

Communio

That All May Be One

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

Fall 2021

Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi

“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 in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.”
Canticle of the Creatures by St. Francis of Assisi

By Deacon Thomas Shaver, OFS
BSSF Region Spiritual Assistant



The Ascension of St. Francis of Assisi. Painting by Giotto/public domain

“A Reflection on Death” I know it sounds morbid! That is not my intent. In recent weeks we celebrated the Exultation of the Cross and the Stigmata of St. Francis. In October we celebrate the transitus of our Seraphic Father, and we should look at death, not as an end, but a new beginning.

Due to COVID-19 we have experienced the deaths of friends and relatives. Certainly, within our region we have experienced the passing of brothers and sisters within the region and within our own fraternities.

My fraternity, The Fraternity of the Stigmata of St. Francis, lost a brother, Joseph Perillo, OFS, to Sister Death recently and he is missed.

While we mourn the loss of loved ones and miss them, do we truly consider that “God has called them home?”

(See Transitus on next page)

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

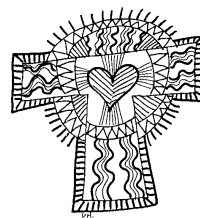
Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate



Transitus (continued from page 1)

All too often that phrase becomes a cliché, but do we really understand the meaning behind it? I have buried a younger brother, and my wife has lost three of her siblings to Sister Death. We are both part of an aging population and are becoming more aware as we age of our mortality.

For those of us old enough to remember the Baltimore Catechism, two of the questions and responses that might be applicable to this discussion of death stand out, “Why does Christ judge men immediately after death? Christ judges men immediately after death to reward or punish them according to their deeds.

And how may we daily prepare for our judgement? We may prepare for our judgement by a good examination of conscience, in which we will discover our sins and learn to fear punishment they deserve.”

As Franciscans we try to focus on the positive aspect of death, not condemnation, but salvation and love from the Father through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection; however, even our own Rule in its preamble chapters one and two reminds of the importance of doing penance and the consequences of not doing penance that at the final hour we will have a reckoning before the Lord. Isn’t that what the two questions from the Baltimore Catechism are saying, there will be a reckoning?

The purpose of this article isn’t to get morbid or negative, it is to encourage all of us to increase our personal awareness of how we stand at this moment in our lives in our relationship with God. If God took me at this moment, am I right with Him? If not, what actions do I need to take to get right with Him? As Franciscans we should never fear death but accept that it is merely a passing from earth to heaven and the presence of God. As gospel people we are reminded of the final word of our Savior as he hung on the cross, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)

What might we do to prepare for our own transitus? Certainly, a nightly examination of conscience and a perfect act of contrition are in order. Frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation is beneficial. I would recommend journaling and reflecting on the gospel, particularly the passage from Matthew on the corporal works of mercy found at Matthew 25:31-46.

This passage certainly corresponds to the theme of the recent ARG, “Who is my neighbor?” I have often said, we will be judged more harshly, not on our sins of commission, but our sins of omission, which is the basis of the judgement found in chapter 25 of Matthew.

We must be prepared, as Jesus said in the parable of the wise and unwise virgins, “Therefore, stay awake for you know neither the day nor the hour.” (Matthew 25: 13)

The Lord will call each of us at His determined time, and will we hear him say, “welcome good and faithful servant?”

Returning to the Baltimore Catechism, I am reminded frequently of question 6, “Why did God make you?” And its answer, “God made me to know, love, and serve him in and to be happy with him forever in Heaven.”

Minister's Message**We are called to love without limit****By DorothyAnn Rowland, OSF**

BSSF Regional Minister

Article 13 of our Rule states *“As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the first-born of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit should accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.”*



Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap, initial formation book, “The Franciscan Journey, Embracing the Franciscan Vision” focuses on Article 13 in Chapter 21, entitled “How to Love People.”.

At times it seems that to love the other is difficult, especially when one doesn't see or understand why the other thinks or acts in a particular way. The many challenges of our current times play a role in our call to love. Fr. Lester asks, “What is the spirit that guides our Franciscan way of relating to people?” This article of our Rule mentions these qualities: a gentle spirit; a courteous spirit; accept people as a gift; accept people as an image of Christ; place ourselves on an equal basis with people; recognize people's worth.

As we now come to the Autumn of 2021 and still are concerned with the realities of each day, I ask you to pray and ponder the ways you have put those qualities into your daily life and shown them or not; and to be open to conversion and be willing to see with the eyes and mind of Christ, especially if one already has negative ideas about people. We are called to love, for God is love.

In This Issue

Transitus	1
Minister's Message	3
Sister Earth-JPIC	4
Francis as surrender model	5
Racism and OFS	7
Election and profession	9
Friar 'Cue.	11
Francis as Superhero	12
OFS Websites	10
Regional Calendar	13
BSSF Recap	14
Apostolate News	17
BSSF Roster	18
October feast days	18
Quinquennial News	19

Love is patient; love is kind.

Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish.

Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries.

Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth.

There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

May God bless you and keep you and give you his peace!

DorothyAnn Rowland

Sister Earth cries for a gentler response

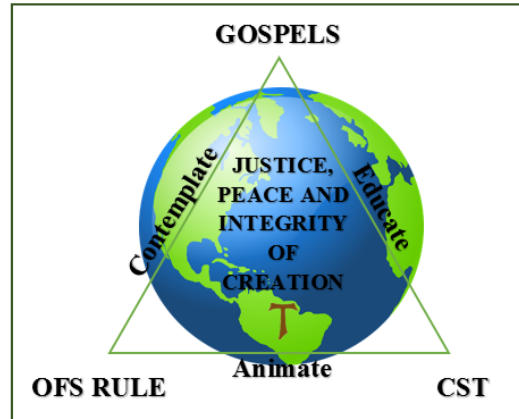
By Carolyn Townes, OFS

BSSF Regional and National JPIC Animator

“The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.... I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.” (Laudato Si, 2 and 14)

SPIRITUALITY

FORMATION



FRATERNITY

APOSTOLATE

We hear the Psalmist proclaim, “*The earth is the LORD’s and all it holds; the world and those who dwell in it.*” Our Holy Rule exhorts us to respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High,” and strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship (OFS Rule, Art. 18). I believe that universal kinship has a three-step approach – ourselves, others and God.

It is not difficult to understand the violence we humans do to our earth since it is very much played out in the violence we do to one another. Mass shootings, for example, is indicative of the violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin. How we do one thing is how we do everything. If we cannot honor and respect ourselves, then it follows that we cannot honor and respect the rest of God’s creatures.

The papal encyclical, *Laudato Si*, is a call to stop, pause and ask ourselves some difficult questions: How are we *BE*-ing with ourselves? With others? With God’s creation? With all creatures, animate and inanimate? Pope Francis shines light on how we show up in the world as we relate to our Sister Mother Earth. First, we must realize that we are all human beings, created by God, and not a product of use. This is the first of our Catholic Social Teaching – the life and dignity of the human person. Violence done to our brothers and sisters reflects the violence done in our earth home. If we do not care about one another, then how can we care about the earth? When we do violence to Sister Mother Earth, the poor and the vulnerable are the first to feel its effects. As the poor cries out for safe drinking water, fertile vegetation, and clean air, we turn a deaf ear. The Psalmist laments the Lord hears the cry of the poor; while the author of Proverbs tells us whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, will also cry himself and not be heard.

Pope Francis speaks of the Trinitarian relationship with all creatures in that “the world was created by the three Persons acting as a single divine principle, but each one of them performed this common work in accordance with his own personal property. Consequently, ‘when we contemplate with wonder the universe in all its grandeur and beauty, we must praise the whole Trinity.’” This is our Franciscan call to praise and honor all of creation – to contemplate with

(See Sister Earth on next page)

Sister Earth (continued from page 4)

wonder. It is in the contemplation that we are mindful of God's grandeur, thus we do not take it for granted. We notice and recognize what we have before us and what we have been so benevolently entrusted to care for; not dominate and destroy.

We are called to trust the presence of the divine seed in everyone (OFS Rule, Art 19). Everything created by God is good and has an inherent nature or divine seed. The inherent nature of an oak tree is to grow tall and strong, giving shade and sustenance to creatures, thus giving honor and glory to the Creator. We must be mindful of the presence of the divine seed in everyone. We must be mindful of the inherent nature of all of God's created.

Pope Francis calls us to recognize our place in the world as stewards of the created world. We cannot hear the cry of the world without hearing the cry of the poor and vulnerable. Stop and notice the violence we do to ourselves, then to each other, and then to our earth home. Then hear the words of the Psalmist as he laments for the poor who are gravely affected by the violence we have wrought. That must also be our lament; for one day we too will cry out and there will be no one left to hear us.

Francis as our model of surrender

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

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

Joanita is the immediate past editor of the Communio and an author who plans to spend time writing in Assisi, Italy. This article was inspired during her recent trip there.

What a blessing it is to attend Mass in the stigmata Lower Basilica of St. Francis on this special day: the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis.

“The Church rejoiced for the holiness of Francis and for this special favor that God gave him,” Father Daniel Quackenbush, OFM Conv., says in his homily. “The Church and its faithful were committed to building a place of rest suitable for this holy lover of the Lord; and for almost 800 years people from all over the world have been coming here to be inspired by the authentic, passionate Christian life of Francis of Assisi, and also by this beautiful basilica built in his honor.”

This Mass is being celebrated in the Chapel of St. Catherine, directly across from the entrance to the Lower Basilica.

In 1224, Francis was on Mount La Verna to fast for 40 days, from the Assumption on Aug. 15 to the feast of St. Michael, Sept. 29. Early documents note that around the feast of the Triumph (or Exaltation) of the Cross (Sept. 14), a six-winged seraph flew to Francis, who was absorbed in prayer, and hovered above him. In his “Legenda Minor of St. Francis,” St. Bonaventure writes:

“When the vision vanished after a mysterious and intimate conversation, it left Francis aglow with seraphic love in his soul. Externally, however, it left marks on
(See Surrender on next page)



St. Francis receives the stigmata. Giotto painting/public domain

Surrender (continued from page 5)

his body like those of the Crucified as if the impression of a seal had been left in heated wax. The figure of the nails appeared immediately on his hands and feet. The heads of the nails were inside his hands (i.e., visible on the palms) but on top of his feet with their points extending through to the opposite side. His right hand too showed a blood-red wound as if it had been pierced by a lance, and blood flowed frequently from it” (*Proper Offices of Franciscan Saints and Blesseds in the Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 292).

I look up at the crucifix above the altar. Blood pours from the wound in Jesus’s side; blood wells up to envelop the nails in his hands and feet. He emptied himself so he could be born into the world, and in his passion and death he emptied himself even further as he shed his blood and gave up his life.

Francis, like Jesus, emptied himself to become poor. From the moment he received the stigmata, he, too, shed his blood. Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounds, to know that they were real. One painting that I’ve seen shows someone putting his hand into the wound in Francis’s side.

We celebrate this feast every year. What is asked of us when we do this? As Father Daniel says in his homily:

“[I]s it enough for us to just remember this amazing spiritual turning point, the Poverello’s sacred stigmata? Does the feast commit us beyond admiration and adulation for the holiness of Francis?

Sure, it does. The saints intercede for us, but they are also an example to imitate. Our attraction and devotion to St. Francis calls us to embrace the evangelical life as he did, with sincerity, dedication and great love.

“In the prayer for the opening of today’s Mass we prayed ‘grant us, God the Father, through the intercession of St. Francis, to conform ourselves to the death of Christ to participate in his resurrection,’ and in the responsorial psalm we proclaimed, ‘I was crucified with Christ.’

“Are we really conforming to the death of Jesus? Have we been crucified with him in the sense of dying to ourselves, to our will, to our agenda, to our way of acting?”

Francis didn’t ask for the stigmata. He prayed that he would feel the same love and pain that Jesus felt in his passion. What form that would take, or when it would happen, he left to God.

That’s one thing I take from this year’s celebration of this feast. I’ve tended to want to be in control of what happens in my life. I can’t abdicate responsibility for what is mine to do, but I’ve learned, including during this time in Italy, that my life is so much richer when I’m surrender in open trust to what *God* has planned for me.

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

Consilium Internationale Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis (CIOFS)

International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order

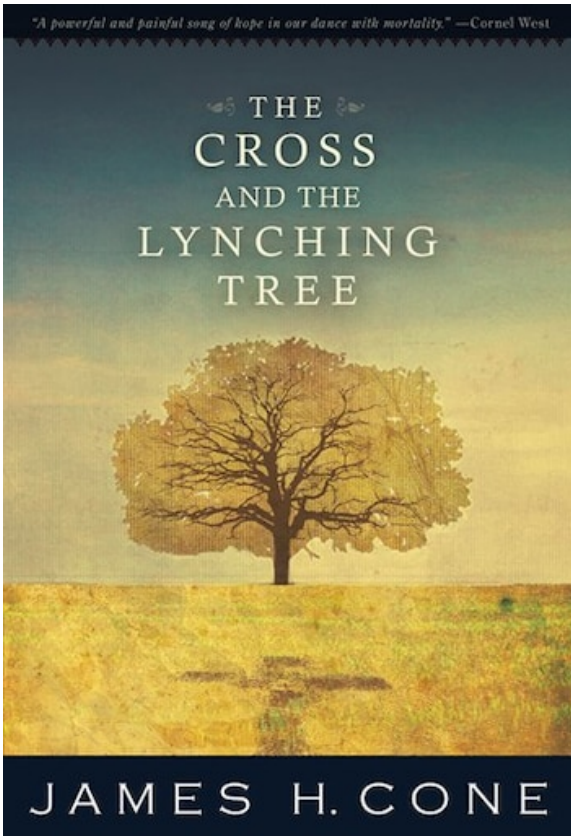
www.ciofs.org

Racism dialogue and Secular Franciscans

By Barb Robless, OFS

Fraternity of St. Clare, Winston-Salem

“Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others” (OFS Rule, Article 19).



Thanks to Orbis Books for permission to use the cover image with this article. This book is available through OrbisBooks.com.

The Rule of our Secular Franciscan Order is like Scripture, always stirring our hearts and moving our minds to understanding our personal journey and the context of God’s movement in our everyday lives, newly informed hearts interpreting it’s meaning to us personally and fraternally as Secular Franciscans.

Our spiritual maturity as Secular Franciscans grows us individually and fraternally through called *dialogue*, something that we use in formation. While this technique is not new to us, I am always taken aback by how many Seculars voice hesitance or discomfort when it comes to dialogue about racism.

Perhaps it’s the political venue or fears of upsetting the apple cart, stirring up unpleasant memories of the past, concerns of having to deal with differing opinions on the subject that could cause initial division with whom we are in dialogue, or felt perceptions that silence will make all fears or troubles mysteriously go away.

Or perhaps it’s having to unearth unconscious bias that lies deeply within one’s own personal and family history.

I have had the pleasure this past year of participating in virtual discussion and dialogue on books suggested by our Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Animator Carolyn Townes, OFS.

One book, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson, articulates the historical Black narrative that involves hierarchal racism and its recurring evolution that goes back to slavery in our country.

The other book, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James H. Cone, seeks to reconcile racism and the gospel message of Black liberation from violence during the lynching era.

(See Racism Dialogue on next page)

Racism Dialogue (continued from page 7)

The other book, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James H. Cone, seeks to reconcile racism and the gospel message of Black liberation from violence during the lynching era.

Both books are powerful and stir a gamut of emotions and feelings that pour forth, the spiritual fruit of which grow into a deeper understanding of today's concerns regarding systemic racism and the criminalization of Blacks. More important and meaningful is the change of heart to move us as Secular Franciscans to do what we need to do with this metanoia within our lives.

Ministers and fraternity members from across the U.S., from California to Maine and as far south as Alabama entered the dialogue sessions on caste and systemic racism within institutions. We accepted the emotions and feelings that were stirred, with honor and respect for each other, as we journeyed deeply and more significantly in empathy with an understanding of the importance in allying ourselves with our Black brothers and sisters, being open to their narratives on race, and dealing with uncomfortableness in the spirit of St. Francis and his stories.

The discussions and dialogues had group guidelines, and embodied prayer and grace, as we listened to each other's stories considering the books' narratives, respected each other's journeys, spoke with "I" statements to take ownership of one's own representation of Christ. There was no blaming, no shaming, no attacking. We honored humility and respected confidentiality.

Among the dialogue questions: "Did it ever occur to you to link the cross and lynching in this country?" and "Do we sometimes forget that the cross is a paradox because it 'inverts the world's value system with the news that hope comes by way of defeat?'" These questions were provocative and this, too, was in the spirit of the Jesus who sought to help listeners understand God's presence amid seemingly difficult situations.

St. Francis understood the power of storytelling, as Jesus told parables the same way, and it took people's hearts and minds to the spiritual core of a meaningful God-moment event in recognizing God in one's midst incarnationally despite turmoil, conflict, or uncomfortable feelings. Jesus and the prophets made many in their day feel uncomfortable.

One important take-away that I learned from reading our Black brothers and sisters' narratives is that most people don't think of themselves as racists. It is systemic policies and programs developed over time that one endorses and advocates that exclude our Black brothers and sisters and other minorities or create obstacles that keep them from their equal rights (like policies against immigration and the poor and marginalized) that defines one as a racist.

Reading and listening to the stories of our Black brothers and sisters brings an incarnational understanding of Jesus in our midst and a metanoia that stirs Secular Franciscans to further move to act on social justice in our secular lives with this new understanding and alliance.

I encourage you to read these books individually and, if you feel spiritually moved, to read them in your fraternities as a way of allying with those who are most poor and marginalized, as you continue to find Jesus in your midst as you listen to narratives that you might at first approach hesitantly or fearfully.

May the Lord give you peace in your dialogue and discussions about racism and in your efforts to bring joy and hope to others as Secular Franciscans.

Immaculate Conception fraternity election



The Immaculate Conception fraternity of Jonesboro, GA, elected a new council on Sept. 11. Above is a the council, regional visitors who managed the election, and the spiritual assistant.

Left to right, Fr. John Koziol, OFM; Deacon Dennis Arcand, OFS; Sandra Bailey, OFS; Lori Moran, OFS; regional visitor Sharon Loiselle, OFS; Eugenia West, OFS; Carmen Madero, OFS; Laura Cleary, OFS; Carol Hamill, OFS; and regional visitor Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS.

St. Francis and Clare Fraternity Welcomes newly professed Franciscans



St. Francis and Clare Fraternity of Knoxville, TN, celebrated seven professions on July 10. Left to right are: John Michael Fox, OFS, Francesca Follone-Montgomery, OFS, Cindy Murphy, OFS, and Margaret Burnette, OFS, with Father John Orr, presiding.

Also assisting as witnesses were far left, Barbara Bell, OFS, far right is Bonnie Ameche, OFS, and to Bonnie's right is Terry Ann Paradis.

'Friar 'Cue' evokes gratitude, awareness



By Lawrence Lynch, OFS

Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity
St. Simon's Island, GA

On Aug. 1, a farewell dinner for 63 persons associated with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), was hosted by The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity, St. Simons, Island, Georgia. The FOCUS group consisted of six full-time missionaries, six student-leaders, and 51 students.

Hosting the dinner was our fraternity's way of thanking the FOCUS students for their faith-filled presence in our parish and for their commitment to evangelize fellow students in their respective universities.

The FOCUS leadership chose St William Catholic Church parish on St. Simon's Island for their base location for their Formation Summer Projects. The students worked full-time at "The Cloister" resort on nearby Sea Island and lived in Brunswick and on St. Simons Island. The students participated in the St. William faith community by attending daily mass, adoration, confession, spiritual direction and listening to Catholic speakers for intellectual and spiritual formation. The lectures were open to parishioners, and they were well attended by fraternity members and parishioners.

The farewell dinner was initiated by Inquirers George and Maggie Hodges. The couple had done a number of pork barbecues as parishioners in their previous Franciscan parish in Manhattan.

As a Secular Franciscan, George renamed the fraternity barbecue "Friar-Cue." The Hodges organized the apostolate, and with the help of fraternity members, they planned the menu and enhanced the church hall with attractive decorations. Several parishioners joined fraternity members with food preparation, and the serving of the food and drinks.

See Friar 'Cue on next page)

Friar ‘Cue (continued from page 10)

Many of the FOCUS members who attended the lectures interacted with our fraternity members and parishioners. A few students recognized our “TAU” crosses, but others were not aware of its significance.

Wearing the Tau was an excellent way to excite their curiosity and to educate them about the Secular Franciscan Way of Life. We hoped that our initial introduction might open their minds and souls to the possibility of entering the Secular Franciscan Order if a full-time religious life was not discerned by them.

When our pastor, Monsignor Schreck, asked each of the students to introduce themselves, a number had discerned to enter religious life. One young man was studying in a seminary and his goal is to become a Franciscan priest. Many other students stated that they were not entering religious life and that they planned to remain in the secular world where they would continue to evangelize others.

The FOCUS dinner was a grand success, and it was an exciting way to show our Franciscan hospitality and thankfulness. It was also an occasion for fraternity members to evangelize the FOCUS members to see the possibility that they could live in the secular world and have a vocation in our third order. The apostolate also made our parishioners more aware of our fraternity’s existence and our charism of reaching out in love for others and walking in the footsteps of St. Francis.



“Wearing the Tau was an excellent way to excite their curiosity and to educate them about the Secular Franciscan Way of Life.”

--Lawrence Lynch, OFS, on the success of the Friar ‘Cue

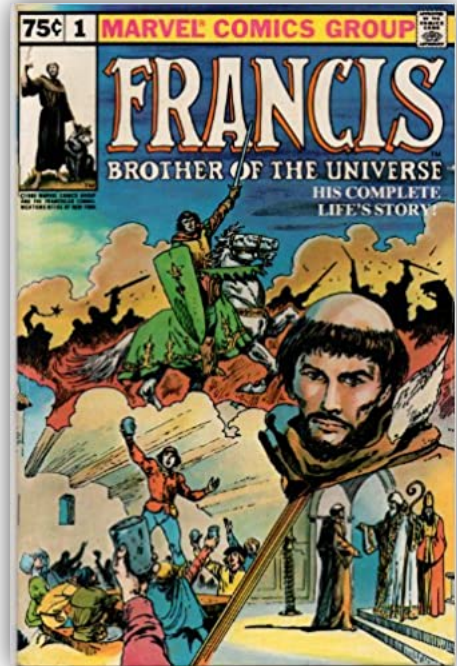
St. Francis of Assisi—*Superhero*

By **Bill Edwards, OFS**

Channel of Peace Fraternity
Chattanooga, TN

We all recognize St. Francis is a Superhero of the Roman Catholic Church as well as for the world for his service to Our Lord in shaping events, influencing the Church, to say nothing of millions of minds, particularly the young for the Glory of God. However, what most of us may not know, is that he is also a real Marvel Comics Superhero... that's right, he's right up there with the likes of Superman, Captain America, Spiderman, Iron Man, the Incredible Hulk and a host of others that have entertained us over the years.

St. Francis made his debut in Marvel Comics, as '*Francis: Brother of the Universe*' in 1980. That issue was a 48-page masterpiece of vivid color and action, depicting the life and times of St. Francis, and sold over 15,000,000 copies. Too bad it went out of print in 2006, his fellow Superheroes could have used his help in their recent cinematic struggles against Thanos and his forces of evil.



In the late 70's, several friars were exploring the potential for evangelization by reaching new and younger audiences. As time went on, contact was made with Marvel Comics in New York who jumped on the opportunity to do a comic book about St. Francis. Marvel agreed to do the artwork, publication and distribution... all they needed was an author.

Enter Fr. Roy Gasnok, OFM, from Holy Name Province, who was known in the community as an avid comic book aficionado, and the project was on. After completion, Pope John Paul II was given a copy. After being told that this was the first comic about a Saint to be made by a major comic book publisher. He replied... "So, why cannot John Paul II be number two?" Soon after, Marvel published '*The Life of John Paul II*'.

A comic of St./Mother Theresa of Calcutta was to follow, as well as work with Paramount Studios in producing the movie '*Brother Son, Sister Moon*', and an Off-Broadway Musical entitled '*Francis*'.

This is just another way the Spirituality of our Seraphic Father St. Francis continues to affect us all more than 800 years after his birth... a man inspired by God who truly can be called 'Brother of the Universe.'

Note: Copies can still be obtained as a keen collector's item in magazine shops, amazon.com, and e-bay. Graphic by Marvell Comics.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS
SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS AND ELECTIONS
October 2021 to May 2022**

* confirmed

V+ follow-up visit (observers in parentheses)

Oct 15-16 *	Blessed John Duns Scotus/Garden City, SC	V	Ellen Ferrone	Deacon Tom
Nov 13-14 *	Channel of Peace/Chattanooga, TN	V	Sharon Loiselle	Jean Schneider
Nov 20 *	St. Francis of the Hills/Hendersonville, NC	E	Betti Longinotti	Jean Schneider
2022				
Jan 7-8 *	St. Elizabeth of Hungary/Augusta, GA	V	Christine Lukesh	Georgette Schraeder
Jan 8-9 *	Stigmata of St. Francis/Johns Creek, GA	V	Sharon Loiselle	Jean Schneider
Feb 5 *	Mother Cabrini/Anderson, SC	E		
April 9-10 *	Franciscan Family of Greensboro/Greensboro, NC	V	Ellen Ferrone	Deacon Tom
May 10 *	Fraternity of St. Clare/Winston-Salem, NC	E		
May 14-15 *	Sts. Francis and Clare/Knoxville, TN	V		

Many fraternities cancelled their scheduled Visitations and/or Chapters of Elections due to the pandemic in 2020 and in 2021. Some have been rescheduled and have taken place; others have not. If you are once again gathering in person, please contact your Area Councilor and me to please offer some dates for your fraternity to be scheduled for your Visitation or Chapter of Elections. For those Councils who are serving longer, thank you; please let us know when you could have an election. If you had a Chapter of Elections in 2020, the minister is to request a date for a Visitation at least a year later. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

BSSF Regional Executive Council Meeting Recap

By **Nora Wessling**

BSSF Regional Secretary

The Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council met on Friday, Aug. 13, 2021, at the ARG. The following are the highlights of that meeting.

- Vice-Minister Carmen Madero, OFS, presided, since Minister DorothyAnn Rowland OFS, was excused due to convalescing from a surgical procedure.
- This being a year for the Regional Visitation, Fraternal Visitor, Joshua Molidor, OFS, National Councilor, and Pastoral Visitor, Fr. Christopher Panagopolos, TOR, CNSA were present. Also present was an invited guest, the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of Most Holy Name of Jesus Province, Fr. Ciduoane Joseph, OFM.
- After the opening prayer, Presider Carmen Madero welcomed everyone.
- The Executive Council then listened to comments from each of our visitors.
 - The status of the SFO fraternities including National, during this time of the pandemic, and the importance of trying to keep a sense of fraternity.
 - An appreciation of our Region for not only the Regional Executive Council, but also for all the fraternities in the Region with an encouragement of continuing to build relationships.
 - Encouraging words to allow the virtues expressed by St. Francis to speak to our hearts—because of fragmentation we hear about—and to allow them to come forward especially in our conversation with others.
 - Use of dialogue and to trust in the Holy Spirit to assist all of us to continue moving forward and succeed during these very trying times.
- The minutes of the REC's May 22, 2021, meeting were approved.
- Treasurer Ken Brooke presented the Draft of the 2022 Budget and a discussion followed.
- He then reviewed the Treasurer's report for the second quarter and stated that we are in good shape financially. He shared that we have met all of our obligations.

New Business:

- The Draft 2022 Budget that Ken presented was approved by the REC. This approved Draft will be presented for further discussion and a final approval will be made at the Regional Fraternity Council meeting to be held the next day, August 14, 2021.
- The ARG packet was reviewed.
- The plan for the Regional Fraternity Council meeting in person and the use of Zoom was explained. To assure we will meet quorum for that meeting, it was explained how the REC will use Zoom for those Ministers, Delegates and REC members unable to physically be present. Via Zoom, those participants will be able to know what is going on in the meeting, interact, and will be considered as attending the meeting.

(See Regional Council on next page)

Regional Council (continued from page 14)

- The status of the endowment distribution was presented by the Committee Chairperson, Carmen Madero. She explained to the Visitors about the monies of the endowment fund, and how the financial requests are made by a fraternity for an apostolate or charity they support—following a protocol that has been established by the REC. She then reported to all, the distributions that have been made thus far. A total of \$1,250.00 has been distributed.
- A suggestion had been made by the Regional Minister to the presider to discuss with the REC members about a fraternity that had made a request but had not followed protocol, which included getting approval from the local fraternity’s council to make the request. In question by some REC members, was if funds should be given to this fraternity because the charity appeared to be a worthwhile cause, despite their not following protocol, not getting their council’s approval. So, discussion by the REC followed.
 - The outcome of the discussion was that the REC had spent time discussing and developing the protocol process and that the recommended procedures should be followed. An REC member suggested that the local fraternity making the request for funds, also send a copy of the council minutes with the request for funds. This suggested that the minutes would provide further documentation and would back up the request. A motion was made by the REC that the minutes of the local fraternity’s council meeting be sent with the request application and was seconded by the majority of the REC members. Thus, a copy of the local fraternity’s council minutes is to be sent along with the fraternity’s request for funds.
 - Another outcome of the discussion was further input provided by the National Visitor, Joshua Molidor regarding further documentation that should be present especially when dealing with money, since there could be questions from others regarding what was done with the money and why was it done that way. Joshua provided specific documentation suggestions.
- In response to a request for approving St. Padre Pio as a Newly Forming Group, Deacon Tom stated that technically they are not a Newly Forming Group because they have not talked to the REC for directions. He felt that before we move on to that level, he thought the Council needs to review the Guidelines for Canonical Establishment of a Fraternity that begins establishment from the oversight of a Newly Forming Group to Emerging to Canonical Establishment. Deacon Tom stated that we do not have enough information to make a recommendation. He felt that we table this for now to our next REC meeting while we gather the data and the information. It was decided to do so, after Deacon Tom made a motion to table this issue to our next REC meeting. The motion was seconded by Ken Brooke and all voted in favor.
- Vice-Minister Carmen stated that Fr. Stephen Hoyt was appointed as Spiritual Assistant for St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, NC by Fr. Remo DiSalvatore, OFM Cap, Provincial Minister of The Sacred Stigmata of St. Francis Province.
- In the Open Forum—the BSSF Regional Records were reviewed--the Visitors reviewed the documentations and records and gave feedback that things were there and proper. The

(See Regional Council on next page)

Regional Council (continued from page 15)

- REC received messages and praise for a good job in that we do much for our brothers and sisters and for our Regional Fraternity and that we have intentions to serve our local fraternities. We were thanked for what we have done for this Region during this Covid time.
- We were also counseled by Josh regarding all Council members, with the Regional Minister, are to work together to know the issues in our Region, whereby we can take care of those issues.
-He stated he is aware of the challenges with Covid and suggested to do the best we can do.
- Fr. Chris and Fr. Cid ended the session with continued expressions of supporting words and thoughts for the REC.

REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP

The Regional Fraternity Council Meeting with the Zoom meeting occurred on Saturday, August 14, 2021. The following is a brief summary/recap of this meeting.

- Vice-Minister Carmen Madero, OFS was the presider. Pastoral Visitor Fr. Chris Panogopolos, TOR, CNSA and Fr. Cid Joseph OFM Provincial Assistant of Most Holy Name of Jesus Province were also present.
- Roll call was done by Secretary Nora Wessling OFS. A quorum was reached.
- Minutes of the August 8, 2020, Zoom Regional Fraternity Council was approved.
- Treasurer, Ken Brooke presented the second quarter report and reported we had sufficient funds.
- He passed out the 2022 Budget to all and reviewed the amounts listed under the categories. There was extensive feedback from the RFC, with questions, suggestions, changes and votes of approval. In the end, there was a majority vote and approval of the 2022 Budget. Treasurer was to make the suggested/voted changes.
- There was an appointment of Sharon Winzeler, OFS as the new Editor of *Communio* with a motion which was seconded.
- Next year's ARG will be August 19-21, 2022 at Ridgecrest, NC which will be a Chapter of Elections.
- The Nomination Committee will be led by Carmen Madero OFS, and Sharon Loisel, OFS.
- Vice-Minister Carmen gave an update on the Endowment Funds Distributions and re-explained the two forms that are used for a local fraternity to use when making a request for funds to be used for an apostolate or charity. She also mentioned that the requesting fraternity have a written statement that the request was approved by the local fraternity's council. The request is signed by the fraternity's minister and a copy of the council minutes showing council approved, is to be sent with the request.
-She stated that an article for the *Communio* will need to be written to explain that the fraternity has received the money, what it went to and if they can also have a picture.
-She stated if anyone has questions to reach out to one of the REC Committee members: herself, Ellen Ferrone, Betti Loginotti, David Cruz-Urbe, or Ken Brooke.
-Chairperson Carmen stated the requirements will be put on the website and that the two forms and requirements will also be sent out to the Ministers.
- The calendar of Visitations/Elections for September 2021-January 2022 were reviewed.
-DorothyAnn Rowland, Minister, stated from Zoom, that they will try to accommodate

(See Regional Council on next page)

Regional Council (continued from page 16)

the requests made because of the existence of backlog and the Region does not have a full complement of Spiritual Assistants. Because of this, she suggested that fraternities give the Region two separate dates.

- Fr. Cid provided comments upon being asked to do so. He shared a little about his personal life and that he was happy to be there and to see everyone. He thanked everyone for what all are doing and are doing for our family, for each other and for the Church and to pray for each other.

The members of the Regional Executive Council and the Regional Fraternity Council are thankful to serve the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region.

We ask for your prayers as we serve the region, and we keep all of you in our prayers, as well. We wish blessings to all, filled with His peace and goodness.

BSSF Region Secretary, Nora Wessling, OFS, is a member of St Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Augusta, GA.

Apostolate brings warmth, comfort to homeless

By Dory Davis

Minister, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity
Elizabeth City, NC

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, along with an outpouring of support from Holy Family Church, just completed a new apostolate. Fraternity members made gorgeous mats.

Thousands of plastic grocery store bags were recycled by cutting them into strips called "plarn" and crocheted into 6-foot-long mats for our community's homeless to sleep on.

Our fraternity met once a month at Holy Family along with welcomed church members to fold and cut the plastic bags then tie the cut strips into "plarn."

This time together not only brought fellowship for the fraternity members but introduced the Franciscan spirit to our church community. A few of our homebound members were enlightened by the ability to participate in making "plarn" as well as crocheting the mats in their own homes.

Our local Elizabeth City S.O.U.L.S. Ministry was blessed with our donation of mats and the community Senior Center has just started collecting plastic bags for more mats to be made for our homeless community. God's Word spreads with His love for all of us.



Pictured left to right: Mary Gilbert, OFS, Formation Director and Eileen Chaney, OFS, Counselor-at-Large

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

Minister: DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS

Vice Minister: Carmen Madero, OFS

Secretary: Nora Wessling, OFS

Treasurer: Ken Brooke, OFS

Formation Director: Dianne Ambrose, OFS

**Spiritual Assistant:
Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS**

Area Councilors

Area 1

David Cruz-Uribe, OFS; Sharon Loiselle, OFS

AL: Bessemer;

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

TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

Area 2

Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, OFS; Christine Lukesh, OFS

GA: Augusta, St. Simons Island;

NC: Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;

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

Area 3

Ellen Ferrone, OFS; Martha Roman, OFS

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

SC: Garden City

Archivist: Sara Nell Boggs, OFS

**Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Animator
Carolyn D. Townes, OFS**

**Multicultural Commission Chair
Position Available**

**Youth/Young Adult Fraternal Animator
Joe Vodenichar, OFS**

Prayer Ministry (online prayer requests)

Area 1: John Martin, OFS

Area 2: Dorothy Huebner, OFS

Area 3: Bob Sabisch, OFS

Fraternity prayer coordinators submit prayer requests.

**Communio Editor
Sharon Winzeler, OFS**

October

Franciscan Feast Days

1. Bl. Nicolas of Forca Palena, Secular Franciscan, d. 1449
3. Commemoration of the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi (near the Portiuncula, October 3, 1226)
4. Our Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi, Deacon and Founder of the Three Franciscan Orders, d. 1226
6. St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds, Secular Franciscan, d. 1791
10. St. Daniel and Companions, First Order friars, martyrs of Morocco, d. 1227
10. Bl. Mary Angela Truszkowska, Third Order religious, d. 1899
11. St. John XXIII, Secular Franciscan Pope, d. 1963
12. St. Seraphin of Montegrano, First Order friar, d. 1604
13. Bl. Honorat Kozminski of Biala, First Order friar, d. 1916
17. Bl. Balthazar of Chiavari, First Order friar, d. 1490
20. Bl. Contardo Ferrini, Secular Franciscan, d. 1902
20. Bl. James of Strepar, First Order bishop, d. 1409
21. Bl. Josephine Leroux, Poor Clare nun, martyr of France, d. 1794
22. St. Peter of Alcántara, First Order friar, d. 1562
23. St. John of Capistrano, First Order friar, d. 1456
25. Bl. María Jesús Masia Ferragut and Companions, Poor Clare nuns, martyrs of Spain, d. 1936
26. Bl. Bonaventure of Potenza, First Order friar, d. 1711
29. Bl. Thomas of Florence, First Order friar, d. 1447
30. Anniversary of the Dedication in Consecrated Churches of the Seraphic Order
31. Bl. Angelo of Aciri, First Order friar, d. 1739
31. Bl. Christopher of Cahors, First Order friar, d. 1272

Secular Franciscan Order - USA



Come celebrate with your Franciscan family
the JUBILEE of our Order's
800th anniversary of Memoriale Propositi,
and the 100th anniversary
of our National Quinquennial Congress!



The Q Committee invites you to pray the Quinquennial prayer!

20th Quinquennial Prayer

Lord God, Heavenly Father,
we come before you in awe of your love for us.
We acknowledge Your divine seed in everyone.
Through your merciful compassion
help us to see our need for conversion.
In our service to each other
let us experience this time of
JUBILEE!
We walk the path before us upon
foundations built by our brothers and sisters.
We are thankful for our present
and excited for our future,
always believing that You, O Lord,
guide our journey.
AMEN

For more information and to register go to: secularfranciscansusa.org