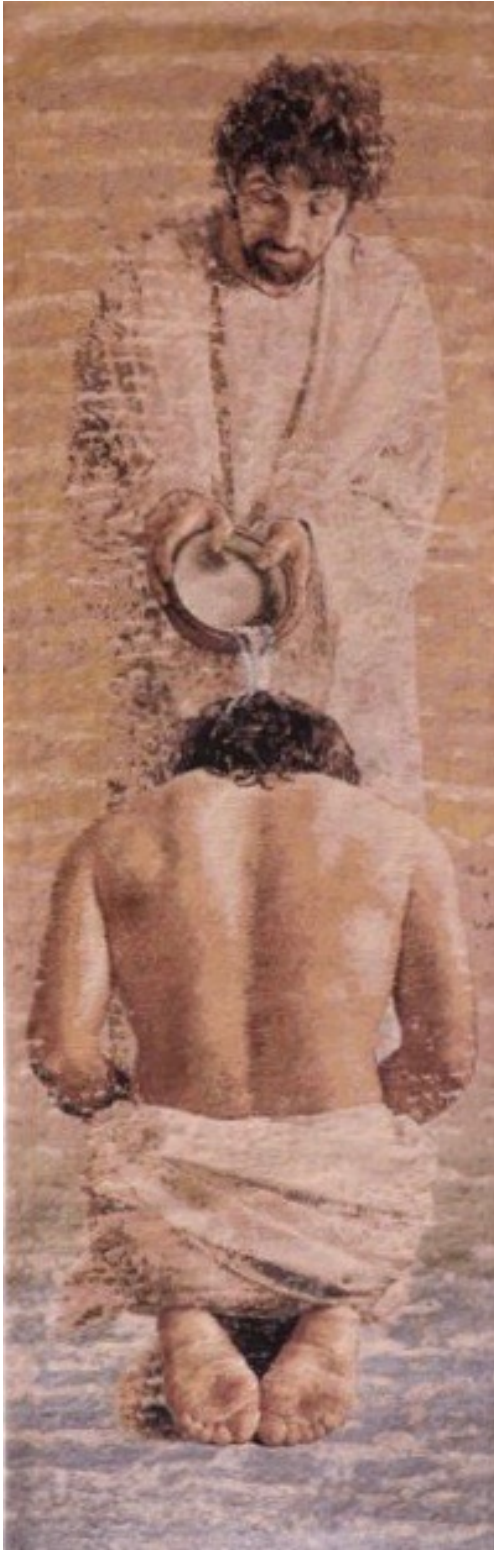


Baptism of The Lord

January 10, 2021



The Cord

January, 2021

Newsletter of the San Luis Rey
Secular Franciscan Fraternity

Our Monthly Gatherings are on the
2nd Sundays of the month

Upcoming Gatherings on Zoom:

- **January Monthly General Gathering ~**
Sunday, January 10th, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
- **Vespers Evening Prayer ~**
Tuesday, January 12th, 7:00 – 8:00 pm
View on Different Zoom Account than the
monthly General Gatherings, see p. 11
- **February Monthly General Gathering ~**
Sunday, February 14th, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Our Gatherings Will Be on Zoom:

Login Link: www.zoom.us

Click on: **Join a Meeting**

Meeting ID: 760 726 2486

Password: 1798

Contact Us via our website [Contact Page](#)

San Luis Rey Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Mission San Luis Rey
4050 Mission Avenue
Oceanside, CA 92057

Baptism of the Lord tapestry designed by artist John Nava is hanging in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles.

Minister's Note for January



In the darkest of nights, we look in the distance and see the star. And that star is *luminous*. We celebrate the Incarnation, the birth of Christ, when the winter nights are the longest. In Christmas we celebrate the coming of the Light. The days start growing longer; Light returns to the world. The Christmas season extends until the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord on January 10th.

The wise men followed the Star, that luminous light, that led them to the Christ Child. These wise people represent us all. Epiphany is “the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world” (CCC 528). Jesus not only comes for the people Israel, represented by the shepherds, but also for everyone, for all of us - represented by the Magi.

The Magi demonstrate the beautiful *catholicity* or universality of the Church. The Second Vatican Council taught that *this gift of universality which adorns the People of God is a gift from the Lord Himself whereby the Catholic Church ceaselessly and efficaciously seeks for the return of all humanity and all its good under Christ the Head in the unity of His Spirit (Lumen gentium 13).*

Christ is the light; we are called to be the channel of his Light in the world. Epiphany reminds me of a song I loved since a child – back in the first days of those Post Vatican II ‘guitar masses.’ Let us allow God’s light to shine through us. Let us become, in the words of the hymn by Jean Anthony Grief, ‘*the light of the world.*’ Let the good we do in the world, let the hope share with others in dark times, let our faith in our living God... **be luminous.**

*We are the Light of the world;
May our light shine before all, that they may see the good that we do
and give glory to God.*



*Laura Chun, OFS
Minister, San Luis Rey*



John 3:30 "The Baptism of Our Lord"

The image in the painting depicts "John The Baptist" in the Scripture bible verse, John 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease." If John the Baptist could see this painting I think he would be pleased with all his humility. The best way to articulate the Glory of Our Lord's Baptism is in a poem I had composed in 2018.

"THE GLORY OF THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD"

As John the Baptist looks up from the Jordon River, only to see our Lord as He approaches; What did he really see? A man looking to John to reveal the Glory of God.

John welcomes Him from the River, while knowing the blessing from Jesus is greater than he; Our lord gave us Baptism to forgive us our Sins, and bring us closer to Him.

John baptizes with water, while hearing the voice of the Father and dunking Jesus, the Son, in the river, then appearing in the sky a Dove, representing the Holy Spirit.

The Glory of Baptism in the water of the Jordon River, we remember John the Baptist and how he must have felt when he knew Who was before him. His heart must have leapt for joy, as he had in his mothers womb.

Thank you Lord for giving us Baptism and revealing it through John the Baptist. How could anyone deny the Glory of Baptism, which was given by the Holy Spirit, and thus, making known to us the Holy Trinity. AMEN!



*Sandy Baden, OFS
Vice Minister*

The Magi

The Story of the Magi is found only in Matthew 2:1-12.

We know little about these royal ambassadors, who travelled “from the East” to Jerusalem and asked King Herod:

“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”

King Herod the Great (“great” for major building projects, not wisdom) ruled Judea under the Romans until his death in 4 B.C. at Jericho. Herod sent the Magi to Bethlehem, where they saw the child Jesus and presented gifts suited for a king: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

WHO WERE THE MAGI?

Besides coming “from the east”, we know very little about the Magi. Herodotus believed they were members of the priestly caste that held sway in Persia after the fall of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, and into the time of Jesus’ birth.

To the east of Palestine, only ancient Media, Persia, Assyria and Babylonia had a Magian priesthood. Their influence continued in the Parthian empire through the time of Christ’s birth. Parthia stretched over most of what had been ancient Persia, from the Mediterranean in the west to India and China in the East.

The Church Fathers also believed the Magi were priests. Their belief system was much like Zoroastrianism. A familiarity with astrology (the ancient combination of astronomy and astrology) as well as their skill in interpreting dreams supports this theory.

In the Eastern Church, tradition holds the Magi were twelve in number, while here in the west, we favor three, probably because of the three gifts presented to the Christ child. The names of the Magi are as uncertain as their number. In the 7th century sources listed variations of the names Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar, while the Syrians listed Larvandad, Hormisdas and Gushnasaph.

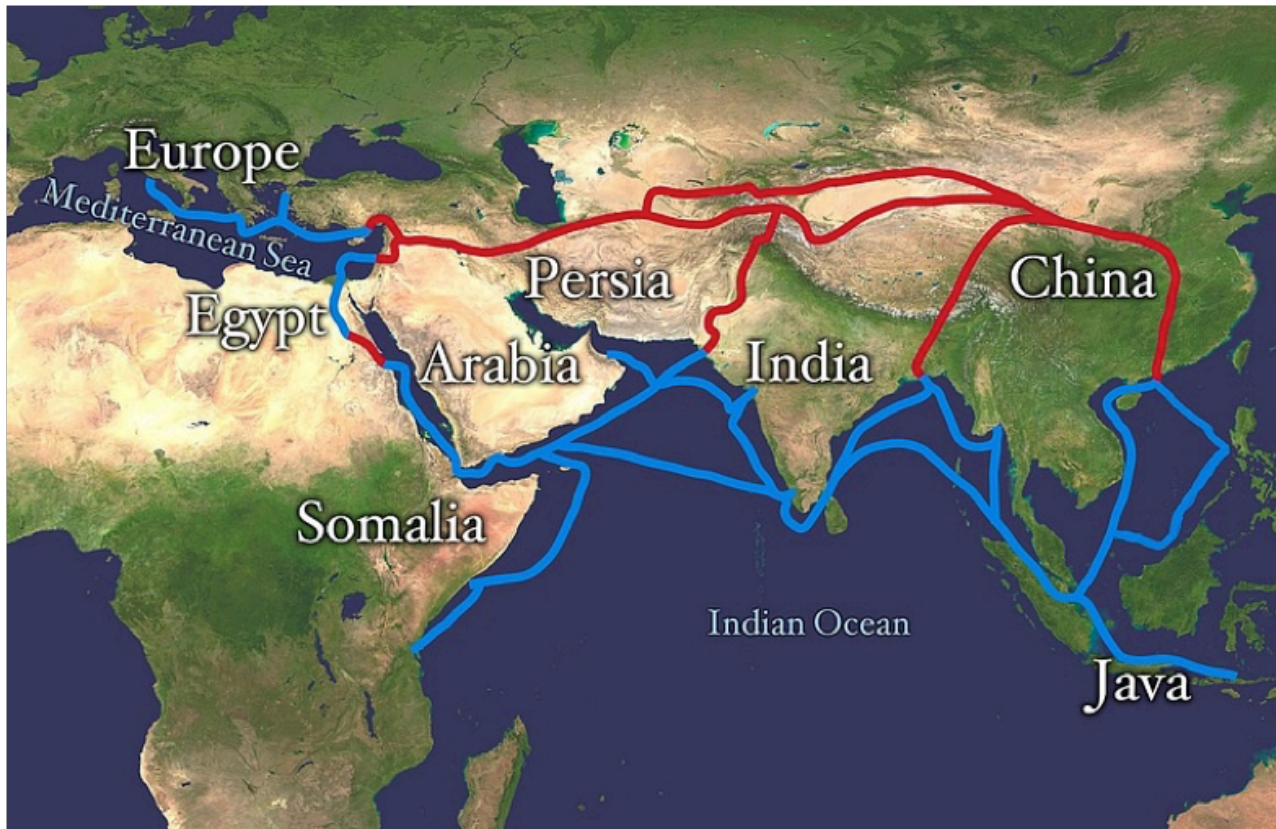
Were the Magi from Persia, the distance to Jerusalem would have been 1000 to 1200 miles, a journey of three to twelve months by camel.

THE CHRISTMAS STAR

From the words of Matthew’s gospel, (eidomen gar autou ton aстера) it’s clear that the Magi thought a star guided them. Was it really a star? Rationalists and rationalistic Protestants, in an effort to escape the supernatural, have elaborated a number of hypotheses:

- The word aster may mean a comet. But we have no record of any such comet.
- The star may have been a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn (7 B.C.), or of Jupiter and Venus (6 B.C.).
- The Magi may have seen a stella nova, a star which suddenly increases in magnitude and brilliancy and then fades away.

The Catholic Encyclopedia points out these theories don't explain how "the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was" (Matthew 2:9). The position of a fixed star in the heavens varies at most one degree each day. No fixed star could have moved before the Magi to lead them to Bethlehem; neither fixed star nor comet could have disappeared, and reappeared, and stood still. So perhaps the Star of Bethlehem was miraculous, just as the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites through the Sinai desert.



The Silk Road

It is likely the Magi were familiar with the Messianic prophecies. Most of the Persian exiles stayed in Persia following the proclamation of King Cyrus in 538 BC that freed them to return to Palestine. When Jesus was born, there were Hebrews still living in Babylon, and at the very least a Hebrew tradition in Persia. Though the Magi may have been familiar with Hebrew Scripture and its references to a Messianic king, the star that led them to the birthplace of a this wondrous king guided only these Magi.

THE MAGI AND THEIR GIFTS

The gifts are significant, and provide spiritual and practical insight on the Magi's expectations for Jerusalem.

For some, the gold signifies the regal status of Jesus, the frankincense his divinity, and the myrrh his human nature.

Frankincense is an aromatic resin from Arabic and East African trees, and had long been used for incense. Myrrh is another resin, which came from Arabia. Both were used in perfumes and for embalming, and myrrh was also used in the anointing of kings.

Early in the 2nd century, St. Irenaeus shared his understanding, "They offer myrrh to him who is to die, gold to him whose kingdom will not end, incense to the God of the Jews who now manifests himself to the Gentiles."

Another interpretation was that the gifts were symbols of what Jesus was to become -- gold for a king, frankincense for a high priest, and myrrh for a great physician

BALTHAZAR (with Myrrh)



Saint Balthazar; also called Balthasar, Balthassar, and Bithisarea, is traditionally referred to as the King of Macedonia (Modern day Greece, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and parts of Albania, Serbia, and Kosovo).

It's significant that Myrrh is produced by wounding a tree. When its bark is cut, the tree "bleeds" sap, which is then harvested, dried and crushed into powder. The gift of myrrh is the perfume of kings, an oil of anointing, and the incense burned in the First and Second Jerusalem Temples. Not so incidentally, it was used to prepare the dead for burial.

Balthazar was described in the 8th century by Saint Bede as being "[of] black complexion, with [a] heavy beard" with the "myrrh he held in his hands prefigured the death of the Son of man". (Wikipedia)

Balthazar in The Adoration of the Three Kings by [Girolamo da Santacroce](#)

CASPAR (with Frankincense)

The name [Caspar](#) or [Casper](#) is derived from "Gaspar" which in turn is from an ancient [Chaldean](#) word, "Gizbar", which according to [Strong's Concordance](#) means "treasurer".

The transition from "Gizbar" to "Caspar" and "Kaspar" can thus be summarized as: Gizbar>Gasbar>Gaspar>Caspar>Kaspar (with "C" being a misreading of the manuscript "G" and "K" having the same phonetic value as "C").



Caspar is often seen as an Indian scholar. He is traditionally portrayed with a reddish beard in the middle of the three kings, younger than Melchior and older than Balthasar. He waits in line behind Melchior to present the gift of frankincense to the Christ child.

Caspar's gift of frankincense, a resinous oil used in incense and perfumes, was at the time extremely expensive, and used in wound medicine and incense. Today the fragrance of frankincense rises from thuribles in many Catholic churches during the Easter season.

Detail from "The Adoration of the Magi" (Geertgen tot Sint Jans)

MELCHIOR (with Gold)

Melchior is often represented as the oldest member of the Magi. He was traditionally called the King of Persia and brought the gift of gold to Jesus. As royal tribute, Melchior's gold would have weighed about fifty pounds – a small fortune! This may have financed a hasty flight into Egypt and helped support them as refugees in a foreign land.

TRAVEL ROUTES

At this time in history, two empires controlled the Mediterranean and Near East: these were the Roman and Persian Empires. Trade between them was brisk, and the trade routes were ancient and well-marked. The Silk Road is the most famous: it extended from the Mediterranean through the Middle East and into China. Though the journey of the Magi may have been long, the land route was well-travelled.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MAGI

The Magi - wise men, priests and astronomers – emphasize key aspects of the Christmas story. As tradition says they are a generation apart in age, and come from different nations, they may represent the ages (and stages) of mankind in all regions of the world. The gifts they offer are rare and precious: they bring their very best to honor this child.

Their journey is a true quest: they are led by a miraculous, shining star, and travel a great distance. They bear gifts and treasure befitting a great king. Most important they remind us we are all seekers of God, no matter our age, creed, color or country.

The Magi came to see the Light of the World. Setting out to follow a star they travelled by night, in the darkness. Matthew gives us no details about their visit with the child, or their conversation with Mary and Joseph. In the end, they acted very wisely, and heeding the warning of their dream, they did not return to Jerusalem to inform King Herod.



Wishing you a Blessed Christmas Season and safe journey through the Year to Come!

Karron Esmonde, OFS

Angela of Foligno

Feast Day January 7

Angela of Foligno (1248-1309) was born into a middle-class family in Foligno, near Assisi. She married at 20 and had several children. Angela retrospectively evaluates this part of her life as “sinful,” although she seems to have viewed her own life through a very harsh lens, so it may have been that her life was no more hedonistic than our own lives are today (Pryds, 2010). Nevertheless, she experienced a profound conversion beginning at age 40, which took her on a journey of great reflection, introspection, and identification with the crucified Christ.

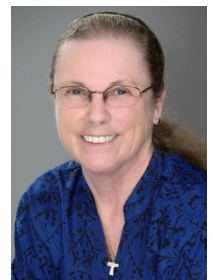
Angela’s conversion began while she was still married and had her family. Her husband was not supportive of this new way of life for his wife, but Angela continued on her path, regardless. Her documented reflection on her life, “*The Memorial*,” goes into great detail on Angela’s ongoing conversion, candidly disclosing her experience of losing her husband and children to death. Angela transformed the grief experience into one of freedom to pursue her relationship with God, and in 1291 Angela became a Third Order Franciscan.



Angela's *Memorial* outlines her conversion experience in 20 steps, describing the very personal, physical, emotional, and spiritual experiences that led her to the humility she sought, and the consequent profound communion with the crucified Christ (Lachance, 1993).

It was from this place of humility that Angela shared her insight with others. She had become close to the friars at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi (it was a friar there, "Friar A.," who wrote her *Memorial* for her), and even as she absorbed their spiritual and theological offerings, she offered back to them her own observations and advice. Darleen Pryds (2010) describes Angela as the spiritual "Dear Abby" of her time, with people coming to her for advice on religious and spiritual matters. It seems to have been partly due to the edifying conversations between Angela, her friar mentors, and her correspondents, that Angela became known as "the master of theologians." Her correspondence is compiled in "*The Instructions*," the second part her book.

Photo from St. Isidore's College in Rome, Courtesy of Corinne Helena, OFS



Connie Collins, OFS

Franciscan Tertiary Bl. Pope Gregory X

Feast Day January 10

In October I wrote about our contemporary tertiary Pope, St. John XXIII. We also have another Pope who was a contemporary and friend to both St. Bonaventure and St. Louis King of France, the Patron of our Order.

He was born Theobaldo Visconti in 1210 at Piacenza and was named Archdeacon of Liege by Pope Clement IV. Clement died in 1268 and the Holy See remained vacant for three years. (This is the longest papal election in the history of the Church.) In 1271 St. Bonaventure was invited to join six designated Cardinals to decide on a pope. St. Bonaventure recommended Theobaldo and he was voted pope when the Cardinals could not agree on a Cardinal from the ranks. What a shock! He wasn't even a priest. Needless to say, he was first ordained a priest, consecrated a bishop, and on March 27, 1272 crowned Pope Gregory X.

His papacy was relatively short (3 years, 9 months). He is recognized as an accomplished peacemaker. At times he called on the Franciscans to work for peace, for instance during the trouble between Bologna and Venice.

He so wanted St. Bonaventure to be by his side during the Fourteenth General Council of Lyons, he made Bonaventure a Cardinal and told him to accept the red hat "in humility of spirit", which he did, but died two days before the final session of that council.

We do well to remember him on January 10th, his feast day, and our meeting day. I encourage you to research him further to read how he was instrumental in efforts in the Holy Land and between many countries trying to maintain peace and harmony. Because of his unusual virtues, he is revered as a saint in Rome and other dioceses in Italy. I would suppose that because of the close connection in time to the canonization of St. Francis, this influenced him to join the Third Order and also his friendship with another tertiary, King Louis of France. Many good people were eager to follow our Seraphic Father at that time in history and we now can celebrate this Franciscan brother's decision to follow Francis' charism.



Jan DeSpain OFS, Director of Formation

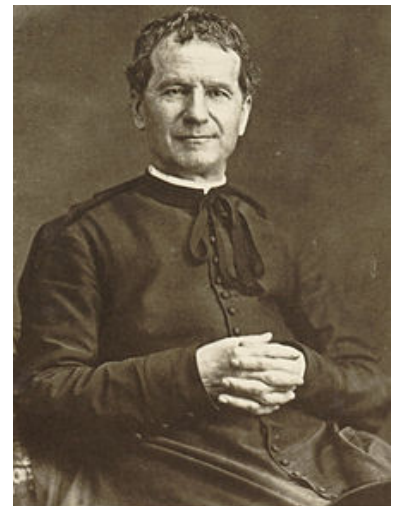
Why St. John Bosco?

Feast Day January 31

I have been asked to share with you about one of the greatest saints of modern times.

To start, I have been inspired on my life's journey to learn more and share more about Secular Franciscans by International visitors and National Franciscans to emphasize that our Order has a special history.

John was born on August 15, 1815, in Becchi at the foot of the Italian Alps. His father Francis, passed away when he was 2 leaving his mother Margaret to raise 3 boys herself. She was a Third Order Franciscan (now the OFS) and taught her sons that they needed to carry their own weight during their lives. She was a pillar of goodness and John heard his call from God at her knees, and when he was a little older, he heard God's call again urging him to go among the farm boys not as a playmates, but as their leader. Soon he took over completely, as God's plan called for. He learned magic tricks, juggling, and could walk a tightrope. He opened a show and charged 1 rosary to be recited as admission, and repeated the Sunday sermon or taught catechism while performing.



John soon learned his calling was to become a priest and because of his mother's influence, became a Third Order Franciscan early on his way to priesthood.

When John was Ordained, his first Mass was said at St. Francis of Assisi Church, and his life opened up many doors to assist other boys and then young men on their journeys. John also loved St. Francis de Sales who mentored them on their life's vocation.

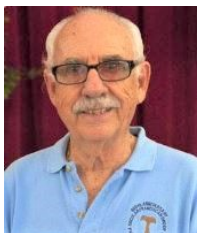
At an audience with Pope Pius IX, John was encouraged and approved to start the Salesian Order with 17 other young men. His life's work was an enormous history of love, sharing, and giving. Several miracles and prophecies have been attributed to him. He was beatified in 1929 and canonized in 1934 by Pope Pius XI. He is the patron saint of apprentices, editors, publishers, schoolchildren, magicians, and juvenile delinquents.

I would encourage every Secular Franciscan to learn more about St. John Bosco and other OFS', we have a history.

Rock De Spain, OFS

News from the Fraternity Council

From our Treasurer



You can mail your OFS fraternity contributions to:

**Rock DeSpain, OFS
1257 Lodgepole Drive,
Hemet CA, 92545**



From our Director of Formation

Well, Covid couldn't stop the momentum of the Spirit in formation at San Luis Rey. We have now been gifted with Caroline who will join Pam, Gina, Linda, and Carolyn in Inquiry. Caroline has been faithfully attending not only our meeting but Vespers as well since October.

Laura and Jan will mentor and bring her up to speed in additional private sessions so she gets the information and relationship foundation from Orientation. She will join with the others at the second session of Inquiry on January 9th which is focused on OFS spirituality. Kelly and Joe will be facilitating the meeting.

Candidacy continues with Heidi and Dotti. We will be covering Chapter 21 and Article 13 where we are challenged on how we love others. Maybe this might be a time to consider a new resolution as we begin a new year?

Brothers and Sisters, let us welcome 2021 with Franciscan joy and gratitude especially for all the new sisters Our Lord has gifted to us in formation. St. Francis and Clare pray for us all.

Jan DeSpain, OFS

From our Formator & Councilors -

Evening Vespers on **January 12th**. All are invited to attend on Zoom

VESPERS
JANUARY 12th 2021

TUESDAY
7:00-8:00 pm

Via Joe Cannons Zoom Account

Zoom ID - 555 347 4653
Zoom Password - 2h19Xx

Beloved Fraternity let's gather for Evening Prayer centering on the Psalms.

We'll have a special guest bringing reflections.

Please bring your bibles and your favorite Psalm to read aloud.

We will also sing scripture songs interspersed throughout our time together.

Looking forward to leaning into Ordinary Time & with the rhythm of praying twice by singing the Psalms.

If you'd like to read aloud during the program ... select your Psalm and ...

Please reach out to ...

Joe : canncan@aol.com

(760) 522-3203

Or

Kelly : kellyjofarnum@icloud.com

(760) 710-9391

REMEMBER

ZOOM

ACCOUNT

INFO

IS :

ID - 555 347 4653

PASSWORD - 2h19Xx

'Let me seek You in longing, let me long for You in seeking, let me find You by loving and love You in the act of finding You'

-from the Proslogion of St. Anselm



Kelly Farnum, OES

See you there &
Happy New Year
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Joe Cannon, OES

Laura Chun's Zoom Meeting Room



To join by Computer, Laptop, Tablet, SmartPhone App:

- Click or Go to this [link](#) (full link is below):
- If prompted use: Meeting ID: 760 726 2486
- Then use Password: 1798

To join by landline or audio-only Phone (no video):

- Dial this number (it's in San Jose): 1-669-900-6833
- Meeting ID: 760 726 2486
- Then use Password: 1798

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7607262486?pwd=dmRBNVU5WFUxMTdzaUxGcy9ibGtwdz09>



Let us Pray for our brothers and sisters, especially: :



- ❖ For those who died in the month of January~~~✝
 - January 20, 2017 **Tim Corrigan, OFS**
 - January 26, 2004 **Armando Quarantiello, OFS**
 - January 29, 2016 **Michael Pollack, OFS**
 - January 23, 1972 **Raymond Langen, OFS**
- ❖ For those who were professed in the month of January:
 - January 24, 2010 **Richard Holdren, OFS**
 - January 24, 2010 **Diane Holdron, OFS**
- ❖ Sandy's husband Ted who is experiencing afib issues with his heart. Please pray for his health and well being and that Sandy and Ted get through this very stressful and difficult time.
- ❖ All who are sick and suffering; there is so much of that in the world right now.

From the Editor: Thank you all for your contributions to this month issue of The Cord. Due to change in our monthly general gathering date to second Sundays, please submit your articles, reports or adds by the 25th of the month to publish in next month issue. Send your Word or Pages files (font Arial 12 pt, if possible) and any photos (jpg or png) via email to: mksfo@me.com. Thanks, Marta

Dr. Marta Kassai, OFS

