

Communio

That All May Be One

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

Winter 2014

Blessings for the New Year



“Our OFS Rule is not a TO-DO List, but an opportunity to learn TO love God and others in the way of St. Francis. Do you spend quiet time with God each day, time away from ritual prayer, silent time just to listen? How has this quiet time enriched your life with God and others?”

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region
Spiritual Assistant Course, Session 2

“How graced each Secular Franciscan is to have been called to this way of life, to this particular charism, to a local fraternity that is bonded to all other fraternities throughout the world, to live a Rule by profession that has the approval and

blessing of Holy Mother Church! Beyond the Secular Franciscan Order, members are joined in this life with the other branches of the Franciscan family, the First Order friars, the Second Order Poor Clares and the sisters and friars of the Third Order Regular.

According to Canon Law, the Secular Franciscan Order is a public association of the Church (GC 1.5) whose secular state characterizes their spirituality and the apostolic life.”

Teresa V. Baker, OFS, “The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order” (p. 14),
For Up to Now: Foundational Topics for Initial Formation (the FUN manual)

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





Editor’s Journal

May the Lord give you peace in all of 2014.

You just never know where you’re going to find Secular Franciscan connections.

Last year began for me with getting a root canal. Tooth pulp has never attracted *me*, so when the endodontist introduced himself I asked how he got interested in a dental specialty that deal solely with tooth pulp. He said he’d originally wanted to be an orthodontist — braces and all that — but when he started studying it, he decided that it wasn’t for him. He chose endodontics because, “I wanted,” he said, “to do a few things well.”

So what’s the Secular Franciscan connection?

A few years ago, I ran an article by Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap., in *Communio*, that originally appeared in *TAU-USA* (before our abbreviation changed to OFS). Father Lester wrote:

“The SFO Rule is one demanding document! Following some other path, for whatever reason, seems to indicate that the requirements of the SFO Rule are not demanding enough. This is amazing to me! I am of the opinion that when we take the SFO Rule seriously, we won’t have time to take on other commitments.”

There is indeed much to do in the OFS: daily time for prayer and contemplation and meditative reading of the Gospels, work, family, our responsibilities in the Order, fraternity apostolates. My OFS vocation centers me, keeps me doing a few things as well as I can; keeps me from spreading myself too thin.

In this *Communio* we see what some of our members are doing. We have the first column from our new regional formation director; social justice thoughts from our JPIC animator and an article on Casey’s Kitchen, an apostolate for Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity in Nashville; a meditation on the Blessed Virgin Mary, protectress of our Order; initiatives from our National Fraternity highlighted in the Minister’s Message.

May you find inspiration and good reading to warm you in this winter issue.

*Pace e bene,
Joanita*

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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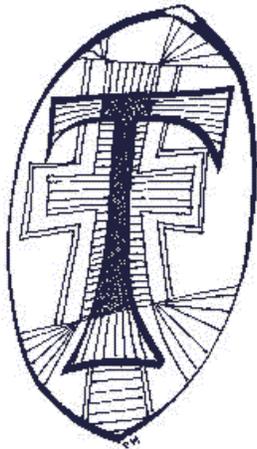


“The world and the present situation in which we find ourselves take on a luminous quality as we grow in the awareness that they are the place for na encounter with God.”

Father Albert Haase, OFM,
*This Sacred Moment:
Becoming Holy Right Where You Are*

Minister's Message:

"Be the merciful presence of God"



This is the **National Theme for 2014**, selected during the National Fraternity (NAFRA) Chapter, Oct. 16–2, at the Savior Pastoral Center, Kansas City, Kan.

God chose us in mercy. As we continue to “be the bridge,” joyful in our universal kinship and having experienced the transforming power of love and pardon, we too are called to be the merciful presence of God in the world. As we begin a new year, allow me to share with you some of the highlights of our NAFRA gathering.

Every Secular Franciscan fraternity gathering is an invitation to spiritual growth. In this regard a National Chapter is no different from any other gathering — local or regional. As we open ourselves to the sacred space of love and relationship, amazing things can and do happen. Here are some of the blessings and highlights of our 2013 NAFRA Chapter.

From “Information” to “Transformation”

Our first full day of Chapter was set aside for **formation** with theologian and author Father Dan Horan, OFM. He was delightful and inspiring! Father Dan used his knowledge of Scripture and Franciscan scholarship with down-to-earth simplicity, applying it to our hearts’ needs.

Business of the Order (Our Priorities in Action)

Communications Committee

- Has completed a study to evaluate current areas of communication including: *TAU-USA* publication, NAFRA electronic lists, OFS websites, public relations, translations, and social media.
- Currently working to update our national website (www.nafra-sfo.org).
- Will now provide a printed Spanish edition of *TAU-USA*.

Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission

- Presentation of National JPIC Award to Margie Sweeney, M.D., OFS.
- Appreciation to Kent Ferris for his years of service as JPIC Commission chair.
- Blessing of Carolyn Townes, OFS, new JPIC Commission chair; and Rhett Engelking, OFS, JPIC vice chair
- Rhett reported on the growth of “Franciscan Earth Corps,” a program for youth involvement and education in Franciscan spirituality.

OFS Disaster Relief

Jim Flickinger, OFS (Amazon Relief), presented his vision for an OFS disaster response team. NAFRA members were given an opportunity to sign up as volunteers, prayer partners, or to request more information.

Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) and Task Force on Spiritual Assistant Development

- CNSA encourages OFS regional fraternities to be in relationship with the provincial ministers and provincial spiritual assistants in their regions.
- Plans for a Secular Franciscan spiritual assistant to be appointed to the CNSA by 2015. There is an effort to move away from the term “lay spiritual assistant” — the term

“Secular Franciscan spiritual assistant” (SFSA) is more precise.

- September 2013 CNSA meeting in Maine included a very successful one-day workshop for local and regional spiritual assistants. Look for more such workshops in the future.
- Providing well prepared and suitable spiritual assistants remains a priority of the CNSA.
- Task force presented the enlightening results of the national survey on spiritual assistance.
- The CNSA and the task force will jointly present on the topic of spiritual assistance at the July 2014 summer seminar in Loretto, Penn.
- Workshop for provincial and regional spiritual assistants, Sep. 24–25, Marytown, Ill.

NAFRA Approves Motion on Fair Share for Candidates

“As of 2015 we will contribute for candidates in the same manner as we treat all professed. The regions would contribute to NAFRA for candidates the same amount for professed members, based on membership as of Dec. 31, 2014, payable to NAFRA in 2015.” *Note: Providing subscriptions to the TAU-USA for candidates is a future NAFRA agenda item.*

Future National Gatherings

The National Executive Committee (NEC) presented a draft three- to five-year schedule for national gatherings:

- July 10, 2014 — Summer seminar on Spiritual Assistance;
- August 2014 — Possible national retreat directed by Brother Bill Short, OFM;
- Oct. 21–26, 2014 — NAFRA Chapter in Lake Dallas, Texas;
- 2014–2015 — Possible youth event;
- 2015 — Peace retreat with Carolyn Townes, OFS, and Father Kevin Queally, TOR;
- 2015 — Summer seminar on servant leadership or youth;
- October 2015 — NAFRA Chapter;
- July 1–6, 2016 — Quinquennial in Denver, Colo.

Fraternity Register of Professions

The NEC presented a sample of a hardbound fraternity register. Design suggestions were made, and a final draft will be submitted to the National Fraternity for approval in early 2014.

OFS Fraternities in Guam

NAFRA unanimously agreed to accept the St. Padre Pio Community from Guam as an emerging community within NAFRA, with the intention that it become part of the National Fraternity, and gave approval for NAFRA to serve as the sponsoring fraternity.

Wishing all of you a holy and healthy New Year. Peace and All Good,

Jerry

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

“To follow Jesus means putting him first and stripping ourselves of all the things that oppress our hearts.”

Pope Francis

**Newly Professed
Congratulations!**

**Padre Pio
Reactivating Fraternity
Raleigh, N.C.**

Nov. 16

W. Stanley Driscoll, OFS



Formation Director: New year inspires reflection, continuing OFS conversion

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The January's full moon is sometimes known as the Wolf Moon. We are reminded that midwinter is cold and dark. Our resources must be husbanded until spring finally arrives.

The days, however, are already getting longer and the shadows are receding. It is a new year, a new beginning. Time to reflect on our spiritual progress and reignite the fire of our vocation in the OFS.

New beginnings can be scary, filled with uncertainty and confusion, but also exciting and hopeful. We celebrated the conversion of St. Paul on Jan. 25 and choose to animate our own continuing conversion to living the Gospel life. The Rule serves as our guide.

This year's formation workshops will focus on keeping the Rule fresh and life affirming through Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. Dates and more information will follow in the coming weeks.

Peace and Blessings in the New Year

Sara Nell Boggs, OFS

Sara Nell Boggs, OFS, formation director for the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region, is a member of St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity in Spartanburg, S.C.

Fraternity celebrates saint's feast day, profession anniversaries

By Nora Wessling, OFS

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Augusta, Ga., participated in a special celebration on Nov. 17, the feast day of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

Along with it being their patron saint's feast day, the fraternity chose to celebrate the many milestone profession anniversaries that occurred in 2013. During the year, more than half of the 27 members celebrated anniversaries that marked 47, 40, 20, 15, or 10 years of profession.

To celebrate our patron saint's feast day, we asked Father Jerry Ragan, the pastor of St Mary on the Hill Church, to offer the 12:15 p.m. Sunday Mass for our fraternity. The fraternity attended Mass as a group. As part of the profession-anniversary celebration, all the professed

members renewed their profession commitment during the Mass.

The profession-anniversary celebration continued after the Mass with a luncheon reception held in the church's parish hall. We invited family and friends to attend. Prior to our meal, there was a short program, which included a memorial service for the deceased members, along with acknowledgment of their years of profession, and presentation of "Anniversary of Profession" certificates to the professed members. All who attended felt it was a wonderful and blessed time filled with spirituality and fraternity.

Nora Wessling, OFS, is secretary of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity.

Lenten Retreat
with
Father Murray Bodo, OFM
April 7
Noon and 7 p.m.
at the Catholic Center
University of Georgia
1344 Lumpkin St.
Athens, Ga. 30605-1344
Phone: 706-543-2293
<http://cc.uga.edu>

Reflections on mysteries of Mary, mother of God

by: Carole King, OFS

“The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently” (Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, Art. 9).

For our Advent retreat in December, St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Aiken, S.C., was blessed to have Brother Henry Fulmer, OFM, as our director. The retreat consisted of five individual meditations on the joyful mysteries of the rosary that reflect the significant joyous events in the life of our mother Mary.

In keeping with Article 9 of our Rule, let us take a deeper look at two of these mysteries.

The First Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation

In my meditation on this mystery, the words from the “Angelus” kept coming to me: “The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary — And she conceived by the Holy Spirit. Behold the handmaid of the Lord — Be it done unto me according to thy Word. And the Word was made flesh — And dwelt among us.”



In the mystery of the annunciation, we are given a paradigm for our own life. Think about it. Mary was a young woman betrothed. According to Jewish custom, that meant she was already considered married. I’m sure she had hopes and plans and dreams for her life with Joseph. She might have been thinking about future children, family celebrations, etc.

S, here she is in the very midst of a busy life, full of her own plans, when suddenly —WHAM-O — God intervenes.

How many of us can identify with that scenario? Well, maybe not an angel suddenly appearing before us. But how about an unexpected illness, or accident, or job loss? There are many times, places, and ways that our lives have been, or perhaps will be, interrupted. And it doesn’t matter if it comes from an angel, or a person, or by circumstance. It’s that one moment in life where everything dramatically changes, and your life will never be the same.

I don’t know about you, but I am not “good” with that kind of change! First of all, I want to be *consulted* before anything sudden and dramatic happens to me. I want time to think about it, make a decision about it, and then plan for it. Of course, in the real world, that doesn’t always happen.

But let’s go back to Mary.

She is now faced with this WHAM-O moment. Out of the many possible reactions she could have had, hers was a very simple: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy Word.” Her trust in God speaks volumes of her faith and love of him. Her surrender to his will is instant. Sure, she has fears and doubts, she even questions logically, “How can this be?” The bottom line is echoed and spoken 33 years later by her Son who sweat blood as he cried out to the Father, “Not my will but yours be done.”

The most important part of our paradigm is this: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Mary’s fiat, her “Yes” to the Lord, brought about the conception of the Lord Jesus in her own body, and she gave birth to the Word made flesh.

What this means for us is this: When God intervenes in our life, or when he permits life itself to intervene, we are to do as our Rule exhorts. In imitation of our mother Mary, we submit our will to his. We surrender our own plans for his. In our surrender, our hearts are made fertile, and the Word is conceived within. In our acceptance of all God is offering to us, we then give birth to him in our life, joyfully sharing him with all.

This is exactly what our father St. Francis says in the Prologue to our Rule of life: “We are mothers, when we carry him in our heart and body (cf. 1 Cor 6:20) through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to him through a holy life which must give light to others by example (cf. Mt 5:16).” Let us pray then, that we always bear in mind the annunciation to Mary, that as did Francis, we too will be able to surrender and give our own fiat — our unconditional “Yes” to our God who saves.

The Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Presentation

Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to God in the Temple, and thus he was named. His name was given by God and in Hebrew means “God saves.” Names are extremely important in the Scriptures; they account way more for identity than they do today.

In meditating on this mystery, a memory came to me. I grew up in a very small town where my father is the town doctor. Everywhere I went, inevitably someone would look at me and say: “Oh, you’ve gotta be Doc C.’s daughter. You look just like him. You’ve got his eyes for sure!”

I remember being very proud of that. I would smile, and stand a little straighter and think to myself, “Yep, I’m Doc’s daughter.”

A few years down the line, I reached the age of 15 in a most troubled way. Young and very stupid, I found myself running and hiding from local authority. This is the “flash” of memory that came to me in my meditation (*Really, Lord?!).* As I flattened myself against a cold cement wall of an open garage in the dark of night, watching fearfully as the spotlight danced in and around, barely missing my toes, the thoughts raced. “What if we get caught? I can just hear people, ‘*Doc’s daughter got in trouble.*’ My dad will be so hurt. I’ve dishonored our name!”

My panic was real, but thankfully we escaped, and thanks be to God, a real “mark” was left on me so I never got myself into that kind of situation again.

And in this meditation, a new mark replaced that old one. I realized that I’m still very proud to be my father’s daughter. But in looking beyond earthly things, I was struck by the fact that I am very proud to be the daughter of the King, my Father in heaven. In my life, I want to resemble him so when people see me, they can say, “You have your Father’s eyes. You look just like him.” And sin — oh, how I want to avoid sin. I never want to bring dishonor to my Father’s name, ever again!

What good incentive for us to take stock, to really examine our life, our conscience. Do I look like my Father? Like our father Francis, who was called a “mirror of perfection,” does my life truly reflect the life of Christ? Do I bring honor to the family name by the way I am living? Our Rule brings this to life in Article 7: “...let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of ... conversion ... the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and the source of grace.”

I encourage you all to take the rest of the joyful mysteries of the rosary as well as our Franciscan Crown mysteries, and truly reflect upon the life of Mary. Then do your best to imitate her as she points us again and again to her beloved Son.



Carole King is a member of St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity.

Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation: May we extend God's mercy to all

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

This year, our National Fraternity has chosen the theme: **“Be the merciful presence of God.”** Our Lord Jesus exhorted in his Sermon on the Mount that those who are merciful are blessed and highly favored. He went on to say that the merciful will also be shown mercy. Mercy begets mercy, just as love begets love. But the task is the same for doubt, fear, and violence. Those, too, beget more of the same.

Each one of us has the capacity to create an existence of violence or a realm of peace. It is merely a decision away. Peace is not the absence of war or conflict or even a friendly debate. Peace is a way of being in the midst of those confrontations. When you are betrayed or wronged in some way, you must stand up and right the wrong. You must exact justice when an injustice has happened. You are not called to fight fire with fire because that only causes a bigger fire! You must quench the fire with water, just as you must quench violence with the firm hand of peace, compassion, and mercy.

Being a merciful presence means you are to mindfully BE peace and mindfully DO love. As Franciscans, we are called to “go from gospel to life and life to gospel” (OFS Rule, Art. 4); “as



witnesses and instruments of [the Church's] mission, proclaiming Christ by [our] life and words” (Art. 6).

Our life, our words, and our deeds must radiate love and mercy at all times — not just when it is convenient or reciprocated. “Thus, in the spirit of ‘the Beatitudes’ (Rule, Art. 11), we are called to be the merciful presence of God. When we extend mercy, mercy will be shown to us.

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, is a member of Our Lady Queen of Angels, Emerging Community, in Columbia, S.C., the Regional and National animator for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, and a commission member of the Franciscan Action Network. Carolyn is also a promoter for the Pace e Bene's Campaign Nonviolence (www.paceebene.org/campaign-nonviolence).

Prayer of Merciful Presence

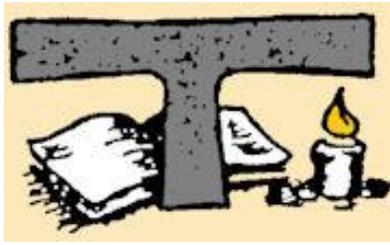
Good and gracious Lord, grant me
the strength and the courage
To be the merciful presence of Your love;
That I may show unflinching love to all those I meet
And overcome the darkness of indifference.

Grant me the strength and the courage
To be the merciful presence of Your peace;
That I may be peace to all those I meet
And overcome the darkness of violence.

Grant me the strength and the courage
To be the merciful presence of Your light;
That I may be light to those
who walk in the darkness of doubt and fear.

Lord, grant me the strength and the courage
To be the merciful presence of Your Son;
That I may bring the love, the peace,
and the light of Jesus to a world in need.

Dear Lord, I humbly pray. So be it. Amen.



Spiritual Assistant: New course begins

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

“The principal task of the spiritual assistant is to communicate Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the brothers and sisters.”

General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order, Art. 90.1

On Jan. 31, our four students will gather at Gravatt Camp and Conference Center in Aiken, S.C., to begin preparation for the ministry of spiritual assistant: a vocation within the Secular Franciscan vocation.

Our teaching team is Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., our regional spiritual assistant; Audrey Binet, OFS; Faye Martin, OFS; and me.

Together, over the last few months, we’ve developed this course, which will be held:

- **2014** —
 - Jan. 31–Feb. 2,
 - May 16–18,
 - July 29–Aug. 1 (at Ridgecrest, days preceding the Annual Regional Gathering),
 - Nov. 7–9.
- **2015** —
 - Feb. 6–8,
 - May 15–17,
 - Aug. 4–7 (Ridgecrest, days preceding the Annual Regional Gathering),
 - Nov. 20–22.

The material is taken from *Franciscan Family Connections*, the spiritual assistant textbook, prepared by the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants; *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order*, *Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership*, *For Up to Now (FUN): Foundational Topics for Initial Formation*, and the *BSSF Regional Formators’ Guidelines for Orientation and Initial Formation*. Course topics:

- Discerning the call of the Holy Spirit,
- Role of the spiritual assistant,
- Spiritual assistant as servant leader,
- Pastoral visitations,
- Witnessing elections,
- Respectful communication,
- The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order,
- Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation,
- Fraternity and Francis,
- Prayer forms,
- St. Francis and his approach to Divinity,
- Francis and the Blessed Virgin Mary,
- St. Clare of Assisi,
- Vocation: God’s Call,
- The vocation, charism, and mission of Secular Franciscans,
- Profession and the Secular Franciscan,
- For the formator,
- *Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Formator’s Guidelines for*

Orientation and Initial Formation,

- “Forming the Formators,” DVD set from the National Formation Workshop:
 - What are Formation and Pathways?
 - Profession
 - Franciscan theology
- “The Franciscan Rule and the Order’s Presence,” presentation by Patricia Brandwein-Ball, OFS, at the 2012 Quinquennial.

As you can see, there’s a lot to cover.

On Friday evenings we’ll have Evening Prayer, dinner, and social time. Saturdays and Sundays we’ll have Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, and meals, in a schedule that runs from 7:30 a.m. to about 9 p.m. on Saturday and 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Much of our first weekend will focus on pastoral visitations and ecclesiastical witness for elections, to prepare our students to observe and to be observed in those duties throughout the two-year course.

THOUGHTS ON VISITATIONS

When praying the rosary and meditating on the mystery of the visitation, it seemed that the depth of the significance of the visitation grew on me. Mary carried Jesus within her to her cousin, Elizabeth, who was also pregnant, with John the Baptist. We are told that John leaped in Elizabeth’s womb. He recognized the presence of our Lord when both of them were in their mothers’ wombs. That was a powerful meeting.

As believers, we carry Jesus in our heart. I would like to suggest that we consider that when a fraternity has a visitation, the visitors bring Jesus to the fraternity and the fraternity receives the visitors with Jesus in their hearts. Although the duty of examining the records of the fraternity is important and needs to continue, it is also a wonderful, grace-filled moment in the life of the fraternity and the visitors if the Spirit continues during their visitation from this perspective. It would raise the emphasis from the concrete to the spiritual and, perhaps, be joyfully anticipated.

Peace and Love,

Barbara Smith, OFS, Secular Franciscan spiritual assistant,
and member of San Damiano Fraternity

A visit is a graced opportunity. A friend, family member, neighbor come to spend time catching up, informing us of what is occurring with mutual acquaintances. We are nourished and informed to have us better disposed to serve as people of prayer and service for the community. A visit energizes and connects the individual with the outside world.

The information raises the understanding, sensitivity and awareness of the individual on the scene contributing to his knowledge of the community. The visit has both formal and informal elements thus serving to provide a more complete picture. As Barbara Smith so aptly put it, “it is a grace-filled moment in the life of the fraternity.” Let us be present for the Lord’s visit to better know how to love and live.

Blessings of peace and all good,
Father Linus

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.

Annual Regional Gathering, Aug. 1–3
LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, near Asheville, N.C.
Guest speaker: Father Albert Haase, OFM

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION CALENDAR
SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

* confirmed

V+ follow-up visit

Names in parentheses are observers. Regional Executive Council (REC) members preparing to serve as fraternal visitors and election presiders, and spiritual assistants preparing to serve as pastoral visitors and ecclesiastical witnesses at elections, first observe those who have experience performing these duties and are then observed by them as they perform the duties.

2014	Fraternity	V/E	Fraternal/Pastoral Visitor
Jan. 17–18	San Damiano	V	Jerry Rousseau (Julie Lorenz)/ Joanita Nellenbach (Dcn. Tom Shaver)
Feb. 8	Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary	E	Charles Meyer/Lori Moran (Audrey Binet)
Feb. 14–15	Bl. John Duns Scotus	V	Frank Massey (Marie Stephan)/Joanita Nellenbach
Mar. 9	Channel of Peace	E	Jerry/Fr. Mark Scholz (Faye Martin)
Mar. 15–16	Sts. Francis and Clare	V	Jerry (Barbara Garrison)/Audrey (Faye)
Apr. 12–13	Five Georgia Martyrs	V	DorothyAnn Rowland/Lori (Joanita)*
Apr. 13	Franciscan Family of Greensboro	E	Marie (Frank)/Faye (Audrey)*
May 3–4	St. Clare of Assisi	V	Jerry/Faye (Joanita)*
May 13	Fraternity of St. Clare	V	Frank/Pat Wilkerson*
June 7–8	Fraternity of Br. Francis	V	Paula Zanker/Tom (Audrey)
June 8	St. Joseph Cupertino	E	Jerry (Barbara)/Willie Guadalupe
June 14	Crucified Christ	E	DorothyAnn/Joanita (Tom)*
June 28	St. Michael the Archangel	E	Charles/Tom (Audrey)

ARG August 1-3, 2014 (Father Albert Haase, OFM, featured speaker)

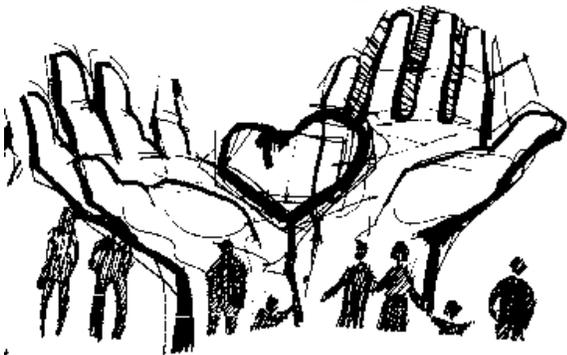
Sept. 5–6	Our Lady Queen of Angels	V	DorothyAnn/
Sept. 11	St. Clare	V	Barbara (Jerry)/
*Sept. 13	Our Lady of the Bl. Sacrament	E	Frank/Fr. Paul Gabriel
Sept. 12–13	Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg	V	Julie/
Sept. 28	Padre Pio Reactivating	E	Marie/Fr. Doug Reed
*Oct. 18–19	Spirit of Francis and Clare	V	Julie/Willie
Oct. 19	Seven Dolours of the BVM	E	Barbara/

NAFRA Chapter, Oct. 21–26, Lake Dallas, Texas

Nov. 2–3	St. John Vianney, NFG	V	Jerry/
*Nov. 16	St. Thomas More	E	Jerry/

An idea born in New York grows into a ministry in Tennessee

By Richard Russo, OFS



The summer of 1990 was life-changing for me. After donating money to Covenant House, a ministry to street youth in New York City and receiving its newsletter, I thought very hard about becoming a volunteer there. So, one evening that June I went into the city to try to speak to someone about doing just that.

I parked my car and walked toward Covenant House. As I passed the Port Authority Bus

Terminal, I nearly tripped over a man sleeping on the sidewalk. A few seconds later another man stood up in a large cardboard box and held out his hand. He started speaking Spanish to me, and although I did not speak Spanish I understood what he wanted. A few seconds later I nearly tripped over another man asleep on the sidewalk. By that time I started to run towards Covenant House. I finally got there and spoke with someone for about an hour about becoming a volunteer.

God, though, had other plans for me. All that summer, instead of thinking about Covenant House, I thought about those men I saw on the street. That fall I convinced a few of my friends from church to help me collect clothes and food to bring to those in need by the bus terminal. As the weather got colder, we started to bring hot soup and hot tea to them.

I made my Secular Franciscan profession in 1993. In an effort to increase the ministry, I brought the idea to my fraternity, New Pentecost, on Long Island. They quickly approved of the idea and within a short time many of them were helping. One year a fellow fraternity member got donations of turkey, stuffing, and potatoes, and we brought Thanksgiving meals to the hungry.

Life was great. I knew exactly what God wanted, and I was doing it. At least, that was what I thought. Soon God put it on my heart to open a house to feed and clothe those in need. But then I moved to Tennessee to work for my brother.

After joining Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity, I again felt the call to feed the hungry. I recruited a fraternity brother, Jimmie Crawford, OFS, to help me. For about two years he, his wife, Anne; and a few other people helped me pack brown-bag lunches at my local parish once a month. We brought them to a soup kitchen in Nashville and gave them to the patrons to take with them on their way.

During that time God inspired me to expand the ministry, and the idea of a house landed on my heart again. Eventually, after fighting with God for a long time, I bought a house in Old Hickory, Tenn., in August 2011. It took awhile to get things in order, but in October 2012 Deacon Simeon Panagatos, OFS, our fraternity minister, celebrated a communion service in our chapel, and the doors at Casey's Kitchen (named after Bl. Solanus Casey) were opened.

Fraternity members have continued to help, and Casey's Kitchen is a fraternity apostolate. Members donate money and clothing. Stephen Brace, OFS, has donated time in buying supplies, such as a San Damiano Crucifix for the chapel. He's also writing a computer program for the ministry.

Right now, because of volunteers' work schedules, the kitchen is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, and at other times by appointment. Along with fraternity members, a neighbor, Rachel Woodroof, and friends also help out at the kitchen.

Casey's Kitchen gives out clothing and nonperishable food in boxes, bags, and cans to low-income people. It is privately funded and takes no money from the government. Recipients can

**Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis
Regional Executive Council Roster**

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Vice Minister: Paula Zanker, OFS

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Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.

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NC: Franklin;

TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

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Area 1: Ada Winters, OFS

Area 2: Donna Kaye Rock, OFS

Area 3: Marie Stephan, OFS

Fraternity prayer coordinators submit prayer requests to their
Area prayer coordinators

get one box of food per month for one person and two boxes for two or more in the family. Proof of income, identification, number of family members, and address are needed. The first month, only if there is an emergency, we give out one extra box.

Those in the program generally come to the house to receive food and clothes, but in emergencies we deliver prepacked food to people. We also refer people to pro-life ministries and have lots of pro-life literature to hand out.

A lady living in senior apartments nearby heard about us and has spread the word. Now, with the help of my parish's Knights of Columbus council, we are planning on feeding 60 seniors per month, giving them supplemental boxes of nonperishable food items once a month.

Father Bala Marneni, OFM, a priest from India, stationed in Tennessee, recently celebrated a Mass at the house for us and gave us his blessing. It was a fun day for all.

For more information about Casey's Kitchen, contact me at bostonterrier2468@gmail.com.

Richard Russo, OFS, is a member of Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity.

T

"Authentic conversion leads to life in Christ, not only for us but also for all people and all creation. Our eyes are open to the needs of others. Our hearts are moved to respond as we become God's people."

Patricia Brandwein-Ball, OFS, "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation," p. 13; *For Up to Now:*

Foundational Topics for Initial Formation

Writing Franciscan

Volume is history of Francis rather than biography of Francis

***Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint* by André Vauchez. Translated by Michael Cusato, OFM. Yale University Press (New Haven, Conn., 2012). 416 pp.; paperback, \$17.12.**

By David Flood, OFM

André Vauchez published his first article on Francis of Assisi in 1968. He did not stop at that first article and kept taking notes on the Umbrian saint. Forty years later, he turned his abundant data into a highly accomplished book. It was published in Paris by Fayard in 2009 and won the Chateaubriand prize for history in 2010. It has now appeared in English, translated by a student of his (at the Sorbonne), Michael Cusato, and published by Yale University Press (2012).

The substantial volume is divided into four parts, covering 336 pages. It has a preface (ix–xv) and supporting material (Notes, Bibliography, Index, and other matter) on pages 337–98. I range the book above the many lives of Francis that have appeared in recent years. I will sum up the four parts and then explain my hesitation at following Vauchez on his historiographical journey.

The first of the four parts of the book tells the story of Francis (“A Biographical Sketch, 1182–1226,” 1–135). Vauchez turns to *The Legend of the Three Companions* as the “best guide” for an account of his youth. Towards the end of an excellent description of Assisi as a commune, he observes that Francis “was never taken in by any mythology of progress” (13). No social program, no politics. He then shifts to Francis’s “public life” (33) by stressing the slow mutation of his ways, clearly distinct from a sudden conversion. He emphasizes that Francis remained a layman as he turned religious. Repeatedly in the book Vauchez mentions Francis’s lay identity. Once the brotherhood began and his reputation for holiness spread, Francis used his communicative skills to play himself, as he was, and nothing more. His sincerity and integrity found favor.

In his account Vauchez gives Francis’s encounter with Sultan al-Kamil close attention (86–94). He reviews the literature on the two men. He concludes that Francis both earned and extended respect in his meeting with al-Malik al-Kamil. As with Vauchez’s description of the commune, this is one of several outstanding if untitled minichapters woven into the book.

At one moment Vauchez turns to what he sees as “institutional vagueness” in the early years of the fraternity, along with the need to clear its relations with the church. He navigates the question carefully without grappling at any length with the details of the two Rules. If the question is institutional, then the Rules are, somehow, the answer. The overworked story where Francis called himself a fool (104) obscures seeing the question whole. After all, there was an approved Rule at hand and, whatever the year, it had Francis’s support. Vauchez returns to the



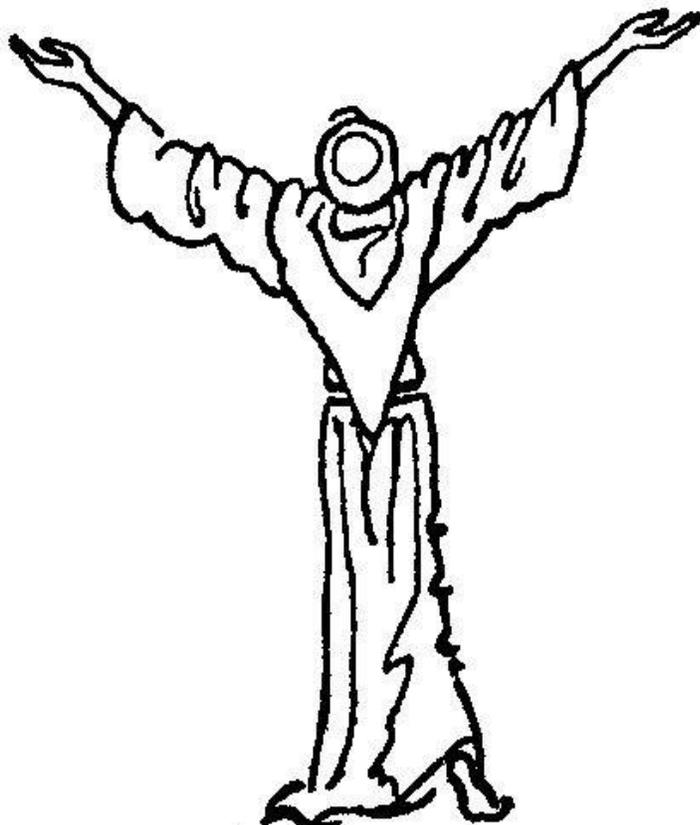
question in the book's fourth part where he speaks about Francis and the church.

This part of the book is finished with several clear and balanced pages on the stigmatization (128–31), another successful minichapter. Vauchez returns to the question later on (217) and finishes by taking a positive stand on the strange wounds (227). He concludes his “biographical sketch” by looking closely at Francis’s last words to his brothers, the *Testament*, a text often referred to in the preceding pages.

With the biography of Francis covered, Vauchez covers Francis’s death and his immediate afterlife in the second part of the book (“Death and Transfiguration of Francis, 1226–1253,” 137–81). Pope Gregory IX saw rapidly to Francis’s canonization (1228). The canonization bull claimed him as ally and support against the church’s enemies. In his account of Francis’s life, a companion to the canonization, Thomas of Celano introduced Pope Gregory and the poor and humble Francis as the church’s answer to the problems and challenges of the times. In Thomas’s extension of “poor and humble” to the brotherhood, Vauchez sees “the first attempt” (149) to make Francis’s message that of the order. At this passage of the story he takes the time to bring in the basilica, Francis’s final resting place, with another fine minichapter.

The book’s second part includes two chapters, Chapters 3 and 4. (The first and third parts each contain two chapters as well, whereas the fourth has six chapters.) In Chapter 4, Francis dies a second time (181). He slips away from the common memory. I find following Vauchez here difficult, for there is too much contrary evidence to speak of a second death of Francis as he does. Moreover he begins Part III by observing that, between 1230 and 1263, “lives of Francis multiplied” (185).

In Part III André Vauchez surveys “Images and Myths of Francis of Assisi from the Middle Ages to Today” (185–251). (Clearly this is a huge hunk of time and he brings it off well.) After considering the difficulties of handling the various stories about Francis, he arrives at the



Legenda maior of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. Bonaventure set out to produce the definitive account. He drew on the available data to present an ascetic and mystical Francis. With the support of the general chapter of 1266, he declared it the only and official image of the saint. Other narratives were to be collected and destroyed, not only in the order’s convents but elsewhere as well. A master of prose as well as theology, Bonaventure “largely succeeded” (196 and 200) in imposing his *Legenda* as the story. There were still many friars who did not accept a purely theological Francis and, though they have caused trouble down to our day, by and large the institution has tamed its saint and made him pastorally useful to the church. Before moving on to modern times, Vauchez has one of his minichapters on the many paintings of Francis. He concludes by referring to Bellini’s Francis (circa 1490). Fayard

put the painting on the cover of its *François d'Assise. Entre histoire et mémoire* (Francis of Assisi. *Between History and Memory*).

With Part III, Chapter 6, Vauchez surveys the way Francis was handled from the “sixteenth to the twentieth centuries” (229–48). He starts with Luther and ends with the Italian historians Manselli, Merlo, Miccoli, *e tuti quanti*. Along the way, he locates the beginning of Franciscan historiography in the Order, mentioning especially Luke Wadding, whose *Annales* is a treasure-trove of information (1625ff.). Paul Sabatier sets off contemporary scholarship with his life of Francis (1893–1894).

Vauchez continues his study of Francis in Part Four (247–336) by reflecting on points that regularly arise in a discussion of Francis’s life: his experience of God as well as the world, his way with Scripture, Francis’s charism and his religion. These essays come across as personal reflections, stimulated by Vauchez’ study of Francis of Assisi. This part of the book is more open to discussion than his historical readings, for it involves presuppositions about history and theology.

Vauchez’ book is, as the title makes clear, first and foremost a history of Francis. It is a history by a recognized medievalist approaching the end of a busy and successful career. A book of considerable merit, it will exercise much influence on those who examine Franciscan origins and try to understand Francis of Assisi. Alas, Vauchez works too easily with the stories about Francis that began accumulating soon after his death. Put another way, Vauchez does not give the early writings (commonly referred to as Francis’s writings) the primary attention they deserve. He tells the story of Saint Francis rather than of Brother Francis. Moreover, although he uses the term “movement” to designate the brotherhood, he holds fast to Francis’s (and the brothers’) consciously harmless relation to the society of his day. (We find the same in the books and essays of Italian historians whom he hails. Miccoli, in particular, forswears the slightest tint of politics in Francis’s behavior.) In *The Letter to the Faithful* (which I call the “Message of Recall and Encouragement,” with the earliest copy of the text as my warrant), Francis censures as blind the way the wealthy use their possessions. He then tells the story of a rich and dying man who will not see to the just distribution of his holdings. He leaves them to his family. Francis sends him to hell for such social injustice. And he tells his readers to make copies of the text and circulate it. This, I dare propose, is something more than an encouragement to private piety.

David Flood, OFM, is a renowned and pioneering scholar of Franciscan history currently on the Research Faculty at the Franciscan Institute. He is the author of 15 books, numerous articles and several critical editions of texts on early Franciscan history. He received his doctorate from the Universität Köln.

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