Creation. This insight resonates with particular urgency in our time, when our common home is threatened and cries out under exploitation. Peace with God, peace among human beings and with creation are inseparable dimensions of a single call to universal reconciliation.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the example and spiritual legacy of this Saint, strong in faith, steadfast in hope and ardent in active charity towards his neighbor, inspire in everyone the importance of trusting in the Lord, of living a life faithful to the Gospel, and of accepting and illuminating every circumstance and action of life with faith and prayer.

[Editor’s note: The prayer that Pope Leo wrote was placed here, see page 4]

With these sentiments, I express my fervent wishes for good, especially for all of you who follow the charism of the *Poverello* of Assisi and for those who will commemorate the anniversary of his *dies natalis* in various ways, while I cordially impart my desired Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 7 January 2026

LEO PP. XIV

[1] Testament 23. [2] Cf. Pope Leo XIV, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps*, 16 May 2025.

[3] Jn 20:19. [4] Lk 2:14.

At our Creche Service each year, each member picks a patron saint for the year. Our fraternity council suggested that we also pick a patron for the entire fraternity.

Our Fraternity Patrons for 2026 St. Berard and Companions – January 16



Preaching the gospel is often dangerous work. Leaving one's homeland and adjusting to new cultures, governments and languages is difficult enough; but martyrdom caps all the other sacrifices.

In 1219, with the blessing of Saint Francis, Berard left Italy with Peter, Adjute, Accurs, Odo and Vitalis to preach in Morocco. En route in Spain, Vitalis became sick and commanded the other friars to continue their mission without him.

They tried preaching in Seville, then in Muslim hands, but made no converts. They went on to Morocco where they preached in the marketplace. The friars were immediately apprehended and ordered to leave the country; they refused. When they began preaching again, an exasperated sultan ordered them executed. After enduring severe beatings and declining various bribes to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ, the friars were beheaded by the sultan himself on January 16, 1220.

These were the first Franciscan martyrs (the "protomartyrs" of the Order). When Francis heard of their deaths, he exclaimed, "Now I can truly say that I have five Friars Minor!" Their relics were brought to Portugal where they prompted a young Augustinian canon to join the Franciscans and set off for Morocco the next year. That young man was Anthony of Padua. These five martyrs were canonized in 1481.

NATIONAL PRAYER for VOCATIONS to the SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

O Good and Gracious God, God of mercy,
compassion, generosity and love,

As we live our lives today in the model of St.
Francis, choosing daily to live the Gospel
life,

Help us to help others to recognize their
vocation as a Secular Franciscan that you
have already planted in their heart.

Help us, so that together we may all work
to bring the Gospel to life.



AMEN!

Marian R. Crosby, OFS

OFS Prayer for Vocation– January 2026

For all OFS brothers and sisters that they may
fully embrace their vocation to follow Christ
in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.



The Transitus Chapel

where Francis died October 3, 1226