

SAINT JUNIPERO SERRA REGION

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

MESSENGERS OF JOY

2nd QUARTER 2023 NO. 5

Mission Statement

We, the members of the Secular Franciscan Order, Saint Junipero Serra Region, called to follow the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the footprints of Saint Francis of Assisi, seek holiness through prayer, action, and promotion of the reign of God within the Franciscan Family, the Church, and the world. Because we believe that Jesus is present among us, especially in the poor, the broken, and the disenfranchised, we are compelled to reach out, to serve and to cherish them.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, nurtured by the Blessed Mother, we believe that all creatures are our sisters and brothers and are gifts from God. To that end, we accept our mission of stewardship in peace and harmony with all.

SJSR Minister's Letter

Greetings and blessings my Sister and Brother Ministers,

The election of this term's Council is a true blessing. The mixture of experienced Council members from the previous REC, combined with members from previous, previous Councils and the fresh and new input from freshmen Council members has produced a vibrant and stimulating REC. It is my hope that this recipe of dedication and determination for a fruitful term will become infectious throughout the Region. I applaud you all at the outcome of the election and visitation this past February. Our Visitors, Fr. John De La Riva, OFM Cap. CNSA, and Joshua Molidor, OFS, National Councilor, were impressed and thankful for a well-organized and a smooth, well-run V&E. Thank you goes to all the hard work in preparation and organization by the previous REC – Edd Ringlein, OFS; Noreen Ringlein, OFS; Mark Kroncke, OFS; Joanna Dobrzynski, OFS were the ringleaders and spearheaded most of the weekend's events. It takes a team to accomplish a task such as that of a combined V&E – Fred Stein, OFS; Joana de Rosa, OFS; John Scully, OFS and Richard Freitas, OFS helped to flesh out the weekend with their input. And special thanks to Shirley Ahumada, OFS – our Region's Treasurer – who volunteered her time and energy as our acting Treasurer. The REC was not only a team working together, I must impress upon you all that we truly became a family with the Holy Spirit being vibrant, sometimes contentious and actively promoting Peace and Harmony. As the region's minister, I walked away from stimulating REC gatherings impressed with the fact that we always found consensus when it came down to making decisions affecting the Region. Please thank all the members of the previous REC should they happen to be in your Fraternity.

Wishing you all Peace and Joy,

Dirk Wohlauf, OFS

Minister, St. Junipero Serra Region

And, some news and updates -

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR FINDING MORE SA's!!!!

I will be forwarding to you all a letter from Br. Buer, OFM (he's our Provincial Spiritual Assistant) regarding a request from Fr. Jerome, OFM – Fr. Jerome, OFM will be attending the Chapter of Unity, the unification of the 6 OFM provinces. 600 Friars will be attending – many of which have no real knowledge of the largest Franciscan Order in their midst – that is US, the OFS. The letter is self-explanatory – please share this with your Fraternity. A wonderful opportunity to perhaps get more Friars involved as Spiritual Assistant's!

CHAPTER OF MATS!!!!

Many in the Region have expressed a desire to attend the Chapter of Mats in Rome in November 2023. The letter I will be forwarding to you all explains many details/changes for the Chapter being postponed. Please share with your Fraternity. ~see p. 6

MESSENGERS OF JOY!!!!

It has come to the attention of the REC that the Messengers of Joy (MoJ), our Region's newsletter is not being circulated among our fraternal sisters and brothers. Please share the MoJ with your group. If this is too difficult, for whatever reason, assign someone in your Fraternity to take on this responsibility. Also, Edd Ringlein, OFS, our illustrious VM and dedicated MoJ editor welcomes articles from the Fraternity's to be included...Days of Reflection, Professions, Retreats, etc. to be shared with the entire Region will help our Region become a more vibrant family.

COURSES AND RETREATS –

San Damiano Retreat Center, Danville, CA, will be offering retreats in May – please check their website for info ~see p. 10

May 6 - Activate Your Heart – 4-week decluttering retreat & May 20/21 - Your Story, Your Legacy Retreat: A full sensory exploration

St. Francis Retreat Center, San Juan Bautista, CA, will be offering a retreat in August – please check their website for info ~see p. 10
Aug 11-13 - Scripture Retreat with Fr. Nisbet

Thanks to Richard Parnacott, OFS – minister of St. Mary Fraternity (Stockton) for sharing the following information:

FREE ON-LINE COURSE – ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY!!!!

A free on-line course (ZOOM) is offered to Secular Franciscans – “From Gospel to Life: Jesus in the New Testament”.

This is a 3-part course: June 3, 10 & 17 - This would be an excellent opportunity for your Formation team to flesh-out your candidate's formation. Also, a great refresher for professed members. Please take advantage of this opportunity. ~see p. 8

Please share the MM with your Council members and interested Fraternity members.

2023 LITURGICAL CALENDAR
FOR THE DIOCESES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
<https://www.usccb.org/resources/2022cal.pdf>

Traditional Franciscan Calendar

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/traditional-franciscan-calendar.html>

APRIL

- 2 SUN Palm Sunday
5 St. Maria Crescentia Höss, Virgin, Third Order Regular d. 1744
6 THU Thursday of Holy Week
7 FRI Friday of the Passion of the Lord
9 SUN EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD
24 Saint Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Capuchin Priest and Martyr
Protomartyr of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith d 1622

MAY

- 3 Bl. Edward Joseph Rosaz, Priest, Founder, Third Order Secular and Regular d 1903
21 SUN THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD *Solemnity*
24 Dedication of the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi, 1253
28 SUN PENTECOST SUNDAY *Solemnity*
29 MON The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church *Memorial*
30 St. King Ferdinand III King of Spain, Third Order Secular d 1252
St. Joan of Arc Secular Franciscan, "Maid of Orleans" and martyr of France d 1431
31 The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary *Feast*

JUNE

- 4 SUN THE MOST HOLY TRINITY *Solemnity*
11 SUN THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST
(Corpus Christi) *Solemnity*
13 Saint Anthony of Padua, Priest and Doctor of the Church *Memorial*
24 THE NATIVITY OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST *Solemnity*
27 St. Marguerite Bays, Third Order Secular d 1879



**THE HOLY FATHER'S
2023 PRAYER INTENTIONS
ENTRUSTED TO HIS
WORLDWIDE PRAYER
NETWORK**

APRIL

For a culture of peace and non-violence

We pray for the spread of peace and non-violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens.

MAY

For church movements and groups

We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelization each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world.

JUNE

For the abolition of torture

We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families.



Our St Junipero Serra Region-Executive Council 2023 - 2026

Our St Junipero Serra Regional Chapter was held at the San Damiano Retreat Center February 24 – 26, 2023. It was a Visitation and Election Chapter witnessed by national representatives, Joshua Molidor, OFS and Fr. John De La Riva OFM Cap. This picture was taken after the Installation Mass.

Members of the SJSR-REC: Aldo Morocho, OFS, Area 3 Councilor, Martha Arellano, OFS, Multi-Cultural Councilor, Mark Kroncke, OFS, Formation Director, Joana M. da Rosa, OFS, Area 2 Councilor, Fred Stein, OFS, Area 1 Councilor, Dianne Prior, OFS, Secretary, Edd Ringlein, OFS, Vice-Minister, Dirk Wohlauf, OFS, Minister, Stephen Garcia, OFS, Treasurer, Joanna Dobrzynski, OFS, REC – Regional Spiritual Assistant (*with Lady Jacoba*), Josh Molidor, OFS, National Councilor, and Sharon Gianelli, OFS, Area 4 Councilor.



Anne Twitchell, OFS entered into hospice and embraced Sister Death on Sunday, 19 March 2023. Bro. Bob Brady shares with us how Anne had served the St. Junipero Serra Regional Fraternity:

She was professed (1982?) Secular Franciscan as a member of the St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, San Francisco. She transferred to the local Fraternity of St Junipero Serra, Walnut Creek, and served as their Minister and Spiritual Assistant.

Anne served as our Regional Minister as well as the Regional Secretary, and Anne was among the first group in the late 1990's, to initiate the Spiritual Assistant training program. Initially in the Life-Giving Union, and later, in the current program of the Franciscan Family Connections.

This program continues under the guidance of the St Junipero Serra Region's Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants. Previously, in the late 1990's, the Regional Fraternity was served by three friar groupings OFM Conventual, OFM Capuchin and the OFM Friars.

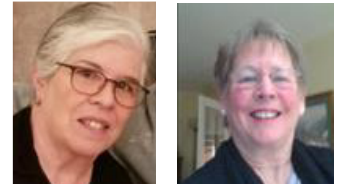
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Dear Franciscan Brothers and Sisters at our last Regional Chapter Visitation & Elections we commissioned two remarkable Secular Franciscans as Certified Spiritual Assistants. Annemarie Cota, OFS, and Kathleen Molaro, OFS, received their certificates during our Saturday Liturgy presided by Fr. John De La Riva, OFM Cap. CNSA.

It was a joyful event for the Third Order and for our Saint Junipero Serra Region. These remarkable women have been called to a ministry within their vocation as Secular Franciscans. They were certified in the name of the St. Barbara Province of the Order of Friars Minor, to serve a fraternity in the Junipero Serra Region of which they will be assigned. We thank God for their willingness to serve your Franciscan brothers and sisters.

The local spiritual assistant is to be a witness of Franciscan spirituality and of the fraternal affection of the religious towards the Secular Franciscans, and to be a bond of communion between the 1st Order or Third Order Regular and the Secular Franciscan Order. A reading from the OFS General Constitutions (Article 89.3):

“The OFS Certified Spiritual Assistant is a professed fully active member of a local fraternity. This person has studied the Life-Giving Union of the First Order to the Third order, the Rule and Articles of the Third Order as well as Franciscan Spirituality. They have successfully completed an internship within the fraternities. They have embodied those qualities needed in order to be of service to a local fraternity as a Certified Spiritual Assistant.”



Congratulations to our region's members who have completed their studies to become Certified Spiritual Assistants:
Annemarie Cota, OFS,
Mt. Alverno Fraternity and
Kathleen Molaro, OFS,
Little Portion Fraternity.



Ongoing Formation is an important part of the lives of our Franciscan Seculars.

A good source can be found in the NAFRA website: <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/ongoing-formation-resources/>
Also, Mark Kroncke, OFS, your region's Formation Director, posts an email known as **Formation Friday**. If you haven't been made aware of this notice, please check with your fraternity's minister and/or formation director for these updates.

Your regional council wishes to keep our fraternity members aware and up to date on what is happening throughout our vast region. The plan is to continue to distribute the *Messengers of Joy* quarterly via email through our fraternity ministers.

Since many of our fraternities are gathering in person once again, the priority of your region's council has been to take care of the fraternities needing Visitations and Elections. We pray that your new council members will be able to step in and continue to guide our region's members on this shared journey.

SJSR Weekly Prayer Offering

Members of our regional fraternities are continuing to meet on ***Tuesday evenings at 6:30*** to pray for those who are in need of our prayers. We alternate praying the **Franciscan Crown Rosary**, or the **Saint Francis Office of the Passion - The Geste**. All who wish to participate with us are welcome, please request the ZOOM link from Edd J Ringlein, OFS, SJSR Vice Minister: ejringlein.ofs@gmail.com.

As we prepare, participants share with each other updates of their past week as well as including those for whom we will be praying for during our evening prayers. Please email your prayer requests for us to the above email address and include on the subject line **Prayer Request**.

Our order is celebrating the 800th anniversary of the rule that has gone through several iterations since 1221. The final decree was presented to the order in the General Constitutions which will be offered for your reflection in upcoming Messenger of Joy publications.

GENERAL CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Chapter I (continued)

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER (OFS)

Article 7

All regulations not in accordance with the present Constitutions are abrogated.

CHAPTER II

FORM OF LIFE AND APOSTOLIC ACTIVITY

Title I

THE FORM OF LIFE

Article 8

1. The Secular Franciscans commit themselves by their profession to live the Gospel according to Franciscan spirituality in their secular condition.
2. They seek to deepen, in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the SFO:
 - a. Rule Paragraph 7* in a continually renewed journey of conversion and of formation;
 - b. Rule Paragraph 4,3* open to the challenges that come from society and from the Church's life situation, "going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel;"
 - c. in the personal and communal dimensions of this journey.

* 7. 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 calls "conversion." Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.

On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.

* 4. The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people. Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.

* 3. The present rule, succeeding "Memoriale Propositi" (1221) and the rules approved by the Supreme Pontiffs Nicholas IV and Leo XIII, adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times. Its interpretation belongs to the Holy See and its application will be made by the General Constitutions and particular statutes.

Article 9

1. Rule Paragraph 5* The spirituality of the Secular Franciscan is a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ, rather than a detailed program to be put into practice.
2. Rule Paragraph 4,3* The Secular Franciscan, committed to following the example and the teachings of Christ, must personally and assiduously study the Gospel and Sacred Scripture. The fraternity and its leaders should foster love for the word of the Gospel and help the brothers and sisters to know and understand it as it is proclaimed by the Church with the assistance of the Spirit.

* 5. Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of St. Francis, who often said, "I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except His most holy body and blood," should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.



Franciscan School of Theology
at the UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Re-Imagining the World Saint Francis and Pope Francis

Re-Imagining Conference (Jan. 26-29, 2023) Lecture

Recordings: <https://www.youtube.com/@franciscanschooloftheology>

<https://www.fst.edu/2023/03/10/re-imagining-conference-lecture-recordings/>



Speakers at this event included: Dr. Daniel Horan, OFM, Professor of Philosophy, Religious Studies and Theology, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind. "*From Assisi to America and Beyond: The Global Significance of Saint Francis for Today and Tomorrow*"; Dr. William Short, OFM, Professor of Spirituality, Franciscan School of Theology, San Diego, CA, "*Re-Imagining the Image of God: From the Human to the Cosmos*"; Dr. Mary Elizabeth Ingham, CSJ, General Superior, Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, "*The Harmony of Goodness: An Ethical Vision Inspired by St. Francis*"; and Dr. Linh Ngoc Hoang, OFM, Associate Professor, Religious Studies, Siena College, Loudonville, NY, "*Global Cultures in Encounter*"; Cardinal Robert McElroy, Bishop of San Diego, "*The Vision of Pope Francis for the Church of Today*"



San Diego Cardinal Robert McElroy's closing plenary at the two-day conference "Re-Imagining the World: Saint Francis and Pope Francis" called Francis' worldwide process of synodal consultation is a "call to conversion to the whole church." (Photo Courtesy of University of San Diego/Catherine Ingle)

'Perhaps the greatest missionary challenge that emerged during the synodal dialogues was the need to invite our young adults back into the life of the church.'

—Cardinal Robert McElroy

Pope Francis' worldwide process of synodal consultation is fundamentally a "call to conversion to the whole church," and is "not optional" to such reform, San Diego Cardinal Robert McElroy said Jan. 28.

"Pope Francis has called the whole of the church to a profound process of renewal through a synodal process that seeks to touch and transform every element of our ecclesial life and our outreach to the world," McElroy told a conference hosted by the Franciscan School of Theology at the University of San Diego.

"The current synodal process seeks an outcome far beyond the issuance of new documents, or even a moment of change, but rather an ongoing process of reform and renewal that constantly enhances ecclesial life from the parish to the diocese to the world church," he said.

McElroy's talk was the closing plenary at the two-day conference titled "Re-Imagining the World: Saint Francis and Pope Francis."

From a National Catholic Reporter article
BY BRYNN SHAFFER



Noreen and Edd Ringlein, OFS on a break between speakers.

This event was held at the Franciscan School of Theology, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, in the Peace and Justice Theater on Saturday, January 28, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. On Friday, January 27, 2023 some gathered in a Border immersion program to hear presentations relating to the immigrant population at the border. We heard from speakers who work with those who are able to cross and receive services to assist them as they settle into a life here in America. We heard stories of immigrants seeking asylum in the U.S. One take away is that decades ago, when it was much easier to cross, many entering came for economic reasons—seeking employment, so they could sustain family members in their countries of origin. Today, due to oppression, violence, and torture, often associated with drug cartels, gang and human trafficking activities, the major reason people leave their countries of origin is due to an imminent threat to their lives, or to the lives of their loved ones. Additionally, others flee from countries experiencing conflict and some migrants are compelled to leave areas impacted by Climate Change (droughts, crop destruction, flooding). Those waiting for a chance to enter are not only arriving from Central and South America, and Mexico, but also Haiti, Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine, and Russia.

Some of the participants were given the opportunity to take busses to the U. S./Mexican border to witness what immigrants encounter when they wish to cross. Fifty years ago, I was in the Navy stationed at Camp Pendleton. A group of us decided that we would go into Tijuana to go bar hopping for the night. We drove across and back without any problems. Today one can cross into Mexico without much of a problem, but the checkpoint coming back is cumbersome and militarized.

Other participants were given a tour of the Catholic Charities run facility, where immigrants, just released from ICE detention and processing are supported before being released to travel onwards and to acclimate to life in the US in the care of family members, friends, or sponsors. Noreen Ringlein, OFS, JPIC Animator, chose to attend this tour. She noted that the Immigration Shelter is run out of a large hotel Crown Plaza hotel leased by the state of California to offer this entry shelter. The hotel has been leased since 2021 and since that time has processed approximately 150,000 immigrants from all over the world. Immigrants who arrive here on buses or vans dropped by ICE, sometimes arrive off buses still in handcuffs. The staff response in the Catholic Charities facility is incredibly welcoming and humanitarian. Catholic Charities demanded that ICE and the transport companies remove the handcuffs, while the migrants were still on the arriving buses and vans, so that they would know they were free once they stepped off the buses.

Arriving immigrants are able to access immediate health care offered by UC San Diego doctors and nurses. All immigrants are screened for Covid-19 or any other medical conditions and immediate care is rendered. Those with Covid-19 or exposed family members are separated into a specific area of the hotel and medical care is provided. On a completely voluntary basis any arriving immigrant is able to receive a Covid-19 vaccine. Healthy migrants stay in a different area of the hotel and the two sides do not mingle during their stay for their own wellbeing. Migrants have reported that at this shelter for the first time, they can bathe and are provided hot nutritious meals. Most have not had access to clean, hot water or a warm meal in months. Area restaurants in San Diego contribute meals to residents and rotate who is feeding the immigrants on a weekly basis. Families room together and are able to get clothing and can also order snacks and drinks across the day. There is also mental health care available to any individual or family. Many of the immigrants have experienced oppression, torture, and abuse on their journey to the US and some have PTSD symptoms. Migrants only stay at this hotel operated by the state of California, FEMA (the feds), and Catholic Charities for about 4 days. Then the majority of them have their own travel funds to move on to stay with relatives, friends, or sponsor's homes all across the continental U.S.

Immigration Toolkit: <https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/immigration-toolkit/>



An integral ecology initiative sponsored by the Saint Barbara Province for the Franciscan family in the Western U.S.

<https://laudatosispirit.org/>



Hope for the Earth.
Hope for Humanity.

May 21 - 28, 2023

<https://laudatosiweek.org/>

At our last REC meeting our regional Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation Animator, Noreen Ringlein, OFS, gave a presentation on *Laudato Si' Spirit*, a project sponsored by the Santa Barbara Province of the Franciscan family. Our council has agreed to sign our SJS Region on as participants to this worthwhile initiative to help spread the message that was initiated by Pope Francis in his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*.

Please help bring this to the attention of our fraternities through On-Going Formation and share what your fraternity is doing as an apostolate in your communities with our JPIC animator. Include pictures that can be posted along with your announcement that we can share in an edition of *The Messengers of Joy*.

Check out the links provided to obtain information about the project. Share what is offered and encourage others to do their part. We highly recommend seeing "The Letter":

Watch "The Letter": A Message for our Earth

Featuring Pope Francis, the full-length documentary *The Letter* follows diverse ecological advocates from around the world. Watch as they dialogue and find common ground with Pope Francis and one another while offering a hopeful vision for the future of caring for our common home.

Produced by Off the Fence (Oscar-winning producers of *My Octopus Teacher*) in collaboration with Laudato Si' Movement and the Vatican, *The Letter* is available to watch for free on YouTube Originals.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rps9bs85BII>

The Pope, the Environmental Crisis, and Frontline Leaders | *The Letter: Laudato Si Film*

Message from CIOFS General Minister, Tibor Kauser, OFS, announcing the decision for delaying the Chapter of Mats for the International Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order and YouFra:



Prot. n. 3564

Circ. n. 11/21-27

Subject: Change of Plans/Date for Chapter of Mats

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Peace and all good!

Last year we announced that we were planning to organize a 'never-before' event, a Chapter of Mats for the International Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order and YouFra. We have received so many wonderful responses to our plan and hope to have our own Secular Franciscan and YouFra Chapter of Mats. Our hope was to offer this once-in-a-lifetime family reunion in November 2024, however, unfortunately, due various reasons which we will state below, we have voted in the Presidency to delay the event two years.

The reasons for our decisions are:

1. The Presidency does not have the cash flow necessary for financing the advanced costs for the venue and services required to have the Chapter of Mats in a safe, protected area which is essential, due to weather uncertainties among other reasons. The costs associated with the event would be almost three million Euros – at least 30% of which would have to be paid in advance.
2. The number of the possible attendees who have indicated an interest in attending is approximately 6,000. The 6,000 would not fill the venue which we have selected and is the only one available for 2024. We need to find a different venue which will be appropriate for the number of participants. Our prayer is to have the greatest number of brothers and sisters present with us.
3. The presidency believes that if we postpone the event until sometime in 2026, we will have time to determine if we can get donations (also helping us to pay for the advance costs) and, hopefully, to reduce the registration fee.

Our next steps will include:

1. Working with the committee to finalize steps forward, including, a possible new date (if it is determined that we can raise the funds), finding a new venue, finding local support, researching foundations, etc. (We already have many OFS families who would be willing to host an OFS/YouFra brother or sister or family. Will they be able to host once we have set a new date?)
2. Finding donors from around the world with the help of our National Fraternities. (Specifics to be provided by your presidency councilors and a follow-up circular.)
3. Once we have confirmed the number of attendees and the registration costs, determining if our brothers and sisters will be willing to pay their registration fee in advance to offset some of those initial costs. (More specifics on date and costs will be sent once we have done additional research on possible donors.)

We want to emphasize that participation cannot be free, as we already indicated in the previous circular letter. (There was some misunderstanding about this, so we think it has to be stated clearly.) We will, however, try to keep the costs as low as possible, but surely, everyone will have to pay. These payments will have to be made in advance, otherwise we will not be able to reserve the venue and services.

Rome, April 18th 2023

We apologize from the bottom of our hearts for this setback in plans. But we promise you that, if we can find the funding, we will have a family reunion we will remember and cherish for a lifetime.

This change in the program means, that the 2024 intermediate General Chapter will be held in the ordinary way, taking advantage of being together for a whole week. Soon a separate circular letter will be sent sharing some details and starting the concrete preparations.

In the meantime, we ask for your prayers and your suggestions. We would be especially appreciative if you could work with us to find possible donors who would consider supporting this truly Franciscan once-in-a-lifetime event. Please let us know.

Your brother in Christ and in St Francis,



Tibor Kauser, OFS
CIOFS General Minister



Message from the National Minister that originally appeared in the Winter 2023 Issue of TAU-USA #108



THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY of the
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER - USA

NATIONAL MINISTER'S MESSAGE

by Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS

Have you heard the adage: "If everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority?" [1]

Of course, we don't profess to live one article of the Rule at a time. But like the liturgical seasons, or the feast days, it does help to focus on one facet to deepen our understanding of it. We focus on one aspect while still applying the other aspects of our Faith and Rule each day.

General Constitutions Article 45.1 & 2 At many elective chapters, the National Fraternity Council sets priorities for the new National Executive Council (NEC). In October 2022, the National Fraternity Council (NEC members, 30 Regional Ministers and Conference of National Spiritual Assistants) voted on the priorities for the next three years: Vocations, Communications and Relationships.

A few hours after we set the priorities, I was elected OFS-USA National Minister. Seeing that I had the pleasure of serving the OFS - USA on the Vocations Committee for several years, I found the priorities to be very fitting. This article focuses on Vocations. Future articles will address Communications and Relationships.

During my tenure on the Vocations Committee, I worked with many others to come up with tools and ideas for sharing our love for our vocation and how to get the word out about the Order. (See the national website for the Vocations Tool Kit, brochures, Vocation Prayer cards, Testimonials, Elevator Speeches.)

Many of us are lifelong Catholics. What was your reaction when you first heard about the Secular Franciscan Order? Did you respond: "I wonder why I never heard of it before?" The same thing happened to me as a young adult living in Chicago. This reaction should be the exception.

Article 45 of the OFS General Constitutions charges us individually and as councils to promote vocations.

Are you convinced of the validity of the Franciscan way of life? If so, your enthusiasm should be contagious. I challenge each member of OFS-USA to meditate on why we became Secular Franciscans in the first place. Then, give serious thought to why the Order is special in our lives. Once we have thought and prayed about our own commitment, we will be ready to talk about our vocation to others. We will be ready to "spread the word" and the joy of following Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis.[2] Who knows how many hearts we will touch?

[1] I can't really find who penned that saying.... but I know our sister, Mary Bittner, OFS, (former National Vice Minister), has shared it many times in the last few years during NEC meetings or OFS-USA National Fraternity Chapters.

[2] Article 6 of OFS Rule: "...Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words..."

Our Regional Minister shares his Easter Message to you in the latest Messengers of Joy

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our liturgical year is in the Eastertide season – the 50 days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday. The Church focuses on the coming of the Holy Spirit. We celebrate this event beginning with the Octave after Easter Sunday. These solemnities prepare us for the coming of the Paraclete on Pentecost Sunday. How blessed are we that Holy Mother Church celebrates in such a way that our hearts and minds are focused on the gift of the Holy Spirit – the third person of the blessed Trinity. The time period between Ascension Thursday (some countries may celebrate this feast on Sunday) and Pentecost Sunday is ideally 9 days – this nine-day period inspired the form of prayer call the "novena".

I am always amazed at how the Church has given us such a rich tradition of prayer and celebration to honor the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior. Delving into these traditions can only fortify our Faith and commitment to living the life of a true Christian. A recent homily I listened to brought home an interesting fact. All those that call themselves "Christians" – can they be honestly calling themselves that, when in essence every denomination stemming from the true religion of Catholicism has taken Christ out of their churches? What other church has a tabernacle? What other church believes in the Body and Blood of Christ being transubstantiated at the point of consecration? What other church believes in the miracle of Christ constantly giving us the graces and blessings we receive when we consume him and we become one, with Him, in Him and through Him? The joy we encounter every Sunday is not one of superficial celebration, heightening our emotions to a point of ecstasy, rather, His internal Joy permeates our Being. Often, I reflect on us as human beings, being such through Christ, without Christ we would only be a human existence.

Wishing you all a glorious and faith-filled Eastertide!

Dirk Wohlau, OFS
Regional Minister

Relic of St. Francis of Assisi Stays with National Executive Council

The National Executive Council (NEC) of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States met in St. Louis Missouri March 10-12, 2023.

On March 12, 2023, former National Minister, Jan Parker, OFS, visited the current NEC to transfer documents, or so she said.

In reality, she stopped by to transfer a special gift. She presented Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, the current national minister with a relic of our seraphic father, St. Francis of Assisi.



Former national minister Jan Parker, OFS, left, presents national minister Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, with a relic of St. Francis of Assisi.



Relic of St. Francis of Assisi

This relic was given to Jan Parker by St. Kateri Tekakwitha Region when Jan was first elected national minister in 2015. A new tradition has been created. The relic will travel with the national minister to all OFS-related meetings. St. Francis, pray for us.

Free Gospel-to-life series offers faithful, contemporary look at Jesus

Fr. David B. Couturier, O.F.M. Cap., will present a free online study of "From Gospel to Life: Jesus in the New Testament." This mini-course, offered over three Saturdays in June,



will provide Secular Franciscans with a faithful and contemporary view of Jesus, as He is presented in the Letters of Paul and the Synoptic Gospels.

Fr. Couturier will discuss Jesus in His Jewish historical context, providing a fresh look at the stories we know so well. In understanding how Jesus spoke in Jewish terms, we can more deeply appreciate His words, thoughts, and commands. His parables will come alive.

The course will run from 12-1:30 p.m. Eastern Time on June 3, 10, and 17. To Register:

https://sbu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5otr11QCVYP94eq
The Zoom link will be sent to registrants.

Fr. Couturier is the executive director of Franciscan Institute & Franciscan Institute Publications at St. Bonaventure University. He gave a popular Quinquennial keynote address last August in Phoenix.

Fr. Couturier also edited the "Gospel of St. Francis" videos and handout for Secular Franciscans that are available on the St. Bonaventure University website.

For additional information and other summer course offerings, go to: Franciscan Institute Programs & Conferences | St. Bonaventure University (sbu.edu)

Dear Regional Ministers, Regional Vice-Ministers and Friars of the CNSA,

Peace be with you.

Please find the attached Easter greeting and message below from Dina Shabalina, OFS. Dina is scheduled to be our Fraternal Visitor from CIOF this coming August at the Chapter of Visitation in St. Louis, MO. Dina is from Ukraine.

Fr. Carlos Gines Campos Julve, TOR, is scheduled to be our Pastoral Visitor.

Let us pray for their safety and final preparations for travel to the United States of America.

Thank you!

Pax et Bonum.

Mary Frances Charsky, OFS

International Councilor OFS-USA

Dearest Mary Frances!

It's still not too late to greet you and all the National Fraternity of the USA with the holy Day of Easter! May the light of our Risen Lord renew the life in your families and fraternities! May the love of Jesus who won the death encourage you to go to those who are still in darkness and to proclaim them the victory of His mercy!

I send you my fraternal hugs,

your sister Dina



Message from Mary Frances Charsky, OFS requesting prayers for all who are planning to travel later this year:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the peace of the Lord be with you.

We are requesting prayers for several Franciscans who are traveling and representing the United States. Attached please find several prayers for your personal use and devotion.

First, there is the XI Latin American OFS and YouFra Congress and the 1st American OFS and YouFra Congress that will be held in Asunción, Paraguay, on April 27 through May 1, 2023.

Travel begins on April 25 and ends on May 2 or 3, for:

Deacon Juan Lezcano, OFS, who has been an International Councilor

Karen Lezcano, OFS, and Fr. John De La Riva, OFM Cap., CNSA President in turn.

Second, for the Franciscan International Board Meeting,

Carolyn Townes, OFS, will be traveling to Assisi, Italy on May 8 - 18, 2023.

Third, YouFra International Gathering (YIG) and World Youth Day (WYD)

will take place in Lisbon, Portugal. They are scheduled for July 27 to August 6, 2023.

Kathleen Molaro, OFS, and Fr. John De La Riva, OFM Cap.

and several Young Adults are hoping and planning to participate.

There are other Secular Franciscans, Friars, Sisters and Young Adults as well as our immediate families and companions who will be traveling in the next few months, let us pray for them all. Hope that several prayers suggested will be a benefit and comfort. Thank you!

Pax et Bonum,

Mary Frances Charsky, OFS

International Councilor OFS-USA

NOTE: The National Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation conference is being held in St Louis, MO the first weekend in May. Noreen E Ringlein, OFS, Regional JPIC Animator and Edd J Ringlein, OFS will be there representing the St Junipero Serra Region.

A Prayer for Safe Travel

O God, our heavenly Father, whose glory fills the whole creation, and whose presence we find wherever we go: preserve those who travel; surround them with your loving care; protect them from every danger; and bring them in safety to their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for a Friend to Travel Safely

Heavenly Father, this prayer of safe travel is for my friends for them to have their safe trip. Oh God, who hast commissioned thy angels, allow very little distraction to come my friends' way and allow them to reach their final destination. Keep them away from any danger and let them not worry; condition their minds to have the unison goal of returning safely. I ask these in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Traveling with Kids

Dear Lord, I pray for our upcoming trip with the kids. I ask that you will guard their bodies so that no sickness will occur while we are gone. I pray that they will be in good spirits and will cause very little distraction on the way to our destination. Help me to discern when they need a break or some rest during this trip yet help us have a wonderful time. In your name, I pray. Amen.



Dear Y/YA Animators and Ministers,

I'm excited to share some important news regarding Franciscan Youth and Young Adults.

- Our Faith Development documents, Living a Gospel Life and Canticle of Creation sessions have now been translated into Spanish! I will distribute it soon, after a bit of tweaking. Thank you to Cecilia Aguirre, OFS, and her friend for fulfilling this long-awaited task.
- Several of us from the region are attending the YouFra International Gathering in Portugal July 26-Aug. 1, the week before World Youth Day...Myself, Fr. John De La Riva, O.F.M. Cap,

our new area councilor, Aldo Morocho, OFS, and his daughter Dalia. Fr. John is staying for World Youth Day also. Please pray for us as we prepare for this important event.

- Thank you to those who have attended the core training sessions we've held so far. Below are the upcoming dates. Please let me know if you have an animator that needs to be put on the group email list, or if you wish to attend. All are welcome!

Peace, Kathleen Molaro, OFS

Each session offered twice to accommodate schedules: 4:30-6:00 on Thursdays and 9:00-10:30 on Saturdays.

Two separate zooms will be sent for each session; one for Thursday and one for Saturday.

Core Training, Session 2: What is Franciscan Youth (YouFra)? - Thursday April 13 and Saturday April 15

Core Training, Session 3: What is Youth Ministry? - Thursday May 11 and Saturday May 13

Core Training, Session 4: What is Young Adult Ministry? - Thursday June 15 and Saturday June 17

Upcoming Events

Establishment Mass for St. Francis Fraternity, Sacramento. This is taking place at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 1066 26th St., Sacramento, CA 95916. June 11th is the tentative date for this event. Secular Franciscans are encouraged to attend and support our fraternity members. An email will be sent announcing date & time.

On June 25th the Il Poverello Fraternity is planning to present a panel discussion on Homelessness and Immigrant populations in the north bay area. Our panelists include staff members of the Caritas Village, Santa Rosa, operated by Catholic Charities; staff members of Petaluma's Committee on the Shelter-less (COTS); and Robby Moore who will talk about his work with the homeless as "Brother's Pantry". This will be a Zoom presentation.

Email for the link: ejringlein.ofs@gmail.com



I am a member of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) and I believe in living the gospel and my Franciscan values all day, every day. As a professed Secular Franciscan, I am delighted to join with you-vowed religious, Seculars, alumni or leaders of Franciscan institutions, and thousands of Franciscan-hearted individuals—in this beautiful work for Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation and human dignity.



<https://youtu.be/ZtY4dplp> ~

~ See the link to hear Brian Simmons, OFS, message on YouTube about being a member of the Franciscan Action Network. Brian is the minister of Iuniero Serra Fraternity of Carmel

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FRANCISCAN WEB LINKS

The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order-USA:

<http://secularfranciscansusa.org>

Tau-USA- Newsletter (complete issues):

<http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa.html>

Franciscan Friars, Province of Santa Barbara – *The Way of St. Francis*:

<https://www.sbfranciscans.org/who-are-we/franciscan-spirituality/third-order-brothers-and-sisters-of-penance-and-tertiaries-secular-franciscan-order-ofs/>

<https://www.sbfranciscans.org/stay-connected/the-way-of-st-francis-magazine/>

<https://www.sbfranciscans.org/3d-flip-book/the-way-magazine-spring-2023/>

San Damiano Retreat Center calendar:

<http://sandamiano.org/retreats-programs/retreats-calendar>

St. Francis Retreat Center:

<https://www.stfrancisretreat.com/>

Fr. Daniel Horan, OFM website: <https://danhoran.com>

The Holy See: <https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>

Papal Encyclicals online: <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/>

Rite Expiatis - On St. Francis of Assisi - Pope Pius XI - 1926

<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius11/p11ritex.htm>

Documents of the Second Vatican Council:

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.usccb.org/>

JUSTICE, PEACE, & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Franciscan Mission Service:

<https://franciscanmissionservice.org>

Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity:

<https://www.franciscanunity.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/franciscanunity/>

Franciscan International:

<https://franciscansinternational.org/home/>

Casa Franciscana Outreach:

<https://casafranciscanaoutreach.org/>

email: casafranciscanaoutreach@gmail.com

Franciscan Action Network (FAN):

<http://franciscanaction.org/>

and www.FranciscanEarthCorps.org

Franciscans for Justice:

<http://www.franciscansforjustice.org/>

Laudato Si' Spirit:

<https://laudatosispirit.org/>

