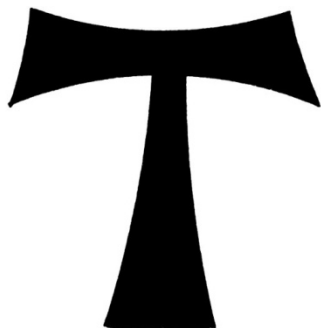


Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity



Spring is trying to blossom!

We started the morning with a beautiful 8:15 a.m. Mass for those early birds. We are now meeting back in the Outback after a few months of meeting in the White House. It is good to have more room again.

Our gathering began with our ritual opening prayer and the lighting of the 3 candles, calling all Franciscans to be present in Spirit. I like the reminder to pray for everyone, past, present and future Franciscans. Fr. Mike offered some suggestions for opening up by sharing ideas on social justice. Several people shared on many topics, showing how our Fraternity is involved in many ways already and gave ideas on how to become more involved. Karen Parsons shared a most unjust experience she had working with the Seafarers. Through her undo diligence; love for the Seafarers and living the gospel life she went above & beyond to make this frustrating situation end happily ever after. It was a good example of how we, through the power of the Holy Spirit can make a difference in other's lives. All the sharing of ideas was most welcomed. It's exciting to see the passion for social justice implemented through sometimes simple measures. Dora Freeman shared "From Gospel to Life" & reminded us of our call to embrace in every area of our lives the Franciscan way of life; to follow in Christ's footsteps through prayer & humility, recapturing the charism of our Founders. A beautiful ceremony of admission for Phyllis Prince & Ike Colleton as they officially became Candidates was prayerfully completed. We then adjourned to enjoy a bountiful feast as is our custom! Yum! PAX ET BONUM

The Second Letter of St. Francis of Assisi, to the Faithful

– “We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father Who is in Heaven (Mt 12:50); mothers, when we carry Him in our heart and body (cf. 1 Cor 6:20) through divine love and pure and sincere conscience and when we give birth to Him through a holy manner of working, which should shine before others as an example (cf. Mt 5:16).”



Don't leave home without it

All of the professed and candidates were presented with a Rule of Life and a Tau during their Rite of Admission. The minister says “ As you turn toward Christ in the spirit of St. Francis, receive this sign of the Secular Franciscan Order and become one with us” This distinctive sign, the Tau is our habit and is included in our National statutes.

We are in the world. Are we wearing our habit?

I saw the following article in the newsletter from the St. Padre Pio fraternity in Lacombe , La. and asked for permission to copy which was granted from their minister, Chuck Palmisano.

The TAU – Our Franciscan Habit



The first recorded reference to the TAU is from Ezekiel 9:4, “Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a TAU on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.” The TAU is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and looks very much like the letter “T”.

The Tau cross (usually simple and wooden) is the official external sign or “habit” of the SFO in the United States. At the Fourth Lateran Council — at which Francis was said to be in attendance — heard the words of Pope Innocent III in his homily when he said, “The TAU has exactly the same form as the Cross on which our Lord was crucified on Calvary, and only those will be marked with this sign and will obtain mercy who have mortified their flesh and conformed their life to that of the Crucified Savior. The Tau became the symbol for the council. From then on, Francis used the Tau in his writings, painted it on the walls and doors of the places where he stayed, and used it as his signature. The TAU became Francis’ own coat of arms.

St. Bonaventure said, “This TAU symbol had all the veneration and all the devotion of the saint: he spoke of it often in order to recommend it, and he traced it on himself before beginning each of his actions. For Francis the Tau Cross also became a symbol of spiritual renewal in the Church.”

In the famous blessing of Brother Leo, Francis wrote on parchment, “May the Lord bless you and keep you! May the Lord show His face to you and be merciful to you! May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace! God bless you Brother Leo!” Francis sketched a head (of Brother Leo) and then drew the TAU over this portrait.

Due, no doubt, in large part to Francis’ own affection for and devotion to the TAU, it has been a well recognized and accepted Franciscan symbol among Franciscans of various denominations and of all orders within those denominations for centuries. It remains so today. The TAU carries with it all of the symbolism of the Cross of Christ as well as Francis’ ideal of life and dream for himself and his followers.

With the revision of our Rule in 1978, our habit changed from the small scapular and string to — in the U.S., at least — the Tau cross. It is most often found wooden, with a knotted cord. The three knots symbolize the religious solemn vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. Seculars do not make vows,

but promise to live Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel practicing the secular version of Poverty Chastity and Obedience: Humility, Holiness and Charity.

What is the theological explanation of the TAU?

The Tau is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It was used with symbolic value since the Old Testament; talked about in the Book of Ezekiel: “The Lord said, Go through the midst of the city, in the midst of Jerusalem, and mark a Tau on the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry ...” (Ez.9, 4). It is the sign placed on the front of the poor of Israel, save them from extermination.

With this same meaning and value it also speaks in the Apocalypse: “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, and bore the seal of the living God, and cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was ordered to harm the earth and the sea, saying, damaged or not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees until we have sealed their foreheads the servants of our God “(Ap.7 0.2 to 3).

The Tau is therefore a sign of redemption. And ‘outward sign of that newness of the Christian life, the more inwardly marked by the seal of the Holy Spirit, given to us as a gift on the day of Baptism (Ef.1, 13).

The Tau was adopted by early Christians, the sign is in the catacombs in Rome. The early Christians adopted the Tau for two reasons. It, is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, it was a prophecy of the last day and had the same function as the Greek letter Omega, as appears from Revelation: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life ... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End “(Ap.21, 6, 22, 13).

But above all, the Christians adopted the Tau, because its shape reminded them of the cross on which Christ was sacrificed for the salvation of the world. St. Francis of Assisi, for the same reasons, referred to the whole of Christ, the sign was very dear, so much so that it occupied an important place in his life as well as gestures. In him the old prophetic sign is actualized, you recolor, regains his saving power and expresses the beatitude of poverty, substantial element of the Franciscan way of life.

It was a love that sprang from a passionate reverence for the holy cross, the humility of Christ, continuous object of the meditations of Francis and for the mission of Christ, who through the cross has given to all men the sign and the expression of his great love. Tau was also for the Holy concrete sign of the sure salvation, and Christ’s victory over evil. Francis was in great love and faith in this sign. “With this seal, Francis signed himself whenever necessity or out of charity, sent a few letters” (FF 980);”With it gave start to his actions” (FF 1347). The Tau was then the highest score for Francis, his seal, the telltale sign of a deep spiritual conviction that only in the cross of Christ is the salvation of every man.

Hence the Tau, which has behind it a solid biblical-Christian tradition, was greeted by Francis in his spiritual value and the Holy seized it so intensely and total up to become himself, through the stigmata in his flesh, the end of his days, the Tau which he had so often contemplated, designed, and above all loved.

Nowadays, many Franciscan family members, friars, nuns, seminarian’s, candidates and professed of the secular Franciscan Order, young devotees and admirers and friends of St. Francis, wear the Tau as a distinctive sign of recognition of their belonging to the family or to Franciscan spirituality.

The Tau is not a fetish, nor a trinket, it is a concrete sign of Christian devotion, but above all a commitment to life in the footsteps of the poor and crucified Christ. **Receive the Tau, take it to your heart, it is a commitment to a way of life. The Christian marked with the sign of the cross at the time of his baptism, he must carrying the cross, through the inevitable suffering that leads to life, imitator and**

follower of Christ, poor and crucified. The Tau should remind us of Christian truth, our life associated with that of Christ on the cross as an irreplaceable means of salvation.

We know this: nothing comes to pass without great sacrifice. We welcome this sign then, let us explain it through the “hope that is in us,” aware that only by clinging to the cross with Him every day we can be reborn, like Francis, a truly new life.

The Tau ...

At the time of Jesus, the cross was the conviction of the perpetrators, therefore, a symbol of shame and scandal. The condemned of that era was tied to a pole hands behind his back; arrived at the place of execution, they were hoisted on another stake driven into the ground vertically. The TAU cross of Christ is no longer a symbol of shame and defeat, but it becomes a symbol of sacrifice by which they are saved.

It is a symbol of the dignity of the children of God, because it is the Cross that Christ has sustained. It is a sign that reminds me that I must also be strong in the tests, ready to obey the Father and docile in submission, as was Jesus before the Father’s will.

It is usually made of olive wood, why? Because wood is a material very poor and ductile; God’s children are called to live simply and in poverty of spirit (Mt.5, 3). Wood is a material that is flexible, that is easily worked; also baptized Christian must be shaped in this life every day, by the Word of God, to be a Volunteer of His Gospel. Wearing the TAU means you have answered YES to the will of my God to save me, to accept his proposal of salvation.

It means to be a peacemaker, because the olive tree is a symbol of PEACE (“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace” – St. Francis). St. Francis, with the TAU, blessed and obtained many graces. We too can bless (see blessing of St. Francis or Nm.6 0.24 to 27).

Peace

michael

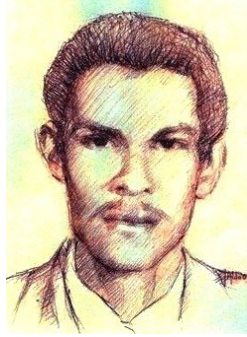
Reminders

The annual Regional Retreat will be May 4th-6th in Moss Bluff, LA. Many of us will be going yet we will still have a gathering at our regular time for those unable to go.

Next Meeting: May 5th, 2018 in the Outback @ St. Jerome Catholic Church beginning 10:00 a.m.

Early Birds: An opportunity to join together in The Holy Mass in the day chapel @ St. Jerome beginning 8:15 a.m.

Candidates and Inquirers Formation begins @ 9:00 a.m. in the Outback



Blessed Luis Obdulio Arroyo Navarro, OFS

Secular Franciscan

Declared Blessed

On October 9, 2017, Pope Francis received in audience his Eminence Cardinal Angelo Amato, S.D.B., prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. He authorized the Dicasterate to promulgate a Decree on the martyrdom of the servants of God Tullio Maruzzo, a priest of the order of Friars Minor and Luis Obdulio Arroyo Navarro, a member of the Secular Franciscan Order of Saint Francis of Assisi, killed on July 1, 1981 in *odium fidei* in Los Amates, in the Apostolic Vicariate, Izabal in Guatemala.

Luis Obdulio Arroyo Navarro was the faithful companion that the Lord placed next to Br. Tullio in the moment of ultimate sacrifice. He was born in Quiriguá (Guatemala) on 21 June 1950. He worked as a driver for the municipality of Los Amates. At the age of 26 years he joined the Secular Franciscan Order, and become a Catechist in the parish. On the evening of 1 July 1981, on the way back from a meeting of Cursillos of Christianity, de Los Amates, Br. Tullio and Luis Obdulio fell victim to an ambush by those who wanted to silence their work of evangelization.

Their cause of beatification, promoted by the Veneto province of Friars Minor, began in the year 2005.