

Communio

That All May Be One

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

Fall 2018



Fresco of the death of St. Francis on an outer wall of the Transitus Chapel in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi, Italy, by Domenico Brushi, 1886.

St. Francis's Transitus

"He scanned the blurred faces of the brothers, one by one, loving them with his blindness as he had with his eyes. Then he asked Brother Elias to strip him of his habit so that he could lie totally poor on the ground. Brother Elias did as Francis had requested, but then he put another habit on Francis, saying in that authoritative voice that only Brother Elias used, 'Father Francis, I am lending you this habit in Holy Obedience. You have no right of ownership of it, so I forbid you to give it away or to remove it from your body.' ...

"He would die flat on his back, his hands gripping the dirt floor, waiting for Jesus to come to him. ...

"The brothers were all weeping now and praying aloud, but Francis neither saw nor heard. His blind eyes were transfixed, watching the man of the Dream approach him." (Murray Bodo, OFM, *Francis: The Journey and the Dream*, 117–118)

"Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.

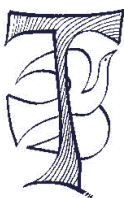
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.

Blessed are those whom death will find doing Your most holy will
for the second death can do them no harm."

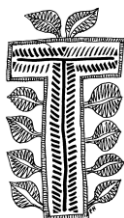
The Canticle of the Creatures, *Francis of Assisi, Early Documents: Volume I, The Saint*, 114

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





Editor's Journal

Like a number of churches I've been to in Italy, leaflets are placed in each pew in the church of San Severino in Spello (about 15 miles from Assisi) before Sunday Mass begins.

These four-page leaflets contain the prayers and readings for the Mass. The first page also has a short reflection on the Gospel and a color picture with a gospel illustration.

The Gospel reading for Sept. 9, the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, was Mark 7:31–39, in which “people brought to [Jesus] a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him.”

Presumably, Jesus could have healed the man then and there, but, instead, he took “him off by himself away from the crowd.”

The reflection on the leaflet proposed that Jesus wanted to show the man that to be his (Jesus's) disciple meant he couldn't follow the crowd.

And isn't this also true of us when we make our Profession as Secular Franciscans?

Each of us said (or will say if we're not yet Professed), “I, N.N., by the grace of God ... consecrate myself to the service of his Kingdom” (*Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order*, 23). To consecrate is “to set apart as holy, make or declare sacred for religious use ... to devote entirely, dedicate” (*Webster's New World College Dictionary*, 310).

Thus, we're no longer one of the crowd. We've set ourselves apart for the vocation to which the Holy Spirit has called us. This doesn't make us better than anyone else; it simply calls us to a different way of life, defined by the Rule we have promised to live “all the days of our life.”

Our culture is changing and some of it is contrary to the Gospel way of life, but as Secular Franciscans we are to be countercultural, to stand in opposition to those elements of the culture that do not promote Gospel values.

And we're called to even more, some of which you'll find described in this issue, in articles on Catholic social teaching by Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS, our new regional spiritual assistant; and Carolyn Townes, OFS, our regional JPIC animator.

We're also called to be about the business of our Order. There's no one to do that but us. One thing that's very much needed in our Region now is spiritual assistants. About half of our fraternities do not have a spiritual assistant.

In This Issue

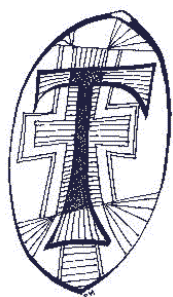
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Back in the previous century (1997–1998), Secular Franciscans didn't serve as spiritual assistants. Friars did. Ten years into my Profession (2008–2009), I was taking the training to become a spiritual assistant, and I've served in that capacity since early 2010.

The number of friars in our Region isn't increasing, so unless we take the training, fraternities will remain without spiritual assistants.

The training is about to begin. Please contact Deacon Tom (tshaverofs@gmail.com) if you think the Holy Spirit is calling you to this vocation within our vocation.

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



Minister's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

June 24, 2018, marked the 40th anniversary of our OFS "new Rule" as approved by Pope Paul VI. I pray your fraternity has celebrated this milestone in some manner and has given thanks for all those Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters who have gone before us to show us our Franciscan path to holiness.

Do you realize that our Rule is who we are? We place much emphasis on our Rule as we live our charism daily and are open to daily conversion.

Oct. 9–14, I had the privilege of attending our National Chapter, held in St. Louis, Mo. Present for this annual chapter were members from our Franciscan family: international, national, regional, local, and First Order. It is always a joy to be with family and learn from each other.

We had a very full agenda daily and accomplished much for our Order in planning for its future in the United States. A Chapter of Elections was held and we have new and second term National Council members to serve us. The names of those elected are posted on page 8 of this newsletter.

Our Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region is scheduled to have our Chapter of Elections Aug. 9–11, 2019, when we'll once again have our Annual Regional Gathering (ARG) at Ridgecrest, N.C. I ask that you prayerfully seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to nominate and elect brothers and sisters to serve us as our region continues to grow.

At this year's ARG, we were visited by Joan Geiger, OFS, national councilor; and Father Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, a member of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. Please read their Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation Report beginning on page 18.

Also, when we gather annually at the Ridgecrest Conference Center, there is a contract that is signed 18 months prior to our event. In this contract, we guarantee a certain number of rooms per night that will be occupied. Even though this year our room guarantee number was reduced by 10 percent, we did not meet the contracted number.

Your Region paid an additional \$4,791.56 to cover this contracted room guarantee number. This amount was not included in our budget; so, not planned for. But, it had to be paid. I share this for your awareness with the hope that in the future when one submits their reservation for the ARG, that one will not cancel, as there is a cost involved.

"Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another. Forgive as God has forgiven you. Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect. Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of the one body you have been called to that peace. Dedicate yourselves to thankfulness. Let the word of Christ, rich as it is, dwell in you. In wisdom made perfect, instruct and admonish one another. Sing gratefully to God from your hearts in psalms, hymns, and inspired songs. Whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. Give thanks to God through him" (Col 3: 12-17).

May God bless you and keep you!

Peace and all good,

DorothyAnn

DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS, Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region's minister, is a member of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Introducing Our New Regional Spiritual Assistant



Deacon Thomas R. Shaver, OFS, was installed as the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region's regional spiritual assistant on Aug. 4, during Mass at the Annual Regional Gathering (ARG).

He attended the Region's second spiritual assistant course (2011–2013) and was commissioned as a spiritual assistant at the 2013 ARG.

Subsequently, he served as spiritual assistant to St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity in Augusta, Ga., for three years. He also served as pastoral visitor for visitations to and as ecclesiastical witness for elections in the Region's fraternities.

Deacon Tom was professed into the Third Order of St. Francis on Dec. 12, 1967. While his journey as a Franciscan has not always been within the guidelines of fraternity, he practiced as best as he could the virtues of gospel poverty, obedience, and chastity.

In the fall of 2007 Deacon Tom ran into a friend who was in formation for Profession to the Secular Franciscan Order and was asked to be his spiritual director. This activity reintroduced him to the OFS.

Deacon Tom is a member of the Fraternity of the Stigmata of St. Francis which meets at St. Benedict Catholic Church in Johns Creek, Ga. He served as a formation director and guided the initial formation of candidates for the fraternity.

A lifelong Catholic, he attended St. Angela Merici Catholic School, Borromeo Minor Seminary High School, and St. Edward High School in Cleveland, Ohio.

He was ordained to the permanent diaconate on May 23, 1987, and has served the Archdiocese of Atlanta in two parishes as a pastoral associate with liturgical and catechetical responsibilities. In the spring of 2000 he earned a master of Theological Studies from Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala.

Professionally, he is a licensed certified public accountant.

He attended and graduated from Franklin University, Columbus, Ohio, in April 1971 with a BSBA in accounting. While employed with Blue Cross of Central Ohio, he attended and earned an MBA from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio in 1977.

His career has spanned 45 years of nonprofit and health care finance and accounting, including 24 years of governmental accounting in his recent position with the Cobb County, Ga., Library System. He retired from his position with the county on June 30, 2017.

Deacon Tom married Lori Shaver on Feb. 10, 1973. They have four children and one grandchild. Hobbies include reading, camping, and fishing. His interests include both scriptural theology and social ethics. T

**The Brothers and Sisters of
St. Francis Region
Needs Secular Franciscans to Answer
the
Holy Spirit's Call to the Ministry of
SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT.
Our Program to Prepare
YOU
is READY to begin in January 2019.
If you have been Professed
at least 5 years,
please prayerfully discern
your answer
to the Holy Spirit.
Contact Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS,
Regional Spiritual Assistant, at
tshaverofs@gmail.com**



Regional Spiritual Assistant: Secular Franciscans and Social Justice

By Deacon Thomas Shaver, OFS

As Franciscans we are called to the Way of St. Francis and to follow the Rule that he established for us in our early history as Brothers and Sisters of Penance and the modifications to the Rule through the centuries as culture and society changed.

Still, we try to follow the basic tenets of that early Rule as father Francis intended. During a recent conference of regional spiritual assistants, Father Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, presented a compelling argument that we as Franciscans in the modern world need to revisit Catholic social teaching (CST) and implement our practice of such as we carry out our Franciscan Way.

Additionally, at the ARG in August we heard Father Christopher speak of the need for us to look at Catholic social teaching. As a response to Father Christopher's challenge, I committed to a quarterly article for *Communio* on the topic of Catholic social teaching and social justice.

The seven themes of CST are:

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person,
- Call to Family, Community, and Participation,
- Rights and Responsibilities,
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable,
- The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers,
- Solidarity,
- Care for God's Creation.

To look at, consider, and act upon these seven themes we need to consider where our conscience is in respect to each point. To that end, I am going to start with two paragraphs from the Catechism of the Catholic Church regarding the basis of CST.

CCC, 1869: "Thus sin makes men accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. 'Structures of sin' are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute a 'social sin.'"

Simply stated, "social sin" is institutionalized sin. Said differently, sin becomes institutionalized when society becomes indifferent to the sinful acts of a few.

For example, society has become very indifferent to the sin of abortion. While many of us find this sin repulsive and are working to stop it, society as a whole allows the sin of abortion to exist and many believe that it is good for society.

The social sin of abortion, differentiated from the personal sin of the woman and the physician who carry out the abortion, is shared by all who turn away and allow it to continue without taking any actions, whatever they may be, to stop the abortions, using what means they might have available to them. The social sin is turning a blind eye to the practice of the sin without attempting to stop it.

We as Catholic Christians abhor abortion, as well we should, but there are additional areas of social sin that we need to look at. Each of the seven themes of CST should be calling us to reflect and act to promote a civil and loving atmosphere for all God's creation. Certainly, human dignity must be the premier force of our conscience.

CCC 1965: "The New Law or the Law of the Gospel is the perfection here on earth of the divine law, natural and revealed. It is the work of Christ and is expressed particularly in the Sermon on the Mount. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit and through him it becomes the interior law of charity: 'I will establish a New Covenant with the house of Israel....I will put my

laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Heb 8:8,10, cf. Jer 31:31–34).)”

“Social justice is both an attitude and a practical response based on the principal that everyone should look at another person as another self” (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006). Based on gospel teachings we are called to love one another (John 13:34). Our covenant with God calls us to this teaching, and as Christians we are given a higher call: “As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34b).

The benchmark of our actions is quite clear: “As I have loved you.” This love that Jesus speaks to us is predicated on the fact that each of us is created in the image and likeness of God, and since God is love, we too must be love.

Unfortunately, we share in a “social sin” brought about from the fall in the Garden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate from the fruit of the forbidden tree. Social sin is not unlike the original sin. We aren’t culpable for the original sin, yet we share in it. Similarly, we are not culpable for the actual sin related to the social sin yet we share in its evil.

As Secular Franciscans, we are challenged to look at our attitudes regarding social injustices in our lives. The Prologue to our Rule is the “Exhortation of Saint Francis to the Brothers and Sisters in Penance,” which begins:

“In the name of the Lord!

All 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 hate their bodies with their vices and sins and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and produce worthy fruits of penance.”

This gospel admonition of love should direct us to a healthy respect for human dignity, the first principal of CST. Article 5 of our Rule reminds us, “Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of St. Francis, who often said, ‘I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except His most holy body and blood,’ should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.”

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, I propose that this article should be the hallmark of our Franciscan way. We live in a very dark world today and need to be the light or beacon of Christian love which will overcome this darkness.

As Father Dave Pivonka, TOR, told the regional formation directors in Kansas City in September, the post-modern era that we live in is best defined by the word chaos. Both God, as the center of our lives (pre-modern era), and Man (modern era) have been abandoned by today’s society.

Article 3 of our Rule reminds of us the reasons for updating the Rule from the time of St. Francis to today: “The present rule ... adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times.” We therefore must also adapt our lives accordingly.

We must examine our lives and consider where we stand on today’s issues. A Secular Franciscan is neither conservative nor liberal, he or she is neither Democrat nor Republican. A Secular Franciscan is Christ-centered and as such follows his or her conscience based on God’s covenant. We are called to be prophets to the world, speaking by our actions on behalf of God to his people. Perhaps to put it more succinctly, in the words of Rabbi Abraham Heschel, a prophet is “called to afflict the comfortable, and comfort the afflicted.”

May Christ give you his peace. More later!

Deacon Thomas R. Shaver, OFS, serves as the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis regional spiritual assistant. He is a member of Stigmata of St. Francis Fraternity, Johns Creek, Ga.

To Wear and Bear the Tau

By Lynn Oeser, OFS

I received my first Tau as a gift from my mother while I was still in orientation. She had found it at a shop in Assisi a year earlier while on a pilgrimage.

"I thought that it was pretty", she said, and she purchased it with no particular recipient in mind. By the Spirit it turned out to be for me.

While in the inquiry phase of formation, I was sitting at a picnic table during my lunch hour one day. I was reading a biography of Francis when a piece of foliage in the shape of a Tau dropped from a tree and landed beside my hand giving me inspiration and encouragement.

Shortly after the Rite Admission to the Order I attended the Area Regional Gathering of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region. Carolyn Townes, OFS, BSSF regional JPIC animator, challenged those in attendance to wear and bear the Tau at all times.

"We are not only Christians," she proclaimed, "we are Franciscan Christians. We are called to live the Gospel."

Inspired by her words, I committed myself to wear the TAU at all times.

Glancing in the mirror, the Tau hanging from my neck seemed obscure and unassuming, but in my moment-to-moment adventures in the secular world I have discovered that the symbol bears deep meaning to others who set their eyes upon it. Shortly after I began wearing the Tau, a co-worker had taken note. He shared with me that he had worked with Franciscan missionaries in Guatemala; their works of love had deeply inspired him.

Then there was an encounter during a meal at our fraternity apostolate at Oak City Outreach Center. I was visiting with some of our friends at a table when a gentleman inquired about the Tau. He and other guests had noticed that Franciscans wore the Tau, and they had also noted the knots. There was a captive audience as I explained the Tau and the knots.

A thoughtful and lively discussion of poverty and chastity ensued. At the end of the conversation, the gentleman asked me for the Tau that I was wearing. Without hesitation I began to remove it, and the entire table gasped.

Almost instantly the man grabbed my wrist stating "No! I could never accept your cross. I was just testing your heart."

Another time a disabled woman approached me in a parking lot and asked for help. We spoke eye to eye. I was only able to help her in a small way. As our meeting came to a close, her gaze fell to the Tau. She gave pause, looked up, and we parted with an embrace.

On the weekend that Hurricane Irma ravaged the Caribbean, I attended a Mass celebrated by a visiting missionary. As grace would have it, his apostolate just happened to serve the poor in that part of the world. He was vibrant and charismatic and gave a stirring homily on the readings of the day. He closed with a very brief mention of his charity and asked the assembly for



generosity in prayer and for donations according to their hearts.

While leaving the church, I offered him my hand and expressed my gratitude for his service to the poor. His eyes fell and fixed on the Tau. He then looked into my eyes. "Please pray for me," he said.

The eyes of these encounters are drawn to the sign of the Tau. It seems to reflect a recognition and trust of "Peace and All Goodness." These cherished exchanges are my soul's dialog with Christ in others and in creation. They nurture and affirm my call to continuous conversion. I place the Tau around my neck in sacred ritual and renewal of the promises to the form of life, the Rule, that I joyfully professed to. I am mindful of the privilege and responsibility that I bear.

I recall St. Francis and St. Clare's abandonment of the world to live the Gospel. By their example, I place myself at the foot of the cross in God's eyes, space, and time. My humanity flows in union with Love made flesh. Father, Son, and Spirit know every speck of my being. Every weakness and sin is exposed.

Yet, in the sacred gaze of his holy cross, I am a penitent graced with knowledge and truth that I am loved beyond mortal comprehension. Christ is the center of my life.

I wear and bear the Tau into the world with the mission to be the salt and light that he calls me to be. I wear and bear the Tau with adoration and praise to Christ because by his holy cross, he has redeemed the world. I wear and bear the Tau with all its meaning to share his love.

Many eyes seem to have noticed, and they keep noticing! My cup runneth over.

Lynn Oeser, OFS, is formation director of Padre Pio Fraternity in Raleigh, N.C.

Congratulations — New Councils

NATIONAL CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS

St. Louis, Mo., Oct. 13

National Minister: Jan Parker, OFS, St. Clare Region

National Vice Minister: Mary Bittner, OFS, Divine Mercy Region

National Secretary: Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, Our Lady of Guadalupe Region

National Treasurer: Claudia Kauzlarich, OFS, Juan de Padilla Region

National Councilor: Donna Hollis; OFS, Our Lady of Guadalupe Region

National Councilor: Josh Molitor, OFS, Los Tres Companeros Region

National Councilor: Dennis Ross, OFS, St Maximilian Kolbe Region

International Councilor: Awilda (Willie) Guadalupe, OFS,

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

Alternate International Councilor: Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS

San Damiano Fraternity

Athens, Ga., Sept. 4

Minister: Julie Lorenz, OFS

Vice Minister: Christine Reynolds, OFS

Secretary: Helen Neff, OFS

Treasurer: Joanne Cutler OFS

Formation Director: Tina Guthrie De Bejar, OFS

Councilor: Virginia Macagnoni, OFS

Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation: Catholic Social Teaching

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

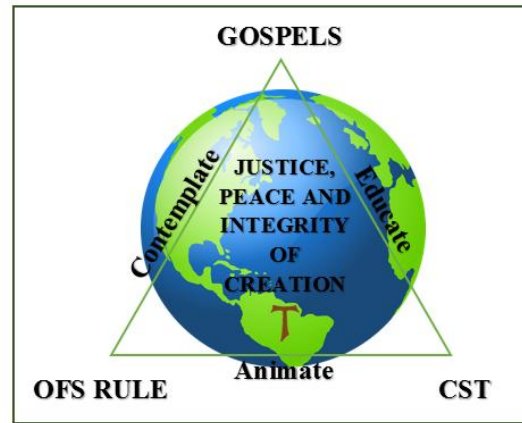
In 1998, the United States Catholic Conference published *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, Reflections of the U.S. Catholic Bishops*.

This report declares:

“It is clear that in some educational programs Catholic social teaching (CST) is not really shared or not sufficiently integral and explicit. As a result, far too many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith. This poses a serious challenge for all Catholics, since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel.”

SPIRITUALITY

FORMATION



Thus, the bishops “seek a renewed commitment to integrate

FRATERNITY

APOSTOLATE

and to share the riches of the Church’s social teaching in Catholic education and formation at every level. This was one of the most urgent challenges for the new millennium.”

The foundational conviction underlying Catholic social teaching is that God is at work in human history. This was true in biblical times; it is true today. It is true in places the Gospel has been embraced; and it is true in places and among people who have never heard of the Gospel or of Jesus. God is at work healing and redeeming human history and inviting all people to participate in that work.

The opening statement from the Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes* (“Pastoral Constitution on the Church of the Modern World,” 1965): “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the women and men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

So, if you are suffering in any way, then so am I. I am not just my brother’s or sister’s keeper, I am my brother or sister.

St. Francis called everything brother or sister. Not because it was a nice thing to do but because Francis recognized God within all living things. It wasn’t some pantheistic realization on Francis’ part — Francis did not call them God, he called them brother, he called them sister. He recognized that God Most High was Supreme Being, and God’s creation that deserved reverence and honor.

As the First Letter of St. John says: “Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen” (1 Jn 4:20, NIV).

No, I have never seen God, but when I look at you, I have seen God’s image and likeness. This is what Francis is saying to us: Reverence the beauty of all of God’s creation, because this is how you love and worship our Most High God.

Catholic social teaching is an invitation — an invitation to a relationship with God and with all of God’s creation: God’s people and God’s world. In order to have a healthy relationship, you have to know the person or thing you want to be in relationship with. God has always desired a relationship with his people. But he wants us to return the favor. Catholic social teaching is the

expression of that relationship. It helps us have a just and right relationship with God and God's creation.

Catholic social teaching draws upon the wisdom of Scripture, the wisdom of tradition, the magisterium, and integrates the social, economic, political, and cultural matters of our time. It begins from a perspective of faith. We address systems and policies as an expression of our faith. Catholic social teaching strives to foster a *living faith* that leads to *loving action* in the world today. It is the Church reflecting on its mission in the world today, helping us think about how we relate to the world around us and the challenges we face.

**Please join Dianne Ambrose, OFS,
regional formation director,
and me on our monthly ZOOM calls
as we continue to explore
our Church's treasure of
Catholic social teaching.**

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, a member of St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Aiken, S.C., is the JPIC Animator for the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region, the National JPIC Animator, and a member of the International Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

OFS-USA NATIONAL CHAPTER 2018 STATEMENT

We, the members of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA, gathered for our annual Chapter at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel in Missouri, October 9-14, 2018. Approximately 90 leaders and observers were present, representing over 12,000 members throughout the United States, including Guam.

The recent Grand Jury report in Pennsylvania is a cause of sorrow, pain and agonizing self-scrutiny for the Catholic Church in the United States. We recognize the tragic reality of sinful abuse perpetrated on the most vulnerable. It deeply saddens all of us. We stand firm and make no excuses. The brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order extend mercy and compassion to the victims of abuse and to their abusers. Trusting in God who allows the good seed and the weeds to grow together (Mt 13: 24-30), we pray for healing, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace.

More than 800 years ago, our Lord asked St. Francis of Assisi to "rebuild my Church which is falling into ruin." Francis accomplished this by living a life of penance and sacrifice according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As followers of St. Francis, we commit ourselves to do the same. We call the members of our Order and invite all people of faith to be vigilant for the sake of the vulnerable and to foster strong relationships throughout the Body of Christ. We support the clergy and religious who serve Christ Jesus and His Church. Let us go forth in the Light of Christ to rebuild our Church, that it may be renewed as a beacon of hope and safe refuge, grace and truth.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION CALENDAR
SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS (V) AND ELECTIONS (E)
November 2018 May through December 2019**

* confirmed	V+ follow-up visit	(observers in parentheses)
Date	Fraternity/Group & Location	V Fraternal/Pastoral Visitors E Presider/Ecclesial Witness
2018		
Nov. 14*	St. Anthony of Padua, Fayetteville, NC	E Carolyn Peduzzi/Pat Wilkerson
Nov. 17*	St. Francis of the Hills, Hendersonville, NC	E Carmen Madero/Fr. Roberto Perez, OFM Cap.
2019		
Jan. 11–12*	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Augusta, GA	V
Jan. 12–13	Stigmata of St. Francis, Duluth, GA	V
Feb. 16–17	St. Thomas More, Wilmington, NC	V
March 9–10	Blessed Solanus Casey, Morehead City, NC	V
Date TBD	Sts. Francis and Clare, Knoxville, TN	V
May 10–11	Immaculate Conception, Jonesboro, GA	V
May 14	Fraternity of St. Clare, Winston-Salem, NC	E
May 17–18	Our Lady of Good Counsel, Greenville, SC	V
May 18–19	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Elizabeth City, NC	V
June 1–2	St. Maximilian Kolbe, Charlotte, NC	V
July 11	St. Clare, Asheville, NC	E
July 13	Fraternity of Brother Francis, Newton, NC	E
Aug. 9–11: Annual Regional Gathering, Ridgecrest, NC, Regional Council Election		
Sept. 14	Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg, Blairsville, GA	E
Sept. 21	Spirit of Francis and Clare, Conyers, GA	E
Oct. 26–27*	Padre Pio, Raleigh, NC	V
Dec. 6–7	Mather Cabrini EC, Anderson, SC	V

Fraternities celebrate Transitus of St. Francis



San Damiano Fraternity, Athens, Ga., held its Transitus service at the Catholic Center at the University of Georgia on Oct. 3. Members of our faith community also attended. Ellen Ritchey, DMA, faculty at UGA and a long-time friend of the fraternity, provided the music. Our Father Frank Critch, OFM, however, enjoyed the Transitus in Assisi with fortunate members of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region and other pilgrims. The fraternity asks for prayers for our church community, which looks forward to a second priest joining Father Frank in the near future. (Photo by George Zumwalt, inquirer.)

Julie Lorenz, OFS, minister

Fraternity of Brother Francis, Newton, N.C.

The Fraternity of Brother Francis, Newton, N.C., celebrated the annual Transitus service with our brothers and sisters and a few guests. What a powerful evening of spiritual awakening and fraternity!

We began by dimming the lights in the little church of St. Joseph in Newton and lighting two candles on a small burlap-covered table surrounded by little statues and icons of our beloved Brother Francis. In front of the table a brown-hooded shroud with a knotted rope waist cord lay at the foot of the table cascading down the altar step, empty, bodiless, as our Seraphic Father is

no longer in this world.

With the mood and spirituality focused on God, we prayed the Franciscan Proper Evening Prayer at the beginning of our intimate Transitus service. We paused and passed bread in an offertory basket to our brothers and sisters as we read how as Sister Death was approaching, our holy father Francis commanded that bread be brought to him and ceremonially blessed. He broke it, giving it to those at his side while the passage from Gospel of St. John, starting with “Before the feast of the Passover” was read to him, as Thomas of Celano shares in “The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul,” Chapter CLXIII, “His Death and What He Did Before It” (*Francis of Assisi, Early Documents: Volume II, The Founder*, p. 387).

What a beautiful tribute and remembrance of our dear St. Francis. What a powerful evening of spiritual awakening as we joined, praying together and breaking bread as a fraternity on a perfectly peaceful North Carolina October evening. God is so good. St. Francis, pray for us.

Paula Coleman, OFS, acting secretary

St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity, Spartanburg, S.C.

We had a beautiful Transitus celebration. Transitus fell on Wednesday this year and the CCD classes participated with us. The older children helped with moving a little table, serving as altar boys, and so on. The younger children's class helped with passing out programs. The younger children were studying about St. Francis at this time also.

It was beautiful. Michaelleen designed our program. Everyone agreed this was one of our best Transitus celebrations.

Carol Drum, OFS, minister

Channel of Peace Fraternity, Chattanooga, Tenn.;

Sts. Francis and Clare Fraternity, Knoxville, Tenn.

Channel of Peace celebrated the Transitus this year with brothers and sisters from Sts. Francis and Clare Fraternity. We attended a Transitus service at Christ Prince of Peace Retreat Center in Benton, Tenn. Father David Mary Engo, FFM, was the celebrant of the Transitus service. After the service, we had dinner together.

Several members from both fraternities stayed the night at the center and attended a retreat held on Oct. 4, St. Francis's feast day.

Gerri Toeller, OFS, minister, Channel of Peace Fraternity

Padre Pio Fraternity, Raleigh, N.C.

The Transitus opened with a procession into the church led by Father Steve Patti, OFM, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Church, and Father Steve Kluge, OFM, and Father Jim Sabak, OFM, associate pastors; followed by members of our Padre Pio fraternity.

The altar steps were adorned with a life-size cross, a Franciscan habit, and a set of candles that fraternity members Joan Monti, OFS, and Dave Shick, OFS, lighted.

The congregation sang “All Creatures of Our God and King.”

Father Jim opened the service with a prayer. Sharon Winzeler, OFS, read the introduction by Brother Elias followed by a narration of Francis's death by Victoria Romero, OFS.

Father Jim spoke on the life of St. Francis.

Parish staff members also took part in the service. Tim Hetzel, coordinator of liturgy and sacraments; and Jennifer Fiduccia, director of family formation, led the singing of the responsorial psalm. Deb Royals-Mizerk, director of stewardship, read from the Gospel of John.

Music director Jim Wahl sang the hymn, “O, Sanctissima” in Latin and also provided a

selection of organ music.

After, Father Jim offered a prayer. Candles were lit from the paschal candle and the participants processed out singing “Jesus, Remember Me When I Come into Your Kingdom.” In the church prayer garden, Father Jim gave us the blessing of St. Francis.

Then the permanently professed returned to the church and renewed their Secular Franciscan Profession.

Frank Peluso, OFS, and Sharon Winzeler, OFS

St. Thomas More Fraternity, Wilmington, N.C.



Front row: Linda Keir, OFS (left), MaryEllen Humphrey, OFS; Marie Mallon, OFS; Joe Wells, guest; Evelyn Lauer, OFS; Mary Tociłowski, OFS; Brenda Wells, OFS; behind Brenda, Carlos Lourenco, OFS; Mary Eileen Hellmann OFS; Back row: Celia Laurencio, OFS (left); Janet Glatt, inquirer; Stan Tociłowski, guest; Greta Strittmatter, OFS; behind Greta, Caleb Strittmatter, guest; Carlos Lourenco. Present but not in photo: Mike Yamat, OFS, Val Roberts, OFS; Don Roberts, guest.

Even a powerful hurricane couldn't stop the members of St. Thomas More Fraternity from gathering to celebrate the Transitus of our beloved St. Francis of Assisi. Usually we hold the celebration in the beautiful chapel at St. Mark Catholic Church in Wilmington. But, with the church suffering from serious water damage due to Hurricane Florence, the chapel wasn't available. After phone calls and emails, a member offered to hold the ceremony in her home.

For centuries, the followers of St. Francis have met on the anniversary of his death, Oct. 3, to celebrate the Transitus; that is, his passage from earthly life to eternal life. It is also a celebration of his spirit and the light he was to his world and now to ours.

On that October afternoon, 17 fraternity members and guests sat in a semicircle, three rows deep, in front of an oblong, glass table. On it was a homemade robe similar to those St. Francis wore, a basket filled with cut-up bread, and two candles. Another table held a statue of St. Francis holding a small bird's nest, with several attentive birds perched on him.

As we sang the “Prayer of St. Francis,” more candles were brought to the table and placed on the robe to show the places where St. Francis had received the stigmata.

An aura of peacefulness surrounded us as the celebratory prayers and songs continued and the bread was distributed. At the request of Marie Mallon, OFS, our minister, we consumed the

bread, a symbol of the Eucharist and the love we share.

Our goal that day was not just to honor St. Francis but to give warm wishes to Janet Glatt, one of our cherished inquirers, who was moving to Maryland to help her family. With true Franciscan hospitality in mind, we celebrated the day with wine and appetizers, followed by coffee and, of course, cake.

St. Clare, too, was not forgotten. On her feast day, Aug. 11, Mary Hellmann, OFS, our formation director, sent everyone reminder emails focusing on Clare's formative years, the founding of the Poor Clares, and her role in helping St. Francis to carry out his vision.

Evelyn Lauer, secretary

St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity, Hendersonville, N.C.

St. Clare Fraternity, Asheville, N.C.

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, N.C.

St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity had its celebration in Immaculate Conception Church, beginning with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at 6 p.m. The sanctuary held a Franciscan habit, candles, and flowers.

Transitus service began at 7 p.m. We were joined by about 150 guests: members of St. Clare and St. Maximilian Kolbe fraternities, and Immaculate Conception parishioners.

Father Martin Schratz, OFM Cap., Immaculate Conception pastor, opened the service with a brief introduction to the life of St. Francis.

Randy Hair, OFS, minister, presented each reading in English, with Margarita Melendez, OFS, then reading each offering in Spanish.

Readings, from such sources as St. Bonaventure's "Major Legend of St. Francis" and "The Legend of the Three Companions" were chosen to highlight transformative events in Francis's life, such as his pilgrimage to Rome during which he changed clothes with a beggar and joined in begging alms, and his meeting and embrace of a leper. The story of Francis's death included how another friar, far away, died at the same time as Francis and called out, "Wait, father, wait, I'm coming with you!"

The scripture reading was 1 Peter 1:10–19.

Jim Costello, OFS, fraternity treasurer, presented a reading about St. Francis from G.K. Chesterton's writings.

Father Martin and Father Praveen Kumar Turaka, OFM Cap., parochial vicar, renewed their vows, and the Secular Franciscans from all three fraternities stood and renewed their Profession promises.

The service concluded with a final blessing, given by Father Martin in English and Father Praveen in Spanish.

Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS,
St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity

Congratulations, Newly Professed!



Channel of Peace Fraternity,
Chattanooga, Tenn., Oct. 14: Bill
Edwards, OFS (left); Karen Humphries,
OFS; Paul Semmens, OFS.

St. Francis and the Rieti Valley

Story and photos by Bret Thoman, OFS

This fall, I received the gift and joy of coming to know the Rieti Valley much more intimately, as I accompanied several groups of pilgrims walking the Camino of St. Francis through Rieti.

As Rieti sits at the geographical center of Italy (it is 51 miles to both the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian seas), the town has long been situated on important crossroads within Italy. Even before the ancient Roman road — the Via Salaria — traversed the peninsula through Rieti so the Romans could move salt, there were Etruscan and pre-Roman roads there, as well.

In the Middle Ages, Francis himself often walked through Rieti while traveling between Assisi and Rome. It is said that Francis loved the Rieti Valley almost as much as the Spoleto Valley. Though he was born and died in the Spoleto Valley (the vast plain that spans 40 miles from Perugia to Spoleto), he considered Rieti like a second home.

Today, perhaps more than any other place in central Italy (including Assisi itself), the Rieti Valley has preserved that rustic and natural simplicity that is so identified with the Franciscan charism and spirituality. Pilgrims frequently are awed by the vast valley, the flocks of sheep and goats, the flowers and wheat fields, as well as the Reatine Mountains all around making up part of the Apennines.

But it is perhaps the four Franciscan hermitages — and the stories that are told within — that have forever united the Rieti Valley to the life of the Poverello of Assisi.

Though one may argue how to rank the importance of the four hermitages, I will list them in the order one would come upon them while walking along the Way of Francis walking the Camino.

From Piediluco Lake, pilgrims first pass by the Faggio di San Francesco (the Beech tree of St. Francis). According to a local legend, Francis took refuge underneath this tree during a heavy storm.

Next, you will come to the town of Poggio Bustone where there is a Franciscan sanctuary, San Giacomo, which commemorates two events from Francis' life.

First, Francis once helped the townspeople see their inner goodness, saying to them, "*Buon giorno, buona gente*," ("Good morning, good people"). Next, perched in the mountains above the town is a cave called Sacro Speco where Francis felt the love of God and forgiveness of his sins through the archangel Gabriel.

The following day pilgrims enter the city of Rieti. Just a few miles before that, you will arrive at the Franciscan sanctuary of Santa Maria della Foresta, or, more simply, La Foresta.

Here there is an ancient house in the courtyard where Francis prepared for eye surgery and where the "miracle of wine" took place. According to the legend, in 1225 Francis came to Rieti for his eye surgery. In an effort to avoid attracting attention, he took refuge outside the city in a house behind the church of San Fabiano here.



Nonetheless, crowds came and trampled the vineyard, which was the only source of revenue for the poor priest. Francis prayed and the few grapes remaining yielded a huge amount of wine. One can also visit a cave behind the courtyard where Francis used to pray.

In Rieti, population 48,000, visitors can see the Church of St. Francis on the banks of the Velino River to the east of the Roman bridge. During medieval times, the area was the site of the leper hospital and was thus where the friars established their community and church. In the center of town is the cathedral, which is worth a visit; adjacent is the papal residence where Pope Honorius III — one of the pontiffs instrumental in the life of Francis and who approved his Rule in 1223 — frequently sojourned.



The following day, on the way out of Rieti, are two very important places in the life of Francis; Fonte Colombo and Greccio. Just about three miles from Rieti, after a steep uphill climb on switchbacks, is the Sanctuary of Fonte Colombo.

Its original Latin name, *Fons Colombarum*, takes its name from a group of doves (*colombae*) that were known to drink from a spring (*fons*) here.

There is a simple church, several chapels, and another grotto known as *Sacro Speco*. It was here that St. Francis prayed and fasted for 40 days between 1222 and 1223 before writing his final Rule. Known as the *Regula Bullata*, it was approved in 1223 and is still the same Rule that Franciscan friars follow. Also, somewhere in this area, it is believed that Francis underwent a painful operation on his eyes in 1225 or 1226.



The final hermitage is perhaps one of the most famous Franciscan sites in the world: Greccio. Referred to locally as the “New Bethlehem,” in 1223 St. Francis desired to recreate an actual nativity scene with live animals in order to render the feast of the birth of Christ — the Incarnation — more vivid and real in people’s lives.

Within the church one can visit a series of nativity scenes, or *crèches*, in addition to the ancient friary in the time of St. Francis as well as the time of St. Bonaventure.

Even if one cannot walk the Camino of St. Francis, all these places can easily be reached by car or bus making the Rieti Valley accessible. And they provide an invaluable insight into the life and spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

Bret Thoman, OFS, is director of St. Francis Pilgrimages and author of St. Francis of Assisi: Passion, Poverty, and the Man Who Transformed the Catholic Church and St. Clare of Assisi: Light from the Cloister.

Secular Franciscan Websites

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region — www.bssfsfo.org

National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States (NAFRA)

www.SecularFranciscansUSA.org

CIOFS — International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order — www.ciofs.org

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region
Secular Franciscan Order
August 3-5, 2018
Life Way Conference Center
Ridgecrest, NC

Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, a member of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, conducted the Pastoral Visitation. Joan Geiger, OFS, National Councilor, delegate of the National Minister, Jan Parker, OFS, conducted the Fraternal Visitation.

Preparatory Information:

The Pre-Visitation Questionnaire was completed collaboratively by the Council members. Carolyn Townes, JPIC Commission Chair, completed a separate Pre-Visitation Questionnaire. The Annual Report for the year ending December 31, 2017, and the Visitation Reports from the previous visitation, August 7–9, 2015, were also emailed in a timely manner.

Demographics:

The Regional Fraternity of Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis is an organic union of locally established fraternities and emerging fraternities. Middle and Eastern Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and designated portions of Georgia and Alabama comprise the region. Memphis, Tennessee area is in the St. Clare Region (74) and Mobile, Alabama area is in St. Joan of Arc Region (60). Southern Georgia with the exception of St. Simons Island is in Five Franciscan Martyrs Region (51).

	2015	2018
Canonically established fraternities	30	29
Emerging fraternities	1	3
Newly forming groups	2	0
Active Professed Members	508	531
Candidates	73	38
Inquirers	47	48
Local Spiritual Assistants	21	16
Regional Spiritual Assistant	1	1

- Active Professed Members includes both active members and those excused from attendance and/or financial obligations.

Documentation Review:

The Region was canonically established on October 20, 1994.

The Regional Minister and Secretary's Binders were reviewed (Agendas, Minutes, etc). The Treasurer's financial records and bank statements were examined for accuracy and compliance. The Formation Director's log, records and books were reviewed. All documentation is in exceptional order,

Leadership:

The Visitors met with the Regional Executive Council on Friday afternoon. The Council is quite large to accommodate the vast area of the Region. In attendance were the Regional Minister, Vice-Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, Spiritual Assistant and 2 Councilors each for Area 1, Area 2 and Area 3, JPIC Commission Chair, Multicultural Commission Chair, Coordinator of Spiritual Assistants, and *Communio* Editor (Newsletter). The REC seems very compatible, is knowledgeable of the responsibilities of their office and is imbued in Franciscan spirituality in addressing challenges, concerns, and issues.

In addition to Regional Leadership, two members – Jerry Rousseau, and Awilda Guadalupe are members of the National Executive Council, Carolyn Townes is the National JPIC Chair, and Dianne Ambrose is National Historian,

Formation:

Dianne Ambrose is well qualified and prepared as Formation Director. Although completing her second year in the position, she has conducted area workshops using up-to-date materials. The *For Up to Now Manual*, *The Franciscan Journey* and *What it Takes* are the basis of her formation instruction. BSSF Region has a “Formator’s Guide for Orientation and Initial Formation.” Forms are also maintained for recordkeeping and assessment pertinent for each person in initial formation. On Friday evening, Dianne presented “History of Our Rule.” The CIOFS video celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Rule was shown. She also had a PowerPoint presentation that had reflections from past and present Regional Minsters as well as other members who had a “favorite article of the Rule and comment to share.”

Spiritual Assistance:

Two very moving ceremonies were held during the Visitation. During the Celebration of the Eucharist on Saturday, Dcn. Thomas Shaver, OFS, was installed as Regional Spiritual Assistant. Dcn. Shaver’s wife and members of his Fraternity participated in the service. At Sunday’s Liturgy, Ken Wessling, OFS, completed the Spiritual Assistant’s Course and was commissioned. Fourteen Fraternities have a Spiritual Assistant. Fifteen Fraternities and one Emerging Community are without a Spiritual Assistant. Fr. Christopher met with the Spiritual Assistants. The Region does have a Spiritual Assistant Training Program that involves a personal and communal approach to the Four Pillars — Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity, and Apostolate of BSSF Region.

Prayer and Liturgies during the Visitation:

Throughout the weekend, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration in the Eucharistic Chapel. Members signed up and took turns throughout the day. I spent time in the Chapel on Saturday evening after the Social. At least six other Secular Franciscans were in the Chapel with me. I learned from another member that he had signed-up for adoration during the night hours. Members were requested to sign up for Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion. The Liturgies were well done with Deacons assisting at Mass. Morning and Evening Prayers and Mass Hymns were in a booklet specially prepared for the Visitation. Although all religious services were held in the same room as the conferences, there was a prayerful and reverent atmosphere present. The Memorial Service for Deceased Members of the Region led by members of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity was very meaningful and gave recognition to the deceased members and their contribution to the Region. Candles were lit by a member of the deceased member’s fraternity in his/her memory.

Apostolic Activities:

The Region is blessed to have scheduled a presentation by Stephen Smith, OFS. Stephen is the founder of *Of the Nations* and has made many mission trips to Uganda, Haiti, and Guatemala. Stephen showed a video of his recent trip to Uganda. He is a living example of and embodies the Beatitudes — feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, etc. With H₂O financial assistance, Stephen and his team of missionaries has brought fresh water to villages.

Summary

The Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region are alive, growing and dedicated. Almost 200 members were in attendance. This demonstrated their desire to come together in fraternity, to learn, to share, to celebrate. Accommodations at Ridgecrest were ideal for the size of the group

Commendations:

- Excellent leadership at the Regional Level is so evident. You exemplify servant leadership.
- Member attendance was exceptional. Most had traveled many hours by car to be with their brothers and sisters.
- Recognizing New Councils, new attendees, those celebrating anniversaries and newly professed certainly welcomed them to the regional family.
- Fr. Louie and his display of books and religious articles made shopping in his “Gift Shop” easy and convenient. Being in the Bible Belt, I’m sure Catholic Shops are few and far between.
- The Fraternity displays — tri-fold poster boards — showing pictures of fraternity events and celebrations as well as items for sale demonstrated the great work and apostolic activities that are happening in the Region. The Fraternity banners which lined the conference room and used in Sunday’s procession, exemplified unity in diversity.
- You have been blessed with outstanding guest speakers — Br. Bill Short, OFM, and Sr. Ilia Delio, OFS, to name just two — every “third year.” Keep up the good work you are doing in providing experts in their field of Franciscan Spirituality. It was wonderful to see former Regional Ministers in attendance — Audrey Binet, Judy Haupt, and Jerry Rousseau. Thank you for the strong foundation you have given to BSSF Region.

Recommendations:

- Continue to respond to current issues presented by members. While we must be fraternal and charitable in our response, we are an Order in the Church and as such must abide by the Church’s rules and teachings. I refer you to Fr. James Martin, S.J.’s, article in *America Magazine*, “What is the Official Church Teaching on Homosexuality?” Fr. Martin’s book, *Building A Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter Into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity* has recently been released in a revised and expanded edition.
- Interest in the Church’s Social Teaching was also expressed. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) websites have information that can assist in initial/ongoing formation. Your quarterly newsletter, *Communio*, as well as presentations/articles by Dcn. Tom Shaver, OFS, Regional Spiritual Assistant, and Carolyn Townes, OFS, JPIC Commission Chair could also inform members of the Church’s social teachings.
- As more than half of your fraternities are without a Spiritual Assistant, encourage members to take the Spiritual Assistant Training Program.

Conclusion: (See page 21)

I felt a genuine cohesiveness among the regional members. Their attentiveness to prayer, to the

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

Minister: DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS

Vice Minister: Carmen Madero, OFS

Secretary: Barbara Garrison, OFS

Treasurer: Ken Brooke, OFS

Formation Director: Dianne Ambrose, OFS

**Spiritual Assistant:
Search In Progress**

Area Councilors

Area 1

Lannie Newman, OFS

AL: Bessemer;

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

TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

Area 2

Sara Nell Boggs, OFS; Janet Hulshof, OFS

GA: Augusta, St. Simons Island;

NC: Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;

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

Area 3

Bob Pearson, OFS; Carolyn Peduzzi, 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

Multicultural Commission Chair

Willie Guadalupe, OFS

**Youth/Young Adult Fraternal Animator
Position Available**

Prayer Ministry (online prayer requests)

Area 1: Lori Moran, OFS

Area 2: Dorothy Huebner, OFS

Area 3: Bob Pearson, OFS

Fraternity prayer coordinators submit prayer requests.

discussions, to one another is noteworthy. Responsibilities for the smooth flow in all areas of the agenda were managed with great care. Aware of the signs of the times: polarization, racism, discrimination, nationalism, sexual assault, violence against women, etc., the ministers of the region eagerly voiced their concern to embrace the Church's social doctrine and begin to study and discuss the doctrine as a subject of formation sessions; Lumen Gentium and Gaudium et Spes on the role of the laity in society and the world — all to bring the 40th Anniversary of the Rule and the light of the Gospel into day-to-day experience. Energy, enthusiasm, and a joyful spirit motivate the region for authentic Franciscan witness.

Several REC members are servant leaders on the NEC. The formation team in the region is visible to the local fraternities. The newly installed RSA, also a Deacon, comes prepared in areas theology, liturgical and sacramental catechesis, and Church history. He is well read, and communicates effectively. The region's Four Pillars are in the minds and hearts of the members. I mentioned, though, these pillars should stand and be grounded in Conversion. The Prologue to the Rule is proper to the Third Order: Regular and Secular. (Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR)

The Visitors are most grateful, appreciative - and a bit overwhelmed - for the accommodations and gracious hospitality that were afforded them. We would like to thank DorothyAnn Rowland, Regional Minister, the Regional Executive Council and the members of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region for their many kindnesses, generosity, and warm welcome. The Visitation was well

planned and smoothly run. We commend you for the care that you show to your members. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. May he look upon you with kindness and give you peace.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR
Pastoral Visitor – CNSA

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Geiger, OFS
Fraternal Visitor – National Councilor

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