

# Communio

That All May Be One

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

Spring 2019

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## St. Francis and the Road to Emmaus

“Once, on a holy Easter Sunday, while he was staying at a hermitage that was so far from any houses that he could not conveniently go begging, he begged alms from the brothers, like a pilgrim and beggar, mindful of him who that day appeared in the guise of a pilgrim to his disciples traveling on the road to Emmaus.



When he had humbly received it,  
he taught them with sacred eloquence  
to continually celebrate the Lord's Passover  
in poverty of spirit  
that is,

his passing from this world to the Father,  
passing through the desert of the world  
like pilgrims and strangers  
and, like true Hebrews.

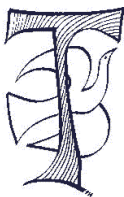
And because,  
when begging alms,  
he was motivated  
not by greed for profit  
but by liberty of spirit,  
God, the Father of the poor,  
seemed to have a special care for him.”

St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio,  
“The Major Legend of Saint Francis’  
*Francis of Assisi, Early Documents:*  
*Volume II, The Founder* (pp. 582–583)

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## The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





## Editor’s Journal

We all know the Peace Prayer, which is attributed to St. Francis. It reflects his values even though he didn’t write it. I saw so much of that prayer in a story I found recently on the Internet

Three young men — Jamarion Howard, JaMychol Baker, and Tae Knight —were waiting for their meal in Brad’s Bar-B-Que in Oxford, Ala., when they saw an elderly woman eating by herself.

“Dang, I’d hate to have to eat alone,” Jamarion recalled. “So after thinking about it a minute I walked over to her and asked if I could sit with her.” He wrote this in a Facebook post that went viral with more than 44,000 views and was published on cbsnews.com, in *People* magazine, and by other media outlets.

Howard learned as they chatted that the woman’s name was Eleanor. She was a widow and the next day was her 60th wedding anniversary.

“I instantly gave my condolences and asked her to come eat with us which she was excited to do.”

The heartwarming picture that went with the Facebook post and the story shows them all smiling, a joyful community. Eleanor volunteers at a hospital. She and Jamarion are going to stay in touch.

According to the news stories, “‘The point in this is always be kind and be nice to people,’” Jamarion reflected. ‘You never know what they are going through.’ He said the woman changed his outlook on life and how he looks at other people. ‘Everyone has a story so do not judge!’”

When I discovered this story, I was also reading *Instruments of Christ: Reflections on the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi* by Father Albert Haase, OFM, as my nonbiblical readings in Office of Readings.

Father Albert speaks often in this 81-page book of how this prayer can help us to achieve “Easter peace” and to be “whom Jesus calls us to be” (p. 4).



**Born Into Eternal Life**  
**St. Elizabeth of Hungary**  
**Fraternity, Augusta, Ga.**  
**Gerard Oullette, OFS,**  
**Feb. 6**  
**Dollie Reeves, OFS**  
**(Candidate), Feb. 7**

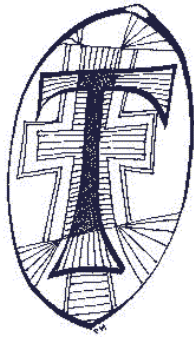
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I’d like to suggest that the four people in that restaurant experienced love, joy, hope, light, consolation, understanding, and mutual giving, all elements of the Peace Prayer.

In this Easter season, may all of us experience the same as we live the Peace Prayer every day.

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

**Communio is published in January, April, July, and October for the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.**



## Minister's Message: A Lenten Journey

The Lord is risen! Alleluia!

I hope your Lenten journey brought you closer to Jesus as you reflected daily on the love and humility of the cross and on the ultimate joy of Easter.

I had the privilege of sharing a Lenten pilgrimage to the Holy Land with my former pastor, Father Paul McNeil, my local fraternity Secular Franciscan sister, Fran Friedman, OFS, and 69 others from three parishes in the South Carolina Lowcountry in the middle of March.

To be physically present and see the holy sites in the land of our Lord's birth truly puts flesh on the Gospels. Each place embodied the beautiful readings from the Bible, both Old and New Testaments as we began our journey in Tel Aviv and finished in Jerusalem.

A most memorable occurrence for me was walking together along the Via Dolorosa in Old City Jerusalem, praying the Stations of the Cross and actually being at the spots where those events happened to our Lord and Savior so many years ago. The emotions that one experiences are so vast as one visualizes the Passion of our Lord. "We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world."

I will always return mentally to the Via Dolorosa each time in the future that I'll pray the Stations of the Cross.

We are now celebrating the Easter season; and I hope and pray you have "come alive" in Jesus Christ and join with all creation in celebration of this feast of Christ's victory over death and suffering. May the joy of Easter be with you each day of your life!

As Secular Franciscans, may our Easter action be to celebrate new life by committing to social justice, environmental stewardship, and respect for the dignity of all human life.

Peace and all good,  
DorothyAnn

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

### **Come Join in Our Family Reunion**

#### **Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Annual Regional Gathering**

August 9–11

Ridgecrest Conference Center, Ridgecrest, N.C.

#### **ARG Theme: "Vibrant Fraternity Life"**

Spend time with, pray with, share with, get to know your brothers and sisters from throughout our Region

#### **Regional Executive Council Election**

**PLUS**

#### **Presentations:**

Servant Leadership  
How to Plan and Conduct Ongoing Monthly Formation  
Care and Feeding of Fraternities  
Catholic Social Teaching

## Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation: Troubling the Waters with Catholic Social Teaching

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

I was blessed once again to attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD).

Held April 5–8 this year in Washington, D.C., the theme was “Troubling the Waters for the Healing of the World,”

based on the story from the Gospel of John about the man at the pool of Bethesda. This translation is from the *King James Bible*:



“After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

“And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath” (John 5:1-9 KJV).

Since the 2018 Annual Regional Gathering, our formation has focused on Catholic Social Teaching (CST), especially from a Franciscan perspective. CST calls us to trouble the waters. It calls us as people of faith, people who follow Jesus in the spirit of Francis of Assisi, to not only animate, but also to agitate and aggravate the status quo. We are countercultural by our baptism and profession. We are not called to remain on the sidelines and allow injustices to take place; but to do all that we can to right the wrongs of injustice — to trouble the waters, to stir up the pool of complacency, apathy, and indifference.

One of the preachers who spoke on this text at EAD mentioned the people at the pool. Where were the people? The gospel text tells us that there were a great multitude of infirm people. So, there had to be people there to help those infirm people get into the pool when the angel stirred up the waters. Notice that when Jesus asks the man about getting healed, the man does not blame his illness, he blames the people: “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

Now, you mean to tell me that in 38 years there was no one who could have helped this man into the pool? If others could have, and no one did, this was a travesty of injustice. This was a travesty of indifference.

CST is about seeing to it that this man gets in the pool when the waters are stirred up. It is not about sitting on the sidelines for 38 years.

Another preacher spoke of sacrifice. Jesus was tortured and crucified for you and me, so



what are we willing to sacrifice for the sake of the other?

It might have taken just a few minutes for someone to help this man go down into the pool and make sure he was properly cared for. A sacrifice of a few moments of time. Time that has been gifted to us by God. Where are the people?

When you are in need, will there be someone there to help you into the pool? Will someone be willing to sacrifice a few moments of their time to give you the assistance you need?

When another is in need, what will you sacrifice for that person?

Please join Dianne Ambrose and me as we trouble the waters with Catholic Social Teaching on the monthly ZOOM calls.

For more information, please contact Dianne at [ambrosedianne6@gmail.com](mailto:ambrosedianne6@gmail.com) or me at [ctownes26@gmail.com](mailto:ctownes26@gmail.com).

May the risen Lord continue to grant you peace.

*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.*



**Members of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council (standing) join St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity and residents of Miller Place for a picnic lunch at Cleveland Park in Spartanburg, S.C., on March 30. Miller Place is a private residential home for mentally and physically challenged adults and for adults who have no one to care for them. It has been a fraternity apostolate for many years, with annual events that include a Christmas party and an ice cream social. This was the spring picnic, with grilled burgers, bratwursts, and hot dogs; plus, homemade foods that family members contributed, with bingo afterward. As the REC was meeting in Spartanburg, the members were invited to the lunch. (Photo by Michaeleen Davis, OFS)**



## Regional Formation Director

Greetings during this Easter season.

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

I pray all of you had a fruitful Lent and are having a glorious Easter season.

First, I would like to say a huge thank you to Mother Cabrini, Emerging Community, and Our Lady of Good Counsel Fraternity for hosting the Secular Franciscan Lenten Retreat on “The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross.” I found the Franciscan Chaplet: Meditation on the Suffering of Christ, and the Franciscan Chaplet Rosary that they made especially moving. I prayed that all through Lent.

Also, thank you to Audrey Binet, OFS, and Theresa Christie, M.D., OFS, of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity in Augusta, Ga., for developing the Franciscan Wake Service into a beautiful program handout. I have sent this to all formation directors in pdf. format and the directions on how to print. I strongly recommend you use this wake service for our Franciscan brothers and sisters when they go to Sister Death.

Carolyn Townes, OFS, continues our sessions on ZOOM on Catholic Social Teaching. If you have missed these sessions the audio of each session is on our BSSF website (bssfsfo.org). If you would like past video recordings, please contact me and I will email drop them to you.

We did not have a session in April because of Holy Week. These sessions are open to local formation directors, anyone on your formation team, and any council member. I’m sending the invites to local formation directors and in May will also start sending to local ministers. The next one is May 21 at 7 p.m. You do not need a computer; you can call in on a phone. If you need assistance in getting on the ZOOM Room, feel free to contact me before the session.

The Lord did not say, “I love you,” but he showed us he loved us.

Remember that in your fraternity gatherings you are showing all how you love them. It is especially important that people in initial formation see this, so they know what true fraternity life is like. The way you interact with each other is a forceful example. Secular Franciscans are known as a hospitable and welcoming order.

In addition, ongoing formation should be a time of growth and fellowship. Please, formation directors, assign a lesson before the monthly gathering so that you can have a true discussion during ongoing formation. Stress that you expect people to read before the monthly gathering, as you will not be reading the material in full, aloud, in the gathering. Have discussion questions ready. If questions are not provided in the material, then have the formation team develop questions for discussions.

Last year, in your evaluation forms from our spring formation workshops, you stated you had the WHAT of formation — now you need the HOW.

We will hold spring formation workshops again this year, with two sessions per workshop. First session will be on “How to Develop a Lesson Plan,” using a chapter from *The Franciscan Journey* and the corresponding FUN manual section. Second session will be on “Deepening Our Franciscan Vocation,” in which Carolyn will present an overview on Catholic Social Teaching.

The workshops will be held as follows:

- Area 1, May 25, hosted by Stigmata of St. Francis Fraternity, in Johns Creek, Ga.
- Area 2, June 15, hosted by Our Lady of Good Counsel Fraternity, in Greenville, SC.
- Area 3, June 22, hosted by Padre Pio Fraternity, in Raleigh, N.C.

You may attend any session in any area. You do not have to attend the one that is just for your area. I’m aware that the Area 1 workshop conflicts with the Area 1 retreat. When we set the workshop dates, I had not been informed about the Area 1 retreat. I’m sorry I will miss it.

*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.*

## Fraternity members venerate St. Anthony relics

By Lawrence Lynch, OFS

Three of us from The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity on St. Simons Island, Ga., had a wonderful opportunity to connect with St. Anthony of Padua.

Patty Bergeron, OFS, Ann Mallon, OFS, and I visited St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Brunswick, Ga., on Feb. 23 to venerate the first-class relics of the 13th-century Franciscan friar.

The relics were from the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua, Padua, Italy. They were on a 10-day tour of churches in the Diocese of Savannah.

Father Bortolino Maistrello, OFM Conv., from Padua, accompanied the relics. The Italian priest concelebrated mass with Father Chris Hassel, parochial vicar at St. Francis Xavier. They were assisted by three deacons. In his homily, Father Maistrello spoke about St. Anthony and the relics.

One of the relics was a fragment of the saint's floating rib which was placed in a simple vertical brass and glass reliquary. The second relic was a piece of skin of the saint's cheek which was placed in a brass and glass reliquary that was held by the arm and hand of a brass bust. That sculpture was a 3-dimensional bust about 4 feet high of St. Anthony of Padua.



Prayer petition cards were available for people to write out their intentions to St. Anthony. Those cards will be taken back to Padua and placed at St. Anthony's tomb, where friars will gather and recite prayers for the saint's intercession on the petitions and intentions.

While we Secular Franciscans were venerating the relics, a gentleman came to us to tell us that "St Anthony's body was exhumed in 1981. It was at that time the relics were taken from his body."

The gentleman told us that his name was Tom Muscatello, and he was a Secular Franciscan from New York City. We learned later that he is the North American Representative for the Franciscan Friars of the Pontifical Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua and Friends of the Anthonian Association Worldwide. Muscatello plans the holy-relic tours in the United States and Canada.

After a short time, he returned with special gifts for each of us. One of the gifts was a St. Anthony medal that contained a piece of cloth that was touched to the saint's tongue. Another gift was a packet consisting of a holy card and "The St. Padre Pio Anniversary Rosary."

Muscatello encouraged us to take the cards and rosaries and place them on the St. Anthony relic so that those items would become third-class relics. We followed his instructions and now we have not only cards and rosaries that are relics, we also have Tau crosses that we wear that are relics.

*Lawrence Lynch, OFS, is minister of The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity, St. Simons Island, Ga.*

### **Congratulations! Newly Professed**

#### **St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity**

Augusta, Ga.

Martha Jurgensen, OFS

Oct. 19

#### **Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity**

Blairsville, Ga.

March 24

Julie Fields, OFS

Ruth McCart, OFS

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

* confirmed	V+ follow-up visit	(observers in parentheses)
Date	Fraternity/Group & Location	V Fraternal/Pastoral Visitors E Presider/Ecclesial Witness
May 10–11	Immaculate Conception, Jonesboro, GA	V DorothyAnn Rowland/Faye Martin
May 14	Fraternity of St. Clare, Winston-Salem, NC	E Bob Parson/Sr. Kathy Ganiel
<b>May 25: Area 1 Formation Workshop, Johns Creek, GA</b>		
June 1–2	St. Maximilian Kolbe, Charlotte, NC	V Bob Pearson/Willie Guadalupe
June 8–9	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Elizabeth City, NC	V Carolyn Peduzzi/
<b>June 15: Area 2 Formation Workshop, Greenville, SC June 22: Area 3 Formation Workshop, Raleigh, NC</b>		
July 11	St. Clare, Asheville, NC	E Janet Hulshof/Dcn. Tom Shaver
July 13	Fraternity of Brother Francis, Newton, NC	E Sara Nell Boggs/Joanita Nellenbach
July 19–20	Our Lady of Good Counsel, Greenville, SC	V Janet Hulshof/Joanita Nellenbach
<b>Aug. 9–11: Annual Regional Gathering, Ridgecrest, NC, Chapter of Elections</b>		
Sept. 13–14	Crucified Christ, N. Charleston, SC	V
Sept. 14	Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg, Blairsville, GA	E
Sept. 21	Spirit of Francis and Clare, Conyers, GA	E
<b>Oct. 15–20: NAFRA Chapter, Corpus Christi, Texas</b>		
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



## St. Pio of Pietrelcina and a Spiritual Son

By Bret Thoman, OFS

“After my death I will make more noise. My real mission will begin after my death.”

St. Pio of Pietrelcina



**Adolfo Affatato and Padre Pio at San Giovanni Rotondo.**



From April 25 through May 5, I had the joy and honor of accompanying one of the last living spiritual sons of Padre Pio to the United States to talk about his experiences with Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. Adolfo Affatato, now 82 years old, met Padre Pio when he was 16 and spent the last 15 years of the saint's life by his side.

Adolfo spoke in the Atlanta, Ga., area; and in the Tampa, Fla., and St. Louis, Mo., areas.

Padre Pio was born in 1887 to a poor family in the small town of Pietrelcina (in the region of Campania near Benevento). His baptismal name was Francesco, after St. Francis of Assisi. As a child, he wanted to become a priest and friar; however, his parents lacked the money to send him to school to learn to read and write. Therefore, his father emigrated to the United States to earn money to send his son to seminary.

He took the name Pio (Pious) when he entered the Capuchin Order. In the seminary, he began to experience extraordinary graces and supernatural phenomena. Frequent illness, however, forced him to return home. Back in

Pietrelcina, he received the invisible stigmata when he was 21 years old.

When his health improved, he returned to the community near Benevento. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1910. Yet, particularly in his lungs, he remained ill. When a fellow friar suggested he go to the hill town of San Giovanni Rotondo, where the air might do good for his health, Padre Pio knew he would remain there for the rest of his life. The year was 1916 and Padre Pio was 29 years old.

Two years later, on Sept. 20, 1918, before a crucifix above the altar in the ancient church in San Giovanni Rotondo, Padre Pio received the five wounds of Christ. Shortly before that, he had experienced “Transverberation,” or the piercing of his heart.

Soon, word of these miracles and his reputation as a mystic and healer spread. Countless souls who confessed to him described how Padre Pio could “read their souls” and how he knew their sins before they confessed them. There are stories of bilocation, in which Padre Pio would appear simultaneously in two places.

Friars who lived with him recounted hearing strange noises at night from within his cell in which the holy friar was struck by demons who left bruises and scrapes on his body. When asked

about these phenomena, Padre Pio answered that they were a mystery even to him.

Given Padre Pio's extraordinary popularity, Church authorities exercised prudence, and for a period of time they forbade him to hear confessions, celebrate Mass in public, and correspond with his spiritual sons and daughters. This caused him immense suffering. Later, the pope himself lifted the order.

Despite the many miracles attributed to his intercession, perhaps Padre Pio's greatest work was *Sollievo della Sofferenza* (Relief of Suffering), the hospital he had built entirely through donations. Having borne the stigmata, which caused him great physical suffering, Padre Pio always had great empathy and compassion for the sick.

He retained the stigmata for 50 years until his death on Sept. 23, 1968, when the wounds mysteriously healed. Countless people continue to testify that Padre Pio has visited them in dreams or through the fragrance of roses and violets.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina was canonized on June 16, 2002.



**Padre Pio blesses Adolfo and Franca Affatato at their marriage on April 23, 1966. It was the last wedding at which Padre Pio presided.**

Padre Pio and Adolfo Affatato first met in 1952, when Adolfo was 16. He naively hoped this “soul reader” would tell him if he had passed his high school final exams. Yet, unbeknownst to this young man, this short encounter would radically transform his life.

The evening prayer service had just finished, and Padre Pio was making his way through the crowded sacristy to his cell to retire for the night. Adolfo was there, too, despite the sweltering July heat, watching curiously at a distance.

Then, as the priest, stooped and in pain from the stigmata, passed among the crowds — as when Jesus called his disciples according to a divine logic not understood by man — Padre Pio chose this young boy. To Adolfo's amazement (and that of everyone else) Padre Pio stopped, turned toward him and said, “*Adolfo, vieni qui*” (“Adolfo, come here.”)

Adolfo went to Padre Pio, who placed his hand on the boy's forehead and said, “I have been waiting for you for many years.” As Padre Pio left for his cell, Adolfo stood there amazed as all the people stared at him wondering who he was.

That was the first of Adolfo's countless visits to San Giovanni Rotondo. Soon after, Padre Pio accepted Adolfo as his “spiritual son”: a special relationship limited to a few carefully selected people. From then on, Adolfo began keeping a diary in which he journaled about his experiences with the saint and what he witnessed.

Many years later, Adolfo realized the good he could do with his stories. Thus, he self-published the first edition of his book (paying for all expenses out of his own pocket) with the

Italian title, “*Io e Il Padre*” (*Padre Pio and I*). In it, he sought to make the saint known “more and better.”

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

**Minister: DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS**

**Vice Minister: Carmen Madero, OFS**

**Secretary: Barbara Garrison, OFS**

**Treasurer: Ken Brooke, OFS**

**Formation Director: Dianne Ambrose, OFS**

**Spiritual Assistant:  
Search In Progress**

**Area Councilors**

**Area 1**

**Lannie Newman, OFS**

**AL: Bessemer;**

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

**TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville**

**Area 2**

**Sara Nell Boggs, OFS; Janet Hulshof, OFS**

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

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

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

**Area 3**

**Bob Pearson, OFS; Carolyn Peduzzi, OFS**

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

**SC: Garden City**

**Archivist: Sara Nell Boggs, OFS**

**Communio Editor**

**Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS**

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

**Carolyn D. Townes, OFS**

**Multicultural Commission Chair**

**Willie Guadalupe, OFS**

**Youth/Young Adult Fraternal Animator**

**Position Available**

**Prayer Ministry (online prayer requests)**

**Area 1: Lori Moran, OFS**

**Area 2: Dorothy Huebner, OFS**

**Area 3: Bob Pearson, OFS**

Fraternity prayer coordinators submit prayer requests.

The book is a fascinating firsthand account of the supernatural side of Padre Pio as witnessed by a close companion. Yet, it is also touching and moving as the author reveals the tender and endearing side of Padre Pio. In the end, what emerges, however, is the heartfelt story of a man who loved Padre Pio intimately as his own father and, in turn, discovered Christ within.

His book is the fruit of what Padre Pio once told Adolfo: “Give the love that I have put into your heart to those to whom you draw near, because in this is the meaning of life.” This book, indeed Adolfo’s entire life, is a response to that personal mandate he received directly from Padre Pio.

*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.*

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**Secular Franciscan Websites**

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis  
Region

**[www.bssfsfo.org](http://www.bssfsfo.org)**

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

**[www.SecularFranciscansUSA.org](http://www.SecularFranciscansUSA.org)**

Consilium Internationale Ordo  
Franciscanus Saecularis (CIOFS)  
International Council of the  
Secular Franciscan Order  
**[www.ciofs.org](http://www.ciofs.org)**