



THE GIFT OF TAU-USA

A Testimonial by Thomas McNamara, OFS

It is 7pm Sunday evening. A few hours ago, we got home from our first fraternity meeting after being on hiatus for about half a year. Currently, our fraternity is awaiting visitation from our Region. At that visit, our Regional leadership will determine whether we have successfully regrouped after experiencing the most difficult challenge to our fraternity since its formation. While there have been several challenges over our century of fraternity life, what we experienced a few years ago was truly unique, difficult, and formative. It has been a time of much prayer, discernment, mutuality, and work. We have a new council who have individually and as a team responded well and helped us in more ways than anyone can list.

In our difficulties, we lost about two-thirds of our active membership. Many of our Inquirers decided to look elsewhere for their needs. Back then, no one seemed at all certain whether we had a future as a fraternity. We seemed to be “catching it” from every direction.

But we kept moving forward, driven by something none of us could see but all of us could feel—a sense of purpose that eludes description and a sense of positive learning and growth. Maybe this is the spirit of fraternity. Maybe we found we truly care for each other.

At today’s meeting, we were joined by nearly a dozen newcomers sharing our prayers, instructions and formation. By the end of our

fraternity meeting, we were mixing very well, sharing a spirit of community, and demonstrating how, with enough motivation, strangers can always find things to talk about. It was a very wonderful feeling.

What I am most thankful for, however, is the most recent issue of *TAU-USA*. We received our copies just as we were finalizing plans for our “comeback meeting.” We chose to use the “Fraternity Life” article, which included a letter from Pope Francis, as our focus for our gathering. As we discussed his article, he seemed to be saying exactly what we needed to hear and talk about. We went through half of the reflection questions today and will finish the second half at our next fraternity meeting. We talked about how our vocation to fraternity is a gift. We recalled the Gospel where we hear about the Master giving each of us a gold coin... and expecting us to use it well. Fraternity is that kind of gift.

Our discussions were just what we needed, a blend of hearing each other's perspectives and of building a common idea about what Pope Francis taught about fraternity life. The *TAU-USA* couldn't have come at a better time. We went home with renewed hope and real gratefulness.

TAU-USA is a physical expression of our combined blessings of vocation, fraternity, and conversion. I am very thankful for this wonderful tool from our National Fraternity. Please keep publishing *TAU-USA*—it works!

