



Our Fraternal Scoop



Spring 2023 • Quarterly Publication



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

Pax et Gaudium. When we first started “Our Franciscan Scoop” I couldn’t imagine that I would have something to share again by April, but it seems that I do. ☺ At least I want to share a couple of happenings with you that have brought me a lot of gaudium/joy.

We had our regional pastoral and fraternal visit by Father Jerome Wolbert, OFM and Joshua Molidor, OFS. We will be getting an “official report” from them, but I want to share with you some of my takeaways. Your Regional Executive Council did a great job in preparing for the visitation which included the reserving of rooms at the Casa, getting messages out to all of the Regional Council members and their guests, putting together a workable agenda, answering the pre-visit questionnaire, etc. Sound familiar? ☺ Seems to be about the same as your fraternity preparing for a visit from the regional minister and one of the co-regional spiritual assistants? But it is all so worth the preparations because of the joy and wisdom gained from the visit. I wish all of you could have been there. It felt as if the whole RC was on fire with excitement and real dialogue. I hope your minister will share with you their thoughts and feelings about the weekend. Be sure and talk with your Spiritual Assistant too, as they were invited to attend also, or if your fraternity was fortunate to have a guest there.

Then I also had the joy and pleasure to meet with the Bishop of the Tucson Diocese, Bishop Weisenburger. The Minister of St. Anthony Fraternity, and Regional Councilor-at-Large, Benjamin Saenz, OFS, was able to accompany me. I presented the bishop with our recent newsletter, a brochure



about our region that Mary Esther Stewart, OFS and I developed which had the approval of the REC, and also our Rule book. Thankfully, I had one of the newer rule books. ☺ He accepted it all with pleasure and interest. He was able to share with us some of the work the diocese is doing and personally took us to see “Our Ladies Chapel” when he discovered I had never seen it. I assured him that “we” are here to be of service to the Church, which is a community of love, and asked what we could do for him and the diocese. His reply was that he needed prayer warriors. Benjamin has contacted the diocese to see if there might be a prayer they are using. As you can see this visit so fits in with our Constitutions, Article 100. You may want take some time to review it. Also, be sure and take time to meet with the pastor of your church and build on that relationship. Lastly and as a reminder: At a previous Franciscan Family Forum, there was the opportunity to meet and dialogue with Sr. Judy Zielinske, OFS, the

producer of the documentary, "Going Home Like a Shooting Star: Thea Bowman's Journey to Sainthood". Now Sister Judy wants to know who Secular Franciscans are for her next documentary. PLEASE give this some thought and share your ideas with her at judy@newgroupmedia.com Let the love you have in your hearts be shown outwardly in your deeds.” (St. Clare) Submitted by Julianne Hartzell, OFS



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM OUR CIOFS MINISTER

What: Invitation from our General Minister

**Where: Chapter of Mats for the Secular
Franciscan Order and YouFra**

When: Rome, on November 14-19, 2024.

The Chapter of Mats is not an official chapter, but a big fraternal event, with the goal of having as many of our members participate as possible. It is open to all our brothers and sisters from the OFS and YouFra, who want to celebrate together, spending four complete days together with others from around the world in Franciscan prayer, joy and fraternity. When could be there a better occasion than during the 800-year celebrations of some important events in the life of St. Francis?

We intend to organize a fraternal gathering where we will have the possibility to meet each other from all the corners of the world -- to pray, to sing, to play together, to participate at various programs, and to listen to presentations, enjoy music, and perhaps even performances! The concrete program will be drafted in due time. We hope to embrace our individual brothers and sisters, but we want to see our Secular Franciscan families with children, too. Participation is not limited to professed members of the OFS or YouFra. Everyone from the OFS and YouFra is welcome. Hopefully we will be able to meet some who are not yet admitted, but are close to our Franciscan family. Of course, we hope to meet many of our Spiritual Assistants, as well. The program will be prepared considering all our family members – OFS members and their families (including the children), those being considered for admission, YouFra and our Spiritual Assistants.

ALL ARE WELCOME

In the spirit of our Franciscan charism, the Chapter of Mats will be very simple, and intentionally kept at low costs, so that nobody will have difficulties to pay the necessary costs. A good part of the participants will be hosted by families, thanks to the hospitality of OFS Italy, and particularly that of the Lazio region. Others will be hosted in convents and retreat houses with simple accommodations. We do not intend to book hotel rooms to keep the costs of participation as low as possible. (Those participating at the XVII General Chapter will have the possibility of remaining at the venue of the General Chapter.) Certainly, it cannot be absolutely free, but the intention is that whoever wants to come, can come without major headaches about participation costs. The International Fraternity will take care of the participants from the moment of arrival to Rome, until the last morning. Travelling has to be organized and paid by each participant with the possible help of their own home fraternities. We intend to set up a solidarity fund to help those who really do not have other options, but the fund will have very, very limited resources. (Once we have determined the criteria, we will send details on the fund, on how to donate and how to request assistance.)

We are so excited as we plan this event, but we want and need your ideas, too. We invite you to share your ideas and thoughts about this big event, so that everyone, who is going to be present, will feel that “it is good that we are here!” (Mk. 9:5, Lk. 9:33) Just send your ideas using the attached application form. Currently, we estimate the possibility of between 3,000 and 10,000 brothers and sisters attending.

Your minister and your brother.

Tibor Kauser
CIOFS General minister

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tibor Kauser'.





MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL CO-SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

Lenten Meditation from Deacon Phil Simeone, OFS

This past week during Mass we heard about people rushing to see and touch Jesus, so they also may be healed. Maybe he could cure them by allowing them to touch him or his garment such as his tassels God's word. The tassel on Jesus' cloak is always waiting to be touched by us. Reach out and touch him today Jesus is never stingy in offering help. All we need to do is open the door to our heart because the knob to the door of our heart is only on the inside, allowing him to come inside to heal us. Traditionally we have been taught that practicing some form of prayer and fasting and almsgiving during Lent are helpful. Giving up and repenting to follow Jesus more closely is constantly preached. But there is another side to the coin a positive one at that our Father who sees us, constantly looks upon us in love. Lent helps us to look upon Him. Remember Genesis where it is said that God looked upon his creation and saw that it was Very Good when he looked upon man and woman, the crown of his creation. Even when sin darkened his masterpiece, God never stopped seeing us with the eye of love. He could not take his eyes off us. We were just too good to be true. The wet clay that we are becoming continues to be shaped by Him and His hands. He hears shouting for him to come and get us. Blind beggars that we are, we search for him in darkness.

He intensified his gaze for us giving us His Son on the cross with abundant love, mercy and forgiveness. This is the good news of Lent. God sees usfinds us is committed to us loves us perfectly so we can see the light.

When we fast and pray to get his attention, it helps us to fix our eyes on Our Father who sees all promising to reward us with love. Let us gaze on Him abandoning all else to care for us. St. Augustine said the Samaritan man was Jesus who came and lifted us up and cared for us when no one else would. After taking care of our needs, He brought us into the church the inn to be cared for. He even paid the price for the care we receive.

Jesus has been so generous to us so how can we repay Him for all that He has done for us? We have gone from death to life and brought into the church. We need to go out of our way to care for our poor brothers and sisters in a variety of ways: help to overcome financial or health concerns in order for them to get back on their feet. Mother Teresa changed the world because she went out of her way to serve the poor. I once heard this humble woman say that the people she served helped her more than she helped them. This Lent may we all hear the cry of the poor try to help those in need by our sacrifices, by our works of charity by our prayers. May we all choose to be good Samaritans to as many as we can. How?

Focus on our love for Jesus. Whether we are running errands doing laundry, caring for a spouse, even fasting we do everything for the glory of God.

Submitted by Susan Simeone, ofs
Written by Deacon Phil Simeone, ofs





MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL FORMATION DIRECTOR



It isn't how we *promote* our lifestyle; It's how we *live it*.
Being "lights for our world" means being out there doing what the Gospel says. When people see the good that you do, they really do in turn give glory to God.

As I continue to share with you the Formation Friday emails, that I receive from our National Formation team, I pray it is a helpful tool for your own personal ongoing formation. In January, we were encouraged to review the following:

In the *Franciscan Journey*, pp. 15-16, we find the signs that a person MAY have a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order. On pp. 17-18 the signs that a vocation may not be present are listed. Here we repeat the affirmative signs:

They are practicing Catholics and wish to deepen their faith commitment; Have a personal faith-relationship with Jesus; Desire to follow Jesus and his Gospel; Recognize that we are all imperfect sinners; Have concern and compassion for others; **Are willing to have dialogue in discussions**; Are service oriented but not dominating; Enjoy learning from others; Have good listening skills/communication skills; Are willing to grow as a person; Are able to deal with life issues; **Are willing to collaborate and share creative ideas.**

As you read through the "Signs that a person MAY have a vocation..." pay extra attention to these two: "They are willing to dialog (talk things over)" and "They are willing to *collaborate and share creative ideas*." Franciscans are about relationship. If we are afraid to share our thoughts and ideas, who can benefit? But if we are bold about it--even when we fear rejection, or when we are not understood--that good idea, *given to us by God*, reaches out and touches others, sometimes with miraculous results!

Remember that the purpose of the Formation Friday emails I forward to you, is not to clutter up your inbox, but to give you regular, relevant and powerful insights into our life. My hope is that these thoughts from the National Formation Commission will help you on your Franciscan journey.



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL JPIC ANIMATOR

Jesus reminds us in *Mark 12:28-29* that:

To Love God, with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength, and to **love our neighbor** as we **love ourselves** is the essence of our purpose here on earth.

We are meant to *be connected with God* and one another by bonds of love.

Each of us has *intrinsic value*.
Each of us is a *gift of God*.

Everything is connected to everything else

So, what about the **rest of creation**? It, too was created by God as *gift*, with *intrinsic value*, to be *interconnected* in a web of life and mutual inter-dependence. Brothers Sun, Wind, Fire, and Sisters Moon, Water, Mother Earth, and Bodily Death... Each reflects an aspect of the glory of God.

Integrity of Creation: the value of all creatures in themselves, for one another, and for God, and their inter-connectedness in a diverse whole that has unique value for God.

Jay McDaniel, philosopher, theologian



Painting by Cynara Himes

This, in a nutshell, is what **Integrity of Creation** is all about.

Everything is connected to everything else.

Everything in creation is GIFT from God, has INTRINSIC VALUE, and is INTERCONNECTED.

People cannot live and thrive for long if the plants, animals, and ecosystems we depend on aren't thriving – if the air and water we breathe and drink aren't clean and available to us. Harming, overusing, or misusing one part of creation can lead to loss and damage to another.

God entrusts us with **stewardship** over creation – Franciscans speak of 'kinship' with her.

THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS

Pray, Live Simply, Protect Our Common Home



NEWS FROM ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY Tucson, AZ

Greetings and blessings to all of our Brothers and Sisters in Penance in the St. Thomas More region from the St Anthony Fraternity in Tucson, Az.



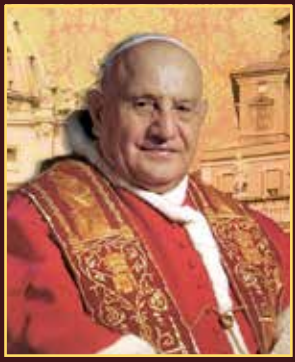
Thank you for all of your prayers, we have found a new home to gather. Friar Ponchie and Sister Carla have graciously given us permission to gather in the St Clare room at the San Xavier Mission on the second Sunday afternoon of each month. What a blessing!! Thank you, thank you Jesus (and Friar Ponchie and sister Carla!). To add to our special blessing, on the Sundays that we gather we will be serving the ministries of the 12 o'clock Mass, i.e. Eucharistic ministers, Lectors, etc., there at the Mission. What a wonderful opportunity for our St Anthony's Franciscan family to spend time together outside of our gatherings doing what we love.

And who says the blessings have to stop? In March, Trevor (potential aspirant) and Adrianna (transfer from Mexico) Kortman, recent visitors to our fraternity welcomed their first baby, Elyas Mateo!! Congratulations to you both. May God shine His face on your new family!

Prayers for Allison Herring for a full recovery. She is still in a rehab facility. Her fractures are healing but she is suffering other serious health issues.

May God continue to show us His love and mercy
Submitted by Linda Richardson, OFS – Vice-Minister

**Lean on your Beloved
because the souls who abandon themselves
in the Hands of Jesus in all they do, are carried in His Arms
-St Clare of Assisi**



NEWS FROM POPE ST. JOHN XXIII FRATERNITY Yuma, AZ

EPIPHANY POTLUCK PARTY

On January 8, 2023, the members of Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity in Yuma, AZ celebrated the Epiphany by hosting a potluck at the home of Frances Garcia, OFS our Vice-Minister.

This has been a tradition for the last eight years since I have been with the fraternity. It is a time to get to know everyone on a more personal level and have great fun! Everyone is asked to bring a \$5-\$10 white elephant gift. Everyone also brings their favorite dish and desserts.

The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity here at Immaculate Conception Parish and St. Francis Parish join us to help celebrate this feast day. Sometimes we show a movie like "The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima" or play games like Bible Trivia.



It is a great way to spend a Sunday with our Franciscan Family and have great food and fun.



Submitted by Denise Carrasquillo, OFS - Minister



NEWS FROM PEACE FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ

Greetings from Peace Fraternity. Writing this the week before Easter brings such sorrow, knowing what Jesus went through. I many times think of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and my heart aches for her. How do you watch your Son being tortured knowing you can't help Him. The grief must have been overwhelming. St Francis wanted to suffer as Jesus did by fasting and also receiving a Stigmata. He wanted to feel the pain Jesus had. He had such a special devotion to Mary and loved Jesus entirely. I wrote a prayer to Mary to talk to her about her heart-breaking grief. I want people to remember her at the crucifixion. The world today makes me wonder if we have people who would have been right there yelling "Crucify Him". I ask everyone to pray every day for the world. As Seculars we need to seek out people who need a caring smile, a small conversation. They need to know they are important and loved. On the bright side Peace Fraternity has been busy.



Last week, we set up a table in the courtyard after all the weekend masses offering fliers and answering questions.

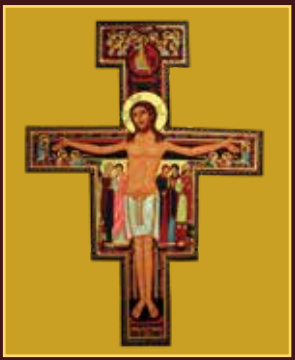


We also had the pleasure of welcoming Gianna Johnston as she begins her journey.



God Bless!

Submitted by Betty Holler OFS – Vice Minister



NEWS FROM SAN DAMIANO FRATERNITY Glendale, AZ

In January the San Damiano fraternity welcomed our new Spiritual Assistant Linda Ressler, OFS (Pictured below with Mike Hart, Minister and Cheryl Groeper, Vice-Minister) during a ceremony led by Bill Neu, OFS, Regional Co-Spiritual Assistant. Various members of the fraternity participated in readings and responses. Linda is a joyful, loving, welcoming, and knowledgeable presence to the fraternity and the entire Secular Franciscan community.



Brother Scott Slattum, OFM brought his presentation on YouFra to the fraternity in February. We learned that the needs and interests of young people are basically the same as folks for all ages. It's a matter of being flexible to the realities of those just beginning their careers and families- and being open to their experiences in the wider world.

We were gladdened by the return of our brother Mark Mitchell. He was away from our gatherings for most of 2022 to help care for his ailing mother-in-law. She passed away in January, and several members of San Damiano were able to attend her Mass of Resurrection.

Submitted by Virginia Vollmer, OFS - Formation Director



NEWS FROM OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ

In the last few months, On-Going Formation has been on the Virtues and Gifts of Mary, in relation to Scripture. This has been well received with participation by all. We began with the Annunciation to Mary and Dream of Joseph, The Nativity, The Presentation, Finding Jesus in the Temple, The Marriage Feast at Cana, and The Woman at the Well.

Lately, we explored Mary in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus in relation to Scripture. We all responded with deep compassion. One member recalled in tears, a close experience. It was heart wrenching and two people were moved to console with kleenex and an origami turtle with a heart to show deep Compassion. It reminded us of the Holy, Quiet Strength, Virtues and Gifts of our Mother. This is our Heritage and why Francis chose Mary as our Protectress and Advocate of his Family.

Another inspiration was mentioned by our Formation Director:

**The Importance of BALANCE in LIFE
We must strive to have this and be careful not to lose it.**

The 10 Virtues of Mary and How to Live Them in Everyday Life

<https://www.coraevans.com/blog/article/the-10-virtues-of-mary>



- Angelic Sweetness
- Ardent Charity
- Blind Obedience
- Constant Mental Prayer
- Divine Wisdom
- Heroic Patience
- Lively Faith
- Profound Humility
- Surpassing Purity
- Universal Mortification

Submitted by Jane Massion, OFS



NEWS FROM ST. CLARE OF ASSISI FRATERNITY Phoenix, AZ

Last November 2022, our on-going formation was on servant leadership in the Secular Franciscan Order, based on Dcn Tom Bello's (National Minister 2009-2015) article from his book **For All the Saints: St Francis Five Point Plan to Salvation**. Our discussion took us from leadership in the corporate world to leadership in the SFO. By virtue of our baptism and profession, we are all servant leaders. Profession helps us realize that baptismal promise to walk with God... a lifelong journey of becoming a servant leader.

While we are called to serve the fraternity, certain servant leadership positions call for specific skills and talents. Our February on-going formation was on **Identifying and Sharing our Gifts and Talents** where a Spiritual Gifts and Talent Inventory was sent to all members days prior to our gathering; given as self- assessment for discussion. There were some revelations of unexpected scores yet concern for lack of skill; While to some, what started as a task became a spiritual gift.

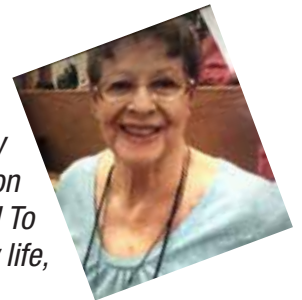
*“Prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit is paramount in the discernment of sharing our gifts/ talents within our Franciscan fraternity and our church. **Know thyself**...self-knowledge is necessary in order to recognize our strengths/weaknesses. Our state of life is also an important consideration when discerning how and when we can best serve. The Holy Spirit will sometimes take you beyond your comfort zone and it is through prayer and discernment that the Lord (sometimes through His sense of humor) will give you the courage to step forward.*

We should have a sense of peace in our “Yes” to serve. If that is missing, the Holy Spirit may be calling us to use our gifts in another way.” **Regina Fortune, Candidate II**



“Ongoing conversion for me is found in the realization that my profession compliments my faith as a Catholic Franciscan. Growing in the knowledge of the life of St. Francis and St. Clare affords me the ability to enter more deeply into an attitude of "beatitude". **Kim Rebello, OFS, CSD**

“I was professed on November 13, 2021. Formation was a Spirit- filled period of my life with many ups and downs, questions and doubts, and most of all joy. During my second year of candidacy, I was troubled by a nagging doubt that because of my assorted disabilities, I had nothing to contribute by way of ministry to the fraternity. Then I was Professed! I was asked if I would be open to assisting on the formation team. Trusting the Holy Spirit, I said YES! What a blessing God has poured out on me! To use me to assist others with their discernment. I am still overwhelmed, that at this late stage of my life, God has gifted me with this Secular Franciscan Vocation. **Marian Garnick, OFS**



“Just recently professed (Sept 2008), little did I know what challenge the Holy Spirit had planned for me when Susan Simeone asked me to run as Secretary for the St Thomas More Regional Executive Council. My first reaction and response to Susan was “I’m not secretary material”. I am an accountant. She encouraged me to step “outside my box” and the Holy Spirit will guide me. I surrendered and said “yes, I accept”. Since then, the Holy Spirit has guided me on a journey with Gifts God made present to me serving in several positions in our Region and my fraternity” **Pat Nikolaisen, OFS**

Openness on the leading of the Holy Spirit forms the type of service we do. **“Jesus never invites us to failure”.**

Submitted by Abby Catalan, ofs – Vice-Minister



NEWS FROM ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY Phoenix, AZ

In the last few months, On-Going Formation has been on the Virtues and On January 15th, the St Francis Fraternity joined with the St. Mary's parish community to listen to a talk from Fr. Joe Schwab, OFM (picture) on the history of St. Mary's.

This is part of the parish Legacy Program. The talk covered from when the friars first arrived, to various friars who were part of significant events in the Church's history. The talk was followed by a Q & A session.



On January 27-28th, Tom and Joanne McNamara and I went to San Diego for a conference given by the Franciscan School of Theology.

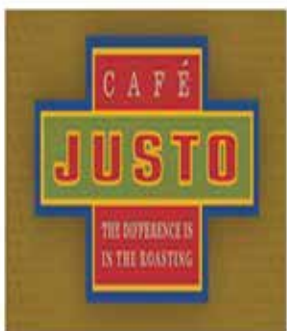


The event included an immersion day at the border visiting Casa de Misericordia, lunch and a visit to the San Ysidro Port of Entry. The 28th was filled with talks by Dr. Bill Short, OFM, Dr. Dan Horan, OFM, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Ingham, Dr. Linh Ngoc Hoang, OFM, and Cardinal Robert McElroy, Bishop of San Diego.

There was also a presentation on a new website that is being developed which will bring the writings of Francis, Clare and other Franciscans into a more useable format. It should be launched sometime in the next three months.

You can find Dr. Bill Short's talk at:

www.fst.edu/2023/03/10/re-imagining-conference-lecture-recordings/



In February, I went to the Los Angeles Religious Congress with the Casa Fair Trade Coffee ministry, Café Justo. We spent four days there explaining how this ministry allows the growers and their families to remain in Mexico. The cooperative allows them to grow and process the coffee and send it to Auga Prieta, Mexico, where it is roasted, bagged and orders are filled. This also gives the members a chance to have health care and retirement.

On March 3-4, members of the council and those who are spiritual assistants attended the National Visitation for our Region. Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM met with the spiritual assistants. The Regional Council did their usual business of the council and then the Ministers of the fraternities met with the Visitor, Joshua Molidor, OFS, Councilor for the National Fraternity and Fr. Jerome to discuss what they wanted from the National Council.

Submitted by Rosemary LeClerq, OFS



NEWS FROM ST. DAEGUN ANDREW KIM FRATERNITY Chandler, AZ

**Dear Brothers and Sisters:
Please join us in welcoming
2023 our new council:**

Minister: Sang Cheol Park, OFS
Vice-Minister: Michael Nam, OFS
Secretary: My Young Seo, OFS
Treasurer: Hyong Suk Pyon, OFS
Formation Director: Chan Rea Joung, OFS
Councilor at Large- JPIC: Julie Nam, OFS
Councilor at Large: Soo Ja Song, OFS
Councilor at Large: Chung Schultz, OFS

Julianne Hartzell, OFS Regional Minister presided
and Bill Neu, OFS witnessed the Chapter of Elections



We drove around the beeline highway to take a photos of wildflowers.



Submitted by Michael Nam, OFS Vice-Minister



NEWS FROM ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE FRATERNITY Surprise, AZ

Our efforts to provide donations of warm clothing, blankets, scarves and hats for men, women and children to the Kino Border Initiative continue. Apostolate coordinators Rita Cummins and Phyllis Smith have made several road trips to Nogales since the beginning of the year. Other members have accompanied them at times.



During the last weekend in January, our fraternity participated to the Ministry Fair at St. Clare of Assisi church. For this occasion, we created a beautiful banner as well as a sandwich board sign to publicize our gatherings designed by our in-house and very own graphic designer, Stan Sisson.

Many members contributed their time to man the table during the Fair and connected with parishioners throughout the weekend of January 28-29 for a total of 5 Masses. Afterward, we offered 2 Zoom “Come and See” presentations to be held one, Friday Feb. 3rd in the evening and another one Saturday Feb. 4th.



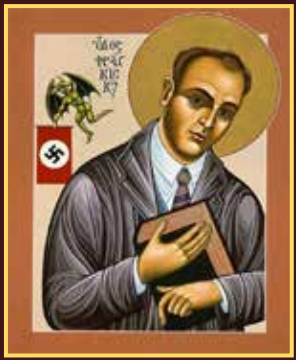
Our fraternity is blessed to have recently welcomed new members who transferred from other regions: Last October, Doralee Tayler, OFS from Illinois and in November Mary Jane McSparran, OFS from Florida. Just recently, our council received 2 more transfer requests for Deacon Richard and Diane Carmody, OFS from California.

With great joy, our fraternity celebrated Barb Otterson, OFS who was admitted to the Order during our gathering on March 5. We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide her on her journey!



We appreciate all who have taking the time to join and to pray with us the Stations of the Cross every Friday during Lent over Zoom. Many have expressed how much they appreciate the opportunity to come together and meditate on this very special Franciscan Lenten devotion with their brothers and sisters.

Submitted by Cathy Roszhart, OFS – Councilor JPIC



NEWS FROM BL. FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER FRATERNITY Flagstaff, AZ

Greetings from Northern Arizona!

My first thought was to tell all of you that we survived The Big Snow but, as I write this on March 30th (beginning of spring?), the snow is coming down! In spite of the weather and obvious climate changes, only our February gathering had to be canceled. We survived up here in the northland!

Eight members of our fraternity went to San Diego the end of January to attend the “Re-imagining the World” conference sponsored by the Franciscan School of Theology at the University of San Diego. Speakers were Br. Bill Short, Fr. Dan Horan, Sr. Mary Beth Ingham, and Cardinal McElroy to name a few. We were challenged to think like St. Francis and Pope Francis in our approach to many social issues from immigration and synodality to communication and goodness. Content from the conference will be shared with the fraternity at ongoing formation at the gatherings. The conference was preceded by a day spent experiencing immigration issues at the border, at a migrant center, and from speakers who serve migrants. We learned much about the plight of those seeking asylum in the U.S.A.



Our council spent time and effort to update our fraternity norms. We all received copies and many of us offered input on content. A final version will be approved and circulated to the fraternity. This periodic activity reminds all of us how we live our charism within our fraternity.



After a brief rest from their performance at the Quinquennial last August, the Cantic of Creation puppets are on the road again. They met the children and parents in the parish religious education class and will be spending a stimulating evening with the parish Women’s Club at their April meeting.

Again this Lent our fraternity joins with the parish to provide a soup supper just before the Friday Stations of the Cross. It’s always a good turn-out, we make our Franciscan presence known, and our crockpots go home empty.

Tom McNamara was our presenter and animator for our annual retreat the last weekend of March. He challenged us by asking, “How far do you let God into your life?” He encouraged us to let go of our devotional prayers and just listen to God speak to us. Yes!! Article 8 of our Rule.

Three candidates are moving forward in their formation program. None of them lives in Flagstaff, but they make the trip up here each month, a sign of their sincerity in pursuing their formation.



Submitted by MaryEsther Stewart, ofs

FROM OUR HISTORIAN-ARCHIVIST

Before 1993 our "regions" were administrative sections of the Friars' Provinces. In Saint Barbara Province we were the South East Region because South West Region was already taken. The "Regional Councils" at that time served under the Franciscan Provincial. When it was decided to give Secular Franciscans autonomy, the new Regions began to be formed. I remember seeing a letter where "South East Region" was officially deactivated and "Saint Thomas More Region" officially took over. Our Document of Establishment, signed by Richard Morton, National Minister, is dated 29 October 1993.

The actual structures of the Provincial System and the new National System are so similar that it's confusing to learn about them. Many of the people on documents served in both systems. The National Council, for example, didn't specifically happen so much as it evolved through different forms until NAFRA became semi-autonomous. The changes were because of legal/financial restrictions. A new organization (juridical personality) had to be created and that's where our modern administration begins. All of these changes happened over time, with many occurring in the 1990's. By 1995 America had pretty much switched.

It helps to think of our history in three "periods". Before 1918 most fraternities had been established by Franciscan pastors who wanted Seculars in their parishes. The second period spans from 1918 to 1995. During this time Friars were working to establish a "national fraternity" similar to structures in Europe. This group became our first National Directive Board (of Friars) and its companion, the National Executive Board, made mostly of Seculars. The Friars made decisions and plans, while the Seculars carried out the work. As soon as we had our National Boards, the Friars began working on developing a national identity and secular administration. In 1921, we had our First National Third Order Convention, which we now call our "First Quinquennial". We just celebrated our 20th Q, which was the Centennial.

By 1940 our National Boards were actively seeking *all active fraternities in America*. What this says is that in 1940 there wasn't a national record of fraternities. They awarded special Certificates to any fraternity that joined the "National Association of Secular Franciscans". We actually have a certificate showing when St. Elizabeth of Hungary fraternity signed up.

St. Francis fraternity at St. Mary's Church was "discovered" in 1940 after being active for twenty years. The fraternity had a council, records of meetings and their chosen name dating back to 1920-1921. Apparently, none of the Friars bothered to tell Rome. When the National Association heard of us, they fast tracked the whole process. I think this proves that the fraternity was strong and active.

Fifty years later, in 1995, we switched to autonomous Regions and began the most recent Period. When our new Region took over, it was more than just changing the stationary and continuing as before. We had to learn and embrace our role as laity in the Church, something our structure is suited for.

The process of our history shows more than a mere connection with the friars. They make a move, and about forty years later the world changes. If my "theory" holds, then what was happening in 1985 should be ready to appear in a new form. 1985 was the beginning of our Apostolic Commissions, an idea first given to us by the Friars. By 2025 perhaps we will see a renewal of apostolic mission, but this time centered not in external structures, but in the very identity of fraternities.

Submitted by Tom McNamara, OFS



We look forward to seeing you at
St. Thomas More Regional Retreat
July 14-16, 2023
At the Franciscan Renewal Center
5802 E Lincoln Dr, Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Online Registration starts May 1st. Watch for the announcement by email. At that time, you will be able to reserve your room and pay for the retreat.

Cost of registration - there will be 3 options:

- \$200 per pers. – Includes retreat program lodging for 2 nights, dinner on Friday, 3 meals on Saturday, and 2 meals on Sunday.
- \$150 per pers. for commuters Friday through Sunday - Includes everything except lodging.
- \$100 per pers. for commuters for Saturday only - Includes retreat program and 3 meals.

Program presentations include:

Tom McNamara, OFS - The Loom of God

Stan Sisson, OFS - Praying with Art

Mary Esther Stewart, OFS - Always Let the Gospel Be Your Guide

Cathy Roszhart, OFS - Andiamo, Walk to Assisi

Silent Auction:

A silent auction will be held all day on Saturday, July 15th. The Brothers and Sisters will be able to bid on all things Franciscan and beyond. At the time of registration, a bid number will be given to you so that you can bid anonymously on the items that will have been donated by your own Brothers and Sisters from all 10 fraternities!

Donations can be mugs with Tau Cross, sculptures, paintings, Tau crosses, Rosaries, jewelry, statues, anything that has to do with creation, for example a hummingbird feeder to name a few suggestions! Look around your home, there may be items that you are ready to let go for a worthy and fun cause!

Bring items Friday evening. You will be given a bid sheet where you will provide a brief description of the item, the value, minimum bid and the minimal incremental bid. Throughout the day, you'll have the opportunity to view wonderful items and bid on them! Saturday evening, we will announce the winners. Oh, by the way, there will also be a raffle! The fun never ends!

Book Exchange:

Books, books and more books! Bring a book and take a book!

There will be a table dedicated to books about Franciscans, creation, saints and more! All retreatants are encouraged to bring a book! There are probably several on your bookshelf that you are ready to let go of!

We are excited about this opportunity for all of us from the St. Thomas More region to spend time together, building relationships and growing in our lifelong formation. Together, let's follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

Peace and all good,

Carmen Durón, OFS and Amy Sperry, OFS
St. Thomas More Region Retreat Coordinators

Carmen: ciduron@cox.net or 602-421-7168
Amy: 9261962a@gmail.com or 928-380-5214

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

April 30	St. Margaret of Cortona fraternity Pastoral & Fraternal Visitations
May 21	Bl. Franz Jägerstätter fraternity Pastoral & Fraternal Visitations
June 11	Peace fraternity Pastoral & Fraternal Visitations
July 14-16	Regional Retreat at the Franciscan Renewal Center

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE NATION

Summer 2026	21 st Quinquennial (Venue and Dates to be announced soon)
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UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

November 14-19, 2024	Chapter of Mats in Rome, Italy
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SUBMISSION DEADLINES AND PUBLICATION DATES

T July 1	Deadline for Article Submission
T July 15	Publication of Our Fraternal Scoop

VISIT BOTH WEBSITES OFTEN FOR NEWS AND VALUABLE INFORMATION

National Website: <https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/>

Regional Website: <https://www.stmregionofs.com/>

Please note a typo error in last newsletter:

“In the National Database the date recorded for the Canonical Establishment of St. Margaret of Cortona fraternity is listed as April 15, 2022. Should have read 2002

Questions/Submissions:

Please contact: Cathy Roszhart, OFS croszhart@gmail.com or 309-825-2900