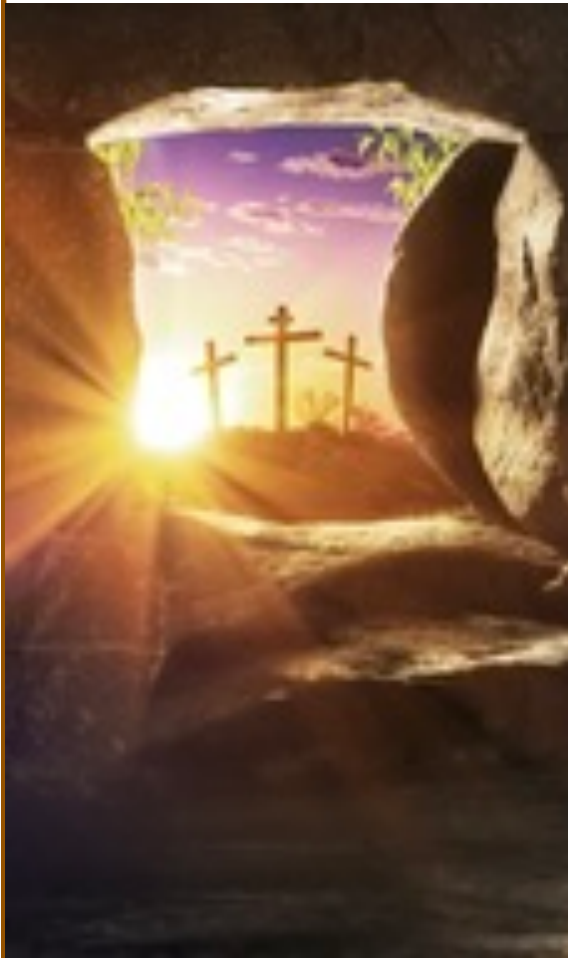


*Easter  
Resurrection  
April 9, 2023*



Attributions:

Photo [209115043](#) / [Resurrection](#) ©  
[Philip Steury](#) | [Dreamstime.com](#)

# *The Cord*

*April, 2023*

*Newsletter of the San Luis Rey  
Secular Franciscan Fraternity*

*Monthly Gatherings: 2nd Sundays*

*April Gatherings 3rd Sunday:  
General Gathering:*

**April 16:**

**10:00am Mass at San Luis Rey Mission  
Church**

**11:30am BYO box lunch at Mission Retreat  
Center Refreshment Lounge**

**\*\*\***

**12:30pm Prayer in Mission St. Clare Chapel**

**1:00 to 3:00 pm General Monthly Gathering:  
*Tree blessing*, Room TBD, and on  
Zoom (link [here](#))**

***Vespers:* No Vespers in April**

***Next Month General Gathering:***

**2nd Sunday**

**May 16, 2023**

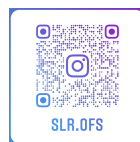
**Login for All Zooms:**

[www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) Click on: **Join a Meeting**

**Meeting ID: 760 726 2486 Password: 1798**

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

Mission San Luis Rey  
4050 Mission Avenue  
Oceanside, CA 92057



## Minister's Note for April

I remember the dark, empty streets of Jerusalem in the early morning as I walked quietly across the cobblestones to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This was a week made holy by pilgrimage in which each morning I made this pre-dawn trek. Only the first time I journeyed alone. Each day thereafter, God gave me companions. As we wove our way through the dark labyrinthine streets, we'd encounter very small groups of pilgrims from the four corners of the earth, also making this hushed pre-dawn trek. We all were called to the same destination: the sacred church that within it are the holiest of sites: where Jesus was nailed to the cross. Where Jesus was crucified. Where Jesus was laid in the tomb. And the place of the Resurrection.

I prayed in the quiet early morning at Calvary, envisioning the Cross marking the place on the planet where Jesus gave his life for love of us. On my knees at Calvary, I prayed that like the women at the foot of the cross, that God help us to be always faithful to him. God responded. That moment was entirely transformational and overwhelmed my senses. I was transfixed. Still on my knees, a woman from Chicago gently tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I would join her and her parish priest for Mass; I excitedly gathered my companions and several of the pilgrims from around the world I had seen each morning and we joined the two Chicagoans for Mass just adjacent to Calvary, in the Chapel commemorating where Jesus was nailed to the Cross. There were twelve of us. I was asked to be both a Eucharistic Minister and a Lector. Within minutes of praying to be given the grace to always be always faithful to Jesus, I was invited to Mass, invited others, and was engaged in Ministry sharing the Word and the Eucharist with others. That was one part of a clear and immediate answer to my prayer that continues to resonate in my life. When it was time to leave and I walked through the door to the outside, I was disoriented. I had arrived in the darkness but emerged into the new morning's bright and blazing light. It was dazzling.

Each morning, as pilgrims on a journey we traveled together through the streets in the holy darkness. Being present, being attuned. Listening. The next day again in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, I was nudged and received an invitation from pilgrims from the Philippines, my friends from the morning Mass on Calvary. They had space for one more person in their small group that would fit inside the tomb. They asked if I'd like to join them for Mass in the Edicule, the tomb of Jesus. The place of the Resurrection. Of where this new life spilled out and into the world. 'Join us.' Our language was limited; but as we prayed in that sacred space, our eyes met in awe.

Being a pilgrim with a pilgrim's mindset - having an open mind and open heart... opens our souls for the holy spirit to rush in with cleansing and fresh perspectives. It allows us to take steps not knowing where they will lead. To walk outside our front door and outside our comfort zone. To God knows where. May this Easter season be a blessing to you. May you embrace God's abundant grace with an open mind and open heart.

Blessings on your journey from any place of darkness – into Light.



Photo [209115043](#) / Resurrection © Philip Steury | [Dreamstime.com](#)



Laura Chun, OFS,  
Minister,  
San Luis Rey  
Fraternity

## ***Our Tree of Life***

***A tree is blessed in celebration of our community and its long tenure at Mission San Luis Rey***

This Easter Season marks the 70th year of Secular Franciscans' passionate engagement in the spiritual life. Here at the Mission, we bless and dedicate a tree, mindful of our call to the loving Creator. This tree of life speaks to God's great blessings, and to the devotion, faithfulness, and piety of those who preceded us, of those now at work, and of Seculars to come.

The Book of Genesis gives us a glimpse of life in the Garden:

*Out of the ground the LORD God made grow every tree that was delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:9)*

Before eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God's first people were created as He intended: formed in His image, given His blessing and destined to live forever in a bountiful and nurturing Eden.

The Tree of Life has long symbolized God's love for us and our dependence on Him for life and sustenance. In Jewish tradition, trees symbolize the natural world and are celebrated as God's gift at *Tu Bishvat* (new year for trees). The Tree of Life (*Etz Chaim*) often refers to the Torah and by extension Jewish schools and synagogues.

For Christians, the Tree of Life has profound significance: Christ was nailed to a tree for the forgiveness of sin and the redemption of the world. The author of life is also the giver of eternal life. He made way for us by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and is the way unto it. It is His gift to us, and He bestows it on all His people:

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)*



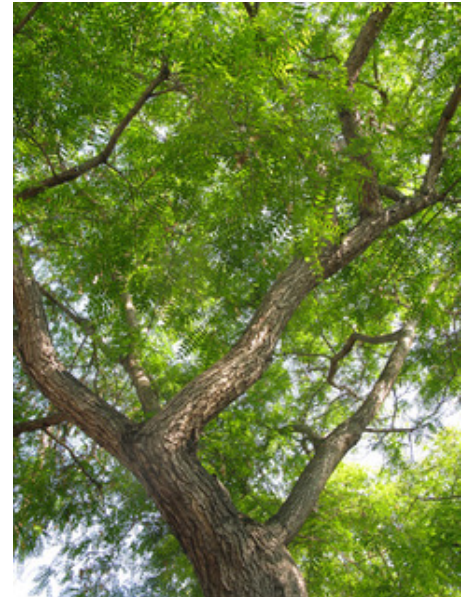
To eat of the Tree of Life is to follow Christ by lovingly bearing our Cross as repentance, thankful for His loving care and His mercy. Victory is yet possible:

*Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the victor I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that is in the garden of God.*

*(Revelation 2:7)*

*Blessed are they who wash their robes so as to have the right to the tree of life and enter the city through its gates.*

*(Revelation 22:14)*



Karron Esmonde OFS,  
JPIC Animator





## The Octave of Easter- Divine Mercy Sunday

The Feast of the Divine Mercy began with a private revelation to the Polish mystic Sr. Maria Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938) a member of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Sr. Faustina received extraordinary revelations from our Lord Jesus, which she compiled in notebooks. These notebooks are known today as the *Diary of Saint Faustina Kowalska*, a modern spiritual classic. **“You will prepare the world for My final coming”** (Diary, 429).



God's mercy has been present from the beginning of salvation history. But, over time, mankind has forgotten this mystery and needed to be reminded of it. Therefore, Jesus gave Sr. Faustina five new channels of grace to emphasize this message. Jesus said, **“If they will not adore My mercy, they will perish for all eternity”** (Diary, 965). So, it is in these new elements of devotion that Jesus gave to the Church, through Sr. Faustina, the means of fulfilling the need to adore Him as Divine Mercy Incarnate.

The five new elements are the **Feast** of Divine Mercy, the **Image** of Divine Mercy, the **Novena** of Chaplets, the **Chaplet** of Divine Mercy, and the **Hour** of Mercy (3 p.m.). Through this powerful new devotion, Jesus simply wanted to renew in the world trust in His mercy.

We should all be familiar with the Image of Divine Mercy Sunday. When Jesus appeared to St. Faustina, He told her to have an image painted according to the pattern that she saw before her. Now this Image is known around the world, fulfilling our Lord's desire. He asked for the image to be solemnly venerated, especially on Divine Mercy Sunday (Diary, 341). Always keep in mind that we don't worship the canvas or the paint or the image itself--we worship what it represents:

Jesus, the Divine Mercy. Jesus said. **“I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over [its] enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as My own glory”** (Diary, 48). He continued, **“I am offering people a vessel with which they are to keep coming for graces.... That vessel is this image with the signature, ‘Jesus, I Trust in You’... By means of this image, I shall grant many graces to souls”** (Diary, 327, 742).

Especially important is Jesus' Sacred Heart of which there are two rays of light shining and illuminating the world. Jesus Himself explained to St. Faustina **“The two rays represent blood and water”** (Diary, 299). From the Heart emanates the Blood (red ray) and water (pale ray). These two rays defeat Satan's only two weapons: sin and death. Sin is wiped away by the cleansing waters of Baptism and the healing words of Confession. Death is wiped away by life--and life, to the Jews, was in the blood. Blood provides us life, so we receive life in Holy Communion. These rays represent what Christ asks us to do on the Feast of Divine Mercy Sunday: Go to Confession, before or on the day of the feast--sometimes during Lent suffices and receive Holy Communion with the intention of obtaining the promised grace. The left foot stepping forward in the image, is symbolic of Christ coming to us, searching for the lost sheep, and His return at the end of time.

Easter is the most important Feast Day of the liturgical Year. The number 7 represents time as when God created the world. But the number 8, in Jewish tradition, represents eternity. Jesus opened the doors on the first day (Easter Sunday) and on the 8<sup>th</sup> day is of the Octave. This is when we, God, and the angels will all be united in Heaven which is the meaning of the 8<sup>th</sup> day and the importance of the Octave as we celebrate Easter for 8 full days.

St. John Paul II told about 50,000 pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square on April 22, 2001, for the first worldwide celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday. "Divine Mercy! This is the Easter gift the Church receives from the Risen Christ and offers to humanity at the dawn of the third millennium," the Holy Father said in his homily. Christ, "who implores forgiveness for His torturers and opens the gates of heaven to repentant sinners, is a reason for hope not only for believers, but also for non-believers," the Pope said. Later, during his noontime address, the Holy Father gave thanks for the Apostle of Divine Mercy. "During this celebration, together with you, I thanked God who almost one year ago, granted me the grace to canonize



Saint [Faustyna Kowalska](#)

Sr. Faustina Kowalska, the chosen apostle of the merciful Christ, and to proclaim the Second Sunday of Easter as the Feast of Divine Mercy for the entire Church."

Of interest, St. Pope John Paul II died on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday April 2, 2005. He was beatified on Divine Mercy Sunday May 1, 2011, by Pope Benedict XVI and was canonized on Divine Mercy Sunday April 27, 2014, by Pope Francis.



Sam DeSantis, OFS  
Vice Minister, SLR Fraternity

## Resources:

this information was compiled from The DivineMercy.org website, booklets, and comments from Fr Chris Alar, MIC Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Additional information is available on the website.

## *Francis, God's Fool*

What do April Fool's Day, Easter, and the anniversary of Pope Innocent's approval of Francis' Primitive Rule have in common? They all fall in April this year and they all express a form of **JOY!!** My focus in this article is to explore this connection.

**April Fools Day (4-1):** Years ago in my 4th grade classroom, my students looked forward to opportunities throughout the day to "fool" me. What was delightful to me was to see their **joyful** expressions when I gasped at their ridiculous comments.

**Easter (4-9):** This year as I approach this greatest feast, I reflect on the long journey that began Ash Wednesday. After our presentations last month I felt a deeper need for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. As we gather after Easter I hope we all have a deeper desire to **joyfully** be a better instrument of God's peace. Alleluia!!

**Anniversary of the approval of the Primitive Rule of St. Francis (4-16 1209):** I can only imagine the **joy** of Francis and his twelve companions as they traveled back to Assisi from Rome after initially

being dismissed harshly by Pope Innocent III. Our meeting date is April 16<sup>th</sup> so it is a **joyful** day to remember this wonderful gift.

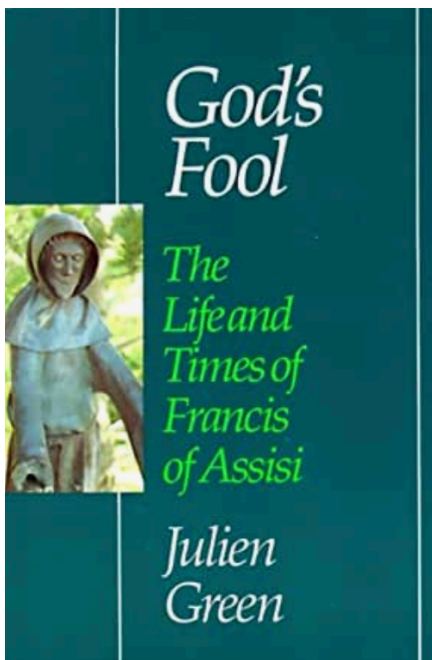
Yes, dear Sisters and Brothers, we follow this holy fool who was initially mocked and ridiculed by his townspeople. Some examples, but there are many more:

- He stole from his father, gave away all and became a beggar
- He stripped naked in the Cathedral square, renouncing his father and fortune
- He preached to the birds and tamed a wolf in Gubbio
- He befriended and ministered to lepers and risked his life to visit the sultan.

Many Franciscans have joked..."If Francis were alive today and wanted to join us, we would screen him out on psychological grounds." 😊

Scripture we might want to reflect on:

God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord." 1 Cor. 27-31



Francis indeed also suffered temptation and despondency. So do we. I found an interesting quote from The Mirror of Perfection p96 that speaks powerfully of **joy**.

"Because **spiritual joy** springs from integrity of heart and the purity of constant prayer, it must be your primary concern to acquire and preserve these two virtues, to possess internal, as well as external **joy**. I so fervently desire and love to see this both in myself and you, for the edification of the neighbor and the defeat of the enemy. It is the fate of the devil and his minions to be sad, and it is our lot to "**rejoice always and be glad in the Lord.**" Phil. 4:4

So , let us rededicate our "foolishness" to Christ" by following the Gospel and our Rule. As you reread our rule you will uncover for yourself what our Francis learned. May we all emerge from Lent enflamed with love to be bolder to take action on issues in our society that require "foolish" attempts at changing ourselves and the world.

[God's Fool: The Life and Times of Francis of Assisi](#)

As you know, Francis died singing. Our Holy Fool had done what was his to do.

Our challenge? Keep the song going... What might our foolishness look like? If you are like me, you have some wasted opportunities. I like to reflect on the words of a Franciscan sister that has brought much joy to me through the years and I'm sure is dancing and joking with Francis right now. Here is a quote from Mother Angelica PCPA:

"You have all eternity to experience the presence of God, but you have a very short time to do something for Him." May God give you the grace to be a fool for Him.

Joyfully,

Jan DeSpain OFS  
Director of Formation



**Resources:**

1. Surrounded By Love/ Murray Bodo/OFM Franciscan Media
2. Francis of Assisi/ Early Documents/ Vol 3 p342
3. Francis of Assisi/ The Song Goes On/ Hugh Noonan OFM and Roy M. Gasnick, OFM

## Resurrection

"Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." *John 3:3*

"Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."  
*Matthew 16:25*

In following Christ, we all experienced dying to our old self and starting anew several times in our lives. Baptism is certainly a "born again" experience, although most of us got baptized as infants and can't remember how it felt like. Those who are baptized as adults can talk about their experience of the grace they felt. When my friend from graduate school asked me to be her Godmother, I got a taste of that grace.

She was of Japanese descent, and attended Methodist worship. After visiting Medjugorje with her husband, an Episcopalian, they both wanted to convert to Catholicism. The priest asked for their baptismal certificates. That is when Susan found out from her Mom that she was never baptized. Why? Well her Japanese grandmother said "over my dead body will she be baptized". So she called me, to be her Godmother. She had only a handful of Catholic friends to choose from.



It was before RCIA program became widespread. They received their Catholic education (catechism) in private lessons from a priest. The big day came in early November over 30-35 years ago. She invited only her Catholic friends, just a handful, to her baptism in the magnificent [Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington D.C.](#) The whole church is built of marble, including the floor, the steps up to the raised altar, and the altar itself. We were lost down in the front row of this huge space, so the priest asked us to come up to the larger than life marble altar, and stand around it in circle through the entire liturgy. Susan and Anthony received

five (5) sacraments: Baptism (Susan), Reconciliation (Anthony), Confirmation, Eucharist and Holy Matrimony for both of them. I still remember the incredible graces that surrounded and entered us. We were swimming in heavenly joy and love. It was incredible. I never experienced that again, but will never forget it. A spiritual rebirth, a shower of graces fell on us all. It's hard to imagine what it would feel like when our bodies rise from the dead at the Resurrection, and we live again in Christ. But if this was a foretaste of that, we are in for a treat provided we keep the faith to the end.



Dr. Marta Kassai, OFS, Councilor



## *Have you read our Rule lately?*<sup>1</sup>

It's over 800 years old, but also fresh and new. As Pope Francis invited Christians to carry a copy of the New Testament with them each day to be close to the Gospel, I'd invite each of us to have a handy copy of our Rule (physical or [virtual](#)), that we frequently read and integrate into our lives. When we speak of a 'Rule,' we're talking about a document that contains the vision and dream of a founder – but also that can adapt to support growth into the future. Changes to the Rule are not frequent, but when there is a change, it's to accommodate the Rule to changing times. In this sense, it's a living document. This occurred after Vatican II with its fresh wind rushing through the Church. The OFS Rule of 1978 was approved by Pope Paul VI on June 24, 1978. It is the Rule we now follow.<sup>2</sup> Previous Rules were 1209/1221, 1289, and 1883.<sup>3</sup>

Article 4 of the Secular Franciscan Rule invites us to "go from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel" – as was often shared with many of us with love, passion, and repetition in Formation! This was the pattern of Francis' life and should be ours, too. This article emphasizes that prayer is an extremely important aspect of Franciscan life. Various sources tell us of Francis often spending long hours in caves on the sides of the mountains (and encouraged his brothers to do so in his [Rule for Hermitages](#)). How often do we dedicate time and energy to prayer daily – but also for an extended few days as we are able? Our Rule invites us to 'go from Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel.' Being rooted in prayerful immersion in the Gospel, we are invited to not only talk to talk, but walk the walk.

Article 5 of our Rule says, 'Secular Franciscans should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of St. Francis, who often said, "I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except His most holy body and blood," should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.' Franciscan spirituality is supremely eucharistic and incarnational! From our General Constitutions we read that the spirituality of the Secular Franciscan is a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ, rather than a detailed program that spells everything out for us.

Article 6 emphasizes that we ...'have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism and have been united more intimately with the Church by profession.' Unlike many of the penitential groups that were formed during the Middle Ages, Francis chose to remain faithful to the Church and its teachings.<sup>4</sup> We are called to be a part of a community of love, *within the Church* – and in our Fraternities, our Order, and in all of Creation.

**There is so much to explore.** Want to learn more? Bill Wicks OFS, has written a brief history of the Secular Franciscan Order and its Rule [here](#). Join us at our next gathering on April 16th, where we celebrate the anniversary of the Franciscan Rule of Life.

*Blessings,*

*Laura Chun, OFS, Minister, San Luis Rey Fraternity*



<sup>1</sup> Thoughts contained here were inspired by 'Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order F.U.N. Reflections by Fred Schaeffer, OFS, et al. <https://www.reflections-dmf-ofs.org/other-reflections>

<sup>2</sup> From "Come and See" Lester Bach, O.F.M. Cap., and, Teresa V. Baker, O.F.S.

<sup>3</sup> William Wicks, OFS. A Brief History of the Secular Franciscan Order and its Rules. Accessed at <https://swinzelerblog.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/a-brief-history-of-the-secular-franciscan-order.pdf>

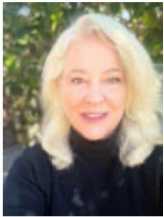
<sup>4</sup> From F.U.N. Formation text: "The Rule of the SFO – 3-23-2011 Page 14 of 46"



## [News from the Fraternity Council](#)

Please note: **The April General Monthly Gathering will be on Sunday, April 16, 2023. Zoom access starting at 1 pm will be provided for those who cannot attend in person.**

### *The San Luis Rey Fraternity Council*



Laura Chun, OFS  
Minister



Sam DeSantis, OFS  
Vice-Minister & Formator



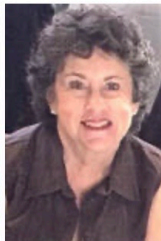
Jan DeSpain, OFS  
Formation Director



Sr. Madeline Fitzgerald, OSC  
Spiritual Assistant



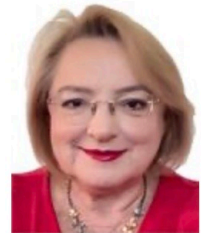
Connie Collins, OFS  
Secretary



Corinne Helena, OFS  
Treasurer



Pam Pert, OFS  
Councilor



Marta Kassai, OFS  
Councilor & Newsletter Editor

### *From our Treasurer*



You can mail your OFS fraternity contributions to:

**Corinne Helena, OFS**  
1048 Turnstone Way  
Oceanside, CA 92057



### *District Picnic*

This is a loving hello and reminder to save the date for our fraternities to gather at the reserved space of San Dieguito Park on June 24th 2023 from 10:00-2:00 for our annual District picnic. More information, on a flyer to be developed, will be available soon. Peace and love as we begin this beautiful Lenten Season. *Peggy Botte, OFS*



**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 April ~~~✝

- April 2, 1999
- April 2, 2012
- April 6, 2018
- April 17, 2003
- April 28, 2009

- Cornelia Sussman, OFS**
- Elane Smith, OFS**
- Mary Behinke, OFS**
- Nicholas Furticella, OFS**
- Mary Gregush, OFS**

❖ For those who were professed in the month of April:

- April 10, 2005
- April 22, 1961
- April 24, 1994

- Winnie Baumer, OFS**
- Sr. Madeline Fitzgerald, OSC**
- Marta Kassai, OFS**

❖ For Tim Pert, husband of Pam Pert, OFS, who is terminally ill and is in hospice care that he may be comforted by Christ and receive His blessings.

❖ For Linda Ochwat, OFS who is in Avocado Coast Acute Rehab Center 510 E. Washington Ave., El Cajon receiving physical therapy.

\*\*\*

**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](mailto:mksfo@me.com)

*Marta*

*Dr. Marta M. Kassai, OFS, Editor*

