

Communio

That All May Be One

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

Winter 2019

The Joyful Marriage of Joseph and Mary



**"The Marriage of the Virgin,"
by Raphael, 1504**

"In 1399, the Franciscan Order began commemorating the betrothal of Saint Joseph with a liturgical office that was later developed into the feast day of Joseph as the 'Husband of Mary' (now a solemnity celebrated on March 19th).

"In 1741, the Franciscans requested that Pope Benedict XIV consecrate the whole Seraphic Order to Saint Joseph.

"Before opening the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII (a Secular Franciscan) declared Saint Joseph the 'Paternal Patron of the Universal Church.' This proclamation formally recognized Joseph's role as inseparable from Mary's role as 'Mother of the Church.'

"With this long history of devotion to the spousal relationship between Mary and Joseph, it is fitting that those meditating on the traditional seven joys in the life of a married woman, complete their prayer with an eighth joy — Mary's marriage to Joseph."

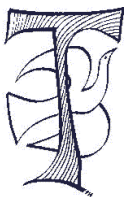
Robert Melnick, OFM Conv., and Joseph Wood, OFM Conv.

A further meditation in, *The Franciscan Crown:*

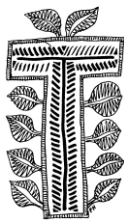
The Joyful Mysteries in the Lives of the Virgin Mary and Saint Francis of Assisi,
published by The Companions of St. Anthony

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate



Editor’s Journal



“The Word is the adopted son of silence, for St. Joseph passes through the pages of the Gospel without uttering a single word.”

I found this quote years ago and copied it into one of my Bibles. It was attributed to Paul Claudel (Aug. 6, 1868–Feb. 23, 1955), a French poet, playwright, and essayist.

Since we’ll celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary, on March 19, before we publish our spring *Communio* in April, let’s take some time to meditate on St. Joseph’s example in preparation for that solemnity.

It’s true, as Claudel notes, that we have none of Joseph’s words, but he speaks volumes in his actions.

I’d be willing to bet that like any man soon to be married, Joseph thought about what his life would be like with his wife. Perhaps he — and Mary — wanted to have a large family. Everything was going well until Mary told him that she was pregnant. It must have been a shattering revelation, even if Mary told him the conception was by a miracle.

Matthew’s Gospel tells us that Joseph “since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly” (Mt 1:19). This was a compassionate and commendable decision.

But then an angel came to him in a dream and told him: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her” (Mt 1:20). Joseph now knew that his life would not as he’d envisioned.

His surrender to God’s will, as revealed in the angel’s message, is such an inspiration to me. Joseph probably didn’t fully understand what it would mean to be the foster father of a child conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. And which of the men he knew was he going to ask what that experience had been like for them? No one else had ever had that experience.

Joseph had to take Mary and the angel totally on trust in his vocation to be the husband of Mary and the foster father of the Messiah.

I don’t always understand what God is asking of me, including in the various aspects of my Secular Franciscan vocation, though there are people from whom *I* can seek guidance.

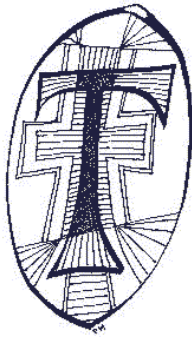
Joseph is, for me, a vivid example of embracing whatever God asks of me (and all of us) in our Order and in the Franciscan Family — even when that means stepping out of our comfort zones.

In fact, as a meditation in *Five Minutes With the Word* (Advent 2009) notes:

“Joseph’s story tells us that we should guard against being too attached to our plans. . . . [I]n the end it always comes down to our humility and openness to God’s infinite possibilities. Whatever plans the Lord may have for us, it’s comforting to know that God is always on our side. If we seek him, he will reveal himself to us. And as we seek his plans, he will make them clear as well.”

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.

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Minister's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth; serve the Lord with gladness!

Since the Third Sunday of Advent, the word that God keeps giving to me to ponder is JOY. It speaks to me in various readings in the Liturgy of the Hours, in my daily encounters with life, and in my search for who I am and who God wants me to be.

Our Franciscan spirituality calls us to be joyful in all circumstances. Not always easy, especially when there is disharmony, stress, deadlines, pain, and heaven only knows what else in our daily lives. I trust you are all familiar with St. Francis explaining perfect joy to Brother Leo. If not, it's in *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* (Fioretti); or, you can always "google" it. I'm sharing the following from The Assisi Project website, an excerpt from "St. Francis Explains Perfect Joy":

"Finally, St. Francis said: 'Brother Leo, please listen to me. Above all gifts of the Holy Spirit, that Christ Jesus gives to his friends is the grace to overcome oneself, to accept willingly, out of love for Him, all contempt, all discomfort, all injury, and all suffering. In this and all other gifts, we ourselves should not boast because all things are gifts from God. Remember the words of St. Paul: 'What do you have that you did not receive from God? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift (1Cor 4:7)?' But in the cross of afflictions and suffering, we truly can glory because as St. Paul says again: 'May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal 6:14).' Amen."

So, cry out with joy, all the earth, serve the Lord with gladness!

And, don't forget to serve your brothers and sisters in fraternity with gladness and joy; plus your family, friends, Church, and _____. (You fill in the blank, as the list goes on and on.) Let's really live our vocation!

Which reminds me. This year of 2019 is a Chapter of Elections year for our BSSF Region, to be held in August at our Annual Regional Gathering. May the Holy Spirit enrich you to live your vocation more fully by considering serving on your regional council.

Please note that this year's Annual Regional Gathering is Aug. 9, 10, 11, at Ridgecrest Conference Center, near Asheville, N.C. In response to your requests to have more interaction/sharing with other fraternities, we are planning opportunities for this. Also note that our National Fraternity Priority for 2019–2021 is "Fraternity Life." Please see "News from the National Executive Council: National Priority for 2019–2021" on page 18 of this issue of *Communio*.

Your Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council wishes you God's peace, love, joy, and all good as we continue our Franciscan journey together!

Joyfully, your sister in Christ and St. Francis,
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.

Regional Executive Council (REC) Election Timeline

The Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region Triennial Election is scheduled for August 10, 2019 at the Annual Regional Gathering.

All Secular Franciscans are eligible to nominate someone professed for the Regional Executive Council.

TIMELINE:

January- Notice of Election published; Call for Nominations

March 15- Nominations close

April- Nominations Committee contacts nominees

June 1 — Deadline for nomination forms returned from nominees to accept or decline nomination

June 6 — Start 9-day novena of prayer for Spirit-led election

June 15 — Résumés of nominees sent to voting members of Regional Council

July 22 — Start 9-day novena of prayer for Spirit-led election

PROCEDURE:

For the office of Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Formation Director, Area One Councilor, Area Two Councilor, Area Three Councilor email or mail Nomination Form to **ALL** members of Nominating Committee:

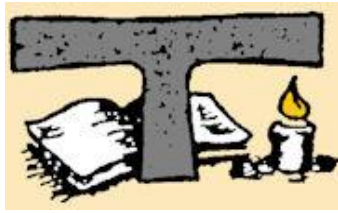
Carmen Madero, OFS ucougar2@comcast.net
1810 Balmoral Dr, Apt 201, Fayetteville, NC 28304

Carolyn Peduzzi, OFS Rncpeduz@earthlink.net
111 Harold Ave, Swansboro, NC 28584

Judy Bruce, OFS judyb4jmi@gmail.com
208 Twin Falls Dr, Simpsonville, SC 29680

(Nominations are sent to all committee members to avoid a nomination being lost. Committee members will continually cross reference nominations.)

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



Regional Spiritual Assistant — Catholic Social Teaching: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

If we look at the first of the seven major themes of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) one word should stand out to us: Dignity.

Why “dignity” you might ask, and that would be a fair question.

As we develop our thoughts about Catholic Social Teaching, perhaps we should look at our sources for these themes and for CST overall. In my fall 2018 article for *Communio*, I discussed social sin and its impact on society and the individual.

Progressing toward the CST, I want to switch gears and transition from social sin to social ethics. Social ethics are developed from four primary sources: Scripture, natural law, theological reflection in Church life, and experience. We’ll look at these over the next several articles, but first try to touch on the role of ethics in social justice.

When we approach social ethics, the question of ethics demands an understanding of who or what is being protected. Father Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, while addressing his thoughts on Christian nonviolent protests, suggested that the sole purpose of ethics is the preservation of the entity. “Entity” can be understood as a business, i.e. a corporation, partnership, or even a mom-and-pop store, a society, and/or an individual. It is more or less a “watch out for number one” thought process in legal ethical terms. Just war theory, use of force to protect yourself or your family, is an example we can relate to. Our Franciscan spirituality would reject or question the just war theory and the use of deadly force for protection.

As Father McCarthy developed his theme of ethics, he pointed out that as Christians we have no real need for preservation of the entity, self, since through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our concerns for preservation were eliminated. In other words, if we proclaim our Christianity and live it according to the Gospel, our salvation is assured and we have no real concerns about what is going to happen to us when we die. Isn’t that what living the Christian way is all about: One day seeing God face to face?

Further elaborating on the concept of ethics, we ask the question, “What should we do?” Yet all too often what we should do and what we ought to do come into conflict with each other. The “should” fixates on “me” and not on the other person. Perhaps this is too simplistic, but you get the gist.

As Catholic Christians and Secular Franciscans, our focus on social justice and the seven themes of Catholic Social Teachings are developed through four main sources of understanding and development: revelation, reason, tradition, and experience. Certainly, revelation through the Bible is the primary source of Christian social justice. From the Hebrew Testament we are taught dignity and respect for creation, including one another. From the prophets we are instructed to respect our fellow human beings because of their intrinsic good instilled by God at creation.

We may have fallen into sin, but we have not fallen out of grace from God. Had we fallen from grace from God, there would be little we could do to regain it. Only because of God’s love for us do we stand any chance of eternal life with him. We are called to love one another as the Ten Commandments instruct us and as the prophets encourage us. From the Christian Testament we hear in the Gospel of Jesus Christ to love one another “as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

The Letter of James further instructs us, “If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also, faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

How often do we hear an appeal for help from the pulpit or in our parish bulletin and turn a deaf ear toward it? I’ve been criticized by members of my parish community for preaching on

the immigrant situation at our border. My question to them is simply, “If you do not want them coming to our country for refuge from violence and corruption, why are you not doing something to correct their homeland situation?” The “ought” part of social justice in this situation should really be helping to correct the home situation for them. The “should” answer is “let them in for refuge,” but nothing is being done to stop the problems in their home countries.

Another example of this dichotomy is, for me, best illustrated in a passage from Leonardo and Clodovis Boff’s book, *Introducing Liberation Theology*:

“One day, in the arid region of northeastern Brazil, one of the most famine-stricken parts of the world, I (Clodovis) met a bishop going into his house; he was shaking. ‘Bishop, what’s the matter?’ I asked. He replied that he had just seen a terrible sight: in front of the cathedral was a woman with three small children and a baby clinging to her neck, He saw that they were fainting from hunger. The baby seemed to be dead. He said: ‘Give the baby some milk, woman!’ ‘I can’t, my lord,’ she answered. The bishop went on insisting that she should, and she that she could not. Finally, because of his insistence, she opened her blouse. Her breast was bleeding; the baby sucked violently at it. And sucked blood. The mother who had given it life was feeding it, like the pelican, with her own blood, her own life. The bishop knelt down in front of the woman, placed his hand on the baby’s head, and there and then vowed that as long as such hunger existed he would feed at least one hungry child each day.”

Perhaps for that bishop his “should” was to proclaim the need from the pulpit. Confronted with the reality of hunger and poverty, he found his “ought” and vowed to feed the hungry.

As I started this article, I spoke about “dignity” as the primary motivator of CST. The bishop realized his initial verbal exchange did nothing for the woman’s dignity. In fact, it probably reduced her dignity and sense of self-worth. And that is not what we as Franciscans are about. We can learn from our father Francis and his interaction with the leper while on the road outside of Assisi.

As human beings we have the “God element” within us called spirit and soul. Simply because of that we should treat each other with respect and dignity. This is what Pedro Arupe, SJ, meant when addressing his order, the Society of Jesus, and he used the term, “preferential option for the poor.”

Do we have a preferential option for the poor in our mind-set? South American theologians embraced this term when looking at and dealing with the extreme poverty and hunger in their home countries. They looked to Matthew 25: **“Whatever you did for one of these the least of my brethren, you did for me.”**

How can we turn our backs on the needs of the poor? This is not a “political” issue; it is a humanitarian gospel issue.

Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS, Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region’s spiritual assistant, is a member of Stigmata of St. Francis Fraternity in Duluth, Ga.

Congratulations, New Councils

St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity

Fayetteville, N.C., Nov. 14

Minister: Fred Arsenault, OFS

Vice Minister: John Reichart, OFS

Secretary: Laurie Wilburn, OFS

Treasurer: Rodney Allen, OFS

Formation Director: Carmen Madero, OFS

Councilor: Gloria Ruiz, OFS

St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity

Hendersonville, N.C., Nov. 17

Minister: Nancy Torres, OFS

Vice Minister: Greg Savold, OFS

Secretary: Barbara St. John, OFS

Treasurer: Gene Ray MaGruder, OFS

Formation Director: Mark Taylor, OFS

Councilor: Frank Colini, OFS

Councilor: Brenda Harris, OFS

Councilor: Margarita Melendez, OSF

Congratulations — Newly Professed



Fraternity of Brother Francis

Newton, N.C., Aug. 11

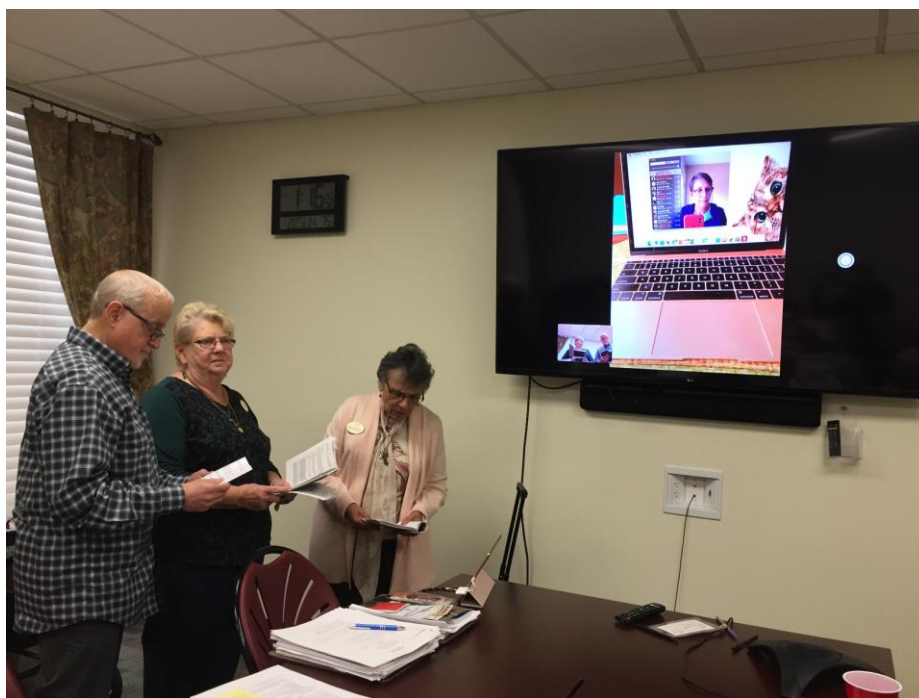
Paula Coleman, OFS, shown here with
Father Jim Collins, pastor of St. Joseph
Catholic Church, Newton, N.C.

St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity

Bessemer, Ala., Aug. 25

Roxanne Bessette, OFS
Kenneth Parker, OFS

St. Thomas More Fraternity Embraces Technology for Rite of Admission



Sal Tascone, OFS, candidate (left); Mary Hellmann, OFS, formation director; Marie Mallon, OFS, minister; Janet Glatt, OFS, candidate, on screen.

Through the grace of the Holy Spirit the entire fraternity was able to gather despite the distance and the storm that could have separated us. Janet stayed with us for the entire meeting and even participated in our ongoing formation lesson.

The entire fraternity planned to gather on Jan. 20, at St. Mark Catholic Church in Wilmington, N.C., to celebrate the Rite of Admission to the Secular Franciscan Order for Sal Tascone, OFS, and Janet Glatt, OFS.

Janet, who was out of town, however, was prevented from traveling because of a fierce storm.

Nevertheless, embracing technology as the gift of the Holy Spirit, we made a FaceTime call to Janet on an iPad and projected the video images onto a large digital screen.

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

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

When we speak of walking with the “Two Feet of Love in Action,” those feet belong to the human person walking in love for a fellow human person.

The first major theme of Catholic Social Teaching is the life and dignity of the human person.

In the 1998 report on CST by the U.S. bishops, we read: “In a world warped by materialism and declining respect for human life, the Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.

“We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.”

Catholic Social Teaching begins and ends with the human person — the life and dignity of the human person — which includes each and every one of us. God’s salvific plan of sending his only Son into the world to live, move, and die for love of God’s people, even though we didn’t earn it or deserve it. God loves us that much.

Encyclicals, papal exhortations, apostolic letters, and letters from the bishops all address the challenges and issues concerning us: the human family. The care and integrity of God’s creation means the human family will have a place to live while on this side of life.

So when you think about all those old musty encyclicals and documents, think about God’s love for his people. When you think about the antiquated stories from Scripture, think about God’s love story for us, his people. And when you try *not* to think about that person or group of people who are offensive to you, think instead of the pain they must be feeling and that God feels their pain and remains with them — yes even them, in their suffering.

Remember, hurting people hurt other people; but God sees the hurt and works it out in God’s own loving and gracious way and time.

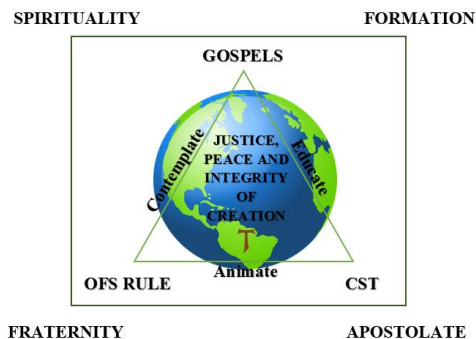
“For the Church, there is no distinction between defending human life and promoting the dignity of the human person.

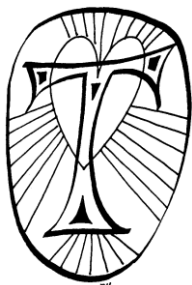
“As a gift from God, every human life is sacred from conception to natural death. The life and dignity of every person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition. The right to life is the first and most fundamental principle of human rights that leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life and greater commitment to justice and peace” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops).

When you talk about Catholic Social Teaching, just remember you are talking about the needs and the rights of our human family — no matter who or where they are. As our holy Rule states, all people have the presence of the divine seed within and they, like you and me, are created in the image and likeness of God.

Please join Dianne Ambrose, 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.





Regional Formation Director

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I was very happy to see many of you at our Annual Regional Gathering this past August. It was nice to spend personal time with you and assist you with your concerns.

Thank you to all who attended the forum on Saturday with our national visitors and expressed your concerns and challenges. Out of that forum came the decision that Carolyn Townes, OFS, national and regional JPIC animator, with me assisting, would for the next year on the ZOOM monthly formation nights have discussions on Catholic Social Teachings. We meet on the third Tuesday at 7 p.m. EST.

I have been sending invitations to formation directors. If you are a council member or on the formation team and wish to attend, please send me an email and I will send you an invitation.

The first one we had was in September and Carolyn wrote about that meeting in the fall *Communio*. We met again in October, December, and January. You can find audio recordings of these sessions on the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region's website (bssfsfo.org).

In addition, I have sent each month a video and audio copy of the recordings to the local formation directors. September and October were overviews of Catholic Social Teachings. In December, we discussed the life and dignity of the human person. January's topic was solidarity.

An excellent source for more information on Catholic Social Teaching is on the United States Conference of Bishops website. There are videos, information, and discussion questions.

I attended "Becoming Prayer, Becoming Presence," a Secular Franciscan workshop at St. Bonaventure University last summer.

Also, I attended the National Regional Formation Directors workshop, Aug. 30–Sept. 1, at the Our Savior Pastoral Center, in Kansas City, Mo. There were approximately 100 participants including representatives from all branches of our Franciscan family.

In her national minister's message in *TAU-USA*, Jan Parker, OFS, wrote about the workshop: "The journey of transformative visioning has begun — a journey that will test our readiness to authentically live the Franciscan life. Our experience at the recent Formation Visioning Workshop awakened our souls. We must now allow God to work this great change in us."

The schedule included Father Dave Pivonka, TOR, speaking on "Realities of the Order & Vision in Discernment," small-group sharing, large-group sharing, and round-table discussion. There was a lot of attention given to what the perfect Order would look like, what formation should look like.

Other presenters were Mary Stronach, OFS, "Realities of the Order"; and Anne Mulqueen and Father Dave on "Visioning: Seeking Gods Vision for Formation." The National Executive Council had read Father Dave's book, *Breath of God: Living a Life Led by the Holy Spirit* and had seen his YouTube series on the "Wild Goose is Loose."

We were sure that he would draw the Holy Spirit to us. Father spoke on our future as Catholics and as Secular Franciscans and how we need to keep in mind that in the present

ZOOM Room Information

**Next ZOOM Room
formation session
Feb. 19, 7 p.m. EST**

**ZOOM formation sessions
are open to
formation directors,
formation team members,
Regional Executive Council,
and local fraternity councils.**

**If you're in the above group and
you haven't received
an invitation a few days before
the ZOOM meeting,
contact Dianne at
706-338-2402
or
Ambrosedianne6@gmail.com**

postmodern thinking, God is no longer the center of everything as he was prior to the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance. Now the individual determines his or her own beliefs. This has a big effect on the issues facing the Church and our Order.

Anne Mulqueen's talk on transformative visioning explained that visioning is a communal faith journey testing our willingness to step out in faith and leave behind that which no longer has meaning.

We gathered in interest groups and discussed topics that are central to formation:

1. Fraternal life and relationships
2. Spiritual life, prayer and contemplation
3. Apostolates and outreach expressing the Franciscan charism
4. Communications and social media
5. Essential documents
6. Scripture and Franciscan sources
7. Secular identity and the Franciscan charism
8. Commitment to the Order: Time, talent and treasure
9. Servant leadership
10. Youth
11. Spiritual assistants and their relationship to the OFS
12. Discerning the vocation
13. Multiculturalism

It was refreshing to hear where other regions were on formation. I learned a lot and found out that you all are doing extremely well in our region on formation.

We will be holding Formation Spring Workshops in 2019 in each area of our Region. I am in the processing of securing host fraternities and locations. The general outline for now is on Catholic Social Teaching, an interactive lesson on how to put together a lesson for formation using *For Up to Now: Foundational Topics for Initial Formation* (the FUN manual) and *The Franciscan Journey*. We will also cover Franciscan spirituality in our daily lives.

If there is a topic you feel needs to be addressed, please contact me.

Our next ZOOM meeting is Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. EST.

Please feel free to reach out to me

Dianne Ambrose

706-338-2402

Ambrosedianne6@gmail.com

Dianne Ambrose, OFS, is the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis regional formation director. She is a member of San Damiano Fraternity in Athens, Ga.

Pilgrimage to St. Catherines Island and the Story of the Georgia Martyrs

By Lawrence Lynch, OFS

On May 2, 2018, The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity, St. Simons Island, Ga., made a one-day pilgrimage to St. Catherines Island, Ga., to visit the 16th century site of the Spanish Franciscan Mission of Santa Catalina de Guale. This undeveloped barrier island is located 35 miles south of Savannah and is accessible only by boat.

The pilgrimage was directed by Father Chris Ortega, who at that time was assigned to two Georgia parishes: St. Francis Xavier in Brunswick and Nativity of Our Lady in Darien. Members of both parishes as well as Secular Franciscans from our fraternity, which meets at St. William Church on St. Simons Island, participated in the trip. The journey started by driving to Midway,

where pilgrims took a boat to St. Catherines Island. Upon arrival, the pilgrims took a tour of the island by truck.

Later in the morning, a presentation was given by archeologist and anthropologist, David Hurst Thomas. It was he who, in 1981, discovered the Santa Catalina de Guale mission site which had lain dormant for more than 300 years. Its significance is that the site was the first documented archeological location of the many missions the Franciscans founded in the area called "La Florida." That area encompassed northeast Florida, southeast Georgia and southeast South Carolina. St. Catherines Island is located near the northernmost region of the mission territory of La Florida.



Father Chris Ortega leads a pilgrimage group on a visit to the site of the 16th century Spanish Franciscan Mission of Santa Catalina de Guale on St. Catherines Island. The group comprised members of The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity and parishioners from St. Francis Xavier and Nativity of Our Lady parishes.

At noon, at the site of the Santa Catalina de Guale church, Father Ortega celebrated Mass on the exact location in the apse where the martyred Fray (Friar) Miguel de Anon and Fray Antonio de Badazos celebrated Mass in the 16th century. Can you imagine the joy of being at one of the first mission sites in the present day United States where Catholic evangelization took place?

Fraternity members Lois Cutia, OFS; Mary Jane Marsh, inquirer, and I were humbled to stand and pray on the holy ground which was consecrated by the blood of two of the five martyrs in 1597. We received the Eucharist in the area of the nave where the Franciscan priests gave communion to their native converts.

Within the church boundaries were found more than 432 buried remains of Native American converts. Artifacts found with the skeletons included a medal of Our Lady of Guadalupe and numerous beaded clothing pieces. Studies found that the beads came from Spain; Venice, Italy; Bohemia, and other parts of Europe. The Guadalupe medal and thousands of other artifacts from this site are housed at the Fernbank Museum in Atlanta, Ga. The Diocese of Savannah recently reconsecrated the grounds of the church and, after the remains of the natives were studied, they were returned to the sacred ground.

The first of the five martyrs to be killed was Fray Pedro de Corpa. He was clubbed to death as he was preparing for Mass. This happened at his mission of Nuestro Señora de Guadalupe de Tolomato, on the mainland, which was located somewhere near present day Darien. He was the pastor who defended the sanctity of marriage, when he did not allow a baptized Guale man, Juanillo, who was the son of a cacique (chief), to take a second wife. As a result of Fray Pedro's actions, Juanillo and his men massacred four other Franciscans. They were Fray Miguel de Anon and Fray Antonio de Badajoz of Santa Catalina, Fray Blas Rodriguez of Tupiqui, and Fray Francisco de Verascola of Santo Domingo.

The Spanish Franciscans who arrived in St. Augustine in 1565 were evangelizing Native Americans two centuries before St. Junipero Serra preached in the western part of the United

States. The Spanish Franciscans were also 70 years ahead of St. Isaac Jogues, who evangelized the Native Americans in present day New York and southern Ontario, Canada.

The Diocese of Savannah chose Pedro de Corpa and his four companions for the “cause of sainthood” recognizing their martyrdom and their sacrifice in defense of Christian marriage. Although St. Junipero Serra was canonized in 2015 and Isaac Jogues was canonized in 1930, if the five Georgia martyrs are canonized, they would be recognized as the earliest martyred saints in the present territory of the United States and also for being the first to bring the word of God to the Native Americans. The canonization would be a joy for all Franciscans, Spaniards, Hispanics, and all the people who live in the Americas, as well as the Church itself. Please pray for their Cause.

You may read more about the Five Georgia Martyrs on these websites:

- southerncross.diosav.org — Website for *The Southern Cross*, the newspaper for the Diocese of Savannah, Ga. Type “Five Georgia Martyrs” into the search engine and links to various news articles on the martyrs will come up.
- thegeorgiamartyrs.org/en — click on “Watch a video about the Georgia Martyrs”
- digitallibrary.amnh.org — American Museum of Natural History digital repository. Type into search block *Murder and Martyrdom in Spanish Florida* and hyperlink for this book will come up.

Lawrence Lynch, OFS, is minister of The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity.

Rosary Rally



Members of The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity, St. Simons Island, Ga., and parishioners of St. William Catholic Church on St. Simons Island gathered for

a Public Square Rosary Rally under the auspices of “America Needs Fatima.” It was said at noon on Oct. 13 to commemorate the anniversary of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary that happened 101 years ago at Fatima in 1917. The fraternity had organized the rosary and Larry Lynch, OFS, fraternity minister, led the prayer. Fraternity members Patty Bergeron, OFS; Lois Cutia, OFS; Ann Mallon, OFS; Georgia Markley, OFS; and Mary Jean Marsh, inquirer, participated. The purpose of the rally was to pray the rosary for our Church, our country and our world. The event was held near the street on the rectory property of St William Church, so that the participants and the banner would be visible to the public.

Fraternity honors deceased members with memorial service



Story and photo by
Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

The feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary is Nov. 17. This just so happened to be the date of the fraternity gathering and chapter of elections for St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity in Hendersonville, N.C.

Members decided to celebrate the feast day with a special memorial service for our deceased members.

We began by attending the 9 a.m. Mass in Our Lady of the Angels Chapel at Immaculate Conception Church. Remaining in the chapel, we prayed the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer for the Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary from *Proper Offices of the Franciscan Saints and Blesseds in the Liturgy of the Hours*.

Members had prepared a program based on the memorial service held each year at our Annual Regional Gathering.

A votive candle for each deceased member had been arranged around a glass crucifix candle holder. In the background was a painting of St. Elizabeth giving bread to the hungry. Below the picture was a basket containing loaves of bread.

A nearby vase of red roses commemorates a famous story about Elizabeth's concern for the poor. Sometimes her husband, Louis, was critical of that generosity.

"One December day while carrying bread to the poor, she unexpectedly met him. After Louis demanded to see what she was carrying, she unrolled her cloak and revealed fresh roses. He made no further objection" (Father Pat McCloskey, OFM, *Day by Day With Followers of Francis & Clare*, 141).

We prayed for our deceased affiliate brother and our departed brothers and sisters, who are included in our cards for our annual Extraction of St. Francis's Spirit. So, at our memorial service, as the name of each brother or sister was read, someone who had been praying for that person went up to light a candle.

Our then-minister, Randy Hair, OFS, led the service, and during the prayers asked our departed brothers and sisters for their intercession for our council election.

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

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

* confirmed	V+ follow-up visit	(observers in parentheses)
Date	Fraternity/Group & Location	V Fraternal/Pastoral Visitors E Presider/Ecclesial Witness
Feb. 16–17	St. Thomas More, Wilmington, NC	V Carolyn Peduzzi/Joanita Nellenbach
March 9–10	Blessed Solanus Casey, Morehead City, NC	V Bob Pearson/Dcn. Tom Shaver
March 29–30: Regional Executive Council Meeting, Spartanburg, SC		
April 6–7	Sts. Francis and Clare, Knoxville, TN	V Lannie Newman/Dcn. Tom Shaver
May 10–11	Immaculate Conception, Jonesboro, GA	V DorothyAnn Rowland/?
May 14	Fraternity of St. Clare, Winston-Salem, NC	E Bob Parson/?
May 17–18	Our Lady of Good Counsel, Greenville, SC	V Janet Hulshof/J. Nellenbach
May 18–19	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Elizabeth City, NC	V Carolyn Peduzzi/?
June 1–2	St. Maximilian Kolbe, Charlotte, NC	V ?/Willie Guadalupe
July 11	St. Clare, Asheville, NC	E Janet Hulshof/Dcn. Tom Shaver
July 13	Fraternity of Brother Francis, Newton, NC	E Sara Nell Boggs/J. Nellenbach
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
Nov. 22–23	St. Francis of the Hills, Hendersonville, NC	V
Dec. 6–7	Mather Cabrini EC, Anderson, SC	V

A Franciscan Lenten Retreat
March 9, 2019
Mother Cabrini Emerging Fraternity
St. Mary of the Angels Parish Hall, Anderson, S.C.



Peace and all good.

Mother Cabrini Emerging Fraternity, with support from Our Lady of Good Counsel Fraternity, will again host a Lenten Retreat. This year's theme will be "The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross," featuring guest speakers Father Mike Jones, OFM, and Father Chris Dunn, OFM, of St. Mary of the Angels Parish.

The retreat will be held Saturday, March 9, 2019, at St. Mary of the Angels Parish Hall, 1821 White St., Anderson, S.C. 29624.

Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. The retreat will open with prayer at 9:30 a.m. and will conclude with Evening Prayer at 3:00 p.m. The retreat will include Mass at noon and an opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation before Mass.

Morning snacks and lunch will be provided with the help of several attending fraternities.

There is no charge for the retreat. A free-will offering will be collected for use of the parish hall and for the benefit of the speakers.

Participants are also welcome to stay for the parish's regularly scheduled 4:00 p.m. Sunday Vigil Mass.

RSVP by Feb. 9, 2019: Nanette Perron, OFS — nperron@sma43.org

"Way of St. Francis" inspires deep reflection

By Bret Thoman, OFS

Many people have heard of (or even personally walked) the Camino de Santiago that traverses northern Spain. Known as The Way, it begins in the Pyrenees Mountains along the border with France and climaxes at the cathedral of Compostela, believed to house the remains of St. James the Greater. It is similar to another medieval camino, the Via Francigena that connected Canterbury, England, to Rome. Of course, the journey to Jerusalem has always been considered the "Queen of Pilgrimages."

Yet, there is another lesser known camino: "The Way of St. Francis." Beginning in the city of Francis, Assisi, it retraces our seraphic founder's footsteps for some 250 kilometers (150 miles) over the course of 15 days, all the way to Rome, passing through innumerable sites where memories and stories of St. Francis still abound.

The Way of Francis is not an ancient pilgrimage route like the others mentioned above; instead, it was created some 20 years ago by the Umbrian government in collaboration with the

Vatican. Nonetheless, it unites two great pilgrimage destinations: Assisi and Rome, as well as two great saints, Francis and Peter.

Over the past few decades, personal-walking caminos have exploded in popularity. Pilgrims setting out on the journey range from devoutly religious and orthodox to secular or “seeking.” Yet, all are looking for something, hoping for something, on their journey.

From the time I heard of the Camino of St. Francis, I wanted to do it. I had already been to most of the Franciscan places on the trail — all places that still sing of Francis: Spello, Foligno, Trevi, and Spoleto, the hermitages of Monteluco, Poggio Bustone, La Foresta, and Greccio, the Beech Tree of Rivodutri, and the “Holy Valley” of Rieti.

Yet, I wanted to experience them differently; I was hoping that touching the ground with my own feet — like Francis did — would draw me closer to him as well as deepen my understanding of Franciscan spirituality.

In the end, I would indeed be deeply touched, though not in the way I had expected.

I began my Way of Francis about four years ago, breaking it up into several shorter jaunts as my job and family responsibilities permitted. I also had to prepare myself physically for the rugged demands of the trail, as much of the camino is situated within the Apennine Mountains, making for steep climbs and descents, some in excess of 2,000 feet.

After getting accustomed to the camino’s physical demands, I soon found it exhilarating. The quiet mountain pathways and trails far removed from busy streets and noisy towns, the trail’s hermitages or sanctuaries around what seemed every bend in the road or atop every mountain or hill, rendered it ideal for prayer and meditation.

Yet, I soon began reflecting on another aspect of Franciscan spirituality. While walking through the land of Francis, it was easy to share his kinship for creation. The breathtaking views and vistas while climbing up over hills and peaks; the gentle or aggressive descents back down to the plains; the expansive valleys of Spoleto, Nera, and Rieti; the dense forests, fertile olive groves, farmlands and fields of grain — all made me, too, want to burst out in praise and song for Brother Sun, Sister Moon, indeed all the Father’s creation.



Remains of an ancient Roman amphitheater near the Trebula Mutuesca archaeological site 40 miles from Rome.



Trail near Spello, a town about 15 miles from Assisi.

I also began to feel a camaraderie and unique connection to the ancient peoples whose land I was visiting. While walking along the storied Via Flaminia, Salaria, and Nomentana Roman roads, or past remnants of aqueducts, amphitheaters, and ancient mile markers, or along ruined walls or castles, my imagination was fired. I could sense the camino recounting stories of a bygone world of mighty civilizations: of ingenious peoples who engineered roads and aqueducts;

of Guelphs and Ghibellines who built fortifications to defend popes or emperors; of privileged noblemen who defended their feudal ways against commoners fighting for justice; of hermits and saints who sought God’s will in the hermitages, and sinners who couldn’t care less.

In short, I discovered a land rich in traditions. And those traditions were still alive in the people who today live and work on the same land. I was greeted and welcomed by friendly locals who served me scrumptious local cuisine in their bed-and-breakfasts, and I watched them as they went about their business and earned their livelihoods.

Thus, I experienced the Camino of St. Francis as a journey into deeper Franciscan spirituality as well as culture. Yet, in the end, there was something else, something that was perhaps more important than the exterior journey.



Bret at St. Peter’s Square in Rome.

As I approached the end of my journey — unfazed by the stares of the “bus pilgrims” as I arrived in the ancient city of Rome, a bit scruffy and clad in hiking gear with walking poles, mountain boots, and day pack — I suddenly became overwhelmed by powerful emotions. Certainly the joy at having accomplished such a challenging feat provoked them.

Yet, at the same time, I was struck with a flood of memories of people from my past, as far back as my childhood. I tried to hold back the tears as my mind suddenly recalled people who had been there for me at important events and trials in my life. I felt a profound sense of gratitude and singular connection to all those who had loved me and been part of my life. I wanted so much to call them at that moment.

The camino — and St. Francis — thus rewarded me with more than the prized testimonium certificate of completion; instead, I had received something more. Just as so many pilgrims before me, I realized that the pilgrimage was not merely a journey to a physical place; instead, the real journey was within and the destination was the Divine.



Chapel near the Rieti Valley.

Following are the words of Catie, an Anglican priest from Australia, after she walked the Way of St. Francis alone in preparation for a midlife transition:

“The Way of St Francis Camino is a beautiful, spiritual but physically challenging camino. The opportunity to see the country [Francis] walked and feel his impact is unique, and to have his life and journeys explained was wonderful. The physical act of walking is a body mantra which enables one to move from thinking to being. In order for this to happen effectively, the walker needs to be quite fit, not just for walking long distances consistently, but fit enough to manage hard climbs, uncertain and uneven terrain. The nature of the terrain is challenging, but to a large extent one becomes fit during the walk. The spirituality of this

camino is hard to name: for some it may encompass walking; for others, visiting the places St. Francis where lived and ministered; for others still the silence and the beauty; or the company of other pilgrims. HOWEVER, one could not walk the journey without being affected within one's soul.”

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.

News from the National Executive Council National Priority for 2019-2021

At the 2018 Chapter, the National Fraternity Council (NAFRA) discussed the question of national priorities for 2019-2021. Many suggestions were presented, and several were mentioned multiple times, but no one priority stood out clearly. It was the consensus of the body that the incoming National Executive Council (NEC) decide our national priorities for the upcoming three years.

The NEC is happy to announce that this was accomplished at our December 13-16, 2018, meeting in St. Louis, Mo. During this meeting we prayerfully considered the needs of the national family, as well as the feedback from the NAFRA Geo Groups at Chapter, and the decision became clear to us.

While in past years NAFRA has set as many as six priorities, this year we chose to narrow our focus to one---*Fraternity Life*. Note that concentrating on fostering vibrant fraternity life does not imply that previous priorities will be ignored or neglected. Formation, JPIC, Communications, and Spiritual Assistance will all play an important role in strengthening our local fraternities.

The decision to choose *Fraternity Life* was confirmed for us in a wonderful way! A few weeks after we chose this priority, we received a Christmas letter from our General Minister. In this letter Tibor Kauser encouraged us to repeat our “yes” unconditionally — saying *yes to God, yes to our vocation and yes to our neighbor*. He then repeated three times “...*this will give new life to our fraternities, too!*” (See our General Minister’s Christmas Letter: <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/2018/12/25/christmas-messages-from-our-national-and-international-minister>)

To help all of us achieve this priority we decided to highlight three aspects of fraternity life:

National Priority 2019-2021 Fraternity Life

1. Deepening our Franciscan Vocation
2. Growing in Fraternal Communion
3. Cultivating Universal Kinship

Our relationships with God, with our OFS brothers and sisters, and with all people made in the image and likeness of God will be the subject of future reflections, as will some of the means (commitment, conversion, communication) we must use to enable our fraternities to grow in holiness.

Meanwhile, let us begin by reflecting on the spiritual reality and purpose of our fraternities. We’re so used to participating in various groups, both within and outside the Church, that it’s easy

to treat our fraternity as just another group, rather than an integral part of our vocation. Let's look at our foundational documents. How do they portray fraternity?

Our General Constitutions state:

Art. 28.1. The fraternity of the OFS finds its origin in the inspiration of Saint Francis of Assisi to whom the Most High revealed the essential gospel quality of life in fraternal communion (See *Constitutions* 3.3 (below); *Testament* 14).

Art. 3.3. The vocation to the OFS is a vocation to live the Gospel in fraternal communion. For this purpose, the members of the OFS gather in ecclesial communities which are called fraternities.

Art. 100.3. Fidelity to their own charism, Franciscan and secular, and **the witness of building fraternity sincerely and openly are their principal services to the Church, which is the community of love.** They should be recognized in it by their "being", from which their mission springs.

Points to ponder:

- The fraternity is not an afterthought. It originated with St. Francis, and its essential gospel quality was revealed to Francis by God Himself.
- We don't just "live the Gospel." We live it "in fraternal communion." Fraternal communion is thus defined as a *constitutive element* of our vocation. We have a specific way of being in the world, and a specific way of being together...in fraternal communion.
- The Constitutions tie building fraternity to our Franciscan mission of 'rebuilding' the Church. In fact, they term it one of the principal services we as an Order do for the Church. Recall that during our profession we promised to spend our efforts doing this very thing.

"The local fraternity is a visible sign of the Church, a community of faith and love. Together with all the members you now pledge yourselves to spend your efforts **to make the fraternity a genuine ecclesial assembly and a living Franciscan community.** Rite of Profession, Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order].

If we fail to take this seriously, if we work half-heartedly, if we rarely show up at fraternity gatherings, we are failing our brothers and sisters, we are failing to live our profession, and we are failing the Church.

- Thomas of Celano tells us that Francis and his brothers rejoiced when others were added to their company.

"Immediately four other good and sound men were added to them as followers of the holy man of God. ...At that time Saint Francis and his brothers felt great gladness and unique joy whenever one of the faithful, led by the Spirit of God, came and accepted the habit of holy religion whoever the person might be: rich or poor, noble or insignificant, wise or simple, cleric or illiterate, a layman of the Christian people. This was a great wonder to those of the world and an example of humility, challenging them to the way of a more reformed life and to penance for sins." (1 Celano 31)

Ask yourself: do people today feel that "great wonder" when they visit our fraternities? What sort of example do they see?

- "Come to [Jesus], a living stone, rejected by men yet chosen and precious in God's sight,

**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:
Deacon Thomas Shaver, OFS**

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.

and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house....” 1 Peter 2:4-5a

And finally, look to the next issue of the *TAU-USA* and to our national website, secularfranciscansusa.com, for additional reflections on this year’s focus.

Secular Franciscan Websites

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis
Region

www.bssfso.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

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