

# Communio

That All May Be One

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

Winter 2013

## Advice from St. Francis on Peacemaking

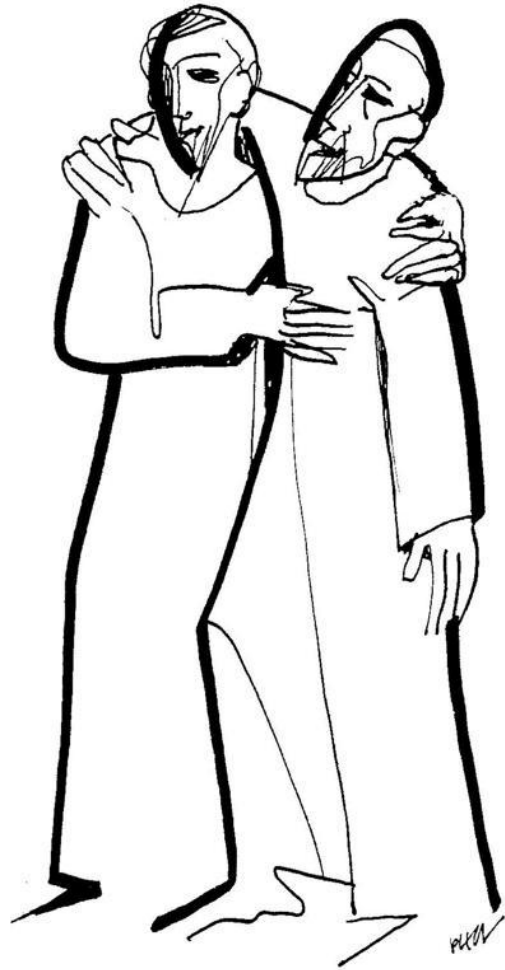
“As you announce peace with your mouth, make sure that you have greater peace in your hearts, thus no one will be provoked to anger or scandal because of you. Let everyone be drawn to peace and kindness through your peace and gentleness. For we have been called to this: to cure the wounded, to bind up the broken, to recall the erring. Many who seem to us members of the devil will yet be disciples of Christ.”\*

“St. Francis defines here the dimension of peacemaking in the brothers’ vocation. Peace begins with each brother; and concomitantly, peace begins with each of us. As the Russian Saint Seraphim once said, ‘Acquire the spirit of peace, and a thousand souls will be saved around you.’

“What do I need to do to become a peaceful person?”

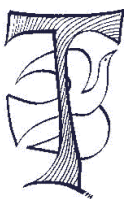
Murray Bodo, OFM,  
*The Simple Way:  
Meditations on the Words of Saint Francis*

\*From “The Anonymous of Perugia,” Chapter VIII, in *Francis of Assisi, Early Documents: Volume II, The Founder*; Editors: Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap.; J.A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv.; William J. Short, OFM



## The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





## Editor's Journal

OK, I'll fess up: Sometimes I procrastinate. That has gotten me into trouble, but this time it turned out to be a blessing. I originally intended this issue's book review of *Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St. Francis* by Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, for last fall's *Communio*. But I didn't start it soon enough.

The blessing is that it fits so well with this issue. Compassion leads to peace, and peace is prominent in our first *Communio* for 2013. (And, no, I'm not advocating that we all procrastinate on everything we intend to send to *Communio*.)

Jerry Rousseau, OFS, our Regional minister, speaks of peace in his Message on p. 3. He begins with servant-leadership. Good servant leadership, I've observed, brings peace to a Fraternity.

The Weather Channel will tell you we're in the season of winter, but Carolyn Townes, OFS, this Region's Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation animator, urges us to enter "The Season of Nonviolence." She writes passionately about her experiences, including working in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001. "The Season of Nonviolence," Jan. 30–April 4, is powerful — 64 days of activities, such as: "Harmony. Choosing NOT to engage in any form of gossip today contributes to harmony"; and "Understanding ... When I find myself disagreeing with someone, I will focus on understanding what they are saying — and why."

You may find some surprises, examples of actions that maybe you hadn't thought of as "violent."

Some of these days could be adapted for use in our fraternities, such as volunteering (a Fraternity apostolate?) or "Graciousness. I will create a skit with at least three other people to show the difference between graciousness and selfishness."

If you don't have your copy of "A Season of Nonviolence," yet, you should be able to get

one from your minister or chosen leader.

This issue also has all the information on our 2013 "On the Road" formation workshops.

These are specially designed for the members of our local fraternity councils.

Even more appropriate this year, since we're also having our Regional Executive Council election at our Annual Regional Gathering this year. You'll find the announcement for that, plus a review of council-members' duties, call for nomination, and the nomination form.

Happy reading!

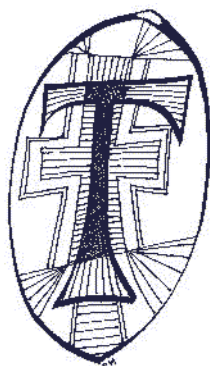
*Pace e bene*

*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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## Minister's Message: "Servant Leadership"

This issue's Minister's Message is on a topic that plays a key role in who we are and what we do. Your Regional Executive Council feels so strongly about this that we plan to hold our 2013 Area Workshops around this very important aspect of fraternity life.

**All of us** are called to be servant leaders. Some of us are even elected or appointed to fraternity councils as servant leaders. However, this message is for **all professed**.

The call to servant leadership in the Secular Franciscan Order is a call to us all. Each and every one of us is called to live a prayerful and active life in the secular world. Our seraphic father, Francis, preferred the contemplative life but also recognized the need to serve the Church in the world. We follow his example.

"Franciscan servant leadership is always rooted in conversion. Because conversion is an ongoing process, dynamic growth will continue to shape the ideals as well as practical application of leadership. In this spirit of ongoing conversion, we remember that Christ is the true leader, and we follow. We hear the call, express our commitment, recognize the vision. Acting as servant leaders, we share our gifts and encourage others to share theirs. We understand that the best leadership is collaborative. We recognize that there is a place for each one of us, and we value our differences" (*Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership*).

There are many leadership styles, and I am sure most of us have been exposed to a variety of behaviors. What works for one group may not necessarily work with another. Leadership is not a solitary phenomenon. It is carried out in relationship with others. This aspect of relationship is critical for the Secular Franciscan leader. How well do I know my brothers and sisters? What gifts do each of them offer? How can we best accomplish our goal utilizing the talents of all members? The most effective leader is the one who is not afraid to explore different styles — directing, coaching, supporting, delegating.

This **Year of Faith** should challenge us to explore how we are called to be leaders in our Secular Franciscan way of life. We need to take advantage of all the many ways in which we are called to dig deeper into our Faith during this special year. **We are called to evangelize.** Are we claiming the graces of our baptism and Profession in this endeavor?

Pope Benedict writes: "Having reached the end of his life, Saint Paul asks his disciple Timothy to 'aim at faith' (2 Tim 2:22) with the same constancy as when he was a boy (cf. 2 Tim

3:15). We hear this invitation directed to each of us, that none of us grow lazy in the faith. It is the lifelong companion that makes it possible to perceive, ever anew, the marvels that God works for us. Intent on gathering the signs of the times in the present of history, faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end" (*Porta Fidei*, 15).

### Newly Professed —Congratulations!

#### Stigmata of St. Francis Fraternity

Duluth, Ga., June 23  
Kenneth L. Brooke, OFS  
Charles Matthews, OFS  
Oct. 13  
Rachel A. Williams, OFS

#### St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity

Augusta, Ga., Nov. 10  
Richard Herdegen, OFS  
Barbara Ouellette, OFS  
Rene Strunk, OFS

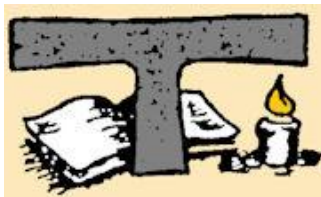
Our dear sister, Carolyn Townes, OFS, Regional JPIC animator, in her article, page 8, and in the "Animator's Notes" she sends us, has given us plenty to think about. Personally, I am

adapting Pope Benedict XVI's comments on the occasion of the "World Day of Peace" and converting them into my own growth and leadership experience which I will call "the three Ps for conversion": Prayer, Peace, and Poverty.

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 Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.*



## **Regional Spiritual Assistant's Words of Wisdom**

*Editor's Note: An e-mail to our Regional Executive Council prior to its Nov. 3 meeting.*

There is something about an agenda which tells a story. The scope of its concerns, the breadth of its considerations, and the desire to realize the potential of both the individual member and the Fraternity are scripted on a single sheet of paper.

There is a reflective facet and a visioning which consider both the worth of what has been initiated and what has been completed. A review of the application of Rule, guidelines, directives, and recommendations are considered. These tools for correcting and refining were crafted to address a need of a member or members or a Fraternity for the purpose of living the commitment made by the members.

One might term these tools as "tools for a fullness of life," and one might name those who crafted these tools as "champions of and for life." So, in effect, we have two powerful and effective elements concerned for the growth and well-being of a people embracing a way of life. These champions guard, nurture, and guide with sincere care. The overall intent is encouraging the persons cared for to realize their potential in the boundaries of a community committed to actualize the good and the positive within each person.

You are the Champions.

Your respect and love for the members who we call brothers and sisters are the motivating forces prompting your deliberations and actions. You are able to see with clarity and understanding more so than those for whom you are crafting a course of action for living a more authentic life. Also, we are all called to integrity: an integrating of hopes, plans, talent, and values to effect a witness to a Creator who loves unconditionally.

We look to one who has understood and embraced the quest for integrity, the integrity of a created being called to realize the potential for wholeness and holiness. He, Francis, came to understand the call from the crucifix and in time understood the blessings of poverty, simplicity, and humility. And this is where we find ourselves: learning how to appreciate the value of guidance through directives, guidelines, Rule, and recommendations so that we are able to embrace simplicity, humility, and poverty. Capsulizing the process, it is information, formation, and transformation.

*Be blessed in your quest,  
Fr. Linus*

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

**BSSF Regional “On the Road” 2013 Workshop:  
Servant Leaders’ Formation**  
(Registration Form, page 6)

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 am	Continental Breakfast Pick up Program Guide and handouts
9:30 a.m. – 10:00 am	Gathering Song Morning Prayer
10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.	Welcome and Introduction – Jerry Rousseau, OFS “Introduction to Servant Leadership” “The Nuts of Bolts of Being a Council”
10:20 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Dialogue with Regional Executive Council
11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Break and S-T-R-E-T-C-H
11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Council-position breakouts
12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. LUNCH	
1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Council-position breakouts (continued)
2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Break and S-T-R-E-T-C-H
3:00 p.m. – 3:30	Open Forum facilitated by REC
3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Evening Prayer Sending Song
4:00 pm.	Adjourn – Safe Trip home

**Everyone will need to bring: *Liturgy of the Hours or Christian Prayer***

**Workshop Presenters:  
BSSF Regional Servant Leaders**

**Minister: Jerry Rousseau, OFS**

**Vice Minister: Frank Massey, OFS**

**Secretary:  
Christine Washington, OFS**

**Treasurer: Greg Savold, OFS**

**Formation Director:  
Faye Martin, OFS**

**Workshop Locations:**

**April 20 — Area 2 Workshop**

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church  
161 Dean St., Spartanburg, S.C. 29302-1516

**May 4 — Area 1 Workshop**

St. Jude Catholic Church, Family Life Center  
930 Ashland Terrace, Chattanooga, Tenn. 37415

**June 1 — Area 3 Workshop**

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church  
1620 Hanford Road, Burlington, N.C. 27215

**2013 BSSF Regional "On the Road" Formation:  
Servant Leaders' Workshop  
Registration Form**

Please check the Workshop that you will be attending.

\_\_\_\_\_ Area 2 - Saturday, April 20: St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church,  
161 Dean St. Spartanburg, SC 29302-1516

\_\_\_\_\_ Area 1- Saturday, May 4: St. Jude Catholic Church, Family Life Center Bldg.,  
930 Ashland Terrace, Chattanooga, TN 37415

\_\_\_\_\_ Area 3 - Saturday, June 1: Blessed Sacrament Church,  
1620 Hanford Road, Burlington, NC 27215

**Name of Fraternity/Emerging Community/Newly Forming Group**

\_\_\_\_\_

Minister or delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

Vice Minister or delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary or delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer or delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

Formation Director or delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

Councilors: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Enclose \$18 per person.** That covers the cost of meals and handouts. Make your check payable to **BSSF 61 Region**.  
Send your completed registration form and payment ONE WEEK before date of workshop and mail to:

Faye Martin, OFS,  
6940 River Run Dr.,  
Chattanooga, TN 37416

## Welcoming Christmas With “Las Posadas”

By Patricia Paton, OFS

“What is that knocking?”

“Why is someone banging on the door?”

“Who is that?”

It was delightful to hear the questions and see the expressions on our newcomers’ faces at their first posada.

“Posada” means “inn” or “lodging,” and the answer to the questions is that Joseph is knocking at the inn door, seeking shelter for Mary and himself.

Las Posadas is a traditional nine-day Spanish celebration that usually ends on Christmas Eve.

Members of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity joined parishioners at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Hendersonville, N.C., for the conclusion of the posadas, which this year was held on Dec. 23.

Each night, adults and children gather, with two youngsters dressed as Mary and Joseph. Scripture is read, a procession is formed, and songs are sung as they prepare to go in search of posada at designated homes. The group requests lodging, but those inside tell them, “Go away. This is no inn.”

But, “Enter, holy pilgrims,” the travelers hear when a welcoming place is found. “Come into our humble dwelling and into our hearts. The night is one of joy for here beneath our roof we shelter the mother of God.” All enter and the celebration begins. And such an exuberant celebration!

The ninth evening, Fraternity members, Father Robert Williams, OFM Cap., Brother Lombardo D’Auria, OFM Cap., and Hispanic and Anglo parishioners gathered in the St. Francis Room, Immaculate Conception’s parish hall. When it was time for the celebration, many went outside, and those inside sang and listened to the repeated knockings at the door. At first, the songs denied them entry.

At last, the door opened.

As Mary, Joseph, and their entourage settled into the room, Scripture was read, with discussion, and more songs accompanied by the parish’s Hispanic musicians. We lifted our voices in such tunes as “Noche de Paz” (“Silent Night”) “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” and “Mi Burrito Sabanero” (“My Donkey of the Field”).

Having worked up our appetites, we were treated to a dinner of delicious traditional Mexican food and drink. Then the bright green and yellow donkey-shaped piñata was hung up. Greg Savold, OFS, blindfolded each child who then batted away at the swinging piñata. Didn’t take long for it to split open, spilling its candy treats.

The final event was the distribution of the posada bags. As an apostolate coordinated by Lucy Nordlund, OFS, our fraternity buys items, including crayons, coloring books, candy canes, stickers, and small toys throughout the year. We gathered about two weeks before the posadas to fill more than 100 colorful bags, a time of fellowship we enjoy each year.

As Secular Franciscans, we are ever so appreciative to share the Las Posadas celebration with the Hispanic community. We are always so touched by their most generous hospitality and by their spirituality.



*Patricia Paton, OFS, is treasurer of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity.*



A SEASON FOR  
NONVIOLENCE

carry the vision

**Peace must begin within us**

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

When I was professed in February 13 years ago, I knew that part of my Franciscan commitment was to be an instrument of peace.

Growing up in New York City taught me many lessons; one of which was how *un-peaceful* the world could be. Although my early childhood was relatively tranquil, my teenage years were riddled with the nightly sounds of gunshots, domestic abuse in neighboring apartments, drugs being bought and sold in stairwells, and children being left to fend for themselves. And those, as we say, were the good old days.

Fast forward to today, no less violent, the crimes have been elevated to drug and human trafficking and mass shootings along with a total lack of morals for the dignity of human life. It makes my commitment to be an instrument of peace no less challenging, but all the more urgent.

I was a close witness of the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Living in New York City and working and serving at St. Francis of Assisi Church in midtown, placed me squarely in the heart of the matter. Still grieving my own devastating and sudden loss less than two weeks earlier, I could no more shut out the violence of that horrible day than I could cease my Franciscan call. I lost two more very near and dear friends: Father Mychal Judge, OFM, and Carole LaPlante, OFS. It still pains me, even today, as I write this so many years later.

Three significant losses in the space of two weeks taught me what my Franciscan call to follow Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis really meant. I mustered up every ounce of courage and ministered to others who were grieving the loss of a person, a skyline, a city, a hope, or a dream. After becoming double certified as a grief counselor and death educator and minister to the dying, I knew my task was just beginning.

During my stint as grief counselor and liturgical minister at St. Francis Church, I was appointed the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation animator. Two years after the attacks on Sept. 11, I was ready to animate peace. The words of the familiar hymn became a mantra: "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

Those words resonated so strongly that I set out the task of making good my Franciscan commitment to be an instrument of peace. My entire being consumed everything that was peace and justice. But it wasn't until I took the 10-week course on Franciscan Nonviolent Peacemaking, sponsored by Holy Name Province, that the light became even brighter. Not only does peace begin with me — so does violence. Every day, we commit senseless acts of violence against ourselves and one another. Over time, they can escalate into a 9/11 or a school shooting. In 2012, there were 16 mass shootings in our nation, where 88 people were gunned down. In all of the news coverage I allowed in, the consensus was more gun control; blame the guns laws. Well, guns don't kill people; people kill people!

Albert Einstein once said we can never solve problems at the same level of consciousness that created the problems. We will never solve the problems of human trafficking, mass shootings, or the blatant disregard for creation if we continue to subscribe to a culture of violence. Think about it: we are violent in our language, in our politics, in our families, in our religion, and in our relationships. The violence may be slight, but it is violence nonetheless. When a person is victimized by senseless acts of violence over time, no matter how seemingly small, sooner or later that person will retaliate. We must interrupt the cycle of violence that is so prevalent in our world today. As Jesus once said to his disciples — and to us today, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The first step to interrupting this culture of violence is awareness. We cannot change what we are not aware of. If we become more aware, then we can bring about a change to become more



peaceful. True peace comes from the heart and can only happen when we transform ourselves. Awareness and education are the tools for personal transformation. To educate means to lead people to move beyond themselves towards a fullness that leads to growth.

In his World Day of Peace Message for 2012, Pope Benedict XVI stated, “Peace is not merely a gift to be received: it is also a task to be undertaken. In order to be true peacemakers, we must educate ourselves in compassion, solidarity, working together, fraternity, in being active within the community and concerned to raise awareness about national and international issues...”

Arun Gandhi, grandson of the late Mohandas Gandhi, said, “We commit passive violence all day, every day — consciously and unconsciously — which generates anger in the victim and the victim resorts to physical violence to get justice, because that is what justice has come to mean; you have to use violence to get justice.”

Nonviolence and peacemaking are about building right relationships with one another in mutual respect, understanding, and love. Let us first seek to love and understand before we are loved and understood. Make it a practice to examine your day for senseless acts of violence committed by you or someone else.

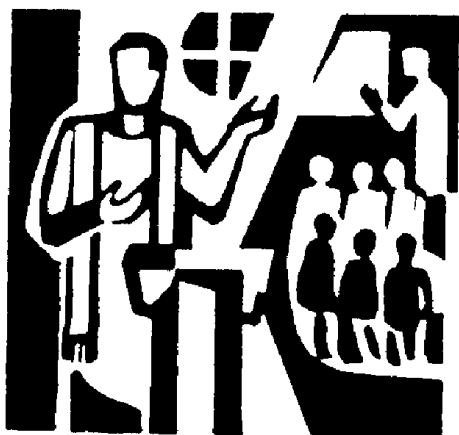
Remember those WWJD bracelets? Well, revive that practice and ask, “What would Jesus do?” or “What would St. Francis do?” Our father Francis was known to pick up a worm and set it aside so it would not be trampled underfoot. Not only do we trample worms, but we see our fellow brothers and sisters as less than that. It means nothing for a person to pick up a gun and snuff out the life of another human being. We have reduced the dignity of the human person because we have reduced our own dignity. We have stopped seeing one another as the image and likeness of God.

I am inviting each one of you to participate in a retraining from violence to peace; a way of being peace, returning to your Christ consciousness. The **Season of Nonviolence** is from Jan. 30, date of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to April 4, date of the assassination of Mohandas Gandhi. This **Season** is a national 64-day educational, media, and grassroots campaign dedicated to demonstrating that nonviolence is a powerful way to heal, transform, and empower our lives and our communities.

Inspired by the 50th and 30th memorial anniversaries of Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., this international event honors their vision for an empowered, nonviolent world. Each day, for 64 days, you will have the opportunity to interrupt your own culture of violence to create a culture of peace and nonviolence. I have been engaged in the Season of Nonviolence for the past several years, and I am very aware of my own senseless acts of violence. If you truly want to see change in the world, then you must be that change. May the Lord give you his peace and make us all instruments of his peace.

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

Carolyn sent  
“A World of Enlightened  
Action:  
The 15th Annual Gandhi-King  
Season of Nonviolence,  
Jan. 30–April 4”  
and  
Issue #4 of her monthly  
“Animator’s Notes”  
to all ministers and  
chosen leaders on Jan. 6.



## Fraternity honors priests/deacons

By Val Cadarr, OFS

Oct. 29 was like an early Thanksgiving Day. More than 200 people attended the eighth annual Clergy Appreciation Dinner that St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity hosted at St. Mary Help of Christians Church in Aiken, S.C.

People of all ages came together to celebrate and honor priests and deacons, living and deceased, who have served the parish so faithfully and so well.

Clergy present this year were Father Gregory B. Wilson, pastor; Father Max Tria, parochial vicar; Father Ernest Hepner, retired; Fr. Hugo Ruiz, Hispanic ministry; Deacon Bob Waters, and Deacon Bob Pierce. And those who have served St. Mary's Parish, living and deceased, were also remembered.

This year's theme, "Being a Simon of Cyrene," was based on the Passion narrative. Scripture tells us, "As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross."

The men we honored that night are our "Simons of Cyrene," because they lighten our loads by helping us carry our crosses. The significant difference is that, unlike Jesus's Simon, our Simons are not forced into doing this for us. They elect, not only to deny themselves and take up their own crosses, they choose, over and over, to bear the weight of our crosses as well.

This year, for me, was the best so far. Several of our priests actually spoke about how much they appreciated the night.

A Nigerian priest, who had been going to school in New Jersey, was visiting our pastor and couldn't get a flight back to New Jersey because of Hurricane Sandy. A priest for more than 25 years, he came to the dinner and was very moved. He stood and spoke: "In all the years I have been a priest, I have never been appreciated."

It really touched (pierced) our hearts when we heard this.

"Everyone should love their priests," said another. "Priests need to know they are loved."

I have always known that our Clergy Appreciation Dinners were good for our priests and deacons, but this was the first time I felt it in my heart and realized how good it is for them to be honored — and for us to be able to express our love and support.

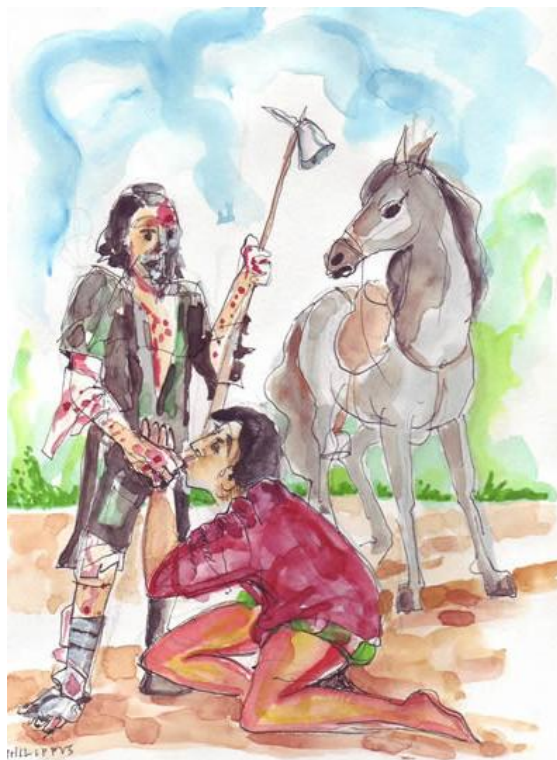
We have come a long way — from a handful of people to hundreds since the first dinner in 2005. Fewer than 25 people attended our first dinner, but we've outgrown local restaurants and now host the dinner in our own Saint Angela Hall. The Fraternity planned, prepared, and served the dinner: beef stew, chicken in wine sauce, rice, egg noodles, salad, bread, beverages, and cake. It was awesome. One of our members is the cook for the priests, and she is great. We sell tickets and have food budget.

In addition to the dinner, there were presentations of words and gifts for the honorees.

Father Wilson said this event is a way of bringing the worldwide Church together because we had clergy from the Philippines, Mexico, Nigeria, and the North and the South.

Our prayer is that other parishes will emulate St. Mary's. It might be as small an effort as writing a thank-you note or as grand as having a full-scale dinner. We need to show our priests and deacons how much they are needed and valued.

*Val Cadarr, OFS, is a member of St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity, Aiken, S.C.*



## Writing Franciscan

### Encountering God Within Us

***Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St. Francis* by Ilia Delio, OSF. St. Anthony Messenger Press (Cincinnati, Ohio, 2011). 142 pp.; paper, \$14.99; Kindle edition, \$9.43.**

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

“What is compassion and how does it emerge in the human heart?” Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, asks in her introduction to this book. “What moves one to compassion? Can we learn compassion as a way of life? Can we let go of our fears to love more deeply?”

We may think of compassion as having pity for or extending mercy to another but as Sister Ilia explains: “Love seeks the good of the other. Compassion is the feeling of love that rends the veil of the stranger and unites one human heart to another, heart to heart.”

We see that in the story of Francis, who learned compassion for lepers, whom he formerly abhorred. At first he didn’t recognize Christ in the leper, just as Mary Magdalene and the disciples didn’t immediately recognize Jesus after the resurrection. Sister Ilia writes:

“These resurrection stories, like the story of Francis and the leper, show us that conversion involves a moment from nonrecognition to recognition; we are invited to see the hidden presence of God. Something took place in Francis’ encounter with the leper that was a resurrection experience. Francis met the leper and then heard the voice from the crucifix. His moment of conversion was not from God to humanity but from humanity to God; in kissing the fragile disfigured flesh of the leper, Francis heard the voice of Christ.”

He had already changed from party-goer to solitary. Francis developed “soul space,” Sister Ilia notes, by spending time in solitude and prayer, which allowed him to get in touch with the God within. We must do the same, she says: “For the Word of God to be planted in the soul, and for the soul to expand in love, space is needed. The space required for the expansion of soul is not so much physical space as it is emotional, psychological space.” In solitude and prayer, Sister Ilia writes, Francis came

“to know who he was and who he was not. ... The space of wilderness made Francis a brother because in the freedom to be himself he recognized his need for others. He recognized himself to be not above others or apart from others but deeply related to others because he and all creation shared the same primordial goodness that flowed from the heart of God.”

Ever the one who wants to straighten thing out, I’ve been cautioned that this isn’t necessarily the best way. Sister Ilia reminded me of that in the chapter on “Contemplation and Compassion”:

“[Henri] Nouwen cautions against the ‘temptation to activism,’ getting caught up in trying to solve other people’s problems, which is what many of us try to do. We are called not to fix things but to bind up wounds through the power of love, realizing that the human person is strengthened when love triumphs over fear.”

And for those who tend to get too involved in virtual living on the Internet, the chapter on “Cyberspace and Compassion” warns us that, “Artificial intelligence can offer community without commitment, mutuality without responsibility. It can lend itself to narcissism, self-indulgence, and isolation.”

“For today’s reader, tired of relationships based on texting and virtual reality, here is a strong voice for a person-to-person encounter with the suffering neighbor awaiting her Samaritan,” says Brother William J. Short, OFM, dean of the Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, Calif., in his praise of the book.

Chapters end with reflection questions and brief meditations.

This book could be an excellent tool for ongoing formation in our fraternities. The penultimate chapter, “Community,” for instance, has as its meditation: “Compassion is another name for community. It is the mirror of relatedness that accepts the pain and weakness of another as one’s own. It is an expression of love that says ‘you belong to me.’”

This book would also be useful for individual reflection during our upcoming Lenten journey.

### Advent mission held

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity in Elizabeth City, N.C., sponsored a parish Advent mission, Dec. 9–11, with a social gathering and Franciscan information available each evening following the presentation.

The speaker for the mission was Julie McElmurry ([julie@franciscanpassages.org](mailto:julie@franciscanpassages.org)), a Franciscan scholar who gives retreats, presentations, and classes with a focus on St. Francis of Assisi.

She holds a master’s degree in religious education from Fordham University and a master’s in Franciscan studies from St. Bonaventure University. Degree from St. Bonaventure University in Franciscan Studies.

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

## Regional Executive Council (REC)—Commissions Gathering Recap

By Christine Washington, OFS

The following are highlights of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis (BSSF) Regional Executive Council — Commissions Gathering held on Nov. 3 in Greenville, S.C.:

- ✓ The council discussed comments participants made on the Annual Regional Gathering assessment form. There were many wonderful, thought-provoking comments upon which the council will act.
- ✓ Jerry reported on the National Fraternity (NAFRA) Chapter meeting. We have a national councilor, Mary Frances Charsky, OFS, through whom national will contact us.
- ✓ We discussed the Pastoral Visitation Report of Father Steve Gross, OFM Conv.
- ✓ Greg Savold, OFS, BSSF Region Treasurer, reported that we are doing well, staying

within our budget.

- ✓ Area 1 Councilors Willie Guadalupe, OFS, and John Knippel, OFS, reported on the canonical establishment of Spirit of Francis and Clare Fraternity in Conyers, Ga.; elections at St. Pio of Pietrelcina Fraternity in Decatur, Ala., and San Damiano Fraternity

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

**Minister: Jerry Rousseau, OFS**

**Vice Minister: Frank Massey, OFS**

**Secretary: Christine Washington, OFS**

**Treasurer: Greg Savold, OFS**

**Formation Director: Faye Martin, OFS**

**Spiritual Assistant:**

**Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.**

#### **Area 1 Councilors**

**Willie Guadalupe, OFS; John Knippel, OFS**

**AL:** Bessemer, Decatur;

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

**TN:** Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

#### **Area 2 Councilors**

**Sara Nell Boggs, OFS; Charles A. Meyer Jr., OFS**

**GA:** Augusta, St. Simons Island;

**NC:** Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;

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

#### **Area 3 Councilors**

**DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS**

**Paula Zanker, OFS**

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

**Archivist: Sara Nell Boggs, OFS**

**Communio Editor**

**Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS**

**Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Animator**

**Carolyn D. Townes, OFS**

**Youth/Young Adult Fraternal Animator  
Vacant**

**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

in Athens, Ga.; as well as a visitation with Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity in Nashville, Tenn.

- ✓ Area 2 Councilors Sara Nell Boggs, OFS, and Charles Meyer Jr., OFS, reported on the elections at St. Francis of the Hills in Hendersonville, N.C., and Blessed John Duns Scotus Fraternity in Garden City, S.C. They also discussed the upcoming elections at Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity in St. Simon's Island, Ga., and St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity, Aiken, S.C.; as well as the upcoming visitation to St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity in Augusta, Ga.

- ✓ Area 3 Councilors Paula Zanker, OFS, and DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS, reported on the upcoming visitations to St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity in Fayetteville, N.C., Padre Pio Fraternity in Raleigh, N.C., and St. Thomas More Fraternity in Wilmington, N.C.

- ✓ The council discussed the accuracy of information on our BSSF Region Roster and the NAFRA database. Local ministers will be asked to make sure the contact information for their council members is accurate on the database.

- ✓ We discussed a potential Newly Forming Group at St. John Vianney Parish in Lithia Springs, Ga.

- ✓ The council approved Visitation Document Three, which deals with reflection

questions to prepare for visitations.

- ✓ The Area “On the Road” Formation Workshops for 2013 were discussed. The workshops will highlight servant leadership: individual council members’ duties and responsibilities, as well as duties and responsibilities of the council as a whole. The workshops will give the members of local councils the opportunity for quality time with their REC counterparts.
- ✓ The Spiritual Assistants Course was discussed, as well as the need to provide spiritual assistants to the 14 fraternities in our region who do not have spiritual assistance.
- ✓ Jerry reported on the Franciscan Federation, which promotes the Franciscan charism. He will be the representative from our BSSF Region. The federation is open to all those following the Third Order Rule.
- ✓ Our JPIC animator, Carolyn Townes, OFS, reported on monthly Animator Notes she sends out to fraternities, an educational tool and creative catalyst for our region. She also reported on the JPIC National Commission plans, Franciscan Earth Core, Summer of Peace, and Season of Nonviolence.

As you can see, our Regional Executive Council discussed many issues to better serve the needs of our brothers and sisters. We look forward to our next meeting, March 1–2.

*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.*

### **BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION** ***SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS AND ELECTIONS (PROPOSED)***

\* confirmed

V+ follow-up visit

<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>LOCATION</u></b>	<b><u>V/E</u></b>	<b><u>FRATERNAL / PASTORAL VISITOR</u></b>
<b><u>2013</u></b>			
*Jan. 6	Duluth, GA	V	Jerry Rousseau, OFS/Cricket Aull, OFS
*Jan. 12	Augusta, GA	V	Sara Nell Boggs, OFS/Joanita Nellenbach, OFS
*Mar. 7	Morehead City, NC	V	Jerry/Fr. Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.
*Mar. 9	Burlington, NC	V	Jerry/Fr. Linus
*Mar. 10	Elizabeth City, NC	V	Jerry/Fr. Linus
*Mar. 17	Conyers, GA	E	Willie Guadalupe, OFS/Laura Haukaas, OFS
*Apr. 6	Franklin, NC	V	Willie/Audrey Binet, OFS
*Apr. 14	St. Simons, GA	E	Charles Meyer, OFS/Fr. Wilfred Logsdon, OFM Conv
*May 5	Aiken, SC	E	Jerry/Audrey
*May 11	Jonesboro, GA	V	Sara Nell/Laura Haukaas
*May 14	Winston Salem, NC	E	Jerry/Sr. Kathleen Ganiel, OSF
*May 18	Greenville, SC	V	Frank Massey, OFS/Audrey
June 2	Charlotte, NC	V	Willie/Kathy Taormina, OFS
June 9	Newton, NC	E	Sara Nell/Joanita
July 11	Asheville, NC	E	Jerry/Joanita

#### **ARG August 2–4, 2013 (chapter of Elections)**

*Sep 14	Blairsville, GA	E
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## Notice of elections and call for nominations for Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

By DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS, and Nancy Brochu, OFS  
BSSF Region Nominating Committee



We have been praying to our Trinitarian God to ready our hearts and open our minds for the process of electing the servant leaders he wants for our Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region.

Now we would like to formally notify every good brother and sister in our region that our Chapter of Elections will be held during our Annual Regional Gathering in Ridgecrest, N.C., on Aug. 3, 2013. We are now calling for nominations for this election process.

A quorum of ministers and the voting members of the Regional Executive Council (REC) or their delegates must be present for the Regional Fraternity Council to elect a slate of officers.

Every established-fraternity minister and the elected members of the REC (minister, vice minister, secretary, treasurer, formation director, and area councilors) are eligible to vote as members of the Regional Fraternity Council.

Eligible voters must be present or delegate this responsibility to another member. The delegate must have a document written by the minister stating that said person is a delegate and has been appointed to that position by the fraternity council. Without the written statement, the delegate does not have voting rights. The delegate must give the statement to the regional secretary before the annual Regional Fraternity Council meeting.

Professed members and Candidates in your Fraternity, Emerging Community, or Newly Forming Group, and the REC members, may nominate members of your Fraternity, Community, or Group within the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region for election to the REC. They may be nominated for more than one position. Nominees must be active Professed members with proof of OFS Profession.

Fraternity ministers, Emerging Community leaders, and Newly Forming Group leaders please review, with all your members, “Article 5. Duties of Members of the Regional Executive Council,” *Regional Guideline*,; and Section II: Voting and Conduct of Business — Articles No. 6 and No 7 in the guidelines. Duties are also listed on page 17 of this *Communio*. In addition, peruse the “Election Chapter Nomination Form,” page 19.

This is the procedure for nominations for the office of minister, vice minister, secretary, treasurer, formation director, Area One councilor, Area Two councilor, Area Three councilor.

E-mail or postal mail nomination form(s) to **BOTH** members of nominating committee:

- DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS, [darsfo@embarqmail.com](mailto:darsfo@embarqmail.com), P.O. Box 258, Seabrook, S.C. 29940;
- Nancy Brochu, OFS, [brochunancy@yahoo.com](mailto:brochunancy@yahoo.com), 1110 Morrow Lane, Adamsville, Ala. 35005.

NOMINATION FORMS ARE DUE BEFORE **MARCH 31, 2013**

Nomination form, page 19

Nominations are sent to both committee members to avoid a nomination being lost. All nominations are confidential. Once the nominating committee receives the nominations, the nomination form(s) will be sent to each nominee so that he or she will have the opportunity to accept or decline the nomination(s). This is why it is important that all nomination forms are received by March 31. T

## Nomination Timeline and Prayer for Selection of New Council

**BSSF Regional Executive Council Triennial Election Timeline**  
**The Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region Triennial Election**  
is scheduled for Aug. 3, 2013, at the Annual Regional Gathering.

All Secular Franciscans (Professed and Candidates) are eligible to nominate someone Professed for the Regional Executive Council (REC).

### **TIMELINE**

January — Notice of Election published.  
Call for Nominations  
March 31 — Nominations close  
April — Nominations Committee contact nominees  
June 1 — Deadline for nomination forms returned from nominees to accept or decline nomination  
June 15 — Résumés of nominees sent to voting members of Regional Council  
July 25 — Start 9-day novena of “Prayer for Selection of a New Council” for Spirit-led election

### **PROCEDURE**

For the offices of Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, Area One Councilor, Area Two Councilor, Area Three Councilor, e-mail or postal mail Nomination Form ( page 19) to BOTH members of Nominating Committee:

DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS,  
[darsfo@embarqmail.com](mailto:darsfo@embarqmail.com)  
PO Box 258, Seabrook, S.C. 29940  
Nancy Brochu, OFS, [brochunancy@yahoo.com](mailto:brochunancy@yahoo.com)  
1110 Morrow Lane, Adamsville, Ala. 35005

### **Prayer for Selection of a New Council**

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

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

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

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

Help each of us to discover “what is ours to do.”

Not our will Lord,  
but thy will be done.

Amen.

Nominations are sent to both committee members to avoid a nomination being lost. Committee members will continually cross-reference nominations.

**DO NOT** send nominations to the REC. Nominations are confidential. T

**Regional Executive Council Duties from the  
Guidelines of the Regional Fraternity of Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis  
of the Secular Franciscan Order**

Article 5. Duties of Members of the Regional Executive Council

1. The Regional Minister, in addition to the duties set forth in Article 63 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duties:
  - a. To prepare with the regional treasurer and the regional secretary the annual report to the regional fraternity and to the national fraternity to include the Fair Share Summary Report, the Treasurer's Report, and the Proposed Budget. This annual report to the regional fraternity will be published in the regional newsletter.
  - b. To approve when necessary extraordinary (nonbudgeted) expenditures, not to exceed one per cent (1%) of the annual regional budget.
2. The Regional Vice Minister's duties are enumerated in Article 52.1 of the *General Constitutions*.
3. The Regional Secretary, in addition to the duties enumerated in Article 52.2 of the *General Constitutions*, has the following duties:
  - a. To record and distribute in a timely manner, the minutes of the Regional Fraternity Council meetings and the Regional Executive Council gatherings.
  - b. To perform such other duties that the Regional Fraternity Council, Regional Executive Council, and Regional Minister may designate.
4. The Regional Treasurer, in addition to the duties enumerated in Article 52.4 of the *General Constitutions* has the following duties:
  - a. To serve the region in accordance with the Fraternity Internal Controls and 2003 Treasury Guidelines.
  - b. To assist the regional minister with the annual report to the regional fraternity and to the national fraternity to include the Fair Share Summary Report, the Treasurer's Report, and the Proposed Budget. This annual report to the regional fraternity shall be published in the regional newsletter.
  - c. To make quarterly financial reports to the Regional Executive Council.
  - d. To obtain a second signature from the regional minister or another designated member when writing checks.
  - e. To contact and schedule a meeting with two qualified professed members that do not serve on the Regional Executive Council to review the treasury records at the Annual Regional Gathering every year.
  - f. To send a copy of the approved budget to the region after the Annual Regional Gathering. This approved budget shall be published in the regional newsletter.
  - g. To perform such other duties that the Regional Fraternity Council, the Regional Executive Council, and the Regional Minister may designate.
5. The Regional Formation Director has the following duties:
  - a. To assume the position of Regional Formation Commission Chair after being duly elected to the regional council.
  - b. To involve the regional spiritual assistant(s) in all formation including the development of formation programs.
  - c. To direct the deliberations of the Regional Formation Commission and report such deliberations to the Regional Executive Council.
  - d. To perform such other duties that the Regional Fraternity Council, Regional Executive Council, and the Regional Minister may designate.
6. The Regional Area Councilors have the following duties:
  - a. To serve on the Regional Formation Commission under the guidance of the Regional

Formation Commission chairperson.

- b. To visit fraternities and groups within their assigned area when formation guidance is requested or needed.
- c. To periodically contact all fraternities and groups within their assigned area to encourage and discern if there are needs or problems.
- d. To preside and confirm the elections of local fraternities and conduct fraternal visitations of fraternities and groups within their assigned area when requested by the Regional Executive Council.
- e. To preside and confirm the elections of local fraternities and conduct fraternal visitations of fraternities and groups as a delegate to another area when requested by the Regional Executive Council.
- f. To attend admissions, professions, canonical establishment ceremonies and other special events within their assigned area whenever possible.
- g. To perform such other duties that the Regional Fraternity Council, Regional Executive Council and Regional Minister may designate.
- h. To refer to the *Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership* and the *Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order* (revised 2012) for further directives. T

## Where area councilors serve

A person can be nominated for area councilor for any of the three areas, not just from the area where his or her fraternity is located. The nominee must be willing to serve in the area for which nominated.

Once elected, the area councilor will contact the fraternities in that area and make periodic visits, to include presiding at elections and fraternal visitations as a delegate.

(EC = Emerging Community; NFG = Newly Forming Group)

### Area One

Alabama: Bessemer, Decatur;

Georgia: Athens, Blairsville, Conyers, Duluth, Jonesboro;

North Carolina: Franklin;

Tennessee: Chattanooga, Knoxville (EC), Nashville.

### Area Two

Georgia: Augusta, St. Simons Island;

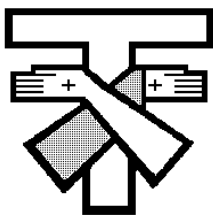
North Carolina: Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Hickory;

South Carolina: Aiken, Charleston, Columbia (EC), Greenville, Hilton Head Island, Spartanburg.

### Area Three

North Carolina: Burlington, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Greensboro, Morehead City, Raleigh, Wilmington, Winston-Salem;

South Carolina: Garden City. T



Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
Secular Franciscan Order

Alabama Georgia North Carolina South Carolina Tennessee

## NOMINATION FORM

Chapter of Elections: August 3, 2013

I nominate \_\_\_\_\_

FOR: MINISTER - VICE MINISTER - SECRETARY - TREASURER - FORMATION DIRECTOR -  
AREA ONE COUNCILOR - AREA TWO COUNCILOR - AREA THREE COUNCILOR

Please underline office(s).

You may nominate the professed member for more than one office.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Fraternity, Emerging Fraternity or Newly Forming Group \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Fraternity, Emerging Fraternity or Newly Forming Group \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail or mail one copy to both:**

DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS  
PO Box 258  
Seabrook, SC 29940  
E-mail: darsfo@embarqmail.com  
Phone: (843-466-9867) Home

Nancy Brochu, OFS  
1110 Morrow Lane  
Adamsville, AL 35005  
E-mail: brochunancy@yahoo.com  
Phone: (205-447-0983) Home  
(205-427-8093) Cell