

Christmas
December 25
Nativity of the
Lord



Attribution:

Nativity, by Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre
(1714-1789). From [Wikimedia](#).

The Cord

December, 2021

*Newsletter of the San Luis Rey
Secular Franciscan Fraternity*

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

In-Person at Mission San Luis Rey:

- **December 10: Funeral of Edna Patterson, OFS**
10:00 am Church of the Resurrection:
1445 Conway Dr, Escondido, CA 92027
<https://resurrectionchurch.org>
- **December 12: Election**
11:30 am Social: lunch in O'Keefe Lounge
12:30 pm Prayer, Adoration in St. Clare Chapel
1:00 – 3:00 pm: Election in a room of the Old Mission

Please attend our Fraternity gathering on Sunday, December 12 for our **Council elections**. Your voice is needed; come be a part of something vitally important - please come, collaborate with the Holy Spirit, and **vote**.

- **January 9: Monthly General Gathering**

Login Link to Zoom: www.zoom.us

Click on: **Join a Meeting**

Meeting ID: **760 726 2486**

Password: **1798**

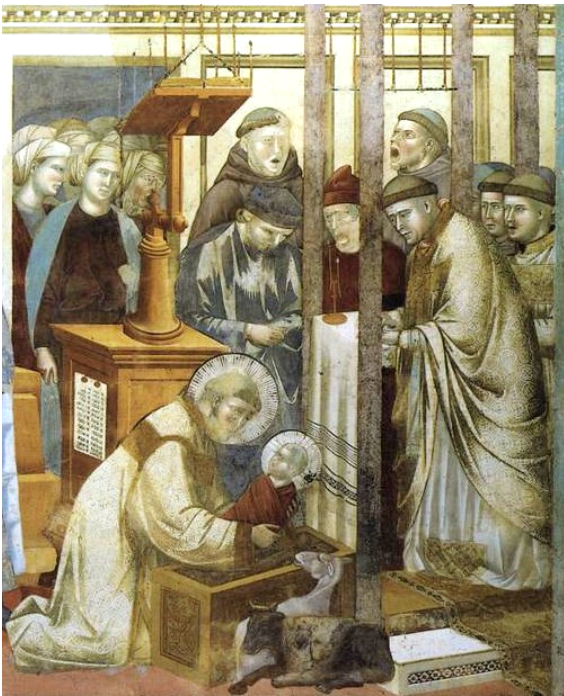
Contact Us via our website [Contact Page](#)
San Luis Rey Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Mission San Luis Rey
4050 Mission Avenue
Oceanside, CA 92057

Minister's Note for December

St. Francis, the Incarnation, and Greccio

Francis and his brothers were dedicated to prayer and contemplation and stayed frequently at hermitages where the brothers would care and support each other in their physical and spiritual needs. In 1223, Francis had spent weeks in prayer at the hermitage in Greccio spiritually preparing for Christmas. In the 1200's most of the local lay people had joined his order of penitents (they were likely some of the first Secular Franciscans!) and were engaged in the local fields as farmers and shepherds.

As Christmas of 1223 approached, and after Francis had spent such time in prayer preparing for this very special feast of the Incarnation, he arranged for a living nativity scene in order to give emphasis on to the birth of Christ. Thomas of Celano, an early biographer of Francis, says that it is here, in the birth of Jesus, that the intimate link between creation and Incarnation become 'visible.' Francis saw the most profound revelation of God's love for humanity in the Incarnation. Through the Christmas scene he created at Greccio with the participation of the local people, Francis wanted to show everyone how God entered into our everyday world of creation through the Incarnation. The Incarnation made all of creation holy.



In a time of filled with oppression, violence, war, and darkness, Francis showed the Light to all those assembled. Francis had used the enactment of the beautiful Christmas scene at Greccio to share the experience and understanding of the Light that Christ brought to the world. At midnight Mass, Francis put on the vestments of the Deacon, for he was one, and preached on the humility of God's entrance into time, and on the poverty of Jesus.

Thomas of Celano tells of Francis speaking 'charming words' overflowing love. Unlike most medieval preaching which tended to be harsh, Francis spoke so tenderly that is 'mouth was filled more with sweet affection than with words.' Francis stood by the manger, overcome with love, and filled with a wonderful happiness. Thomas describes a 'wonderful vision' seen by a virtuous man present that night: *he saw Francis rousing the Child, as if from a deep sleep.* To Thomas, this image was entirely fitting as it illustrated how Francis awoke

the love of the Holy Child in the hearts of the people in a way that would make an indelible mark on their hearts and memories.

During this holy Advent and Christmas season, may our own hearts be awakened to the love of our sweet Lord and be indelibly marked with that love. May we, as Secular Franciscans, be emboldened to take that wonderful Love out into the world.

Pace e bene +

Laura Chun, OFS,
Minister of San Luis Rey Fraternity



A Message from Pope Francis to Secular Franciscans

By CNA Staff Vatican City, Nov 15, 2021



Pope Francis urged Secular Franciscans on Monday to embrace the “path of conversion” taken by St. Francis of Assisi. The pope spoke to participants in the general chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order on Nov. 15, days after making his fifth visit to Assisi since his election in 2013. Addressing members of the order originally known as the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, he reflected on the 13th-century saint’s transformation from a gilded youth to a humble friar nicknamed “Il Poverello.” The pope said that the Secular Franciscan vocation was “born of the universal call to holiness,” a term used in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. “This holiness, to which you are called as Secular Franciscans ... involves the conversion of the heart, attracted, conquered and transformed by the One who is the only Holy One, who is ‘the good, every good, the supreme good,’” he said, quoting from St. Francis’ writings. “This is what makes you true ‘penitents.’”

St. Francis, in his Letter to all the faithful, presents ‘doing penance’ as a path of conversion, a path of Christian life, a commitment to do the will and works of the heavenly Father.” The pope noted that in his Testament, St. Francis said that he was at first repelled by the sight of lepers. But when God inspired him to do penance, the saint wrote, “that which had seemed to me bitter was changed for me into sweetness of body and soul.” “The process of conversion is thus: God takes the initiative: ‘The Lord gave to me to begin to do penance.’ God leads the penitent to places where he would never have wanted to go: ‘God led me among them, the lepers,’” Pope Francis said. “The penitent responds by accepting to place himself at the service of others and by using mercy with them. And the result is happiness: ‘That which had seemed to me bitter was changed into sweetness of mind and body.’ Exactly the path of conversion taken by Francis.”

He went on: “This, dear brothers and sisters, is what I urge you to achieve in your lives and in your mission. And, please, let us not confuse ‘doing penance’ with ‘works of penance.’ These — fasting, almsgiving, mortification — are consequences of the decision to open one’s heart to God.” “Open your heart to God! To open one’s heart to Christ, living in the midst of ordinary people, in the style of St. Francis. Just as Francis was a ‘mirror of Christ,’ so may you too become ‘mirrors of Christ.’”

The Secular Franciscan Order belongs to the third branch of the Franciscan family, after the First Order of friars and the Second Order of nuns, known as the Poor Clares. The Franciscan Third Order dates back to 1221, when St. Francis outlined a way of life for lay people seeking to do penance but unable to join the First or Second Orders. More in Vatican Well-known Secular Franciscans include Dante, St. Joan of Arc, Christopher Columbus, Michelangelo, and St. Thomas More. Each of the orders has its own Rule, rooted in St. Francis’ original Rule of 1209. Pope Paul VI approved the current version of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order on June 24, 1978, with his letter Seraphicus Patriarcha.

The order’s general elective chapter was due to take place last year but was postponed due to the pandemic. It is being held in Rome on Nov. 13-21. Pope Francis told participants in the general chapter: “You are men and women committed to living in the world according to the Franciscan

charism. A charism that consists essentially in observing the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “The vocation of the Secular Franciscan is to live the Gospel in the world in the style of the Poverello, sine glossa [‘without gloss’]; to take the Gospel as the ‘form and rule’ of life.” “I urge you to embrace the Gospel as you embrace Jesus. Let the Gospel, that is, Jesus Himself, shape your life. In this way, you will take on poverty, minority, and simplicity as your distinguishing marks before all.”

The pope described the Secular Franciscans as “part of the outbound Church.” “Your favorite place to be is in the midst of the people, and there, as lay people — celibate or married — priests and bishops, each according to his or her specific vocation, to bear witness to Jesus with a simple life, without pretension, always content to follow the poor and crucified Christ, as did St. Francis and so many men and women of your order,” he said. “I encourage you too to go out to the peripheries, the existential peripheries of today, and there to make the word of the Gospel resound. Do not forget the poor, who are the flesh of Christ: you are called to proclaim the Good News to them, as did, among others, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, your Patroness.” He added: “And just as the ‘fraternities of penitents’ of yesteryear distinguished themselves by founding hospitals, dispensaries, soup kitchens and other works of genuine social charity, so today the Spirit sends you to exercise the same charity with the creativity required by the new forms of poverty.”



General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order *November 15, 2021 Clementine Hall*

The address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the Participants of the General Chapter:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/november/documents/20211115-ordinefrancescano-secolare.html>

Chalking the Door, an Epiphany Tradition

[St. Gaspar del Bufalo](#) was born on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1786, in Rome. His parents named him after the Magi who visited the Christ child: Gaspar Melchior Balthazar del Bufalo.

We also look to the three kings as an exemplar of seeking Christ. Many people write in white chalk 'K+M+B' or 'C+M+B' and the year on the outside of their front door. Priests taught that the letters were 'C+M+B', since those are the first letters of the phrase 'Christus mansionem benedicat' (Latin: 'Christ blesses this house'). However, people often wrote: 'K+M+B' instead. It is believed that the three kings who came to worship baby Jesus were named Kaspar (Casper), Melchior and Balthazar, and 'K+M+B' are their initials.

This tradition of writing these letters in chalk on doors emerged in the 18th century in Poland. Despite during the communist regime, Communists aggressively spreading atheism, many Poles continued this tradition as a demonstration of their faith. They ignored the statements of communist leaders and every year on 6th January wrote 'K+M+B' on their doors anyway. If you'd like to participate in this tradition, using a chalk, mark the lintel of your front door as follows (or even mark a small cardboard and place it on your door or in a front window): **20 + K + M + B + 22** saying:

The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand and twenty-one years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

Then say the following prayer:

Visit, O Blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love. Grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.



(Sources: <https://culture.pl/en/article/why-do-poles-write-kmb-on-their-doors>, <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2020/12/30/chalking-the-doors-for-epiphany-2021/>)

Image, Giotto, from the Barti Chapel, Padua

Laura Chun, OFS
Minister of San Luis Rey Fraternity

St. Gaspar del Bufalo, Priest, Third Order Secular

I couldn't resist sharing this most interesting priest whose Franciscan roots most certainly influenced his magnificent calling to serve God's people and his connection to the upcoming liturgical season.

Gaspar was born on the Feast of the Epiphany in Rome in 1786. Because of this link to the Magi, his parents decided to name him Gaspar Melchior Balthazar del Bufalo. This proved to be an apt name for this man who, like Francis chose to interact constantly with the people, especially those most alienated from society.

He was ordained a diocesan priest in 1808 at age twenty-two during the reign of Napoleon as Emperor of France. During this time, Fr. Gaspar refused to take an oath of loyalty to Napoleon and was exiled and imprisoned for five years for his loyalty to both the Pope and the Gospel.

After his release from prison he returned to Rome and founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood. This was his attempt to heal and revive the Church through spreading the good news of the Gospel as he and his original three companions traveled all over Italy preaching missions. Society at that time was in total disarray after the French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon. He desired to help resurrect the faith of the common and marginalized people.

After his many missions he returned to Rome to minister to those affected by an epidemic of cholera. Gaspar died there on December 28th 1837. His doctor's comment... "he died a 'victim of charity', worn out by his ministry to others". He was canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1954.

His Feast Day is an interesting story in itself. It couldn't be the date of his birth as it was the Feast of the Epiphany. It also could not be the date of his death (Feast of the Holy Innocents). It was moved a couple times, but now is celebrated on October 21st. He is listed in the Franciscan Calendar of Saints on December 31st.

Today the Communities he founded are worldwide just as our Franciscan Order. They also include lay associates. They are very much involved with peacemaking and humanitarian efforts. On their official website I watched a video where a current priest spoke about their focus on Justice, Peace, and Care of Creation. That definitely lines up with our Franciscan focus on JPIC. 😊

So as we journey toward the Christmas season, as you celebrate Epiphany this year, remember fondly our Secular Franciscan brother Well done Gaspar Melchior Balthazar del Bufalo! May we use your example to minister generously and energetically to others.

Sources used: <https://cpps-preciousblood.org> and catholicfaithpatronsaints.com



*Jan DeSpain, OFS
Director of Formation*

The Creation Care Ministry in San Diego and Worldwide

This month, I'd like to share an article by **Fr. Emmet Farrell**, Director of the Creation Care Ministry at our Diocese, as he discusses [Laudato Si](#) and talks about progress locally. This is as printed in [The San Diego Union Tribune](#). - *Karon Esmonde, OFS, JOIC Animator*



Pope Francis greets Catholic pilgrims as he arrives in the Popemobile to lead an open-air Sunday mass on September 12, 2021 in Budapest, Hungary. (Getty Images)

He underscored how interconnected every living thing is across the planet, how we all shared a “common home.”

I have been a Catholic priest for 56 years. I have served in distinct places, including Iowa, where I grew up in a farm town of 3,000, in a primitive community in Peru's mountains, and, for the last 27 years, across the San Diego region.

What I experienced and learned working in those places informs my service today, leading the San Diego Diocese's efforts to protect the environment and the life it sustains. That work is based on the [landmark letter](#) Pope Francis released in 2015 to believers and non-believers alike called “Laudato Si’: On Care of Our Common Home.” A distinguished scientist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Veerabhadran Ramanathan, called it “without exaggeration ... the best document ever published on climate change.”

On Sunday, the pope plans to follow it up with the launch of a revolutionary initiative: [The Laudato Si’ Action Platform](#), a global grassroots movement to reduce environmental damage and to create a more just world. Its goal is to encourage key sectors to implement projects to become sustainable in seven years. It envisions increasing the number of participating groups each year, which together over time will create real change.

In all of my years as a priest, I have never known of a papal document to be supported with a project of this scope to bring it to life.

In the document, called an encyclical, the pope urged us to listen “to the cry of the earth” and “to the cry of the poor” and to make radical changes to heal both. He said there was scientific consensus that climate change was caused by human activity, primarily the burning of fossil fuels, and that bold steps needed to be taken immediately to reverse its devastating impacts.

He stressed that the people most hurt by climate change were the world’s poorest populations, who least contributed to it. And that it was the responsibility of the wealthy nations to provide a solution to the problems they were causing.

The letter was a moral and spiritual one. The Creator gave us this world as a gift, one we were told to “till and protect” (Genesis 2:15), not destroy, the pope wrote. He said people of faith were called to be responsible stewards of all of creation.

He underscored how interconnected every living thing is across the planet, how we all shared a “common home,” which we had to work together to safeguard.

That call has only gotten more crucial amid killer floods, years-long droughts, massive fires and, most recently, the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

The U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a report on Aug. 9 on the impacts of climate change worldwide. Some changes, such as sea level rise, are [already irreversible](#) for centuries to millennia, it said. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called the report nothing less than “a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable.”

At the San Diego Catholic Diocese, we embraced sustainable practices before the pope issued his document. Half of the diocese’s 97 parishes have installed solar energy systems, with more in the works, and several offer plug-in stations for recharging electric vehicles. In national and international forums, [Bishop Robert McElroy promotes the pope’s expansive vision](#) of how people of faith can renew the earth and heal the social divisions in our world.

The [Creation Care Ministry](#) I lead works with teams at parishes and schools to help them develop their own projects. Students at St. Martin of Tours Academy in La Mesa, for instance, planted an organic garden whose edible plants are used to provide food to needy families. Parishioners at St. Thomas More Church in Oceanside planted trees as part of our ministry’s tree planting campaign.

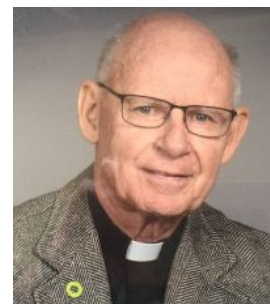
In July, the diocese launched its [Creation Care Action Plan](#), which will work in concert with the Vatican’s Laudato Si’ Action Platform. The plan recommends steps to protect the environment and to promote social justice that individuals, parishes and organizations can implement. The steps individuals can take include driving less and walking more, using less water, reducing food waste, using eco-friendly disposable products, and reducing the use of heaters and air conditioners.

When I speak at parishes, I underscore that climate change is not a Democratic, Republican or Catholic issue, it’s a human one.

“We are facing an existential crisis,” I tell people. I quote Desmond Tutu, who was Anglican bishop of South Africa: “We are all part of the problem, and we are all part of the solution.”

By Father Emmet Farrell

Father Farrell is a retired priest at the Catholic Diocese of San Diego, where he directs the Creation Care Ministry. He lives in Paradise Hills.





Frances Xavier Cabrini M.S.C. (Italian: *Francesca Saverio Cabrini*; July 15, 1850 – December 22, 1917), also called **Mother Cabrini**, was an Italian-American [Roman Catholic nun](#)

Mother Cabrini

(St. Frances Xavier Cabrini)

Patron Saint of Immigrants

~Mother of Immigrants~

First Nationalized Citizen (1909) to Be Canonized (1946)

As an Italian immigrant herself and against odds such as thinking her call was to China, which for most would have been thwarting, she persevered and was undaunted, un-discouraged in being a constant for the faith in the lives of those making a new life in the United States of America.

The Order of The Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus blessed the lives of children and adults in the tough neighborhoods of the lower east side of New York due to her fearless trust in God having what they all needed and the essential encouragement to keep their faith alive.

She was called by God from childhood during her First Communion.

Her influence reached across the Americas and Europe.

Hospitals ~ Orphanages ~ Schools

She traveled extensively in pursuit of establishing societally integral service organizations, across and around the country and crisscrossed the Atlantic Ocean many many times.

She trusted in St. Frances de Sales as her manager and in St. Frances Xavier as her provider thus not relying on her own strength and not running dry.

In leaving everything in the hands of God, the possible and the impossible hadn't any meaning, only whether God would provide her the wherewithal to carry on.

She believed prayer could accomplish anything.

Kelly Farnum, OFS

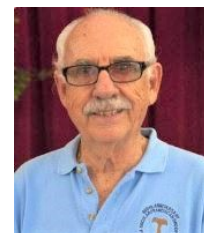
Our Greatest Gift

No! I'm not thinking about what you're thinking about. I'm writing about our journey of conversion, and what we are doing in this special time of the year of Thanksgiving and Christmass. Where are we at in our thoughts of giving to those who are in need. Is our heart into what we are going to give. Not only to our family and loved ones, but to all of the people that have very little and things like the Water Project we just did with National. There are so many worthy charities and causes out there for us to consider

The things that touch our hearts based on who we are and shows who we are on our journey of conversion. We are Franciscans inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, so let us all think about the whole year.

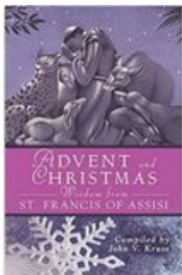
J.R. Tolkien made a beautiful statement for us to think about in The Hobbit, "Some believe it is only great power that can hold evil in check but that is not what I have found/ I have that it is the small things. Everyday deeds of ordinary folks that keep the darkness at bay. Simple acts of kindness and love."

So your greatest gifts are from your heart.



Rock DeSpain, OFS
Treasurer

News from the Fraternity Council



Chapel Prayer at our December Gathering

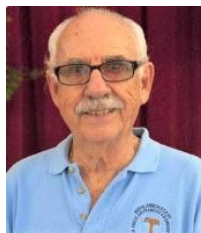
Prayer and contemplation is the lifeblood of our Fraternal life. Please join us in St. Clare's Chapel at the beginning of our December Gathering for our community prayer at 12:30pm. This prayerful energy is especially important this month prior to our Fraternity elections. Our prayer will be reflections on Advent and Christmas Wisdom from St. Francis of Assisi with selected reflections by John Kruse, PhD.



Christmas socks for Br. Benno's

At our December 12th Gathering, you are invited to bring warm socks that we can share with the folks at Br. Benno's. During this warm and wonderful time of year, it's something small we can do to help others out in the cold. We will be happy to bring over any warm socks or even financial donations to help the homeless.

From our Treasurer



You can mail your OFS fraternity contributions to:

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



Secular Franciscan Regional & National News

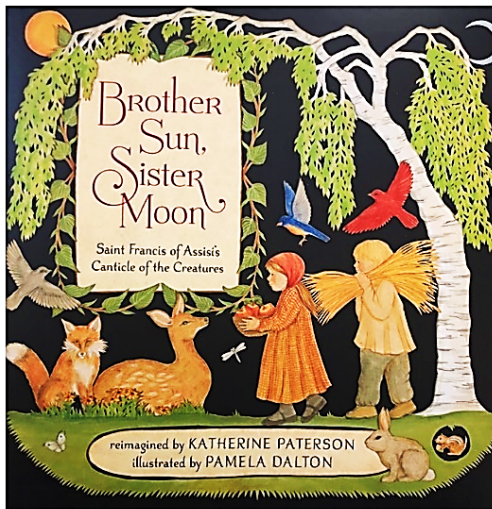
National 'Q' Quinquennial Congress - August 3rd-7th, 2022.

Act Now... Early Bird Registration Rate until 12/31/2020



Secular Franciscan Order

Renew your Franciscan calling at the 20th Quinquennial Congress! Come celebrate with your Franciscan family the JUBILEE of our Order's 800th anniversary of Memoriale Propositi, and the 100th anniversary of our National Quinquennial Congress. Key FAQs are [here](#), or visit our National website [here](#) and click on the 'Quinquennial' tab. The 'Q' will be from August 3rd-7th in Phoenix, AZ. Registration closes on July 1st, 2022.



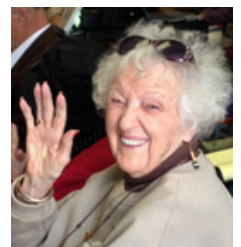
A Book Review: A beautiful Franciscan Children's book

I found this wonderful children's book, spiritually and visually beautiful: [Brother Sun, Sister Moon](#) by Katherine Paterson. The writer took our Francis' prayer and simplified each prayerful point into wording that any child could understand and learn from. Nothing of the original is "lost", different but still poetic and spiritually rich. In the back is the original version and notes from the writer and illustrator about their experience writing the book. Reading it is a prayer as well.

– Heidi Madden, OFS

Prayers Requested:

Edna Patterson, OFS, our fraternity member, passed away Thursday, November 18th. Services will be held on Friday, December 10th at 10:00 AM at Resurrection Catholic Church in Escondido. Paul Tremblay, Edna's son, invited fraternity members to her funeral. Eternal Rest Grant unto Edna, O Lord and may perpetual light shine upon her.



Jan DeSpain, OFS asks us to please pray for her family upon the death of her dear sister, Diane. Diane has been in poor health for some time and passed away on November 27th. Diane was 74 years old and was a woman of lively faith and wonderful humor.

Mary Haynes, OFS, our fraternity member, is requesting the fraternity to pray for her. She is now residing at Silvergate Fallbrook Assisted Living: 420 Elbrook Drive, Room 313, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Visitors must have proof of vaccination. <https://silvergaterr.com/silvergate-fallbrook-elder-care/>



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 December ~~~✝
 - December 4, 2002 **Mary P. Ryan Molnar, OFS**
 - December 29, 1998 **Mae Coash, OFS**
- ❖ For those who were professed in the month of December
 - December 10, 2006 **Penny Johnson, OFS**
 - December 15, 2006 **Jan DeSpain, OFS**
 - December 15, 2006 **Rock DeSpain, OFS**
- ❖ For Prudy Hrisanthopoulos, OFS, our fraternity member who recently was hospitalized for a kidney infection, and is recovering at home.
- ❖ For Edna Patterson, OFS who passed away November 18. May she rest in peace.
- ❖ For Diane Marie Kvarnlov Lovejoy, sister of Jan DeSpain, OFS, who passed away November 27. Eternal Rest Grant unto Diane, O Lord and may perpetual light shine upon her.
- ❖ Linda Ochwat, OFS our fraternity member, that she soon find satisfactory housing and regain her physical health.

* * *

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

Merry Christmas to All!

Dr. Marta M. Kassai, OFS

