

Our Fraternal Scoop



WINTER 2025 • Quarterly Publication

MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER



Greetings of Joy and Peace

Or should I be saying Merry Christmas or even Happy and Blessed New Year! It is so hard to believe that we are already closing out 2025 and bringing in 2026.

This region has accomplished so much, and yet faced so much as we worked and even prayed together. I feel so happy and so blessed to belong to the Secular Franciscan Order and especially this Region of St. Thomas More. AND WHY do you ask. When I go to National Chapter Meetings, it becomes very clear to me when I listen to other stories from various Regions. Or especially when I am able to visit one of our fraternities or talk/email with individual members of the family, I can feel or even answer why to my own questions. It is because of each and every one of you!



ME? You may ask... Yes **YOU!!** And here is why or what I have perhaps seen in each member of the Secular Franciscan Family here in our Region, that I have had the pleasure of seeing or talking with. For me, and probably above all, is the open and honest communication. From that alone we learn so much from each other. I know I have learned a lot especially when it comes to elections. We, the Regional Executive Council, (REC), have strived to open those lines of communication through our two Councilors-at-Large, Carmen and John. And of course, your REC is always available.

As used by Pope Francis: "Share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts." So, to me if you have that hope and even love in your heart, then any concerns can be shared and discussed and learned from.

May the new year of 2026 bring you peace, joy and happiness with love within your heart!



During the Regional Fraternity Council Bi-Annual meeting, held October 11, 2025 at the Franciscan Renewal Center, our Minister Julianne Hartzell led the Rite of Installation of our new Regional Spiritual Assistant to officially invest Fr. Micah Muhlen, OFM who was appointed on Sept. 1, 2024.



SAVE THE DATE!

ST. THOMAS MORE ANNUAL REGIONAL RETREAT

will be held at the
FRANCISCAN RENEWAL CENTER
MAY 22-24, 2026

National theme for 2025-2028 is:
GO INTO THE WORLD AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS
it seems fitting to make it also the theme for our Retreat this year.

Meet our Retreat Master:

Father Jack Clark Robinson, OFM

Father Jack Clark Robinson, OFM is the Director at Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library. He has taught at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio as well as at the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University. At present, Father teaches as an adjunct professor at the Franciscan School of Theology. He is the author of *Franciscan Friars: Coast to Coast*, 2019.

Presenting

GO INTO THE WORLD AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS

In the past...

How have Franciscans gone out and proclaimed the Good News in the US in the last 200 years or so?

In the present...

How are we proclaiming the Good News now, but even more importantly, where in our world, culture, local community, fraternity, is the Good News most needed?

In the future...

What am I going to take away from the retreat as a personal commitment to proclaiming the Good News?
How am I going to energize my local fraternity, my local parish/faith community to proclaim the Good News?

Questions: Please contact: Joan Nordstrom, OFS nordstromjoan@gmail.com

17th Annual NUN RUN 2026

What: Fundraising Run for the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration of Our Lady of Solitude Monastery.

When: Saturday, March 7th, 2026

Where: Kiwanis Park, Tempe AZ

UNABLE TO TAKE PART IN THE NUN RUN, BUT STILL WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The Nun Run is the Poor Clares biggest fundraising event of the Year!

Each sponsorship and registration is greatly appreciated
and helps make this a great success year after year!

If you aren't able to take part in the Nun Run you may choose to make a donation.

Mail-in donations may be addressed to Nun Run, PO Box 639, Tonopah, AZ 85354.

Checks may be made out to Our Lady of Solitude Monastery.

Please note in the memo line: "Nun Run".

***Funds raised through this year's Nun Run will be used for the maintenance
and upkeep of Our Lady of Solitude Monastery.***

"Secular Franciscans must cultivate a special affection, which expresses itself in concrete initiatives of fraternal communion, towards the sisters of the contemplative life who, like Saint Clare of Assisi, bear witness in the Church and in the world and by whose mediation they expect the abundance of grace for the fraternity and for the works of the apostolate."

Article 98.2 of our General Constitutions

As Secular Franciscans we need to support our Poor Clare sisters.

This is such a fun and worthwhile way to do so. Please consider inviting your family and friends too.



For more information go to: <https://desertnunrun.com/>
To register go to: <https://desertnunrun.com/registration/>

At the OFS USA National Chapter, it was decided that the National theme for 2025-2028 will be

“Go into the world and proclaim the Good News.”

The National Priority for the same time period will be **“Living the Gospel.”**

This is a broad overview of how the theme and priority line up with our Rule. Over the next three years, we will spotlight various aspects of both. As Secular Franciscans, we are invited to live the Gospel in our daily lives, embodying the teachings of Christ and St. Francis of Assisi. This theme encourages us to reflect on how we can actively engage in evangelization and witness to the Gospel through our actions and words.

Building Relationships: The OFS Rule emphasizes the importance of building relationships based on love and respect. Article 13 of the Rule states, "As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ." By fostering genuine connections with others, we create opportunities to share the Good News and invite others to experience the love of Christ.

Engaging and Inspiring Others to Seek God: Article 6 of the Rule calls us to "go forth as witnesses and instruments of the Church's mission among people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words." Our lives should be a testament to our faith, inspiring others to seek God and explore their own spiritual journeys. Through our actions, we can demonstrate the transformative power of the Gospel and encourage others to embrace a life of faith.

Forming Ourselves: The Rule also emphasizes the importance of ongoing formation and personal growth. Article 7 states, "United by their vocation as 'brothers and sisters of penance,' and motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls 'conversion.'" By continually forming ourselves, with the help of the Spirit, in the teachings of Christ and the example of St. Francis, we become better equipped to share the Good News with authenticity and conviction.

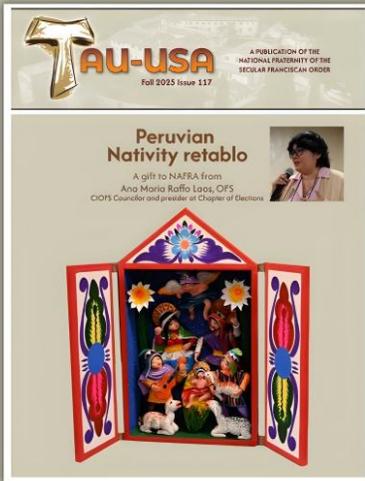
Attracting Others to Our Way of Life: Our way of life as Secular Franciscans should be attractive to others, drawing them to the beauty of the Gospel. Article 16 of the Rule encourages us to "esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community." By integrating our faith into our daily activities and demonstrating the joy and fulfillment that comes from living the Gospel, we can attract others to our way of life and inspire them to follow Christ.

Rebuilding the Church: St. Francis was called to "rebuild my Church," and this call extends to us as well. Article 14 of the Rule reminds us that "Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel." By living out the Gospel in our communities and participating in the life of the Church, we contribute to its renewal and growth.

Involved in the Activities and Challenges of the World: As Secular Franciscans, we are called to be actively involved in the world, addressing its challenges with faith and hope. Article 15 of the Rule states, "Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives." By integrating faith and action in our daily lives, nurturing hope, and sowing seeds of transformation, we can make a positive impact on the world and bring the Good News to those in need.

The theme "Go into the world and proclaim the Good News" invites us to live out our vocation as Secular Franciscans with renewed zeal and commitment. By building relationships, engaging and inspiring others, forming ourselves with the help of the Holy Spirit, attracting others to our way of life, rebuilding the Church, and being involved in the activities and challenges of the world, we can effectively proclaim the Good News and fulfill our mission as followers of Christ and St. Francis.

Formation Friday October 10, 2025



All professed members and candidates should have received an email with the Fall Edition of the TAU-USA, our National Newsletter. Please remember to share this newsletter with other members in your fraternity who have not yet been admitted or professed as well as guests who show an interest in the Secular Franciscan Order.

The TAU-USA is a wonderful and most practical resource to facilitate our Ongoing Formation. Please take the time to read it from cover to cover.

https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/TAU-USA_117_fal_25.pdf

"The supreme rule in the Church is love.
No one is called to dominate; all are called to serve.
No one should impose his or her own ideas;
We must all listen to one another.
No one is excluded; We are all called to participate.
No one possesses the whole truth;
We must all humbly seek it and seek it together."

Pope Leo XIV

Be in the Margins

This is my prayer for our nation, that each of us goes a little further to the margins, peripheries, and abandoned places in our communities to touch the poor there. I pray that we endure a little longer in the service of our fellow human beings, helping to lighten the load of those who endure far too much injustice. And to look closer, both within ourselves and our communities, to search and to find God's image in everyone we meet.

I pray that after we have done this, we may discover that lasting and true peace that can only be found when we give ourselves in selfless service to others.

—from *Franciscan Spirit's* "[We Must Rediscover the Soul of America](#)"

by Tyler Grudi, OFM

HURRY! Early registration ends Dec. 31



\$550 - Early Registration	August 15 - December 31, 2025
\$650 - Regular Registration	January 1- May 31, 2026
\$725 - Late Registration	June 1- June 30, 2026
\$160 - Single Day Registration	August 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Walk-ins not accepted

Registrations subject to a \$100 non-refundable deposit.

**Lexington Griffin Gate Marriott Golf Resort & Spa
1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40511**

Special discounted room rate: \$169 per room per night

Hotel reservation link will be provided in your registration confirmation email.

Please note: We recommend using the link to book a room as it is the best and easiest option and will assure you get our group rate. Calling Marriott center reservations is not as reliable.



***Easter of St. Francis
Rekindle the Flame***

Questions: Please send email to:

ofsusa.qcongress@gmail.com

OPTIONS FOR AIR TRAVEL TO THE Q

Our sisters, Amy Sperry and Linda Ressler have researched air fare to travel to the Q. Here is what they found out...

Flight info:

On the way to Lexington, it's a quick 56-minute connection in Atlanta. However, if it works, we will be in Lexington in time for dinner. If it doesn't work, we could catch the next flight which gets us into Lexington later in the evening. On the way back to Phoenix, there is also a later flight out of Atlanta, in case of miss of connection (although the connecting time is 1 hour and 22 minutes.). So, these two scenarios allow for backup plans that will get us to our destinations the same day. This is flying out on July 29th and returning on August 2nd. (*airfare priced early December and is subject to change*)

Phoenix to Lexington

6:05am - 2:59pm (5h 54m, 1 stop)
▲ Delta • Wed, Jul 29
[Flight details](#)

Price summary

Traveler 1: Adult	\$508.37
Flight	\$426.39
Taxes, fees, and charges ⓘ	\$81.98

Lexington to Phoenix

1:30pm - 5:21pm (6h 51m, 1 stop)
▲ Delta • Sun, Aug 2
[Flight details](#)

Trip total

\$508.37
Rates are quoted in US dollars

[Check out](#)

**** Note:** *If you are a Senior Citizen and make your reservation by calling Delta Airlines you will be eligible for a Senior Citizen discount*

There is also an option with American Airlines:

The screenshot shows the American Airlines website interface. On the left, a 'Basic Economy' fare is listed for \$477 per person, including taxes and carrier-imposed fees. The main content area displays flight details for a round trip. The departure leg is from Phoenix, AZ to Lexington, KY on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, with a flight time of 6h 29m and one stop. The return leg is from Lexington, KY to Phoenix, AZ on Sunday, August 2, 2026, with a flight time of 5h 37m and one stop. Both flights are operated as American Eagle. The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with the system clock at 9:17 AM on 12/1/2025.

Finally, if you would rather have a non-stop flight, you could fly into Louisville (SDF) or Cincinnati (CVG), both airports being about a little over an hour drive away from the Griffin Gate. By coordinating your travel plans with 2 or 3 other members, you could also share the cost of a rental car.

The screenshot shows the American Airlines booking summary for a round trip from Phoenix, AZ to Cincinnati, OH. The departure is on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, at 8:30 AM, and the return is on Sunday, August 2, 2026, at 7:00 PM. The fare is Basic Economy, nonstop, with a flight time of 3h 49m for the outbound and 3h 55m for the return. The total price is \$434 per person, including taxes and carrier-imposed fees. The aircraft used is an Airbus A321.

Flight Type	Origin	Destination	Date	Time	Duration	Class
DEPART	Phoenix, AZ (PHX)	Cincinnati, OH (CVG)	Wednesday, July 29, 2026	8:30 AM	3h 49m	Basic Economy
RETURN	Cincinnati, OH (CVG)	Phoenix, AZ (PHX)	Sunday, August 2, 2026	7:00 PM	3h 55m	Basic Economy

The screenshot shows the Southwest Airlines booking details for a round trip from Phoenix, AZ to Louisville, KY. The departure is on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, at 9:05 AM, and the return is on Sunday, August 2, 2026, at 6:30 AM. The fare is Basic, nonstop, with a flight time of 3 hr 30 min for the outbound and 3 hr 40 min for the return. The total price is \$535.96, including taxes and fees. The aircraft used is an Airbus A321.

Flight Type	Origin	Destination	Date	Time	Duration	Class
Outbound	Phoenix, AZ (PHX)	Louisville, KY (SDF)	Wed 7/29	9:05 AM	3 hr 30 min	Basic
Return	Louisville, KY (SDF)	Phoenix, AZ (PHX)	Sun 8/2	6:30 AM	3 hr 40 min	Basic

Price Breakdown:
Base fare (1 Passenger(s)): \$470.10
Taxes and fees: \$65.86
Flight total: \$535.96
or from \$53/mo* with flexpay. Learn more

Helpful Information:
• All fares and fare ranges are subject to change until purchased and are per person for each way of travel.
• For more information regarding Cash + Points, visit [Southwest.com/rterms](https://www.southwest.com/rterms)

THE MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER, JOHN PAUL II (*worth sharing again*)
**On the occasion of the X GENERAL CHAPTER
OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER**
Rome, 15th – 23rd November 2002

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. I receive you all with joy and give to each one my hearty welcome: to the members of the Presidency of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, both new and previous, to all the participants in the Tenth General Chapter and, through you, to all the Secular Franciscans and members of Franciscan Youth present in the world.

In this General Chapter you have brought to a close the up-dating of your fundamental legislation. You now have in your hands the Rule, approved by my predecessor Paul VI, of happy memory, on the 24th August 1978; the Ritual, approved on the 9th March 1984; the General Constitutions definitively approved on the 8th of December 2000; and the International Statutes, approved in this Chapter. It is now necessary to look to the future and to set out: *Duc in altum!*

The Church expects from the Secular Franciscan Order, one and only, a great service in the cause of the Kingdom of God in the world of today. The Church desires that your Order should be a model of organic, structural and charismatic unity on all levels, **so as to present itself to the world as a “community of love”** (*Regola* OFS 22). **The church expects from you, Secular Franciscans, a courageous and consistent testimony of Christian and Franciscan life, leaning towards the construction of a more fraternal and gospel world for the realisation of the Kingdom of God.**

2. The reflection, carried out during this Chapter, on "*The vital reciprocal communion in the Franciscan Family*" pushes you to commit yourselves evermore in the promotion of meeting and understanding especially within your Order, then before other Franciscan brothers and sisters and finally, with maximum care, as St. Francis wished, in your relations with the hierarchical authorities of the Church.

Your renewed legislation gives you optimal instruments for carrying out and fully expressing the unity of your Order and its communion with the Franciscan Family within precise coordinates. In it there is, above all, provision for the service of animation and guidance of the Fraternities, "co-ordinated and connected according to the norm of the Rule and the Constitutions"; such service is indispensable for communion between the Fraternities, for the coordinated collaboration between them and for the unity of the Secular Franciscan Order (cf. *General Constitutions SFO* 29.1). Also, the "spiritual assistance as a fundamental element of communion", to be carried out collegially on the regional, national and international levels is important (*General Constitutions SFO* 90.3). Of decisive importance is finally the collegial service of the *altius moderamen*, "entrusted by the Church to the Franciscan First Order and to the Third Order Regular", to which the Secular Fraternity has been attached for centuries (cf. *General Constitutions SFO* 85.2; 87.1).

I earnestly hope that the new Presidency of the International Council of the SFO (CIOFS) will continue the path undertaken by the preceding one towards the goal of a true and single body, in fidelity to the charism received from St. Francis and to the fundamental line of the renewed legislation of your Order.

3. In the meeting of more than twenty years ago, on the 27th September 1982, with the participants of the General Assembly of your International Council, I exhorted you to: "Study, love, live the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, approved for you by my predecessor Paul VI. This is an authentic treasure in your hands, harmonised with the spirit of the II Vatican Council and corresponding to what the Church expects from you" (*Teachings*, V/3, 1982, page 613).

I am pleased to be able to address analogous words to you today: study, love, live also your General Constitutions! These exhort you to accept the help that, in order to fulfil the will of the Father, is offered to you through the mediation of the Church by those who have been established in authority and by your Confreres.

You are called on to give your own contribution, inspired by the person and message of St. Francis of Assisi, in speeding up the advent of a civilisation in which the dignity of the human person, co-responsibility and love will be a living reality (Cfr. *Gaudium et Spes* 31 ss). You must deepen the true foundations of the world-wide Fraternity and create everywhere the spirit of welcome and the atmosphere of brotherliness. Commit yourselves firmly against all forms of exploitation, discrimination and marginalisation and against all attitudes of indifference towards others.

4. You, Secular Franciscans, by vocation, live belonging to the Church and to society as inseparable realities. Therefore, you are asked, above all else, to bear personal witness before all in the environment in which you live: "in your family life; in your work; in your joys and sufferings; in your associations with all men and women, brothers and sisters of the same Father; in your presence and participation in the life of society; in your fraternal relationships with all creatures." (*General Constitution SFO* 12.1). **Perhaps blood martyrdom will not be asked of you, you are certainly asked for the testimony of consistency and firmness in fulfilling the promises made at Baptism and at Confirmation, renewed and confirmed in your Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order.** In virtue of this Profession, the Rule and General Constitution must represent for each one of you the reference point for everyday experience, on the basis of a specific vocation and a precise (cf *Promulgation of the General Constitutions of the SFO*). If you are truly spurred on by the Spirit to achieve the perfection of charity in your secular state, "it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 31). It is necessary to commit oneself with conviction to the "high measure of ordinary Christian life" to which I invited all the faithful at the end of the Great Jubilee of 2000 (*Ibid.*).

5. I do not want to conclude this message without recommending you to consider your family as the primary environment in which to live the Christian commitment and the Franciscan vocation, giving within it space for prayer, to the Word of God and to Christian catechesis, and making every effort to respect all life, from conception and in all situations, until death. It is necessary to act in such a way that your families "show convincingly that it is possible to live marriage fully in keeping with God's plan and with the true good of the human person: of the spouses and especially of the children who are more fragile" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 47).

In this context, I exhort you to take up the Holy Rosary, which, "by age-old tradition, has shown itself particularly effective as a prayer that brings the family together. Individual family members, in turning their eyes towards Jesus, also regain the ability to look one another in the eye, to communicate, to show solidarity, to forgive one another and to see their covenant of love renewed in the Spirit of God" (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae* 41). Do it with your gaze on the Virgin Mary, the humble servant of the Lord, disposed to his Word and to all his appeals, who was surrounded with inexpressible love and was designated Protector and Advocate of the Franciscan Family by Francis. Give witness to Her of your burning love, in imitation of her unconditional availability and in the effusion of a confident and conscious prayer (cfr *SFO Rule* 9).

With this wish, I heartily impart to you, Secular Franciscans and to you, members of Franciscan Youth, a special Apostolic Blessing.

The Vatican, 22nd November 2002
John Paul II

Contemplative Prayer Using the Gospels



Saturday, February 28 | 9 am – 3 pm

with Mary Esther Stewart

This workshop invites participants on a journey of deepening their contemplative prayer through the Gospel readings. Together, we will explore how Scripture can become the foundation of a daily personal prayer practice. A central focus will be on the method of *Gospel journaling*—a reflective technique that integrates prayer, writing, and meditation to open the heart more fully to God’s word.

While this is not a silent workshop, participants will have dedicated time for personal contemplation with the Gospel texts, as well as opportunities for shared reflection and discussion.

Through guided practice, journaling, and group insights, participants will learn practical ways to sustain a rich, contemplative rhythm of prayer rooted in the Gospels.

Fee: \$75, includes lunch. Pre-registration required.



Mary Esther Stewart is a Secular Franciscan, mother, grandmother, author, artist, and retired educator. She has led retreats for parishes and Franciscan communities across the United States and has served as formation director for both her local Franciscan fraternity and regional Franciscan leadership. She makes her home in Flagstaff, Arizona.

To register: visit frc.retreatportal.com, contact the guest services desk, or scan the QR code. Volunteers are invited to register for any two programs per year with a 50% discount by contacting the guest services desk (discounted registrations cannot be made online). Scholarships are available—email lora@thecasa.org.



Franciscan Renewal Center
Peace. Renewal. Good.

5802 East Lincoln Drive
Scottsdale, Arizona 85253

480.948.7460 phone
TheCasa FRC on social media

thecasa.org
All are welcome.



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

WOW! It is December we have reached the final days of 2025. Thanksgiving was a time to give thanks to God. Now Advent, a new year for the church, offers us new beginnings. Advent is time for preparation for the gift God has given, the gift of love, Jesus Christ.

It is hard to believe that we are in the last days of 2025. For me, we just celebrated Easter and here we are close to Christmas. The way time flies when you are older seems as if a year is a month long. When I was a child, a month seemed so long, and a year never ended. Here we are in December 2025, a year filled with changes sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. For a Fraternity it was an election, or visitation, or profession. St. Thomas More Region and for the National, both had their election. We are always changing becoming new whether it be weekly or monthly or yearly. Change is good it shows we are growing. Change with the help of God and the love we have for our Franciscan Secular Order and the prayers to St. Francis and St. Clare to intercede for us, we can do it.

As the Regional Spiritual Assistant there always is something happening at Council meetings and Gatherings, as we share a Gospel reading and a reflection. I recently heard an SA state we should read the Gospel every day and reflect on it. We live the Gospel life so YES reading the Gospel daily will help us as individuals and as a Fraternity help us with the challenges we face. Example, I may hear from a Fraternity SA or the Formation Director difficulty in uptraining a document on a candidate what can they do, or the document is in Spanish, they have difficulty reading it. It may be a theological question or dogma or even Canon Law. There could be a concern with a candidate we need to share this difficulty. Sometimes even I have difficulty and will forward it over to PSA (Provincial Spiritual Assistant). It is the life of a Spiritual Assistant. None of what I shared with you is new to me.

It is a part of being the RSA.

We have been blessed having all fraternities with a Spiritual Assistant and three Spiritual Assistants in the making. Sometime, later in the coming year, they will be placed with a seasoned SA, shadowing them and learning how to help a Fraternity. All the theory one learns means nothing until you put it in to use. As a priest I spent some 8 plus years studying Philosophy, Theology, Spirituality, Sacraments, Canon Law, and Scripture. But what matters most is putting it to use. I enjoyed listening to the responses of the questions asked at the end of each chapter. All three amaze me. I am so looking forward to them to be placed in a Fraternity along with an SA. Then their future as an SA looks promising.

There are SA's who reached their limit 12 years in a Fraternity, and they will be stepping down. Personally, I want to thank them for their service to the Fraternities they ministered and to the region. There years of service has generated wisdom that cannot be denied but used at times for the larger community. I will call upon them for some needed assistance in the future. I pray that those who will be stepping down will have a send-off with a celebration from the Fraternity.

In closing, the call to a Secular Franciscan is a to live the Good News of Jesus Christ. Earlier, I said we should read the gospel daily and reflect on it. The readings during Advent are a time to prepare us for the incarnation. As we wait patiently for the coming of Christ read the beginning of each Gospel, reflect on the differences, and reflect on what is the same. Let me know what you learned.

May you understand fully the gift of peace,
Fr Micah Muhlen, OFM



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL FORMATION DIRECTOR

“Let us begin again, for until now we have done nothing” (St Francis). Here we are in Advent ... again. Another journey to Christmas... again. Do we use this Advent as a new beginning? Or is the same ol’ getting ready for Christmas, untangling the lights, trying to figure out what to buy for who, or what are we to do for our Christmas gathering this year. How might we use this phrase of St Francis to motivate us into embracing Advent as it comes to us through the scriptures, to begin again?

The first week reminds us to stay awake. “Therefore, stay awake” Luke 24:42, “it is the hour now for you to awake from your sleep” Romans 13:11, and Isaiah 2:5, “Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!” Going through the motions of “getting ready for Christmas” may look like sleep and our readings of the first week of Advent are shaking us up, waking us up to the reality of Jesus coming again. This is a new beginning, one that calls us to be attentive to God’s creation, to people and relationships, that we may not take the incarnation of Christ for granted.

In the second week we are told by John the Baptist of “One crying out in the dessert, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths”. Francis spent 200 days a year in quiet, in the caves of Italy so that he might hear the voice of the one crying out, the one who directed his life through the gospel. As followers of Francis and Clare, use the time given to listen, just listen!

The third week invites us out of the desert, to acknowledge the good works of God. Jesus tells John’s disciples, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them”. How might our ongoing formation open our eyes to the realities of our world that we can, in some way, share in this proclamation of the gospel, sharing hope.

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel,” our final gospel of Advent proclaims. “God so loved the world ...” I guess we can hear it so many times it may lose its effect. But not for Francis.

This incarnation, this Emmanuel, this presence of God with us, drove his entire life. This was Francis’ celebration of life. Let us begin again. May we renew our passion. Wake up!

Advent reminds us how we were saved once—and will be saved again and again and again. Jesus wants to come into our lives, take on human skin and elbows and ears, heal whatever it is that holds us back from being fully ourselves, fully God’s.

Let us begin again!

MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL ARCHIVIST

Are you interested in the history of our Region?
Would you enjoy caring for and managing our Region Archive?'

The job of Region Archivist is *assigned by the Region Executive Council*. I can introduce you to our collections, show you techniques, and explain our conservation goals.

If you would like to learn more or embrace the task of sorting and preserving our artifacts, please email me, trmcnamara@yahoo.com for more information. Or call my cell at (602) 583-1471.

Thank You!

Tom McNamara, OFS

Important documents, photos and artifacts that are pertinent to the St. Thomas More Regional Fraternity need to be kept in a central place that is both environmentally safe and secure. By assessing, sorting and preserving regional records correctly, the archivist is extending the life expectancy of those documents. Material that is created and saved by local fraternities needs to be properly sent for storage in the Regional Archive, chief among reasons is being the suspension of activity in a local fraternity (deactivation). Local fraternities should keep their records in their own archive area. This is not a position that can be assigned to simply anyone. There should definitely be a love, even a fascination, for the work.

The archivist, a non-voting member of the Regional Council, is to be appointed by and after the Regional Executive Council (REC) election for a term of three years, no later than 12 months after election. In most cases the term of 3 years can be renewed for an unspecified period of time. Regional funding should ensure that the archivist is compensated for supplies and mileage.

The Archivist:

- Should have some experience as a secretary, historian, or have previous archival experience
- Should have good organizational skills as well as good writing skills
- Should have access to a computer and the ability to use the necessary computer programs

Regional Archivist Duties:

1. Collect important records specific to the regional fraternity
2. Assist in finding a suitable, secure place in which to store regional fraternity material
3. Collect pertinent documents of early regional fraternity history
4. Create a directory (catalog) of archival files
5. Scan documents onto hard-drive as back-up to paper copies
6. Store hard copy files alphabetically and/or chronologically within folder in archival boxes or file cabinets
7. Give updates verbal or electronic, periodically to the Regional Executive Council
8. Share important information at District Regional Council meetings
9. Be available for consultation when needed to check documents
10. Remove unneeded materials and duplicates
11. Should actively be recruiting and training others as replacements for future work

We preserve our past as a gift for our future. (Tom McNamara, OFS)



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL JPIC ANIMATOR

Advent in a Jubilee Year – Cultivating Peace and Hope

As the Jubilee Year of Hope draws to a close (officially January 6, 2026), we pray to carry that hope into the New Year.

Speaking of which, [Pope Leo XIV's address](#) for the January 1, **2026 World Day of Peace** is themed:

“Peace be with you all:
Towards an ‘unarmed and disarming’ peace”

He “invites humanity ... to embrace an authentic peace based on love and justice...”

“This peace must be unarmed, that is, not based on fear, threats or weapons,”

“And it must be disarming, capable of resolving conflicts, opening hearts and generating mutual trust, empathy and hope.”

“**It is not enough to call for peace,**” ... “**We must embody it** in a way of life that rejects every form of violence, whether it be visible or systemic.” (Vatican News, 8/2025)

Do I embody a disarming peace?

How am I striving to open my heart, to let go of even subtle violence in the way I might think or speak of perceived enemies or those who are different from me?

“Remember when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received, only what you have given: a heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage.”

St. Francis of Assisi



From the Dot Himes and Harry McGinnity household to yours –
May the Lord Give You Peace!

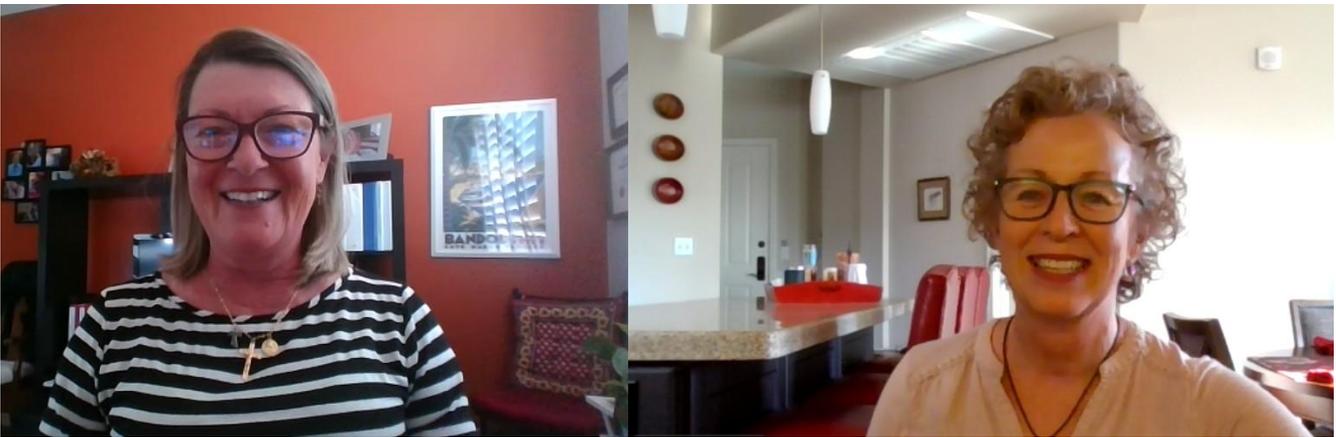
MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL DATABASE TEAM



It's the most wonderful time of the year!
Time to celebrate the Incarnation of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
God humbled himself to become one of us! God loves us infinitely –
no matter what! Take that into your prayer space all year long – wow!

Hi there!

Just a quick end-of-year message from your Regional Database Team,
Cathy Roszhart, OFS and Amy Sperry, OFS.



Cathy has served the region for many years as the Database Manager. For the past couple of years, she has been teaching Amy the ropes. We have become a really good team, dedicated to keeping your fraternity's records up-to-date.

Please reach out to your fraternity's database contact person with any changes of physical address, email address or phone number. Also, please provide an update on whether you prefer to have the TAU-USA Newsletter sent in "electronic format only" (4 times per year). As a professed member or as a candidate, you are automatically mailed one issue per year, with the other three issues coming to you electronically. Our National Executive Council voted to mail only one issue a year in order to save money and God's precious trees. (Article 18 of our Rule). If you would like to save even more trees, please volunteer to have all of the issues sent electronically to you.

End of year reports are due from each fraternity by December 13th. Prior to that date, please inform Cathy and Amy of any changes of membership status, transfers, meetings with Sister Death, address and email address changes, TAU-USA subscriptions, etc. We are your data darlings and we couldn't do it without you! Thank you! May the Lord give you peace!

UPDATE ON THE FAMILY FROM VENEZUELA

A new chapter for the Osal-Fajardo family



The Osal-Fajardo family expresses their heartfelt gratitude to the Franciscan brothers and sisters of the St. Thomas More Region for your prayers, support, and solidarity. Your generosity has been a source of strength and hope throughout their journey.

As we prepare our hearts during this Advent season, we are reminded of the many families – like the Holy Family - in our midst who continue to walk a journey of hope and perseverance.

This past summer, Edixon and Alejandra made the important decision to hire a new immigration attorney to guide them through the complex legal process ahead. While the road will be long, they remain hopeful and committed to building a secure future for their family.

The children are thriving in school, including the youngest, who began preschool this past fall. In November, the family have taken a significant step forward. After spending over two years staying at Rico's home, they have moved into their own apartment. This new home brings a sense of stability and dignity to their daily lives.

Edixon is now working, and Alejandra is actively seeking employment—a challenge made more complex by the demands of caring for four young children. Still, their determination remains strong. Rico, their steadfast supporter, continues to advocate for their needs.

If you feel called to reach out to the Osal-Fajardo family this holiday season, here is their mailing address:

Edixon Jose Osal and Family
4715 N Black Cyn Hwy, #2096
Phoenix, AZ 85015

As we await the coming of Christ, may our hearts remain open to the needs of others, and may the Osal family feel the warmth, peace, and love of our prayers and presence.



NEWS FROM PEACE FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ

Peace fraternity has had several visitors the last few months and 4 of them are growing an avid interest in Peace fraternity! By our next article we hope to introduce them to all.

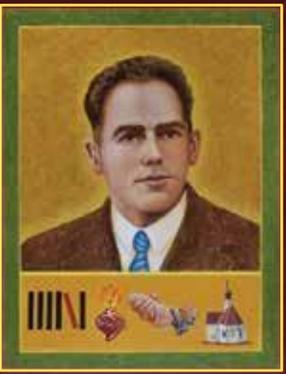
As with all of you, I'm sure; we are busy planning our Christmas party. Kathy Stefanov suggested a new idea this year. Each candidate and professed member is drawing the name of a fellow person in Peace Fraternity. They will then make some sort of tribute to that person. Just a little letter or note or perhaps a poem to brighten that person's day. We are all met with so many difficult challenges throughout the year. Sometimes we forget to be thankful for each other and all the blessings surrounding us. We hear so much negative; it can be hard to stay positive. It seems just one person's smile or word of encouragement can get us feeling so much better. When I see people hurrying about, they look so tired and sad...not to mention stressed. We keep hearing and probably saying; "Let's not forget the real meaning of Christmas!" Do we ourselves look at Christmas with love and gratitude for the little baby born in Bethlehem. I look at myself; and some days I probably look sad, and tired and stressed. Does that mean I am not doing Christmas as good as I should? I think I am guilty, too often, of bringing that on myself thinking my family expects a certain routine. Was I the one who trained them that way? Yes, I must admit I probably did it to myself. I know they don't expect a lot. Do I believe that? Why is it ingrained that we are letting people down if we don't keep the pattern up? Do any of you go through these same thoughts at Christmas? I ponder every year on how to bring people peace and happiness. Gifts never come to mind as an answer. I know that this year I am going to try to show God the appreciation I have for all he gives us every day.

Thankfully, I have a little wrapping to do but I have finished shopping. This year I want to be sure the little baby in Bethlehem is my focus.

Whatever any of you, brothers and sisters, are struggling with; please know you are not alone. We can pray for each other and, maybe just smile, it really does go a long way. Or causes them to wonder "why". Let's try to smile more and always say thank you.

Wishing you peace and joy,

NEWS FROM BL. FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER FRATERNITY Flagstaff, AZ



Maurice Clifford, OFS

Praise be You, my Lord, for Mother Earth!

Several of us have come together to help keep our city beautiful by cleaning up one of the streets in Flagstaff. Now, however, we are longer needed for that street, so we will be beautifying Mother Earth's river bed that runs through our city – the Rio de Flag. It's a great opportunity for *fraternitas*, fresh air, and exercise, and our Franciscan contribution to our beautiful city.

Seven days, Seven Joys of Mary

At many of our fraternity gatherings last month, the month of the Holy Rosary, we may well have said all together our Franciscan Crown Rosary dedicated to the seven joys of Mary. It's long, two decades longer than the regular rosary. Fr. André Cirino, ofm, shared with several of us an idea about simplifying the Crown Rosary and making it a regular part of our prayer practice each day. There are seven days in the week and there are seven decades in the Crown Rosary. Recite one decade each day remembering one of the joys of Mary. By the end of the week, you will have recited the entire Crown Rosary.



Get to know Pope Leo XIV

The Vatican has put out a film on Pope Leo which can be viewed on YouTube. I found it to be excellently informative. It is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYzssRwE7Gg>

Enjoy!

NEWS FROM BL. FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER FRATERNITY Flagstaff, AZ (Continued)

It's coooold!

We northlanders have plenty of warm clothing in our closets for just this time of year, enough to spare. But it is just as cold in Ukraine, and many there no longer have closets or clothing to see them through the winter. Our donations of extra warm things filled the back of Jennifer's truck. With the help from our Northern Arizona Community and Bl. Franz Jägerstätter Fraternity, a full truck load of new and gently used winter clothing, boots/shoes, sleeping bags, and bedding was delivered to Phoenix in October. These donations as well as monetary assistance from donors and our Franciscan fraternity, we helped to deliver 15,000 lbs. of warm clothing which will arrive in time for Christmas to be dispersed to displaced Ukrainians because of the war. Thanks to everyone here who cleaned out their closets.



*Loading the trucks
for Ukraine*



*Some of our Franciscans
on pilgrimage*



Be a Franciscan and see the world. Besides the nine members of our Fraternity who went to Assisi and the hometown of our patron Bl. Franz Jägerstätter last May, two members of our fraternity attended Fr. André Cirino and Josef Raischl's final retreat on the *Soul's Journey into God* in Assisi this November. Over 30 members of our fraternity including our affiliate, Kate Golski, M.D. (who has been pure gift to us), have made this retreat, many more than once. The spirit of St. Bonaventure, St. Francis' theologian, permeates our fraternity and keeps us going.



NEWS FROM OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ

Dear Members of the St. Thomas More Region,

As we near the end of a beautiful year together, I'm delighted to share some highlights from our recent months. Our Franciscan community has flourished through our meetings, shared prayers, learning experiences, and times of spiritual reflection. We are a blessed community!

September brought a fresh start as we held our first meeting at our new location, St. Patrick's Catholic Community. The welcoming atmosphere has helped with our transition and ongoing growth and fellowship. This month also marked the beginning of the Inquiry phase for two postulants, John Nanni and Leon Igras.

Their formators, Tom and Linda Raimundo, are enjoying their enthusiasm and thoughtful questions. We were honored to host two interested individuals at our September gathering. We hope our fraternity provided a warm introduction to our spiritual family. October was dedicated to deepening our devotion to Mary through the Franciscan Crown Rosary. Together, we reflected on the seven joys of Our Lady, finding peace and unity in this Franciscan tradition.



During November, Formation Director, Carol Bundy led us in prayer and read aloud the names of our professed members who have died, including Terry Worth, who passed away on May 28, 2025. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

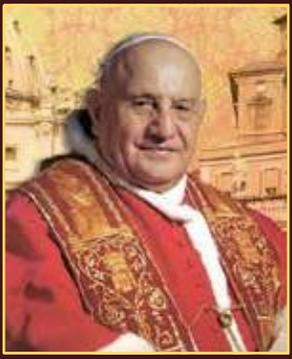
In December, we'll wrap up the year with a slideshow presentation by Cheryl Cook, who traveled to Assisi in October. Afterwards, we'll celebrate together with a delicious potluck!

January 2026 will be an important time for our fraternity, with upcoming elections for a new council. During this process we ask for your prayers. That the Holy Spirit may lead us. Additionally, we plan to offer a new orientation class for those interested in learning more about the Franciscan way of life.

As we look forward to Advent and the new year, let's continue to support one another, welcome newcomers, and grow in faith together.

Peace and Joy,

NEWS FROM POPE ST. JOHN XXIII FRATERNITY Yuma, AZ



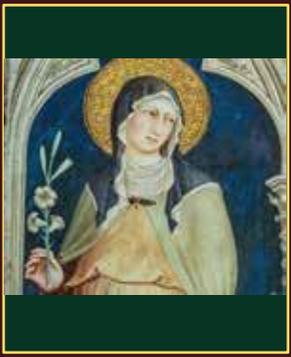
Members of our fraternity and young members from the FIAT group from Immaculate Conception Parish gathered at Pioneer Cemetery on October 18, 2025 to Pray the Rosary of Life by the Memorial for the Unborn which was erected by the Knights of Columbus. Father Thomas from Immaculate Conception Parish led us in the rosary and Cosette Schaaf, OFS passed out leaflets with special prayers for the Rosary of the Unborn.

On October 28, 2025 Millie Quijano, OFS made her Permanent Profession. It was a joyous occasion. Father Emilio Chapa from St. Francis of Assisi Parish officiated the Mass and the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity joined us on this special occasion. Afterwards we celebrated with a potluck at the house of our member Frances Garcia, OFS.



The Council approved the transfer request for Joel and Ida Gomez, OFS in a unanimous vote at the November 13, 2025 Council Meeting. We are so happy to have them. They have transferred from St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity in Roswell, NM.

Article submitted by Denise Carrasquillo, OFS (Minister)



NEWS FROM ST. CLARE OF ASSISI FRATERNITY Phoenix, AZ



Profession of Newest Fraternity Members

On October 25, 2025, St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity welcomed five newly professed members into the fold. Fr. Micah Muhlen, OFM presided over the profession ceremony, and was concelebrated by Fr. Stephen Imbarrato, and two other priests. The profession ceremony was celebrated at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Ahwatukee, and a reception was held immediately after the profession. Bethann Bader, OFS, Becky Calderon, OFS, Kelly Carpenter, OFS, Fran DeNardo, OFS, and Alan Tavassoli, OFS all made their profession to become lifetime members of the Secular Franciscan Order. Congratulations on your profession!



Blessing of the Animals at Corpus Christi Catholic Church



On October 5, 2025, our fraternity sponsored the “Blessing of the Animals” at Corpus Christi Catholic Church. Fraternity members were on hand to greet parishioners and their pets, provide snacks and certificates of blessing, and to honor the legacy of St. Francis of Assisi, who is remembered for his reverence of creation and his connection to animals. It was also a chance to interact with some of our youth helpers, whom we continue to pray will follow in the footsteps of St. Francis.



NEWS FROM ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY Tucson, AZ

Congratulations, Maria Corral!

Maria was welcomed into Saint Anthony Fraternity on Sunday, October 12, 2025, at the fraternity's gathering. She was gifted a bilingual book, titled "*Motivos – The Life of St. Francis, by Gabriela Mistral.*"



*In the picture, from left to right:
Doug Esch, Formation Director, Maria Corral and Benjamin Saenz, Minister.*

The fraternity also celebrated the 25th profession anniversary of Veronica Jimenez, OFS, and Karen Osteen, OFS, as Franciscans.

On November 9th, the Fraternity completed its triennial annual fraternal and pastoral visitations by Friar Micah, OFM, and Amy Sperry, OFS.

Article submitted by Benjamin Saenz, OFS (Minister)

VISITATIONS FOR OUR REGION MARCH 7, 2026

When We Gather in Chapter for the Fraternal and Pastoral Visitation

(Formation Friday October 24, 2025)

In the USA, Regional Chapters are held each year and have a profound effect on that region's members. On the regional level, **elections and visitations take place every three years**. On the national level, elections also take place every three years, but the visitation by the higher level (CIOFS) takes place only every six years.

"The goal of all chapters is to promote communion of mind and heart, and a renewal of the lives of each and every brother and sister of the OFS Order. Speaking about renewal, it is a long and difficult process that makes serious demands of us: the demand to return to the source of our vocation, the priorities and essential elements of our gospel way of life that, over the course of time can become less clear and, in the extreme, no longer serve to animate and set direction for our Franciscan lives." (Br. Michael A. Perry, OFM, former General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor, at the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order in 2021.)

As you can see in what Br. Michael said, the Chapter is not only for business, although that is also important. But, probably the most important part of the gathering is fraternity and ongoing formation. National Chapters (and Regional Chapters) occur on a three-year cycle. On the regional level, a **visitation** by the higher fraternity is usually requested by the Regional Minister in the year following elections. The National Executive Council will then schedule the visitation according to the availability of the Minister (or her delegate) and the National Spiritual Assistant who will conduct the visit.

Did you know that...

...the earliest Rules of our order, right up to the promulgation of the Rule of 1978 and the Constitutions of 1990 (updated in 2000 and 2001), required that the visitor be a friar alone? (You can read about this in the *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance—updated in 2012*)

...our present-day Rule in Article 26 and our Constitutions in Articles 92 and 94 give us important insight into the Fraternal and Pastoral Visit?

- "The purpose of both the **pastoral and fraternal** visits is to **revive the evangelical Franciscan spirit, to assure fidelity to the charism and to the Rule, to offer help to fraternity life, to reinforce the bond of the unity of the Order, and to promote its most effective insertion into the Franciscan family and the Church.**" (Constitutions: Article 92-1)
- "The **fraternal visit is a moment of communion, an expression of the service and concrete interest of the secular leaders at the various levels, so that the fraternity may grow and be faithful to its vocation.**" (Constitutions: Article 94-1)
- "Among the various initiatives to achieve the purpose of the visit, the visitor will give special attention to:
 - ⇒ the **validity of the formation, both initial and permanent;**
 - ⇒ the **relations entertained with other fraternities at the different levels, with Franciscan youth, and with the entire Franciscan family.**
 - ⇒ the **observance of the directives and of the guidelines of the International Council of the SFO and of the other councils;**
 - ⇒ the **presence in the local Church.**" (Article 94-2)

- “The visitor will (also) **check the report of the previous financial review** or verification of the financial and property management of the Council, the register of the accounts and every document pertaining to the property of the fraternity...” (Article 94-3)

...one of the duties of the fraternity minister at each level is **“to request, with the consent of the council, the**

pastoral and fraternal visits, at least once every three years.”? (Article 51-2) In the case of visitations of Regions, the National Fraternity often contacts the Regional Ministers to schedule visitations.

...**your Regional Minister and council prepare ahead of time for this visitation?** Executive councils prepare for the Fraternal and Pastoral visitation for many months. They fill out pre-visitiation questionnaires, prepare notebooks with paperwork and various reports that the visitors will want to see. (When a local fraternity has a visitation, the local council also has to fill out paperwork and prepare ahead of time!)

...**the National Visitors will meet with the Regional Executive Council on the night before they meet with the Regional Fraternity?** At that time, the visitors will examine the regional records and discuss with the Regional Exec all aspects of life in your region. During the meeting with the entire Regional Fraternity council on the following day, after business is concluded, the visitors will ask the Regional Exec to leave the room so that a free and frank discussion can be had with all the local ministers and Spiritual Assistants who attend.

For discussion or to answer in your journal:

- Have you attended a National or Regional Chapter? What was your impression?
- Talk to someone who has attended your regional chapter and ask them their impressions.
- If you could attend your Regional Chapter this year, what questions would you ask the National visitors? What questions would you ask the Regional Executive Council?
- Could you explain to a non-Secular Franciscan what the different levels of the Order are?

VISITATION PRAYER

We praise and thank you, O Lord our God, for through your love and wisdom you have called us to holiness through the Franciscan way of life. Through your grace and inspiration, you have provided for us the means to promote fidelity to the Franciscan charism, to observe the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, and to receive greater support in the life of the fraternity. By the power of your Holy Spirit, we will come together soon for the fraternal and pastoral visitation of our Region, in order to evaluate our efforts and to renew our dedication to live the holy Gospel of your Son in the footsteps of St. Francis. We ask for your blessing and guidance so that this occasion may help us to appreciate our vocation more deeply, to embrace it more enthusiastically, and to share it more fully with one another and with all people.

Give us the fullness of your Spirit. Take full possession of our hearts; root out of them attitudes of selfishness and false fear. Give us the will to persevere, as followers of St. Francis in the contemporary world, in rebuilding the Church and in proclaiming the Good News of salvation. Where we have faltered or even failed, give us the strength to begin anew, the light to discover our true meaning and purpose, and the courage to move forward with conviction and humility. “May the power of your love, O Lord, fiery and sweet as honey, wean our hearts from all that is under heaven, so that we may die for love of Jesus’ love, who was so good as to die for love of our love.” This we ask through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



NEWS FROM ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY Phoenix, AZ

On October 19th St. Francis Fraternity joined the Diocesan community to celebrate Rosary Sunday. We went early to set up a double-space where we gave out Rosaries, holy cards and information pamphlets in Spanish, along with plenty of other materials. The celebration was noisy, prayerful and full of the energy of diverse community coming together. Fraternity members were very excited and plan to do it again next year.



On November 2nd we hosted a booth at the Dia De Los Muertos in downtown Phoenix. We met and talked to hundreds of people from around the Valley including Spanish speakers. Our members gave out drawing pages and Halloween candy. Our new table runner and banner arrived just in time (thanks Rita!) The last-minute purchase of a folding awning made it comfortable on a sunny Sunday. The food was delicious, the music was lively and we even got a picture of our Vice Minister JoAnne saying hello to our Governor. Nearly a dozen members took turns at our booth and some even went next door to help at the Vincent de Paul information table. We would like especially to thank the students of Saint Mary's High who helped us fold up and pack our awning after the party!

Our November fraternity gathering included a special memorial for friars, Seculars and family members who passed away in the last year. It was very touching and helped us feel close to the people we were remembering.

Our members have adopted the seminarians living at St. Mary's, sending cards and emails, checking to see if they have special needs and giving them support of our prayers and encouragement. We invited them to join our Christmas gathering but they all wanted to go home to be with their families!

December has been a busy month. We will celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the same week! At our December gathering our Spanish community will take the lead by preparing and teaching *Las Posadas* in the basement at Saint Mary's. Our Formation team is planning a special program to help members who have difficulty with Roman-Franciscan Daily Prayer.

In our days of celebrating and feasting we remember members and neighbors who have needs—particularly the need for companionship. We try to live the values of Francis daily, seeking guidance from the Gospel and strength in fraternity. May you all be blessed in the coming year, accepting the challenge to grow and adapt continuously in service to the world.

We were able to attend a memorial service for Fr. Sam Nasada, OFM, who went home to our Lord in the early Fall. Ours is a life of "hope in eternal things".

And may we all be blessed with young vocations to help us set the direction for the future of our Order in Arizona. God Bless Everyone and *Feliz Navidad!*





NEWS FROM ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA FRATERNITY Las Vegas, NV



The Profession Mass for our five candidates was a heartfelt celebration held on October 18, 2025, at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, Las Vegas, NV. Angie Freeman, Pat Stoy, Colleen Malloy, Kathy Crowley, and Sue Kowalski were joined by Fraternity members, families, and friends to witness their profession and shared commitment to the Franciscan way.

Pastor Steven Hoffer served as Celebrant. Julianne Hartzell, OFS (Regional Minister), Patrick Mowrer, OFS (Spiritual Assistant) and Ann Tao, OFS (Acting Local Minister) smoothly synchronized components of the profession ritual. Sadly, Fr. Micah, Muhlen, OFM, and other Formation Team members from Arizona (Cathy and Steve Roszhart, and Amy Sperry) were absent due to a serious highway accident in which all traffic was diverted.

Our newly professed members gratefully rejoice for the goodness of God and our Franciscan Family!



Article submitted by Susan Kowalski, OFS



NEWS FROM ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE FRATERNITY Surprise, AZ

PROFESSION

Barbara Holton, OFS made her permanent commitment to the Gospel Life as she professed into the Secular Franciscan Order Sunday October 26, 2025.

The Rite of Profession took place at St. Clare of Assisi Roman Catholic Church in Surprise, AZ during the 11:30 am Mass. Father Mathew, the new parochial vicar of St. Clare of Assisi celebrated Mass and Deacon Richard Carmody, OFS served.

The fraternity and many guests celebrated afterwards with a reception lunch followed by our monthly gathering.

Congratulations, Barbara!



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

Our fraternity held their Annual Christmas Potluck on Sunday December 8 at the Goodyear Recreation Center where we rented a Ramada.

As it has been custom in the past, members and guests prayed a Franciscan Crown Rosary led by our local Minister, Phillip Brocker. Everyone contributed to a delicious lunch, making sure to bring enough to have plenty of "planned over" for our member Kevin Moshier to deliver to our homeless brothers and sisters in Phoenix. Great fellowship was enjoyed by all!



Article submitted by Cathy Roszhart, OFS

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

January 10 – Our Lady of the Rosary fraternity Triennial Chapter of Elections

February 15 – St. Daegun Andrew Kim fraternity Triennial Chapter of Elections

March 7 – Regional Council Meeting/Visitations - Franciscan Renewal Center, AZ

April 26 – Bl. Franz Jägerstätter fraternity Pastoral & Fraternal Visitations

May 22-24 – Regional Retreat Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale AZ

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE NATION

July 29 – August 2, 2026 - 21st Quinquennial in Lexington, KY

SUBMISSION DEADLINES AND PUBLICATION DATES

March 1 Deadline for Article Submission

March 15 Publication of “Our Fraternal Scoop”

VISIT BOTH WEBSITES OFTEN FOR NEWS AND VALUABLE INFORMATION

[National Website: https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/](https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/)

[Regional Website: https://www.stmregionofs.com/](https://www.stmregionofs.com/)

Questions/Submissions:

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

Please remember to notify your council and Database manager of any changes of mailing or email addresses, and new phone numbers.

REMINDER: (A great way to foster your personal Ongoing Formation!)

To receive a daily email featuring, in monthly rotation, The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, the Admonitions of St. Francis, an article from the OFS General Constitutions, the USA National Statutes, Little Flowers of St. Francis, a Franciscan quote, and additionally, the Franciscan saint of the day. (This is not a discussion list.)

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