

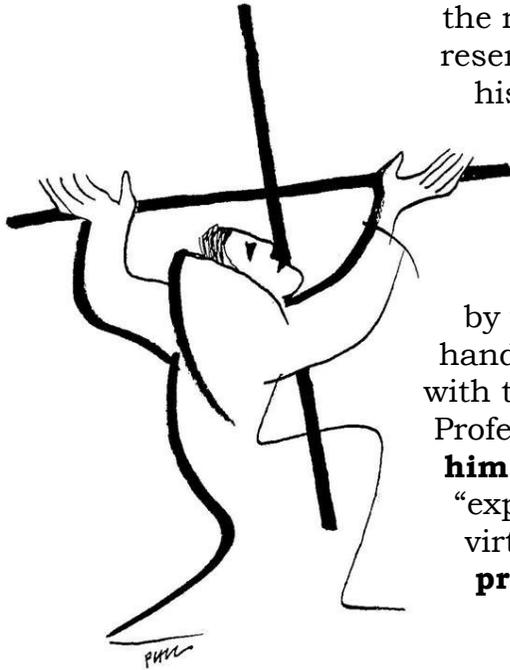
Communio

That All May Be One

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

Spring 2014

Consecration and Profession



The *Ritual* uses the verb *to consecrate*, giving it the meaning of *to devote*, in other words to dedicate, reserve and destine a thing or a person for God and his exclusive service. (I)n the specific context of the *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order* it is persons who ... are the ones who must offer themselves to God with full freedom and awareness.

From this point of view Profession is the act by which a person places him/herself into the hands of God, enabling God to take hold of him, with the result that from the precise moment of Profession, **the person no longer belongs to him/herself**, but is considered as totally “expropriated” and at God’s entire disposal. By virtue of Profession, **the person becomes God’s property**, and therefore “sacred.”

Father Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap.,
“Profession in the SFO: Gift and Commitment”

You ask how you can live a life of poverty while in the world? Well, if you can let go enough of self so that the life of God may live in you — so that you can truly belong to Him, you will be exercising the highest poverty. You will also be living out the promise of obedience by quieting your own voice enough to be able to hear what the Lord has in store for you.

Father Richard Trezza, OFM,
“Profession and the Secular Franciscan,” *FUN* manual

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





Editor’s Journal: Secular Franciscan Order — Yes

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

I’ve heard it at least three times in recent months — that we’re the Order of Franciscan Seculars (or Franciscans Secular). I’m guessing this is because we now use OFS, instead of SFO, after our names.

But we’re not — never have been — the Order of Franciscan Seculars. We’re the Secular Franciscan Order.

At the Order’s 2011 General Chapter, held in Saõ Paolo, Brazil, our International Presidency voted to approve “The Official Name of the Order: The Use and Translation of the Name of the Order.” This document said, in part: “The acronym which refers to the name **Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis** is OFS and is always to be used regardless of the language. For example, when Secular Franciscans use the acronym after their name, they must use ‘OFS’.”

Thus, OFS refers to our name *only* as it’s written in *Latin* — not as it’s written (or spoken) in English. Even that official document doesn’t refer to us as “Franciscan Seculars.”

“When we use English, we are still the Secular Franciscan Order, not the Order of Franciscan Seculars or whatever,” said Tom Bello, OFS, our national minister, when he sent that document to us.

“The CIOFS-approved English language ‘official’ translation of our Order for communications and speaking remains Secular Franciscan Order,” Bob Fitzsimmons, OFS, our national formation commission chair, added in a subsequent e-mail.

So, even when we talk, in English, about something the OFS is doing, what we’re saying is that the Secular Franciscan Order is doing it.

The OFS’s four official languages and translations of the Order’s name from Latin to those languages: Italian — Ordine Francescano Secolare; English — Secular Franciscan Order; Spanish — La Orden Franciscana Seglar; French — L’Ordre Franciscain Séculier.

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It’s easy to see that our name in three of the languages automatically abbreviates as OFS. For English, it seemed logical to use SFO. We are, however, all one Order, no matter where we live or what language we speak. Having one abbreviation worldwide unites us a little more.

Many statements can’t be *literally* translated from one language to another. Take the name of our Order’s governing body: Consilium Internationale Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis (CIOFS). Word for word, that translates as Council International Order Franciscan Secular. But, in English at least, we don’t say it that way. We say the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order; or International Council or International Presidency, for short.

If you have our Rule in what we like to call the “little red rule book,” take a look at the excerpts from the three letters written in 1978 to deliver our newly approved Rule to us. All three letters refer to the Secular Franciscan Order.

*Pace e bene,
Joanita*

Minister's Message:

Anniversaries! Let us celebrate these milestones together



April 25th marks the 800th anniversary of the birth of our patron, St. Louis IX. His feast day is Aug. 25.

Louis IX (April 25, 1214–Aug. 25, 1270), commonly St. Louis, was king of France from 1226 until his death. He is honored as co-patron of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS).

Even in childhood, his compassion for poor and suffering people was obvious to all who knew him. After he became king, more than 100 poor people ate in his house on ordinary days. Often the king served these guests himself.

Such acts of charity, coupled with Louis's devout religious practices, gave rise to the legend that he joined the Third Order of St. Francis. Though this is unlikely, Louis's life and actions proclaimed him one of them in spirit. Let us learn more about him during this anniversary year.

March 13 also marked the first anniversary of Pope Francis as supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. We can all celebrate God's providence and grace in sending us this wonderful priest and teacher.

In a recent conversation about religious life, we were reminded that "when listening to Pope Francis we should pay careful attention not only to the contents of what he says but also to the dynamic of the relationship that is created."

Pope Francis has said that "the Church must be attractive. Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! It is possible to live differently in this world. We are speaking of an eschatological outlook, of the values of the Kingdom incarnated here, on this earth. It is a question of leaving everything to follow the Lord. No, I do not want to say 'radical.' Evangelical radicalness is not only for religious: it is demanded of all. It is this witness that I expect of you. You should be men and women who are able to wake the world up" (excerpts from "Wake Up the World," November 2013).

Are we, Secular Franciscans, creating relationships in our everyday journey and "waking up the world?"

I believe this theme is also appropriate to our Region as we celebrate two anniversaries: 20 years of establishment as a Region (1994-2014); and the 10th anniversary of the Four Pillars, presented at our ARG in 2004 (see articles, pp. 8 and 10). We will celebrate these Anniversaries during our Annual Regional Gathering, Aug. 1–3. The actual theme of our gathering is "Awakening Your True Self." This theme was selected to complement the talks to be given by our guest speaker, Father Albert Haase, OFM.

At the time of our establishment as a Region, we had 17 canonically established fraternities*. We now have a total of 33 fraternities (including one Newly Forming Group and two Emerging Communities), as follows (highlight of oldest fraternity by state):

Alabama: St. Joseph Cupertino – October 12, 1968* **45 years**

St. Pio of Pietrelcina – March 10, 2012

Georgia: Immaculate Conception – March 15, 1959* **55 years**

Stigmata of St. Francis – September 10, 2011

The Spirit of Francis and Clare – September 9, 2012

St. John Vianney NFG – (NFG December 28, 2012)

St. Elizabeth of Hungary – October 4, 1984*

San Damiano – February 13, 2012

The Five Georgia Martyrs – June 5, 2002

Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg – August 11, 2007

North Carolina: Padre Pio – August 13, 1975 (reactivating)*

St. Maximilian Kolbe – October 29, 1989*

St. Elizabeth of Hungary – February 9, 1981*

Fraternity of St. Clare – January 12, 1992*

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament – May 24, 1992*

St. Francis of the Living Waters – November 29, 1987*

St. Francis of the Hills – April 5, 1987*

Fraternity of Brother Francis – March 10, 1991*

St. Anthony of Padua – November 2, 1978*

St. Thomas More – January 9, 1954 **60 years**

Franciscan Family of Greensboro – March 8, 1997

St. Clare – date unknown – reactivated February 25, 1997

Fr. Solanus Casey – January 6, 2002

So. Carolina: Our Lady of Good Counsel – November 1958* **55 years**

Blessed John Duns Scotus – February 8, 1991*

(formerly St. Michael's fraternity)

Crucified Christ – October 5, 1987*

St. Michael the Archangel – August 5, 2004

St. Clare of Assisi – May 1, 2009

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary – January 3, 2004

Our Lady Queen of Angels EC – (EC - March 24, 2012)

Tennessee: Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary – 1915 (actual date missing)*

99 years

Channel of Peace – June 24, 1995

Sts. Francis and Clare EC – (EC February 12, 2011)

In closing, I share this story as related by Pope Francis. "I recall the story of a young man, 22 years old, who was suffering from a deep depression. He lived with his mom who was a widow and who did the laundry of wealthy families. This young man no longer went to work and lived in an alcoholic haze. The mom was not able to help him: every morning before leaving she would simply look at him with great tenderness. Today this young man has a position of responsibility: he overcame that problem, because in the end that look of tenderness from his mom shook him up. We have to recapture that tenderness, including maternal tenderness. Think of the tenderness that Saint Francis lived, for example."

Do we bring that tenderness to those we meet and to our brothers and sisters in fraternity?

Come celebrate with us on Aug. 1–3, and let all of us "awaken our true selves."

Wishing all of you a fruitful Lent and a Joyous Easter. Peace and All Good,

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.

"May the sun bring you new energy by day, may the moon softly restore you by night.
May the rain wash away your worries, may the breeze blow new strength into your being.
May you walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life."

Apache blessing

Message from Our Minister General

LENT 2014

Dear brothers and sisters,

We are just in the middle of our Lenten journey which will lead us to the great joy of the Easter of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During the past three Sundays, we have heard and meditated upon what was proposed to us in the Gospels:

- ✓ The Temptations,
- ✓ The Transfiguration, and
- ✓ The Samaritan Woman at the Well.

These are three passages in the Gospels that provide a strong invitation to conversion:

- ✓ Resisting the many temptations that arise daily and which we find difficult to resist;
- ✓ Being transformed into new people, invited by Jesus to descend from Mount Tabor and to immerse ourselves in everyday life to rebuild, with our hands and with the witness of our lives, his Church and the world in which we live, by engaging ourselves with courage and in a concrete way to repair what is “broken” around us.
- ✓ Asking Jesus, as the Samaritan woman did at Sychar, for the Living Water that the Lord offers, since He is *“a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

During this Lenten season, we must make an effort to restore the rhythm and the style of who we are: true believers and true Franciscans who commit themselves to live as the children of God.

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for this Lenten Season is: “... though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” (2 Cor 8,9). And, in his Lenten message, the Pope continues by stating: “The Apostle was writing to the Christians of Corinth to encourage them to be generous in helping the faithful in Jerusalem who were in need. What do these words of Saint Paul mean for us Christians today? What does this invitation to poverty, a life of evangelical poverty, mean for us today?”

Brothers and sisters, what does this invitation to poverty, in the evangelical sense, mean for us, Secular Franciscans, youth and adults?

Today, we live in a time of distressing poverty, violence and war. How can we become transformed in order to have “a heartfelt compassion” (Col 3,12) ?

I strongly invite you to think about, to pray for, and to be close to those brothers and sisters of the OFS:

- ✓ ***Who can only eat once every two days and are absolutely without everything but the joy that comes from their faith and their hope;***
- ✓ ***Who, because of lack of means, are forced to have their children abandon their schooling;***
- ✓ ***Who do not have a place to live, as happens in Haiti and in the Philippines, where hundreds of thousands of people still live the consequences of the earthquake and of the cyclone;***

- ✓ *Who are suffering from violence and from war, as in Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and in many other countries;*
- ✓ *Who are killed, as were the 25 Secular Franciscans of the Central African Republic, all belonging to the same fraternity.*

Can you help?

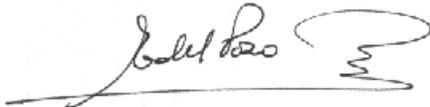
My dear brothers and sisters, what will give us true freedom, true happiness and true salvation is a love full of compassion and tenderness, that is shared with generosity and with a spirit of doing without — not only without that which is part of our excess but also without that which is part of our essential — so as to alleviate some of the injustices that are suffered by so many of God's children.

We are confident that you will offer the fruit of your Lenten sacrifices to your National Councils so that they can send your contributions to CIOFS who will in turn offer these fruits of conversion to all those brothers and sisters of the OFS and YouFra who are in need.

I think that, with this spirit of conversion and penance, of transformation of individuals and fraternities, we will be able to arrive at Easter in a way that is both serene and joyful, and which bears witness to those around us of the joy of having found the source of living water that quenches us eternally.

On behalf of all the brothers and sisters of the CIOFS Presidency, I greet you with great confidence and fraternal love, and I wish you a Happy Easter of Resurrection.

Your sister and minister,



Encarnación del Pozo
Minister General OFS

Communio
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Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region
of the
Secular Franciscan Order
in the United States of America.

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region
20th Anniversary of Regional Canonical Establishment*
 &
10th Anniversary of the Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Celebrate at our Annual Regional Gathering — Aug. 1–3
LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center (near Asheville, N.C.)

Theme: Awakening Your True Self

Featured Speaker: Father Albert Haase, OFM,

Popular preacher, teacher, spiritual director, radio personality.

A former missionary to mainland China for over 11 years,
 and the author of eight books on popular spirituality,
 he trains spiritual directors in the diocese of Springfield, Ill.

Co-host of “Spirit and Life,” a radio show every weekend on the Relevant Radio
 Network. Website: www.AlbertOFM.org

Every fraternity: Plan to display your history and highlights
 (and any other info you wish to share) throughout the weekend.

Each fraternity will have a dedicated table for this event.

AND — please bring your fraternity banner for our banner procession.

If you don't yet have a banner, now is a good time to make one
 (great one-time apostolate).

Come and celebrate with your brothers and sisters from throughout our Region.
 It's going to be a joyous reunion.

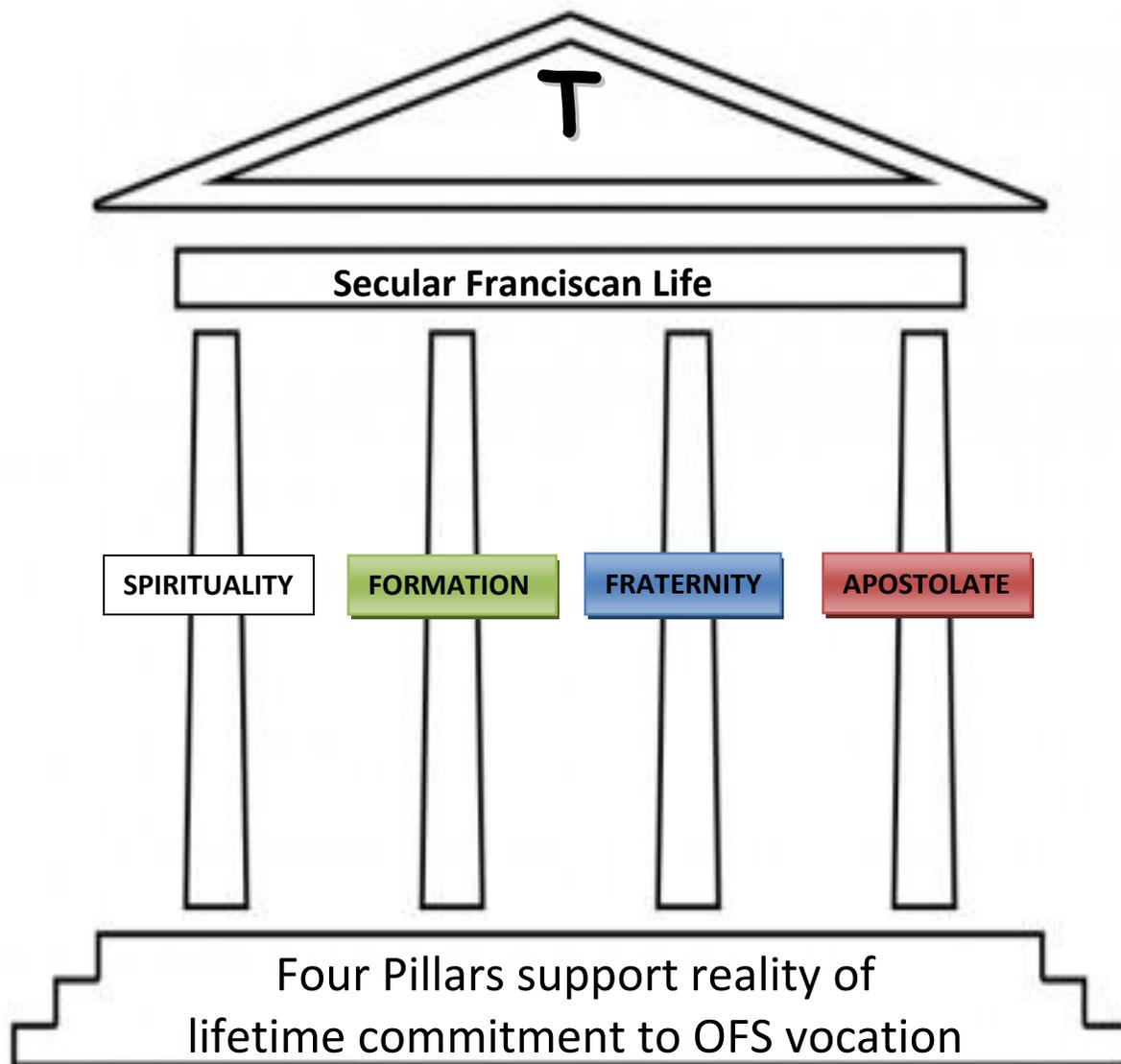
***Regionalization**

“The process of regionalization, first called for by the 1957 General Constitutions and then by the new Rule [the Rule of 1978, which we now follow], began in the United States in 1987 and was completed in 1997; the process divided the country into 31 geographic regions, thus doing away with the Provincial jurisdictional structure. This geographic structuring helped bring to fruition this aspiration of a Third Order autonomy. The argument was that the Secular Franciscans are one Order, not made up of four branches, as are the friars, which virtually was the case for the Third Order when they were organized under a specific province umbrella.

“This restructuring was not a complete separation from the friars, nor was it planned to be. Canon 303 ordained a connection to the Friar Provinces via *Altius Moderamen*, a Latin term used in Canon 303 to mean that the friars of the First Order and Third Order Regular are to guarantee the fidelity of the OFS to the Franciscan Charism, communion with the Church and union with the Franciscan Family.”

William Wicks, OFS,
 “A Brief History of the Secular Franciscan Order and its Rules,” (29–30 of that chapter),
 in *For Up to Now: Foundational Topics for Initial Formation* (the FUN manual)

***Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region: Established Oct. 20, 1994**



by Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

I still remember that evening — Sept. 10, 2004 — when, at our Annual Regional Gathering (ARG), we received the Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan life. This concept is unique to our Region and has become essential to much that we do.

The Four Pillars are taught in initial and ongoing formation and are important in our spiritual assistant training. We structure our visitation reports on the pillars. Reflection questions fraternity members answer prior to visitations, as well as the reflection questions given to candidates preparing for Profession, focus on the pillars. They are also going national, about to become part of our NAFRA (National Fraternity) Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Handbook for JPIC animators (see JPIC column, page 11).

The Four Pillars were approved by the Regional Executive Council (REC), which included Audrey Binet, OFS, minister; Larry Skrivan, OFS, vice minister; Skyler Harvey, OFS, secretary; Dominic Morda, OFS, treasurer; Christine Washington, OFS, formation director; Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., regional spiritual assistant.

“I do remember that Father Linus did the vast majority of work on the Four Pillars,” Christine said via e-mail.

Father Linus, responding to an e-mail request for his memories of how the Four Pillars came about, recalled “that while driving, after a visitation, Audrey and I would begin doing the report

to the fraternity. Much of what is in the Four Pillars was in those visitation reports of the late '90s. I would drive and Audrey would write. We would revise and clarify on the way home or to the next visitation.”

At the 2004 ARG, he introduced them to the region in his talk: “Roles of Formation, Fraternity, and Apostolate in our Franciscan Spirituality.”

“In the time that I have worked with the Seculars and working more specifically and directly with Audrey, and in the visitations, we have utilized this particular paradigm known as the Four Pillars,” Father Linus said. “The Four Pillars speak of Formation, Spirituality, Fraternity, and Apostolate.”

“I’ve worked with the three levels we have in our (OFM Conventual) formation process,” he said. “You can’t help but learn through experience, looking at what the ideal says and what the real says and trying to mesh the two. That’s what we’ve been doing these past five years, together with the (BSSF Region) Council and through the very, very hard work of Christine Washington, who put it all together, pulled it all together. We have come up with the Four Pillars.”

It’s “that whole idea of anchoring the basic ideas, the whole idea of really knowing what I want,” Father Linus said. “It’s not a prayer society. It’s not a pietistic society. *This is a way of life*. ... The concept of — for life — making promises *for life*. That was a concept that needed to be more firmly rooted in the different fraternities. That it’s not just for as long as I feel or so long as I believe I can handle this. It’s for life; it never ends. So that idea of perpetuity had to be really instilled in a much stronger fashion.”

“The Four Pillars are my ‘companions on the journey,’” Audrey said in a recent e-mail. “I have learned that it is of utmost importance that the Four Pillars are in balance. I must ask myself if I am in balance; and if not, why not?”

“In my own fraternity and when I visit fraternities, I look at their balance as I ask myself if they might topple over because one or more of the pillars is short-changed. In addition, I look at those in formation. Again, are they addressing all the pillars equally. If not, why not?”

The *Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Guidelines for Orientation and Initial Formation* contains (pages 39–42), “The Four Pillars of BSSF Region,” which explains each pillar in detail and, during the Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming, is given to each person who is moving from orientation to inquiry.

“The Four Pillars of BSSF Region,” (pages 43–50) includes applications for implementing the pillars. This is for the formators — which is all of us who are Professed.

After Father Linus’s talk that evening, each fraternity minister was called forward to receive a set of tea lights in holders with colors representing the pillars: Spirituality — white; Formation — green; Fraternity — blue; the fire of Apostolate — red.

But the Four Pillars aren’t just for formation or in fraternities. Each of us can use them when we personally assess how deeply we’re living our OFS vocation or when people ask us about Secular Franciscan life. Most of us probably can’t quote every article of the Rule, but we can say that our Secular Franciscan life is Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity, and (Fraternity) Apostolate, and then go on to explain what that means.

“When I am asked about our way of life, I am sure to mention the Four Pillars,” Audrey said. “The Four Pillars have been a blessing for me on my Franciscan journey. I would say that the Four Pillars have also blessed our region by giving us foundational guidance, direction, and unity. I give thanks to Father Linus for the original idea of the Four Pillars for the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region.”

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.

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

A Trinitarian approach — by admitting the power of God as Three Persons working in concert, each supporting the other, confirming the other, working with unstinted energy, sacrificing for and with the other for the good, the truth, the peace and wholeness of the community, now in faith we embrace Him as mentor and His way as model. Reflecting how Francis invited the Friars to participate in the mission and ministry — using the umbrella of Penance — self-denial, selflessness, rooting out that which would impede the goal of peace. He invited each one to share the vision and work to achieve its goal.

It is God's inspiration, it is Francis's life and energy as model and mentor. We move from the divine to the human, from God to Francis, whether we be 1st, 2nd, or Secular Order. It is Francis who is the conduit of God's grace. He, Francis, has shown that it is possible to achieve. He, by virtue of employing the grace given, leads to transformation.

Our region expresses this approach in the Four Pillars, which is a foundation of our Secular Franciscan way of life. These pillars are Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity, and Apostolate. The questions are: What are the pillars? How do they relate to each other? How do I live them in an authentic Franciscan manner.

The interplay among the Four Pillars addresses the content, the approach, the living, and the sharing of the Secular Franciscan life. The various pieces which constitute:

- the **Spirituality Pillar** are aimed at providing the materials for a Franciscan identity and mindset; with this material;
- the **Formation Pillar** is intended to mold and shape the individual progressively throughout Orientation, Initial Formation, and Ongoing Formation;
- the **Fraternity Pillar** is the interactive piece aimed at living the formed spirituality of those who are on the same journey;
- the **Apostolate Pillar** has a twofold intent — working with and for — working with fellow Franciscans in a cooperative, collaborative manner, respecting the gifts and person of each member of the group. The service rendered is a Gospel response, in and of itself laudable, yet the added factor is this service is done by a group who is “of one mine and one heart” — a seamless garment, if you will — communicating an example of the early Christian community. In fraternity the ideal is to recognize the gifts God provides in brothers and sisters, forging a bond and this community of brothers and sisters simultaneously ministering not only to the needs of others but also witnessing to the Franciscan identity by the manner in which the ministry is dispensed.

The Four Pillars give us developed focus to live authentically the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

BSSF Regional Formators' Guidelines for Orientation and Initial Formation, p. 43

Congratulations New Councils

Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Fraternity

Hilton Head Island, S.C., Feb. 8
 Minister: Judy Haupt, OFS
 Vice Minister: Maureen Cronin, OFS
 Secretary: Daly Gutiérrez, OFS
 Treasurer: Dan Cronin, OFS
 Formation Director:
 Catherine Kenney, OFS
 Councilor: Angela Cavalluzzi, OFS
 Councilor: Helena Williams, OFS

Channel of Peace Fraternity

Chattanooga, Tenn., March 9
 Minister: Karen Ferraraccio, OFS
 Vice Minister: Gerri Toeller, OFS
 Secretary: Paulette Croteau, OFS
 Treasurer: John Martin, OFS
 Formation Director:
 Alice Lenning, OFS
 Councilor: Gail Campbell, OFS
 Councilor: Barbara Garrison, OFS
 Councilor: Ann Hammers, OFS

Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation: Active Listening as a Lenten Practice

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

This holy season of Lent finds us once again wondering what to give up and what to take up. The Lenten season of peace practices and prayers invites you to fast from something and feast on something else.

One of the practices suggests fasting from constant chatter and feasting on active listening. To actively listen to someone is one of the most loving things you can do for yourself and for others. When you have truly listened to someone, you have truly loved them.

Not listening — and constantly chattering away — is doing violence to the other and to yourself as you are not being a true witness of Christ. Jesus taught the multitudes, but when he encountered an individual, he asked a question — allowing that person to share what was on his or her heart. And what did Jesus do? He listened. He did not interrupt. He did not wait for them to finish so he could give his point of view. He actively listened. Then, he responded in love.

It is easy to chatter on consistently, but it is much harder to sit and truly listen to another. I believe my coaching and counseling background was fueled by my ability to sit with another and actively listen to them.

I remember when I was assistant supervisor on a consumer complaint hotline. The phone was to my ear, but I wasn't speaking. After this went on for several minutes, my supervisor picked up the extension to see if someone was on the other line. She was amazed that I could just sit and listen to them without interrupting and giving them all the solutions.

Most people had legitimate complaints but some just needed to be heard. Once they were truly listened to, they felt better. I was able to give them that space to let their frustrations out. I have been holding that space for three decades now, especially in counseling people who have suffered the loss of someone or something dear.

There is nothing more loving that one can do than to listen to another. You do violence to another when you do not allow them the chance to equally share what is on their heart. When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, the sky opened and they heard the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to him" (Mt 17:5).

When you sit and listen to the Lord, you do a loving act of nonviolence to yourself by mindfully being in the presence of God.

This Lenten season, I invite you to turn down the chatter of mind and mouth, sit in the presence of the Lord, and listen to him. Bring to him what is burning in your heart, then listen. Abundantly feast on active listening and make it a year-round practice.

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, is a member of the Our Lady Queen of the Angels, Emerging Community, in Columbia, S.C.; the animator for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation for the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region and the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States; and a commission member of the Franciscan Action Network. She is also a promoter for the Pace e Bene's Campaign Nonviolence.



These are the JPIC BE-Attitudes. Carolyn is preparing a handbook for JPIC animators; this diagram will be included. The handbook will be laid out according to the Four Pillars. The diagram is a spinoff of the NAFRA Priorities diagram, which has appeared in TAU-USA.

A Checklist in Choosing Good Resources for Formation Qualities of a Good Text

- A. Good texts will have references to Vatican II, the 1978 Rule, the General Constitutions, the National Statutes, the Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS. The OFS texts can be found in the book: *The Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order*. Leaders should have a copy of *The Essential Documents of the OFS* available as a resource.
- B. Resources should convey clear information on the nature of the Secular Franciscan vocation with clarity about the permanent and secular aspects of the vocation. It should point out that formation is a never-ending process. Initial formation is only the beginning of a Secular Franciscan's lifetime journey to God. Learning about and applying the OFS Rule in daily life is a regular requirement.
- C. Resources refer to the essential elements of formation: a) the Gospel; b) the OFS Rule; c) Franciscan writings; d) Church documents, especially Vatican II; e) the subsequent Church documents on the role of the laity in the Church; f) resources that provide opportunities to apply acquired insights and knowledge into practice in daily life — transforming the lives of people in formation.
- D. Resources need clear examples of Secular Franciscan spirituality and apostolic involvement, especially regarding social and Church issues in modern times. It emphasizes that our vocation commits to living the Gospel in fraternity, in a communal way of life, rather than a life of private piety lived in isolation from other Secular Franciscans.
- E. Resources accentuate how, in daily life, we follow Francis and Clare of Assisi; a) through a process of ongoing conversion; b) in community; c) as secular people; d) in life-giving union with all Franciscans. Initial formation texts should reflect the rites and ceremonies experienced during initial formation.

Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order, p. 52

Channel of Peace holds Day of Reflection

By Barbara Garrison, OFS

Channel of Peace Fraternity in Chattanooga, Tenn., held a day of reflection on Jan. 18 at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Soddy-Daisy, Tenn.

Members of Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity in Nashville and Sts. Francis and Clare, Emerging Community, in Knoxville joined us for a most rewarding day of love, renewal, and fellowship.

Carolyn Townes, OFS, (ctownes26@hotmail.com) national and regional JPIC animator, was our presenter. Her topic was "LOVE: The Ultimate Franciscan Virtue."

She is available to visit other fraternities for similar presentations. Since she does not drive, transportation will have to be arranged. Channel of Peace arranged for her to fly into Chattanooga, and Faye and John Martin, OFS, hosted her at their home.

Barbara Garrison, OFS, is a member of Channel of Peace Fraternity, and serves as an Area 1 councilor.

Newly Professed Congratulations!

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity

Charlotte, N.C.

Feb. 22

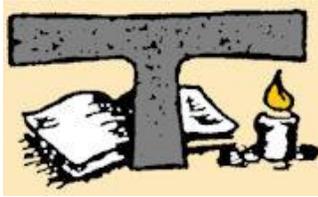
Bertha Blandon, OFS

Eneida Ceballos, OFS

Denise Hickey, OFS

Marcelino Lopez, OFS

Xiomara Palma, OFS



Spiritual Assistant: Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region of the Secular Franciscan Order

Process to appoint a local spiritual assistant

The local spiritual assistant is appointed by the competent major Superior, after consultation with the council of the fraternity concerned.

The process to appoint a local spiritual assistant is outlined below with references from:

- *2012 Handbook for the Spiritual Assistant to the Secular Franciscan Order
- *2002 Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order.
- *Franciscan Family Connections
- *Guidelines of the Regional Fraternity of Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis of the Secular Franciscan Order
- *It is strongly recommended that the fraternity council acquire a copy of these documents for both the council and the spiritual assistant.*

STEP 1: Council and fraternity pray together to find the right person to serve as spiritual assistant. Someone who is “knowledgeable about Franciscan spirituality as well as understanding the Franciscan way of life.” Someone who understands “how the OFS fraternity fits into the Franciscan family, the people of God — called Church — and how it serves the world.” Council asks the person if they have “the time and ability to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the secular Franciscans” and is willing to assist.

Council contacts the Regional Spiritual Assistant for concurrence per regional guidelines. Send the RSA the recommended name and a brief biography (qualifying information) with copy to Regional Minister. Regional Spiritual Assistant will notify REC and local fraternity council of his/her concurrence or need for additional information.

STEP 2: REC will contact local fraternity to proceed when accepted by Regional Spiritual Assistant.

STEP 3: The local fraternity council then makes the request of the Provincial Spiritual Assistant or Minister Provincial of the province to which the fraternity is bonded. The local council recommends an individual to be local spiritual assistant. They send his/her name and a brief biography (qualifying information) to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant and request the appointment. The PSA may accept a nominee and appoint him/her...and/or request additional information.

When the PSA appoints an individual as spiritual assistant to a particular fraternity, the nominee receives a letter of appointment from the PSA or minister provincial of the Province to which the local fraternity is bonded. The appointment is for no more than 12 years.

STEP 4: Fraternity council notifies REC of appointment.
There is a liturgical ritual which a local fraternity can use to install the spiritual

assistant. It is recommended that such a ritual be used. (Found in 2012 *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order*, Page 30).

2012 Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to Secular Franciscan Order

How a spiritual assistant is appointed and *who* may be appointed are important elements to understand. A spiritual assistant is NOT appointed by the local fraternity. He or she is NOT appointed by the bishop of the diocese. A departing spiritual assistant does NOT appoint his/her successor. The Statutes spell out quite clearly both *who* has the authority to appoint spiritual assistants and *who may be appointed* to that role.

2002 Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order

Art. 13

1. The principal task of the assistant is to foster a deeper insight into Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the secular Franciscans [See General Constitutions, Art. 90.1].

Art. 15

1. The Assistant is appointed by the competent major Superior, after consultation with the council of the fraternity concerned [See General Constitutions, Art. 91.3].
2. Where more than one major Superior is involved in the appointment of an Assistant, the norms established jointly by the Superiors with jurisdiction in the territory should be followed [See General Constitutions, Art. 91.2 and SA Statutes, Art. 10]. (Applies mainly to regional spiritual assistants)
3. The appointment of the Assistant is made in writing and for a limited time, which accumulated cannot be more than twelve years.
4. When it is not possible to give the fraternity a spiritual Assistant who is a member of the First Order or the TOR, the competent major Superior can entrust the service of spiritual assistance to:
 - religious brothers or sisters of other Franciscan institutes;
 - secular Franciscans, cleric or lay, specially prepared for such service;
 - other diocesan clerics or non-Franciscan religious [See General Constitutions, Art. 89.4].

Guidelines of the Regional Fraternity of Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis of the Secular Franciscan Order

Section II Fraternal Life

Article 9. Local Fraternity and Group Responsibilities

11. To seek concurrence of the Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) prior to request for appointment of spiritual assistant.

Franciscan Family Connections

CNSA recommends that ordinarily OFS members not be appointed to serve their own fraternity. However, there are times when pastoral considerations may make this necessary.

The principal tasks of the (spiritual) assistant is to communicate Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the brothers and sisters.

OFS General Constitutions, Article 90.1

Emerging Community meets for Extraction, Apostolate

By Donna Kaye Rock, OFS

Our Emerging Fraternity, Our Lady Queen of Angels, in Columbia, S.C., met two weeks in a row.

On Dec. 29, we had our very wonderful potluck social. Our good sister Carolyn Townes, OFS, talked about the Extraction in the Spirit of St. Francis. We are all going to do this in our fraternity. It was a great inspiration.

For the Extraction, we picked at random these things: a saint, a virtue, quote from Scripture, and a quote from the writings of St. Francis. We are to share our experience and knowledge of our saint during the month of the saint's feast day. I chose St. Rose of Viterbo, Sept. 4.

In addition, we helped to fill bags of sandwiches and food for the food kitchen at St. Martin DePorres Catholic Church here in Columbia, and it turned out that 51 clients were served that day.

Catherine and Charles Hood, OFS (our treasurer and chosen leader, respectively), accepted items for the Clean of Heart Catholic Charities Center, serving the homeless in our community. God blessed us with joy and peace.

Then we met again Jan. 4, First Saturday devotion with Mass and rosary in Our Lady of the Hills Catholic Church in Irmo, S.C., followed by our gathering in the library, just down the hill from the church. Audrey Binet, OFS, our spiritual assistant, joined us. We enjoyed the day so much.

Donna Kaye Rock, OFS, is acting vice minister of Our Lady Queen of Angels, Emerging Community. She also serves as Area 2 prayer coordinator.

First visitation noted; fraternity begins conflict-resolution training

Julie Lorenz, OFS

In January, San Damiano Fraternity of Athens, Ga., had its first visitation since being recognized as a fraternity (Feb. 13, 2013).

Jerry Rousseau, OFS, fraternal visitor; Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS, pastoral visitor; and Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS, observing the pastoral visitation, arrived on Friday afternoon and joined the council for dinner before going through our books and records.

Saturday was an abbreviated candidate formation class, followed by the usual monthly gathering. After that we enjoyed a potluck lunch and then the wrap-up with the council and visitors. For all the anxiety leading up to the visitation, the actual experience was one of family coming together to share, with a lot of friendship, fellowship, and food to spare!

Beginning in mid-February, our fraternity started training in conflict resolution, sponsored by the Georgia Conflict Center here in Athens. One of our OFS candidates is employed there; and our spiritual assistant, Father David Hyman, OFM, is on the advisory board. Graduates of the JustFaith program at the Catholic Center at the University of Georgia established the conflict center. The goal is to learn active listening techniques and alternatives to violence. As the motto states, "Conflict is inevitable. Violence is not."

A statement by the director goes into more detail: "In my work I try to remember three prepositions. Punitive systems do something 'to' people. Social services often do something 'for' people. Both of these can be dehumanizing and crippling. Instead, I strive to do something 'with' people, and remembering that their basic nature and goals are the same as mine helps me stick with that strategy." Learn more about this excellent nonprofit on <http://gaconflict.org/>.

We are very encouraged by the attendance at a recent Come & See we held. Six members of our faith community came to learn more about the Order, and three others expressed interest but

were unable to attend the meeting. As one of our candidates said to those assembled, “You are all rock stars!” Pray that many of these nine wonderful people decide to join us as Inquirers this spring! Thanks to Sue Stephens, OFS, our minister; and Dianne Ambrose, OFS, our formation director, for reaching out to our community as they work to build the strength and size of our new fraternity!

Finally, we welcome everyone to join us for our Lenten reflection with Murray Bodo, OFM, April 7, here at the UGA Catholic Center. Some of you visited when we hosted Richard Rohr, OFM; Ilia Delio, OSF; or other speakers. Talks are a 7 pm in the chapel. The phone at the church is 706-543-2293.

Julie Lorenz, OFS, is a member of San Damiano Fraternity and serves as an Area 1 councilor.

Regional Executive Council Recap

By Christine Washington, OFS

Our Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis (BSSF) Regional Executive Council (REC) meeting was held Jan. 31 through Feb. 1 at the La Foresta Retreat House, at the Monastery of St. Clare, Travelers Rest, S.C. We had a wonderful meeting in the middle of God’s beautiful nature, and thank Sister Bernadette Marie Cappola and her Poor Clare sisters for their hospitality. Here is a summary of what transpired at the meeting:

- Congratulations to St. John Vianney, Newly Forming Group, Lithia Springs, Ga. Our newest group has been given official approval. Let us keep our brothers and sisters in prayer as they start their journey in developing a bilingual fraternity.
- The National Fraternity (NAFRA) has approved a fair share contribution for candidates. As of the 2015 Annual Report (for the year 2014) all regions will contribute to NAFRA the same amount for candidates as we currently do for active professed members.
- The new area councilors — Barbara Garrison, OFS, and Julie Lorenz, OFS, of Area 1, and Marie Stephan, OFS, of Area 3 are engaged in an internship as they learn to serve as fraternal visitors for visitations and presiders at elections. Let us keep our sisters in prayer as they become the area councilors God has chosen them to be.
- The Area 1 Retreat is scheduled May 16–18 at the Dubose Conference Center in Monteagle, Tenn.
- In Area 2, St. Maximillian Kolbe Fraternity in Charlotte had our region’s first bilingual profession on Feb. 22. Let us keep our brother and sisters in prayer as they continue their Franciscan life as professed members of our Order.
- Our National and BSSF Region Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation animator, Carolyn Townes, OFS, reported that a JPIC Formation Team is being developed. In addition, she reported that there are some fraternities that are using the “12 Weeks of Franciscan Peace” (developed last fall) as a formation tool. Now she is also creating a new document, the *Lenten Season of Peace*.
- In her Formation Commission Report, Sara Nell Boggs, OFS, BSSF Region formation director, reported we will concentrate on the Rule and nonviolence as it ties into the Rule for our area formation workshops this year.
- In the Hispanic Commission Report, Willie Guadalupe, OFS, commission chair, reported that she’s developed a Spanish version of the *Come and See* video, and a manual: *The Nuts and Bolts of the Hispanic Commission*. She also said that Area 2 and Area 3 have had a number of requests for help in starting bilingual fraternities.
- The REC discussed our upcoming Annual Regional Gathering, Aug. 1–3, in which Father Albert Haase, OFM, will be the main speaker. The discussion included going over the

2013 ARG evaluations and ways we can respond to the needs of our members in this next ARG.

- The new spiritual assistant course held its first session Jan. 31–Feb. 2 at Gravatt Camp and Conference Center, Aiken, S.C. Let us keep in prayer the students, as well as the teaching team: Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., BSSF Region spiritual assistant; Audrey Binet, OFS; Faye Martin, OFS; and Joanita Nellenbach, OFS.
- The Secular Franciscan Order's International Council will open a Year of Commemoration on April 25 for the 800th anniversary of our Order's patron saint, St. Louis IX, king of France.

As you can see with this summary, we were again hard at work in meeting the needs of all in our Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region. Let us keep each other in prayer as we strive to live our Franciscan vocations as true servant leaders.

Christine Washington, OFS, is the secretary of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council and a member of St. Joseph of Cupertino Fraternity in Bessemer, Ala.

"A Little Portion in Time: Weekend With St. Francis at the Portiuncula"

Oct. 3–5, 2014

Presenter: Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

Avila Retreat Center
711 Mason Rd., Durham, NC 27712
919-477-1285

www.avila-retreat-center.com email: avila1983@nc.rr.com

Donation: \$160.00 double-occupancy room
Limited number of single rooms available on first-come, first-served basis

Celebration of Transitus of St. Francis Friday evening
with renewal of OFS commitment

The Portiuncula, a tiny chapel, the third that St. Francis repaired, is dedicated to Mary, Queen of Angels. Francis loved it deeply. Here, he heard the Gospel reading that told him his vocation. Here, he died on the night of Oct. 3, 1226.

We'll spend time this weekend exploring Francis's response to that Gospel;
his devotion to Mary; his final words to his followers.

What did all this mean to him? What does it mean for us?

**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.

<u>2014</u>	<u>Fraternity</u>	<u>V/E</u>	<u>Fraternal/Pastoral Visitors</u>
Jan. 17–18	San Damiano	V	Jerry Rousseau(Julie Lorenz)/ Joanita Nellenbach (DeaconTom Shaver)
Feb. 8	Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary	E	Charles Meyer Jr./Audrey Binet
Feb. 14–15	Blessed John Duns Scotus	V	Frank Massey (Marie Stephan)/Joanita
Mar. 9	Channel of Peace	E	Jerry/ Fr.Mark Scholz (Faye Martin)
Mar. 15–16	Saints Francis and Clare (EC)	V	Jerry (Barbara Garrison)/Audrey (Faye)
Apr. 12-13	Five Georgia Martyrs	V	DorothyAnn Rowland/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 Brother Francis	V	Paula Zanker/Deacon Tom (Audrey)
June 8	St. Joseph Cupertino	E	Jerry (Barbara)/Lori (Willie)*
June 14	Crucified Christ	E	DorothyAnn/Joanita (Deacon Tom)*
June 28	St. Michael the Archangel	E	Charles/Deacon Tom (Audrey)

**Annual Regional Gathering, Aug. 1–3, LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, near Asheville,
N.C.**

Father Albert Haase, OFM, featured speaker

Sep. 5–6	Our Lady Queen of Angels (EC)	V	DorothyAnn/Faye*
Sep. 11	St. Clare	V	Barbara (Jerry)/Deacon Tom*
*Sep. 13	Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament	E	Frank/ Fr. Paul Gabriel
Sep. 12–13	Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg	V	Julie/Audrey (Deacon Ed Rademacher)*
Sep. 28	Padre Pio	E	Marie/Fr. Doug Reid
Oct. 18–19	The Spirit of Francis and Clare	V	Julie/Deacon Ed (Willie)
Oct. 19	Seven Dolours of the BVM	E	Barbara/Barbara Smith*

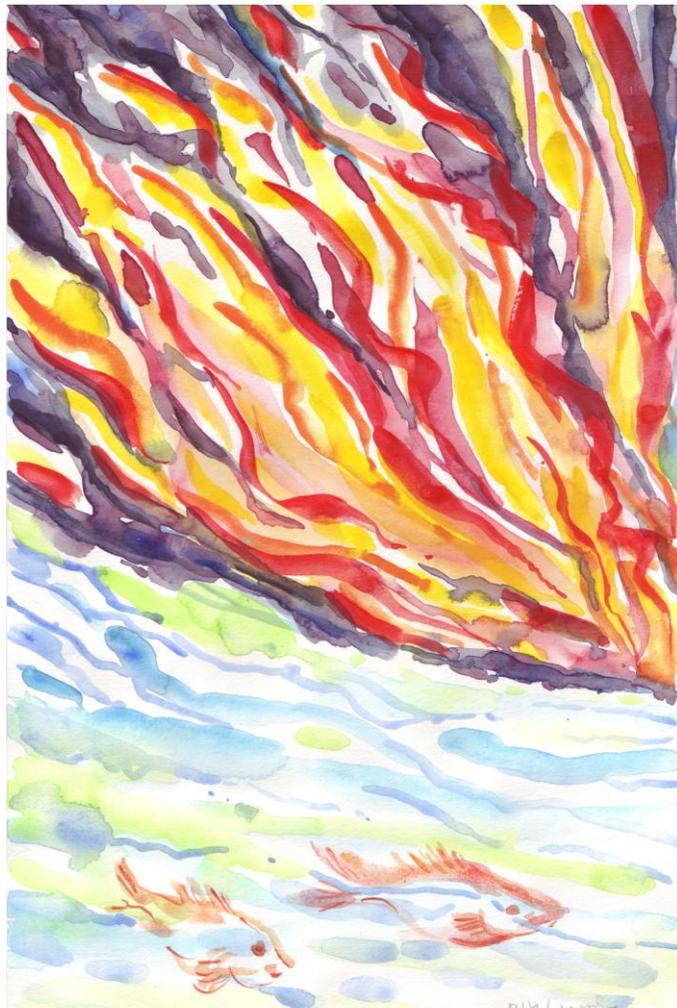
NAFRA Chapter, Oct. 21–26, Lake Dallas, Texas

Nov. 2–3	St. John Vianney	V	Jerry/Lori Moran (Willie)*
*Nov. 16	St. Thomas More	E	Jerry/Barbara S.

Writing Franciscan

Igniting — and stoking — the spiritual blaze

Catching Fire, Becoming Flame: A Guide for Spiritual Transformation by Albert Haase, OFM. (Brewster, Mass.: Paraclete Press, 2013). Paper, 302 pp., \$16.95; DVD, 180 min., \$89.95.



“Water-Fire” by Father Philippus Philippus, OFM Cap.

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

Once upon a time, if you wanted a fire, you rubbed stuff (like stones) together until you got a spark. Applied the spark to whatever fuel you had. Blew on it until it grew into a flame. Then you tended the fire to keep it going.

Nowadays, you can strike a match, click your lighter, flip the switch on your gas stove or gas fireplace. Instant flame.

In fact, much of our lives are lived by the instant. Instant news. Instant pain relief. Dinner ready in less than 30 minutes.

Sometimes that’s good, but we may expect the same thing in our spiritual lives. I’d like instant transformation, but that’s never been my experience. Yes, I’ve had periods when I felt suddenly holy; but, for me at least, feel-good spiritual feelings don’t last.

So, I was glad to read in *Catching Fire, Becoming Flame* that lasting spiritual transformation doesn’t happen overnight. We know from our OFS Rule, and our life experience, that “Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily” (Art. 7).

The “essence of the spiritual life,” Father Albert says, is that “we are called

to become who we profess to be by virtue of our baptism.” As Secular Franciscans, this book can also help us to become who we say we are by virtue of our OFS Profession.

It’s refreshing to find a book that doesn’t guarantee instant anything. “Because this is a gradual, ongoing process,” Father Albert says, “we have to resist the temptation to look for a single book, program, practice, or guru that will cause spontaneous combustion; there is none.”

Father Albert has, in fact, written a number of books (see box, p. 18). He served as a missionary in China for 11+ years and is scheduled as our guest speaker at this year’s Annual Regional Gathering (Aug. 1–3).

“Catching and crackling with the fire of godly enthusiasm is a lifelong *process*,” he writes. “It starts with God throwing a divine spark on the tinder of the heart.”

Instead of the usual dedication, he tells a story from *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*:

“Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said to him, “Abba, as far as I can, I say my little office, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?”

“Then the old man stood up and stretched his hands toward heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps of fire and he said to him, “If you will, you can become all flame.”

Catching Fire, Becoming Flame is all about how to burn with fire for God, to become like the burning bush — on fire but not burned up — or burned out. Fortunately, we can take it slowly, with plenty of time to absorb what’s offered.

“This book is designed as a handy resource for expanding your knowledge and practice of ancient and contemporary spiritual practices,” Father Albert writes. “It will fuel your creativity and appreciation for myriad ways to fall in love with God—which, in the end, is what being on fire is all about.”

Thirty-three chapters are grouped in sections:

- “Introduction: God’s Passion, Our Enthusiasm,”
- “The Spark From God: An Introduction to the Spiritual Life,”
- “Kindling: Basic Spiritual Concepts,”
- “Catching Fire: Methods of Prayer,”
- “Fanning the Flame: Discernment,”
- “Becoming All Flame: Dynamic Commitments,”
- “Conclusion: A Prayer at the Hearth of the Heart.”

This book is so practical, which is one of the reasons it resonates with me. For example, bad habits. I’m not saying what mine are — only that I’ve tried to overcome them, but often without lasting success.

“Ever notice how temptations toward compulsive activity ... suddenly emerge when you find yourself in a stressful or emotionally charged situation?” Father Albert asks. “That awareness reveals your medication of choice. So we need to give ourselves time to grieve the loss of these ill-suited friends as we struggle with the feelings and emotions that we previously did not allow ourselves to fully experience.”

Grieving the loss of a bad habit? I was only too happy to think I’d gotten rid of it. Until it cropped up again. Then my grief was for my inadequacy in changing my ways.

“Once we have adequately grieved the loss of the habit, we can actively, consciously, and deliberately change and replace the unacceptable behavior with

Other books by Albert Haase

This Sacred Moment:

Becoming Holy Right Where You Are
(InterVarsity Press, 2010)

Living the Lord’s Prayer:

The Way of the Disciple
(InterVarsity Press, 2009)

Coming Home to Your True Self:

Leaving the Emptiness of False Attractions
(InterVarsity Press, 2008)

Instruments of Peace:

Reflections on the Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi
(St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004)

Enkindled:

Holy Spirit, Holy Gifts
coauthored with Bridget Haase, OSU
(St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2001)

***Catching Fire, Becoming Flame* DVD,** with discussion guide, contains six 30-minute presentations:

1. “Spiritual Journey as a process of transformation,”
2. “Your image of God,”
3. “The examen,”
4. “The 7 principles of prayer,”
5. “The Challenge of Forgiveness,”
6. “God’s will.”

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

Minister: Jerry Rousseau, OFS

Vice Minister: Paula Zanker, OFS

Secretary: Christine Washington, OFS

Treasurer: Greg Savold, OFS

Formation Director: Sara Nell Boggs, OFS

Spiritual Assistant:

Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.

Area 1 Councilors

Julie Lorenz, OFS; Barbara Garrison, OFS

AL: Bessemer, Decatur;

GA: Athens, Blairsville, Conyers, Duluth,
Jonesboro; **NC:** Franklin;

TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

Area 2 Councilors

Charles Meyer A. Meyer Jr., OFS

Dorothy Ann Rowland, OFS

GA: Augusta, St. Simons Island;

NC: Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;

SC: Aiken, Charleston, Columbia, Greenville,
Hilton Head Island, Spartanburg

Area 3 Councilors

Frank Massey, OFS; Marie Stephan, OFS

NC: Burlington, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville,
Greensboro, Morehead City, Raleigh, Wilmington,
Winston Salem; **SC:** Garden City

Appointed Positions:

Archivist: Sara Nell Boggs, OFS

Communio Editor

Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Coordinator

Carolyn Townes, OFS

Hispanic Commission Chair

Awilda Guadalupe, OFS

Youth/Young Adult Fraternal Animator

Position Available

Prayer Ministry (online prayer requests)

Area 1: Ada Winters, OFS

Area 2: Donna Kaye Rock, OFS

Area 3: Marie Stephan, OFS

Fraternity prayer coordinators
submit prayer requests to Area coordinators.

another behavior. Experts tell us that the new behavior must be willfully chosen twenty-one *consecutive* times before a new habit is formed firmly in its place.”

Father Albert calls us to be open. For example, what is our image of God? Has it changed over the years? He says his has. “Now as I approach sixty years of age, I think of God as the conductor of the symphony of my life who, much to my utter surprise, calls out of me a melody I never knew existed.”

There are also principles of prayer, which aren’t limited to times we set aside for prayer. “Prayer should make us prayerful,” he writes, “should make us more aware of the presence of God, who constantly surrounds us and never leaves us. People who pray typically experience God’s presence while ironing, commuting to work, and walking to the dorm more often than people who don’t (pray).”

Just a few of the other alluring topics you’ll find are “The Attitude of Gratitude”; “The Lord’s Prayer Anew”; “Dryness, Darkness, or Depression?”; “Self-Care and Wellness”; “Pilgrimage”; and “Soul Training.” In “Wonder-ing With Creation,” we read:

“One of the unique gifts that Franciscan spirituality offers is a pair of glasses through which we can look at creation as a ladder to God. From the Franciscan perspective, God the Creator has left behind footprints in creation and, when we gaze at this created masterpiece with the eyes of a child, we can follow those footprints as if walking up the rungs of a ladder into the divine presence. The treasures on earth boldly

proclaim the Treasure above. Childlike eyes fixed firmly on earth are gradually lifted up in a spiritual direction toward heaven.”

Each chapter concludes with three reflection questions and lists several references we can use to explore the chapter’s topic more deeply.

While Lent, which we’re in now, is certainly a time for transformation, *Catching Fire*, *Becoming Flame* can help us with conversion all year long.

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.

“Those who hate their bodies”: What does St. Francis mean?

The 1978 Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order begins with the Prologue, which is the oldest known written document we have from St. Francis of Assisi. It’s the “Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance,” also known as the “First Version of the Letter to the Faithful” (1209–1215). The first chapter of the Prologue starts with this:

“All those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength (cf. Mk 12:30), and love their neighbors as themselves (cf. Mt 22:39) and who hate their bodies with their vices and sins ...”

What is Francis telling us? Consider this explanation from Father Raffaele Pazzelli, TOR, Franciscan scholar, in his book, *St. Francis and the Third Order: The Franciscan and pre-Franciscan Penitential Movement*:

“The sentence ‘and hate their bodies with their vices and sins’ should be understood according to the language and use of words of Francis who uses the word ‘body’ in the sense of ‘flesh,’ that is, fallen nature, the cause of sin. It does not mean, therefore, ‘body’ in the modern sense, in which it is an integral part of human nature. For Francis this body is also God’s creature, to be loved, respected and taken care of. On the contrary, what the penitent must fight are the sinful tendencies of that fallen nature, the cause of ‘vices and sins.’ This is very evident in the expressions of the second part of the *Letter*, ‘Those who do not do penance,’ where we have in counterdistinction the behavior of those who have not accepted *conversio*. To those who ‘hate their own body with its vices and sins’ as described in the first part, Francis contrasts those that ‘live in vices and sins and yield to evil concupiscence and to the wicked desires of the flesh ... and are slaves to the world, in their bodies, by carnal desires, and the anxieties and cares of this life; ... because all vices and sins come out and proceed from the heart of man as the Lord says in the gospel.’ It is, therefore, the internal fallen human nature, the divided heart, that needs to be controlled (pp. 110–111).”