

# Communio

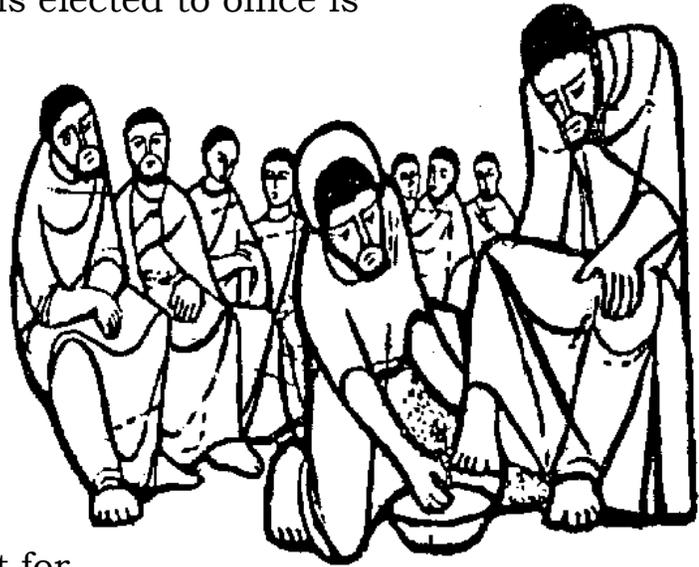
That All May Be One

Newsletter of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
Secular Franciscan Order

Summer 2013

## Servant-leadership: A gift to the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

“The spirit of anyone who is elected to office is one of being a servant after the model Christ used at the Last Supper, i.e., washing the feet of his disciples. Jesus did not lose his authority nor his power to lead. Rather he gave a model of *how* to lead by being a servant. For Franciscans it means that the power or authority that officers possess is used for the common good and not for personal purposes or needs. ...



“As our Franciscan spirit grows, loving service is a natural consequence when we are called to serve. Our way of life implements the spirit Jesus shows at the Last Supper. ... Power and authority are gifts from God. ...When used in a spirit of service, Franciscans with power and authority model the servant-leadership role.”

Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap.,  
*The Franciscan Journey: Embracing the Franciscan Vision*, p. 313

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### The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





## Editor’s Journal

Some years ago, when I served as public affairs NCO in the Florida Army National Guard, the captain I worked for in one unit said to me one day, “You have no talent.”

She compared me with Mozart, the child prodigy who began composing music at the age of 6. In her view, because I wasn’t on Mozart’s level I lacked writing talent.

When she finished, I replied that Mozart certainly was a genius, but genius and talent are two different things. Not everybody is gifted with genius, but everybody has talent, which is a natural ability to do something.

Carolyn Townes’ article in this issue reminded me of that incident and of how often I take for granted the things I can do that don’t seem all that important to me. I can do them, that’s all. Yet, what may seem unimportant to me, may be very important to someone else.

At a seminar I once attended, we were asked to mention a talent we had. One woman said she had no talent, all she could do was listen to others. What an amazing talent that is. Consider: That note you took five minutes to write may mean all the world to the person who receives it.

Perhaps part of our humility is to graciously accept that compliment, praise, or thanks.

As Franciscans are we not to affirm ourselves — in a healthy, not boastful, way — and to affirm others, as well? When we do that, we build bridges.

Jerry Rousseau, OFS, speaks of how we can each “Be the Bridge — Animate Peace,” the theme for our Annual Regional Gathering, Aug. 2–4.

Carole King’s article about accepting a personal cross can give us all pause to reflect on how we take up those crosses that come to us in the course of our lives.

This year, our Regional Fraternity Council (the Regional Executive Council plus the ministers, or their delegates, of our canonically established fraternities) will elect a new REC. In his “Words of Wisdom,” Father Linus DeSantis encourages us in the adventure of transition as our members step forward to offer themselves for service and as we as a Region welcome our new council.

We’ll celebrate the feast of the Stigmata of our Holy Father St. Francis on Sept. 17, before our fall *Communio* comes out; so, in this issue we’re including a look at that miracle.

As we know, Francis was totally in love with God, so we’re offering a review of *Dating God: Live and Love in the Way of St. Francis* by Daniel Horan, OFM.

*Pace e bene*  
*Joanita*

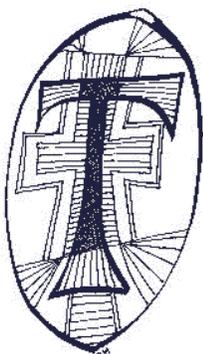
### In This Issue

Minister’s Message	3
The Mirror of Perfection	4
Newly Professed	5
Regional Spiritual Assistant	6
Election Novena	7
Personal Violence	8
Youth/Young Adult Animator Sought	9
Stigmata of St. Francis	10
New Councils	11
Regional Notes	12
Calendar/Visitation & Elections	13
Book Review	14
REC Roster	16

*Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS, is Communio editor. She is a member of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity in Hendersonville, N.C., and spiritual assistant to Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.*

**If you think you’re too small to be effective, you’ve never been in bed with a mosquito.**

*The Franciscan Journey: Embracing the Franciscan Journey, p. 215*



## Minister's Message: Peace be with you

“Those people are truly peacemakers who, regardless of what they suffer in this world, preserve peace of spirit and body out of love of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

St. Francis of Assisi, *Admonitions*

### “Be the Bridge — Animate Peace”

This is the theme of the 2013 Annual Regional Gathering to be held at Ridgecrest, NC, Aug. 2–4. How can I live this call if I do not have peace inside of me? Inner peace must first of all begin with prayer.

God our Father, open our eyes to see your hand at work  
in the splendor of creation, in the beauty of human life.

Touched by your hand our world is holy.

Help us to cherish the gifts that surround us,  
to share your blessings with our brothers and sisters,  
and to experience the joy of life in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

If we can experience the wonder of our God in all his creation and see his face in the faces of all of our brothers and sisters, especially in the poor and marginalized, then we can begin to bring his peace, “which surpasses all understanding,” to those around us.

We live in a very violent world. “Practice watering seeds of joy and peace and not just seeds of anger and violence, and the elements of war in all of us will be transformed,” says Thich Nhat Hanh. All of us face conflicts and irritations almost daily. How we handle those situations is the key to finding peace.

First of all, recognize the feelings of anger within you during these difficult situations and refuse to let them control you. Take a deep breath and pray, “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.” I cannot hope to move the world toward nonviolence if I cannot control the violence within myself.

At the height of the Fifth Crusade, St. Francis of Assisi discerned the signs of the times and made a strategic decision to take his peacemaking message to Damietta in Egypt where the Christian crusaders and Muslim warriors were about to come to a violent clash. The story of the encounter between Francis and Sultan Malik al-Kamil continues to challenge Franciscan-hearted people to cross the threshold of their fear and to transcend the political and religious ideologies that, all too often, scapegoat and demonize the “other.”

Rather than merely admiring or talking about the courage of St. Francis and his commitment to following in the footsteps of Jesus, we are called to live it out in our contemporary context. Where, in my local environment, can I be that voice of peace?

We are blessed to have Carolyn Townes, OFS, as our Regional JPIC (Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation) animator. We will have several opportunities to hear her speak during our Annual Regional Gathering, along with Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., our Regional spiritual assistant; Father David Hyman, OFM, campus minister at the Catholic Center of the University of Georgia; Father Louis Canino, OFM, director of St. Francis Springs Prayer Center; and Sister Bernadette Marie Cappola, OSC, of the Monastery of St. Clare, Travelers Rest, S.C.

We will also have time to share with one another the challenges and joys of striving to live a nonviolent way of life. I look forward to renewing acquaintances and having the privilege to make new friends.

In closing, I remind you that we have a eucharistic-adoration chapel available during our gathering. I encourage all of you to spend time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. As our dear sister Carolyn recommended in her “Animator Notes” last fall, in preparation for this time

before the Lord, when you read a newspaper or watch the news, pay particular attention to stories of conflict and violence. Bring these situations into conversation and contemplation as you spend time with the Blessed Sacrament.

**“Peace begins within each of us.** It is a process of repeatedly showing mercy to ourselves, forgiving ourselves, befriending ourselves, accepting ourselves, and loving ourselves. As we learn to appreciate ourselves and accept God’s gift of peace, we begin to radiate peace and love to others.”

John Dear, SJ

May the Lord grant you peace!

*Jerry*

*Jerry Rousseau, OFS, minister of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region, is a member of Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.*

## The Mirror of Perfection — Gospel to Life

By Carole King, OFS

Our Rule calls us to live the Gospel; to imitate Christ in every aspect of our life; to become as our father Francis did, the “mirror of perfection.”

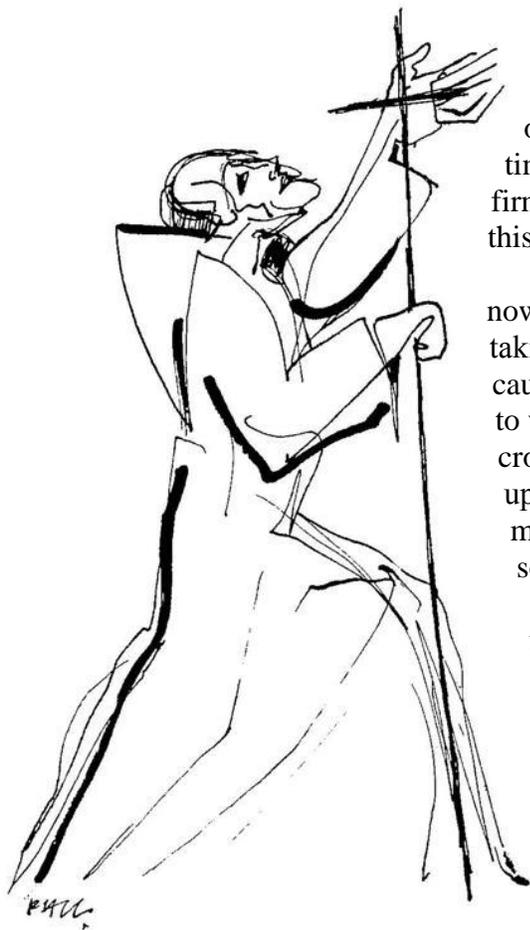
To be united with Christ is to be united with the cross. Jesus himself said, “Whoever wishes

to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (Mt 16:24). Our Rule says that we should witness to him even in difficulties. Whether or not this resonates with you now, there will come a time in each of our lives when we will have to stand firmly upon what we claim to believe. We cannot escape this life without trials.

I have never before been in more of a position than now to contemplate this mystery of suffering, this idea of taking up one’s cross. Speaking for myself, as I was caught up in day-to-day living, it really didn’t occur to me to voluntarily take up the cross. I never have refused a cross — my mother taught me at a young age to “offer up” my sufferings — but I certainly did not take it upon myself to look for one. I always looked at suffering as something foisted upon us by circumstances.

As a Secular Franciscan, I would like to have thought that I was living my life as best I could in imitation of Jesus through the footsteps of our father Francis. I attended our OFS meetings, served on our council, participated in our apostolate, took care of my family responsibilities, tried to keep up with my prayer life and went to daily Mass. Life was pretty good, with little in the way of life’s issues and problems, and those I could “handle” as they came along.

Then my mother became ill. As I write this, I am still 735 miles from home, taking turns with



family members staying at the hospital with her. She has been in the hospital for more than a month and has not been alone for a single minute. I have been here about that long, having taken a leave from my job.

The day-by-day journey through my mother's illness has been extremely difficult and stressful; a roller-coaster ride from crisis to complication, back to crisis with little respite in between. She has suffered sepsis, high fevers, and horrific pain from the infection and consequent surgeries, becoming so weak that she cannot feed herself. She has suffered the many indignities and humiliations of being completely helpless and at the mercy of her many caregivers. This is the "cleaned up" version. All of this was caused from her first hospitalization for acute kidney failure, which was cured; but part of the cure was a blood transfusion that gave her a staph infection in the vein where the IV was. It was MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), which had gone into her bloodstream.

So what happens to our Franciscan spirituality through such horrific events of life? For me, it has been a true blessing to have my Tau and our Rule to hold on to. It was a natural movement of my soul to turn and cling to the Lord, to hang on to the routine of my prayer life. A consistent prayer life becomes a lifeline when things become dark and frightening. Even in delirium, my mother calms down to the sound of prayer.

It has been a nightmare having to see my mother suffer so horribly. One night as I sat helpless, crying with her as she fought against the pain and anguish, I held my rosary tightly in my hand and began to pray "The Memorare" over and over.

Suddenly, a feeling of warmth, understanding, compassion, and love washed over me. I had a sudden realization that came in the form of a thought placed gently and lovingly into my mind: Mary understands! She had to watch helplessly as her Son endured unspeakable indignities and suffering — even more horrific than what my mother is going through. Yet, she never ran away as so many did. She stayed there and faced it with him. She suffered, she cried, and she prayed through it all. She understands fully what I am going through, and her Son fully understands what my mother is suffering.

**We are not alone!** Mother and Son are walking this path together with us — this very trail they first blazed so long ago to clear the way for this moment.

In being united to the redemptive obedience of the Lord Jesus, I have the strength to pick up and carry this cross however far the will of God leads. In this union with the Lord Jesus upon this cross, in the company of mother Mary, my prayer becomes a weapon of grace. This great weapon drives out doubt, anger, and despair, and brings great hope, love, and joy in knowing that we are not alone.

The Rule of the OFS, Chapter Two:

- ❖ Article 9: The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. ... The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.
- ❖ Article 10: Uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will into the Father's hands, let them ... follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to him even in difficulties and persecutions.

**Newly Professed  
Congratulations!**

**Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament  
Fraternity**

**Burlington, N.C., June 8**

Jeannine Clemons, OFS

Peggy Holmes, OFS

Beverly McGee, OFS

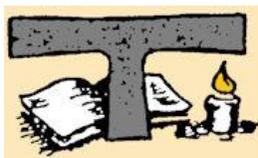
**Our Lady Queen of Angels,  
Emerging Community**

**Columbia, S.C., June 16**

Terence Chisolm, OFS

*Carole King, OFS, is formation director of Saint Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Aiken, S.C.*

## Regional Spiritual Assistant's Words of Wisdom: As Our REC Election Approaches – Thoughts on Transition



I recently attended a university deans, directors, chairs, and department heads meeting. What an assembly.

The vice chancellor, Eric Spina, convened the meeting. He titled it “Transition”; and as he spoke about the changes, he gave substance to the reason for the title.

Beginning with the chancellor down to plant maintenance personnel, he named those who would be leaving. I assure you the people who will be leaving will definitely be missed. Even in my short time of six years here at Syracuse University, hearing their names unsettled me. Many are key and pivotal people in administration, instruction, and support services. These changes will impact the image and life of SU.

Does this sound familiar?

All we need do is look around. The local ministers, councils, other members of the Fraternity who have served us; those who were once in initial formation, who have completed their formation and now fulfill another facet of life in the Fraternity and the Region. And this particular dynamic operates in all other sectors of our society.

So, I believe we can safely say change and transition are staples of our life and society, organizations and groups. This change can provide a different perspective, a fresh approach, new energy and growth in the number of participants. Notice, I say CAN. Only if we work with the reality of something that is ever so constant — CHANGE. The instance of this phenomenon prompts us to a host of responses and reactions.

So what would be a good plan of action?

How can I contribute and make this a healthy transition? What gifts do I bring to the table? What change might I need to make to be of greater assistance and support in the transition? How can I be welcoming and helpful? While sincerely discerning these pieces, you will realize there is a positive thrust, a perspective of other-centeredness. A creative inclination toward what can occur positively.

Are you on board for transition? It's a challenge and adventure. Are you ready? I address **YOU!** because you are going to be the agent of change. If you, all of you, are Gospel people, bringing that Gospel alive, then and only then will a spirit and energy be operative to effect good from the changes to occur.

Sensitive to the human condition, we realize no one of us is perfect nor have any of us all the answers. We do have an “incomplete skill set” which is completed by our sisters and brothers. And acting corporately, like a Body of Christ, we all accept the responsibility to creatively effect a healthy transition. We have the power of the Gospel and of Francis. How do we engage them?

Those who will assume office and those who will leave office are to support a healthy transition by being the agents of stability and calm. With a correct attitude and substantial energy, you will model what Church, Order, and Region are to be: “bringing to fulfillment the good work God has begun in us.” God bless and keep you.

*Peace and all good,  
Fr. Linus*

*Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Province, USA, which has its headquarters in Ellicott City, Md. He is Catholic chaplain at Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y.*

# Election Novena

Your Nominating Committee sisters want you to know that we are still asking the Holy Spirit's prompting to each of you who are called to serve our Region. We have nominees who have accepted council nominations, but the slate is open to more.

We will have three "Calls for Nominations" from the floor at our Annual Regional Gathering. So, please listen for the Spirit's voice, and answer his call.

We invite you to join us in a novena beginning July 25, praying this "Prayer for Selection of a New Council."

DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS, and Nancy Brochu, OFS



## Prayer for Selection of a New Council

O our dear GOD,  
we pray for the guidance of  
your most Holy Spirit  
as we review in our minds  
the personal attributes  
required by the various  
council positions.

Illumine for us our own strengths,  
and those of our fellow members,  
that YOU may inspire us to  
recognize who it is YOU desire  
to serve YOUR fraternity.

Dear Francis, we also ask for  
your guidance  
as we seek a new council.

Lead us to those  
who will help us to grow in your virtues:  
humble, polite, peacemakers, and  
ardent lovers of our  
crucified Lord.

Help each of us to discover  
"what is ours to do."

Not our will, Lord,  
but YOUR will be done.

Amen.

## OUR story of personal VIOLENCE

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

This past May, I had the privilege of presenting to the spiritual assistants class the JPIC (Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation) chapter from *FUN* (our national formation) manual. I wanted the experience to not only be informative but also personally reflective and profound. From the feedback I have received, I must say it was for both the class and for me as well.

After the introductions, I began by asking the group what were their impressions of the chapter. Much to my surprise, the overwhelming response was the awareness of violence in one's life; particularly the violence done to oneself.

When we think of violence, what first comes to mind is physical violence — doing harm to someone by beating, shooting, or the like. This is one form of violence, a very outward form of violence. But what I want to bring to your awareness, as with the attendees in the spiritual assistants class, are the more insidious forms of violence, especially violence done to oneself.

You may be thinking, “I am a good Christian, a good Franciscan. I could never be violent!” Yes, you may be a very good Christian and a very good Franciscan and still have a streak of violence coursing through.

So let me ask you a few basic questions: Have you ever put yourself down? Have you ever said, “I am not good enough?” Have you ever said this of yourself *to* someone else? Have you ever cut someone off in traffic? Or, “flipped the bird” when someone has cut you off? Have you ever said something you later regretted? Are you harboring any unforgiveness in your heart?

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, then there is an insidious streak of violence within you. It has been said that we are our own worst enemy. This is so very true. We are so good at putting ourselves down, ruminating on negative comments, and not taking compliments very well. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard someone say to a woman how nice she looks and she responds with some kind of minimizing comment about herself.

Consider the following scenarios:



- “What a lovely outfit you’re wearing!”  
“Oh, this old thing? I’ve had it for years.”
- “You make the best muffins!”  
“Oh, it’s nothing, really.”
- “You are such a gifted and giving person!”  
“I really don’t do that much.”

Or, how about these:

- “I will never forgive her for what she did to me!”
- “I can’t believe how stupid I am!”
- “I am such an idiot for doing that!”

We don’t realize that our words — our violent words — become our stories. Our words can either harm or heal. When the words we speak on a daily basis are words of anger, gossip, bullying, or belittling, then we commit acts of violence. We are

sons and daughters of the King, the Almighty God. And as such, we must recognize the life and the dignity of the human person, in every human person, regardless of their differences. Our Rule states that the divine seed is present in everyone (Art. 19).

I love acronyms and one of my spiritual practices is to THINK. Before you speak, ask yourself: Is what I will say True? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? And, is it Kind? If even one of these is NO, then refrain from speaking. Practice affirming and appreciating others. Not in a forced or fake manner, but find something you can genuinely appreciate about another person. Begin with your family, your Fraternity, and yourself. Try appreciating or affirming one person every day and see how peaceful and compassionate your life becomes.

*Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region's JPIC animator, is a member of Our Lady Queen of Angels, Emerging Community, in Columbia, S.C., the National JPIC Commission, and the Franciscan Action Network Commission.*

**Youth/Young Adult  
Fraternal Animator  
for BSSF Region**

**Should be young of heart and mind  
and capable of reaching out to  
youth and young adults in our Region.**

**Preferably under 39**

**AND**

**Facebook/Twitter savvy.**

**Candidate should be a Secular Franciscan  
with experience in leading youth and young adult ministry  
and want to help YouFra fraternities become a reality in  
the Region.**

**Should be willing to attend the upcoming**

**“Franciscan Summer Confab”**

**July 25-28**

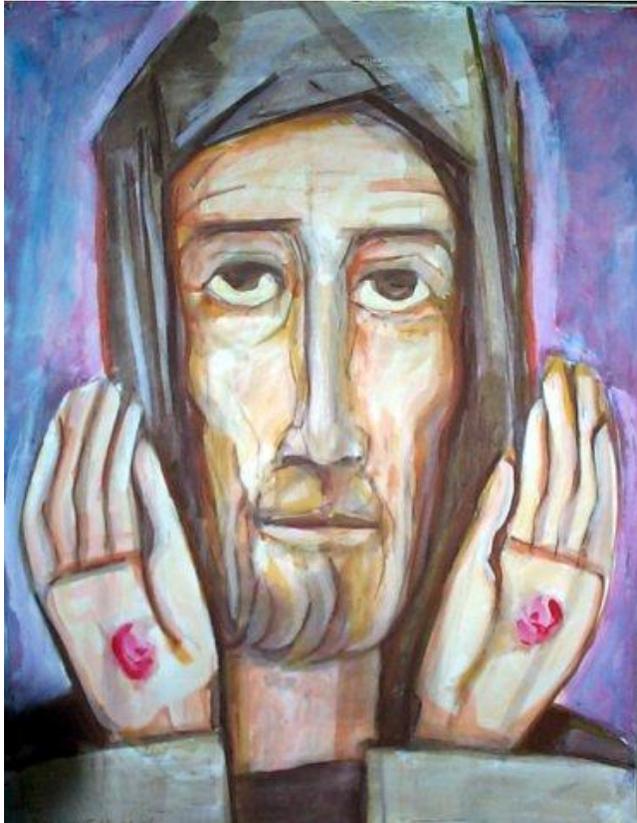
**in Belleville, Ill. (Our Lady of the Snows).**

**Interested parties should contact**

**Jerry Rousseau [jrsfo2004@windstream.net](mailto:jrsfo2004@windstream.net).**

# Our seraphic father and the gift of stigmata

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS



“It is impossible to overemphasize the centrality of Jesus Christ crucified in the life of Saint Francis. This is made abundantly clear in that poignant incident which takes place two years before Francis’ death.”

Father Murray Bodo, OFM,  
*The Way of St. Francis: The Challenge of Franciscan Spirituality for Everybody*

Jesus was crucified on the hill called Calvary (or Golgotha). St. Francis received the wounds of Christ on Mount La Verna during a 40-day fast in honor of St. Michael the archangel.

Francis had prayed fervently all night.

“The unconquerable enkindling of love in him for the good Jesus had grown into lamps and flames of fire that many waters could not quench so powerful a love,” St. Bonaventure tells us in *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*. “With the seraphic ardor of desires, therefore, he was being born aloft

into God; and by compassionate sweetness he was being transformed into Him Who chose to be crucified out of the excess of his love.”

It was near the feast of the Triumph of the Cross (Sept. 14), when Francis saw a “fiery as well as brilliant” six-winged Seraph descending toward him from heaven, Bonaventure says. “And when in swift flight, it had arrived at a spot in the air near the man of God, there appeared between the wings the likeness of a man crucified, with his hands and feet extended in the form of a cross and fastened to a cross.”

Francis “marveled exceedingly at the sight of so unfathomable a vision.” Bonaventure describes what happened next:

“As the vision was disappearing, it left in his heart a marvelous fire and imprinted in his flesh a likeness of signs no less marvelous.

“For immediately the marks of nails began to appear in his hands and feet just as he had seen a little before in the figure of the man crucified. His hands and feet seemed to be pierced through the center with nails, with the heads of the nails appearing on the inner side of the hands and the upper side of the feet and their points on the opposite sides. The heads of the nails on his hands and feet were round and black; their points were oblong and bent as if driven back with a hammer, and they emerged from the flesh and stuck out beyond it. Also his right side, as if pierced with a lance, was marked with a red wound from which his sacred blood often flowed, moistening his tunic and underwear.”

Seraphim (the word means “the burning ones”) are the highest choir (order) of angels and surround the throne of God. They are fairly bursting with burning love for God. St. Francis, too,

burned with love of God. As love of God came forth from inside the Seraphim, the wounds of Christ came forth from inside of Francis.

“The stigmata is but the external sign of the wounded heart St. Francis already is,” Father Murray notes in *The Place We Call Home: Spiritual Pilgrimage as a Path to God*.

“What happened in St. Francis’s body on La Verna is the mirror of what had already happened in his soul. He had been crucified with Christ through penance and deprivation and taking up his cross daily in the footsteps of his Savior. ... St. Francis is outwardly who he is inwardly.

“The sacred stigmata also attests to the unity of body and soul, to one person, not a person divided into body and soul, or a person with a good soul trapped in a bad body. St. Francis is outwardly who his is inwardly. La Verna marked the crucifixion of Francis. When he died two years later, the Porziuncola, the little church on the plain below Assisi, marked his rising.”

*Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS, is Communio editor. She is a member of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity in Hendersonville, N.C., and spiritual assistant to Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.*

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**God,  
grant me  
the SERENITY  
to prioritize the things  
I cannot delegate,  
  
the COURAGE  
to say NO when I need to,  
  
and the WISDOM  
to know when to go  
HOME.**

*The Franciscan Journey:  
Embracing the Franciscan Vision, p. 215*

## Congratulations New Councils

### Spirit of Francis and Clare Fraternity Conyers, Ga., March 17

Minister: Charlotte Alesi, OFS  
Vice Minister: Phil Wescott, OFS  
Secretary: Patti Wilson, OFS  
Treasurer: Janie McIsaac, OFS  
Formation Director: Joel Alesi, OFS  
Councilor: Karen Corsetti, OFS  
Councilor: Francis (Mickie) Wescott, OFS

### Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity St. Simons Island, Ga., April 14

Minister: Lois Cutia, OFS  
Vice Minister: Jean M. Ryals, OFS  
Secretary: Carolyn Favole, OFS  
Treasurer: Ann Mallon, OFS  
Formation Director: Catherine Gruber, OFS

### Fraternity of St. Clare Winston-Salem, N.C., May 14

Minister: Kris Jonczak, OFS  
Vice Minister: Karyn Daugherty, OFS  
Secretary: Betti Longinotti, OFS  
Treasurer: Janice Safrit, OFS  
Formation Director: Mary Ellen Humphrey, OFS  
Councilor: Anne Modrow, OFS  
Councilor: Frank O'Neil, OFS

### Fraternity of Brother Francis Newton, N.C., June 9

Minister: Carole Marmorato, OFS  
Vice Minister: Rita Borst, OFS  
Secretary: Virginia Stewart, OFS  
Treasurer: Roger Stewart, OFS  
Formation Director: Eric McIntire, OFS  
Councilor: Ismini Frieser, OFS  
Councilor: Douglas Miller, OFS  
Councilor: Betty Snipes, OFS

## Regional Notes

### Article goes international

The article, “La stagione della nonviolenza” (“The season of nonviolence”), by Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, was published in the March issue of *FVS: Francesco Il Volto Secolare (Francis the Secular Face)*, the magazine of the Secular Franciscan Order in Italy.

Carolyn is our Regional Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) animator.

Kent Ferris, OFS, our National JPIC chair, distributed the article nationally and internationally. Attilio Galimberti, OFS, saw the article and asked to translate it into Italian for FVS magazine. Attilio, who lives in Milan, is a member of the Presence in the World Commission of CIOFS (Consilium Internationale Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis), our International Presidency.

Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

### 65 years of Profession honored

Barbara Carter, OFS, of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity celebrated her 65th anniversary of Profession on June 20. The fraternity honored her with cake and congratulations at its monthly gathering two days later.

She made Profession in 1948, in St. Elizabeth Fraternity in Southfield, Mich. Her husband, Larry (who died Sept. 17, 2008), had made Profession in that Fraternity on June 15, 1941. After moving to Arden, N.C., the couple joined St. Francis of Hills in 1988, a year after it was canonically established.

Barbara served as Fraternity secretary for several years and remains active in all aspects of Fraternity life.

Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

### Fortnight of Freedom celebrated

St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity in Spartanburg, S.C., participated in the Fortnight for Freedom at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Spartanburg by leading the Patriotic Rosary for Religious Freedom on June 23.

Also during the Fortnight for Freedom, on June 29, we celebrated the Solemnity of St. Peter and St. Paul, the patron of our parish with a morning holy Mass with Father Timothy M. Gahan as celebrant. After Mass, we provided light refreshments for all who attended the Mass.

Participating in the Fortnight for Freedom allowed St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity the opportunity to live the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Our Rule, Article 14, states that we “exercise [our] responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.” We hope to participate in Fortnight for Freedom in 2014.

Micheaeleen Davis, OFS, minister

“When we refer to ourselves as Secular Franciscans, our name identifies our relationship within the Franciscan family and the word *Order* after our name connects us to the Catholic Church. *Secular* binds us to a large group of people called by God to live the Franciscan charism in ordinary daily lives. A fraction of these people we know, but many more we will never meet in this life. When we use the *name* Secular Franciscan, we reveal an identity to others that tells them quite a lot about who we are and to whom we are related. If this name plays a major role in our identity, it will affect everything we do.”

Anne Mulqueen, OFS, “Our Identity as a Secular Franciscan,” p. 3,  
*For Up to Now (FUN): Foundational Topics for Initial Formation*

**SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

\* confirmed

V+ follow-up visit

**2013**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>V/E</u>	<u>FRATERNAL/PASTORAL VISITOR</u>
*Jan. 6	Duluth, GA	V	Jerry Rousseau, OFS/Cricket Aull, OFS
*Jan. 12	Augusta, GA	V	Sara Nell Boggs, OFS/Joanita Nellenbach, OFS
*Mar. 7	Morehead City, NC	V	Jerry/Fr. Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.
*Mar. 9	Burlington, NC	V	Jerry/Fr. Linus
*Mar. 10	Elizabeth City, NC	V	Jerry/Fr. Linus
*Mar. 17	Conyers, GA	E	Willie Guadalupe, OFS/Laura Haukaas, OFS
*Apr. 13	Franklin, NC	V	Willie/Audrey Binet, OFS
*Apr. 14	St. Simons, GA	E	Charles Meyer, OFS/ Fr. Wilfred Logsdon, OFM Conv.

**April 20: Area 2 On-the-Road Formation Workshop, Spartanburg, SC**

\*June 16 Nashville, TN V+ Willie/Kathy Taormina, OFS

**May 4: Area 1 On-the-Road Formation Workshop, Chattanooga, TN**

\*May 5 Aiken, SC E Jerry/Audrey  
 \*May 11 Jonesboro, GA V Charles/Laura  
 \*May 14 Winston-Salem, NC E Jerry/Sr. Kathleen Ganiel, OSF  
 \*May 18 Greenville, SC V Frank Massey, OFS/Audrey

**June 1: Area 3 On-the-Road Formation Workshop, Burlington, NC**

\*June 2 Charlotte, NC V Willie/Joanita  
 \*June 9 Newton, NC E Sara Nell/Joanita  
 \*July 11 Asheville, NC E Jerry/Joanita

**August 2–4: ARG (Chapter of Elections), Ridgecrest, N.C.**

\*Sep. 14 Blairsville, GA E  
 ? Sep.-Oct. Fayetteville, NC V

**October 15–20: NAFRA (Kansas City, KS)**

\*Oct. 26 Hendersonville, NC V

**2014**

Jan. 18 Athens, GA V  
 Feb. 15 Garden City, SC V  
 Plus numerous others to be determined

## Writing Franciscan

### An intimate relationship: Falling in love with the Lord

***Dating God: Live and Love in the Way of St. Francis* by Daniel Horan, OFM. St. Anthony Messenger Press (Cincinnati, Ohio, 2012). 160 pp.; paper, \$14.99; Kindle Edition, \$8.39; Audio CD, \$22.36.**

By Paula Scraba, Ph.D., OFS

The Franciscan Family is gifted with a new up-and-coming Franciscan scholar, Father Dan Horan, OFM, a newly ordained friar with the Holy Name Province.

We have read many of his articles in various publications, but *Dating God: Live and Love in the Way of St. Francis* is Horan's first book. The title definitely is an eye-catcher to all, especially our younger generation who are beginning their journey of

understanding their relationship with God. Horan attempts to capture the imagination of all for a new and creative way of entering into our relationship with God.

Horan tells the story of one person's journey to find God in his life. This down-to-earth explanation of approaching a relationship with God simulates how we as human beings begin our relationships with one another. Some of our relationships are superficial, some are acquaintances, some are closer as friends and family and others are more intimate to build longer lasting relationships. It is all about building trust with one another and God in a language that especially younger people can relate to their life's journey. This also parallels how Francis began his soul's journey to God.

Horan begins the "First Date" as we would begin a pilgrimage searching for God, just as Francis's journey with God began as a yearning from the heart for something more in life. Francis's call of the heart was to live a gospel way of life in relationship with all of God's creation. Horan guides the reader to weave the primary question of the heart throughout the book: How can I know and love God today? Can we look at this question with new lenses in the concept of dating God?

In the summary and reflective questions posed at the end of each chapter, Horan opens the summary discussion of the first chapter with the same question St. Francis posed when beginning his personal search for God and the journey of what was to become the Franciscan Family: Who am I? Where did I come from? and Where am I going?

In Chapter two the author asks the question, What is our true self before God? This is also expressed in a quote from St. Bonaventure, "God is the One who is closer to you than you are to yourself." It is like finding a tree in the forest. Horan refers to the writings of Duns Scotus citing *haecceitas* — this-ness or "human-ness" — as God's plan for our existence in a world with us at the center of God's love for each one of us. To put Scotus's idea in another framework is to ask, "What makes me me and you you?"

We are reminded that one of the greatest challenges for this and future generations is that people need to know themselves before they can have a good relationship with others. It is



through the writings of St. Clare that we as Franciscans have come to realize that it is through knowing our true selves that we come to know God.

As in any relationship, at times it can be a long-distance relationship with experiences of loneliness. Francis's life was centered on experiences of the Crucified Christ and the phrase, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" This was something Francis related to and is a question many of us ask ourselves often. It is through prayer, as we see in the Psalms, that a distant relationship with God is brought into focus to become a relationship of reciprocal love and understanding in those times of challenge.

At the same time Horan uses the language of "making a date with God," as those times of solitude to be alone with God to build our relationship with God. For Franciscans this is an invitation to a hermitage experience and the "Rule of the Hermitage," that Francis provided for us so that we could have that quiet time with God. Horan shares his time of solitude in a hermitage experience and invites us to find that space in our lives to enter into the mystery that is the very Love that gives us meaning and life.

It is through these experiences of contemplation that we become an "Everyday Mystic." Horan uses the writings of St. Bonaventure's *Soul's Journey to God* to ponder the question of "being and doing." This weaves us back to some of the original questions of who you are and how you live, rather than what you do. So often when we are asked to explain who we are, we have the tendency to talk about what we do. To answer the question of our being challenges us to see the world anew.

St. Francis did not find God in the extraordinary moments but in the everyday moments of "being." St. Clare lived a life of "being" and was a model for us to gaze, consider, contemplate, and imitate, and to be the mirror image of God. Likewise, Horan uses the writings of Bl. Angela of Foligno, one of the Franciscan Mystics, to view the world as "pregnant with God," full of possibilities if we take time to be present to God's love. Can we allow God to shape and influence the way we see reality?

Horan continues this relationship with God by knowing God through Scripture in the chapter titled: "Love Letters from God: The Word." What is the story of God for us? God's story of creation of all out of love is told through God's love letters through the ages. God sent the prophets to help us understand those love letters.

God's love was shared through Jesus the Christ so that we could experience the human and divine inspiration and the guidance of the dynamic communication of the Spirit. Francis understood the power of God's love and the presence of God's Word through the Scriptures. Horan leaves a reflective question for us to consider: "If I wrote a love letter to God, what would I say?"

In Chapter Seven Horan takes an interesting turn in relationships when he discusses being for others as God is for us. Francis had a desire to be in relationship with the sultan and went to the sultan in an attitude of presence, dialogue, and witness. How are we in solidarity with social justice today? Do we go in peace to serve God and one another? The author shares the Franciscan story of a colleague moving from a "be-attitude" of selfish to selfless. Horan also shares the story of Francis moving from being selfish to selfless in a moment of conversation as the crucifix spoke, "Francis, repair my house."

As with Francis, our prayer life is more than a relationship with "me and God," but an overflowing life-giving source of service to all of God's creation.

It is that gift of God's creation that Francis poured his heart out in gratitude to God through the Praises of the Canticle of the Creatures to the Whole Family. Francis's model of care for creation is also a challenge for us to view the world as humanity's playground or God's House. Do we live in solidarity in a "dominion" model of relationship over God's creation? Or do we

live as Francis had hoped, in a “kinship” model with shared responsibility to “be” in relationship to care for the needs of the cosmos?

In the conclusion, Horan brings us full circle with new lenses to see our relationship that starts with our first date with God and ends with a desire to continue living a prayer-filled life in a love relationship with God, striving for wholeness with all of creation. In the Franciscan tradition, rooted in gospel living, each one of us has an amazing love story with God to share.

*Paula J. Scraba, Ph.D., OFS, is an associate professor in the Physical Education Department in the School of Education at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. She earned her doctorate in special physical education from the University of Connecticut and a graduate degree in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure. Paula is a member of St. Clare Fraternity, Omaha, Neb., and serves as a national facilitator for the Franciscan Institute Build with Living Stones program.*

*This book review originally appeared in the October/December 2012 issue of The Cord. It is used here with permission.*

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