"FROM GOSPEL TO LIFE AND LIFE TO GOSPEL"

ST. CLARE FRATERNITY NEWSLETTER

St. Clare Fraternity, Stafford Springs, CT — September 2026

MAY GOD GIVE YOU PEACE!

Saturday, September 26th Gathering

Rite of Admission for Helen—2:30 p.m.
Please gather in St. Edward Church

Fraternity Gathering will follow. We hope all can attend the 4:00 Mass, then share in a Pot Luck dinner.

Looking forward to seeing you as we celebrate this special day for Helen and gather for a time of fraternity!

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential."

Pope St. John XXIII

Secular Franciscan



FRATERNITY LIFE

Monthly Gatherings:

Fraternity Gathering
Saturday, September 26th –2:30 p.m.
Please meet in St. Edward Church
See details above

Fraternity Gathering
Saturday, October 24th—10:00 a.m.
St. Edward Parish Hall
Hospitality—TBD

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 Peirolo, OFS

Spiritual Assistant:

Father John Koziol, OFM Conv

CONTACT US:

comsandy@cox.net

POPE LEO' S PRAYER INTENTIONS

September 2026—FOR THE CARE OF WATER

Let us pray for the just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.

October 2026 -FOR MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of people with mental illness.

OFS INTENTIONS

September 2026

For the success of formation workshop of formators in Chile, the national fraternities of Peru and Cuba.

October 2026

For the national fraternities of Malta, Tanzania and Argentina.

Thoughts from your minister:

Peace and all God's good my friends,

When I really think about it, September is simply a very complex month. We start with a false farewell to summer on Labor Day with the beginning of Autumn still three weeks away. We send our kids off to school and jam our weekends with fairs and apple picking and events that would be delightful on a leisurely August afternoon. With warm days and crisp nights, we begin our annual preparation for a winter ahead - cleaning windows and gutters, raking and clearing out the garden, and if we really want to get ahead of the calendar, the post office just opened its Operation Santa program.

In our church, September is packed with Saints and celebrations of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary, the Holy Name of Mary, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Our Lady of Sorrows and the Feast of the Stigmata of our Holy Father of St. Francis. The traditional Franciscan calendar for September lists 24 Franciscan Feast days, including some of my favorites, St. Padre Pio and St. Joseph of Cupertino, each with their own complexities and challenges on their journeys to sainthood. And to end the month – the feast of St. Micheal the Archangel, the guardian of the faithful, daring September and the world to deceive us.

I read this great description of the trees in September as they shed their summer dance with their "chlorophyl's green utility and, for a moment, reveal their authentic beauty before surrendering all pretense" and I could picture the trees in my backyard standing tall, bare and proud in November. Then the author, S. James Meyer, had the audacity to ask, "do we have the spiritual fortitude to do the same?"

As I go through this month dedicated to creation, do I have the courage to face the issues that have made Pope Leo XIV dedicate his prayer for the month to the care of Sister Water? Am I willing to stop supporting those companies and institutions that pollute our water, that continue to make our water a commodity? Am I willing to accept the challenge to stop wasting water as I go through my day, praying not only for those people who are struggling with drought conditions but also for those who are been plagued with the recent floods and tidal waves?

(Cont. pg. 4)

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, the Holy Land, Iran, 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

September 17—Stigmata of our Holy Father Francis

September 18 –Joseph of Cupertino (Zofia)

September 23—Pio of Pietrelcina (Nancy L)

September 26—Elzear & Delphina

October 4—Our holy Father Francis of Assisi (Joe)

October 11—Pope St. John XXIII (Marie)

WE PRAY FOR:

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

Healing for fraternity members Marie, Nancy R., Nancy L., DeDe , Rich, Lynn, Greta , Anne, Marion, Carolyn, Pat, Charlotte, Mabel , Albert, Rich

Healing for: Father Jude, Brother Vincent, Tom, Ronald C., David D., Bob G., Laraine D., Koren, Mary, Clare, Kerry, Jared, Kevin, Tracey, Angela, Samantha, Mike, Chris, Mary Ann Julian OFS, Mary Beth, Jim, Brenda, Audra

For an end to the war in Iran, Ukraine and in all places affected by war, violence, and the lust for power.

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.

FORMATION

FRANCISCAN CENTENARY—THE EASTER OF ST. FRANCIS

As we quickly come to the end of our four-year remembrance of the significant events in the last years of St. Francis' life, the International Formation Commission offers these thoughts.

"We are approaching the year 2026, when we will commemorate 800 years since the passing of St. Francis of Assisi. The centenary of the "Easter of St. Francis" becomes a unique opportunity to bring the Poverello of Assisi "to the streets and squares" of every corner of the world, so that those who do not know him can come closer to him and his spirituality. As a Franciscan Family, we must make a greater effort to creatively bring the message of St. Francis to as many places and people as possible. Organizing something together is also a prophetic sign of unity and hope, as the universal Church invites us to do in the jubilee year we are experiencing…"

This is a special time to remember and contemplate the life of St. Francis, to remember how much Christ was present in his life, giving us an example to always strive to let Christ fill our lives.

This is a special time to remember the origins of Franciscan spirituality, how God called St. Francis to live a fraternal life, giving us the example that there is no other way to live our secular Franciscan vocation than in a fraternity filled with love.

This is a special time to remember St. Francis' dedication to reaching out and serving the poorest of the poor, thus helping us to rediscover who it is we should reach out to and serve.

(cont. page 5)

OUR RULE of LIFE

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

Concerning those who do not do Penance (cont.)

And they leave their wealth to their relatives and friends who take and divide it afterward say: "May his soul be cursed because he could have given us more and acquired more than what he distributed to us." Worms eat his body and so body and soul perish in this brief world and they will go to hell where they will be tortured forever.

REFLECTION: This part of the Prologue continues to remind us of the challenges of clinging to possessions, or being envious of others. We are called to not value material things. How well do I do that?

Thoughts from your minister: (cont.)

Can I become more conscious of my use or water as I brush my teeth, do my dishes, wash my clothes? Sister Water may not be a constitutional right, but she is a free gift from our Creator, given to all, worthy of being treated as a vital, treasured resource.

During this month of extremes, we watched as Mary stood by the Cross of our Savior. And we remembered and mourned as a country the 25 years since the tragedy of September 11th. "Blessed are those who mourn" - another complexity as we continue to struggle with inexplicable terrorism. We hugged each other; we cried together; we helped each other and truly knew compassion. Yet, have I grown in those 25 years or have I become more protective, more defensive, more self-absorbed? Have I forgotten that all I have is a gift from our God? Have I become more aware of the disadvantaged, the marginalized, the forgotten? As the Gospel challenges, do I forgive seventy times seven? Is my love for my neighbor any greater? Do I even know my neighbor? With mourning comes healing and growth; more gifts.

As I continue to pray with Pope Leo XIV for the care of Sister Water, with Pope Francis for the Care of all Creation, for all whose lives were so drastically changed by the events of a single September morning 25 years ago, I also pray for the strength to follow St. Francis' path in "surrendering all pretenses" in total joy to live in God's will. Thank you, S. James Meyer, for reminding me that the beauty of September isn't just in the foliage.

Grace, peace and hope,

Sandy

REMINDER: Regional Chapter

November 14, 2026—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

This Chapter will be a Visitation from our National Fraternity and National Spiritual Assistant
St. Pius X Church
310 Westfield St.,
Middletown, CT

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 Vocations September 2026

For a fruitful and close collaboration between the OFS fraternities and the spiritual assistants to promote vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order.

October is Franciscan Month! We will be sharing some ideas on how we can promote our Franciscan life with others. Please bring any ideas you may have to our gathering.

FRATERNITY EVENTS

Celebration of the Feast of St. Francis

Saturday, October 3rd

Blessing of the Animals—12 noon

Transitus of St. Francis—1:00 p.m.

35th Anniversary of the Establishment of St. Clare Fraternity

Saturday, December 5, 2026

Mass at 10:00 a.m. followed by Luncheon

FRANCISCAN CENTENARY—THE EASTER OF ST. FRANCIS *(cont.)*

And finally, this is a special time to remember that it all began with God's call, which St. Francis heard and followed throughout his life, inspiring us to remember how God has called each of us and to give thanks for our personal vocation to the Secular Franciscan life..."

Here are five discussion questions inspired by the Easter of St. Francis, woven with the themes of trust, relationship, listening, and hope.

1. **Trust in the Resurrection**
   How did St. Francis embody trust in the promise of resurrection, and how can we cultivate that same trust in our own lives?



2. **Relationship with the Crucified Christ**
   What does Francis' intimate relationship with the crucified and risen Christ teach us about the transformative power of love and vulnerability in our relationships with others?

3. **Listening to the Voice of God**
   In what ways did Francis listen deeply to the voice of God in nature, scripture, and silence—and how might we practice that kind of listening in our own spiritual journey?

4. **Hope in the Midst of Darkness**
   How did Francis find hope in moments of physical and spiritual darkness, and how can his example guide us in finding light during our own seasons of despair or doubt?

5. **Rekindling the Flame**
   How can this journey shape our understanding of hope, renewal, and spiritual growth?



This image was used for the "Q".

Spend some time with it, and consider how this time celebrating the Centenaries of Francis has rekindled your Franciscan vocation!!!