

Communio

That All May Be One

Fall 2022 Newsletter of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region
Secular Franciscan Order

Minister's Message



By Ellen Ferrone, OFS
Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Minister

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

May the peace of the Lord be with you. It is with a joyful heart that I write my minister's letter to you while I'm at the National Chapter of Elections in Detroit, Michigan. As with any gathering of Franciscans, the air is full of laughter, hugs, smiles, and lots of stories. As someone at a local gathering said "it's like being surrounded by a big hug."

I am especially blessed since this comes so quickly after our elections of the Brothers and Sisters of the St Francis Region. It is reassuring to listen, seek advice, make connections and know that in addition to a strong REC Council we have the assistance of the NEC and many ministers across the country.

The theme selected for the next three years is Listen – Discern – Go Forth. Some questions truly resonate with me as I listen to all my sisters and brothers, those in fraternity and those on the margins. Do I take concerns, suggestions, and issues to prayer? Do I again listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Go Forth?

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The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate



Minister's Message, from page 1

The national priorities selected for the next three years are relationships, vocations and communications.

Relationships are at the core of who we are, including our relationships with ourselves, our God and each other. Solid relationships and trust in the Holy Spirit will help us communicate with love, lead by using our charisms, and attract others to our way of life and Order.

The BSSF region is blessed with a full REC, and since the election in August we have appointed David Cruz-Uribe as Multicultural Chair and Bob Dorsch as Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Chair. In addition to supporting our growing region of 27 Fraternities, 5 states, 509 professed members, 45 candidates and 31 inquirers, we also have talented, committed members to focus on these two areas that are critical to our call to embrace all.

This is a growing region. This is us—Secular Franciscans listening to the Lord from the San Damiano Cross “Rebuild my Church.” These most beautiful words of Our Lord to our father Francis have long sat on my heart. How can I help to rebuild your church, Lord? With strong fraternities and each of us living Article 5: *we should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters in Sacred Scripture, in the church and liturgical activity.*

In 2022 we can continue to rebuild the church. To this regard, I have sent letters of introduction of the new NEC to all bishops in our Region, offering support and looking forward to collaborating in the future. I encourage each of you to reach out to your local pastors and offer the same offer of support and collaboration.

The following lines from Louise Sandberg, OFS, this year's JPIC Award Recipient, resonated with me:

Jesus asks Peter “Do you love me?”

Peter “Lord, you know I love you”.

Jesus “Feed my sheep”

When we say “Yes” to the Lord, it needs to be followed up with action.

Go forth and feed my sheep.

With peace and joy

Ellen.



Ellen Ferrone, OFS, Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region's minister, is a member of Padre Pio Fraternity, Raleigh, NC

The Communio is the quarterly publication of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region. You are invited to submit articles for publication. Deadline for the next issue is **Jan. 15, 2023**. Send your stories and photos to Sharon Winzeler, OFS, at swinzeler@gmail.com Please send photos as attachments to your email.



Blessed Are the Peacemakers

By Carolyn Townes
Regional JPIC Animator

“Mindful that we are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, we 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, we should strive to bring joy and hope to others.” (OFS Holy Rule, Art. 19)

Recently, I presented on the seventh Beatitude from the gospel of Saint Matthew: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.* As you know, in Biblical and Jewish tradition, seven is the number of perfection. So, why is this beatitude the seventh, the number of perfection? The Message translation states: *“You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.”*

There are two kinds of people in the world – people who promote the peace and well-being of others, and people that erode the peace and well-being of others. Peacemakers walk into a room and with them bring an anointing, an aroma, of peace. They can contribute to the overall good of their relationships both in person and online. To access this anointing, one has to have accessed and gone through well the first six beatitudes. One has had to have become poor in spirit, meek, merciful, humbled as they mourned, as well as have a hunger and thirst for righteousness, or right being with God and people; and become pure of heart. Only after living these six beatitudes *well*, can you become a peacemaker. And it is being a maker of peace, that you will face persecution – which is the final Beatitude.

The beatitudes are not attitudes we need to strive for to be like Jesus. The beatitudes are gifts that God has already granted and graced us with. We have been given these gifts and it is up to us to receive the gifts, open the gifts and use the gifts. If your dear friend comes over to your home and gives you a gift, are you going to set the gift on the shelf and never open it? I hope not. You will likely take the gift, open the gift and thank the giver of the gift as you prepare to use the gift in the future. And so it is with the gifts of the beatitudes. God has given us all these amazing gifts of attitudes that we must receive and use to be more Christlike.

In the Jewish culture, peace is the highest ideal in life. That is why their customary greeting to one another is *“Shalom.”* In our western culture, we tend to think of peace as the *absence* of something – the absence of war, conflict, disagreements, or violence. And yet, the peace that is shalom – is the real peace found in the *presence* of – not by being emptied out but by being filled up with the peace that is from the Lord. This Jewish greeting of *shalom* meant more than the absence of

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Blessed, from page 1

conflict, it expressed the desire that the one greeted will have all the righteousness and goodness God can bestow. The deepest meaning is God's highest good to you. When I say, "Peace or shalom," I am bestowing upon you God's highest and greatest good. Let us think about that the next time we use those words. Let us use them more mindfully.



means completeness, wholeness, fulfillment, living without lack, and being in right relationships – which, by the way, has nothing to do with our external circumstances. We need to have shalom, peace before we can give it away.


Shalom means completeness, wholeness, fulfillment, living without lack, and being in right relationships – which, by the way, has nothing to do with our external circumstances. We need to have shalom, peace before we can give it away. To be a peacemaker, we *have* that kind of peace, then we *make* that kind of peace in our everyday lives. To *have* is to BE, but to *make* is to DO. We are called to DO that kind of peace in our everyday walks of life. God is calling us to confront the lack of peace in our world today. We are called to have and make peace in every part of life we encounter, especially in those difficult and challenging parts where we would rather not tread.

God is a God of peace and Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The God who is the God of peace extends an invitation to us – a gift and a responsibility. When we are making peace, we are living out our identity as God's children. We are never more like God than when we take the wholeness and the completeness we have into this broken world that so desperately needs it. That is what it means to be peacemakers. To be a peacemaker means you walk from behind your security wall into that contested space, into that uncomfortable space.

Notice, Jesus doesn't say blessed are those who *love* peace; but blessed are those who *make* peace. Everyone loves the concept of peace, but few are willing to create it. This is why Jesus said he didn't come to bring peace, but a sword. Jesus knew that making peace is challenging and sometimes dangerous business. He got tortured and executed for it. What are you willing to do for making peace?

Our Seraphic Father Francis was quoted as saying: "While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart."

Etty Hillesum, a contemporary of Anne Frank, who also lost her life during the Holocaust wrote: "Ultimately, we have just one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and to reflect it towards others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will also be in our troubled world." Those words still ring true today. May we continue to meditate on them. And may the Lord continue to grant us peace.

 Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, is the National and Regional Animator for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. She also serves on the International Board of Directors for Franciscans International; convenes a Justice Circle for the Franciscan Action Network and is a member of the Commission of Charisms for the Franciscan Federation. Carolyn is a member of the St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Aiken, SC.



Choose Faith

By Deacon Thomas Shaver, OFS
Regional Spiritual Assistant

You might see a trend in my writings for the *Communio* as the articles have been reflections on the scriptures that I was called upon to preach.

Personally, it is a privilege and opportunity that I cherish and that early in my ministry as a deacon my diaconal brothers and I sought permission to preach and, on a less important note, to wear the Roman collar.

Preaching forces me to delve deeply into the scriptures. A wise man once said about preaching, “spontaneity is no excuse for lack of preparation.” Early in my diaconal preaching my brothers and I didn’t wear dalmatics, the diaconal equivalent of the chasuble. We simply wore an Alb, cincture, and a stole that hung across our chest and back from the left shoulder to our waist on the right. When I had the opportunity to preach, I would often place my right hand under my stole. This simple act was a reminder that I was called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, not me. As Secular Franciscans we find that wearing our tau serves as a reminder of how we are to carry ourselves humbly and obediently in society.

Recently, the opportunity to preach was based on the readings for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time which were on faith. In the first reading, we read from the book of Habakkuk verses from chapters 1 and 2, “How long, O LORD? I cry for help but you do not listen! I cry out to you, “Violence!” but you do not intervene. Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and clamorous discord.” (Hab 1:2-3) “The rash one has no integrity; but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.” (Hab 2:4) Clearly, we live in an age where these same things that Habakkuk was saying to God exist. We see the war in Ukraine and the ever-increasing threat of nuclear holocaust, the vile evil of abortion and the ugly legislation recently passed in California, violence on our streets and in our schools...and the list goes on.

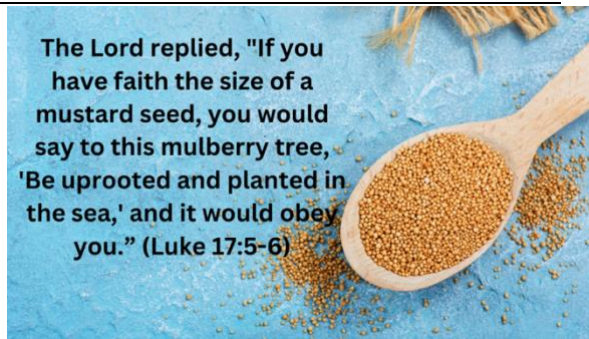
We can despair about all this, or trust in God and His divine plan. We must stay true to Him and to ourselves.

In the reading from Paul to Timothy, Paul makes to significant statements that touch my soul. “I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power, love, and self-control.” (2Tim1:6) and “Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us.” (2Tim 1:13-14) Paul reminds Timothy that by the imposition of hands, the Holy Spirit is instilled in us. At several points in our lives have had the imposition of hands. Baptism, Confirmation, admission in the OFS, and the placing of the Tau around our necks all can be seen as the imposition of hands. We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul further admonishes Timothy (an admonishment that we too received) to not be tempted to teach something inconsistent with the gospels, but to live our lives consistently with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Choose Faith, from page 5

Finally, in the readings dealing with faith, the gospel of Luke, tells us, “The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith. The Lord replied, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” (Luke 17:5-6)



Simply stated, faith is given to us freely, it is not an academic or theological exercise, it is the first of the theological virtues that is supported by hope and love. You can’t learn faith; you must seek it in your heart and whole being. Secular Franciscans live our lives by faith and trust in God’s divine will and plan for us.

I shared with the attendees at that preaching Sunday the small blue band that I wear on my left wrist, which has the words of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, “Pray, hope, and don’t worry.” It reminds me that God has given me faith sufficient to move anything. There is nothing to worry about. He has it in control. Worry is the antithesis of faith, and I choose faith.



Deacon Thomas Shaver, OFS, Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region’s spiritual assistant, is a member of Stigmata of St. Francis Fraternity in Johns Creek, Ga. He serves at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Marietta, Ga.

New BSSF Region Executive Council Elected



New members of the BSSF Regional Council from left to right are: Zubair Simonson, OFS, treasurer; Lee Cunningham, OFS, Area 3 Councilor; Betti Longinotti, OFS, (front), Area 3 councilor; Gabrielle Cruz-Uribe, Area 1 Councilor (back); JC Liu, OFS, Area 2 Councilor; Margi Williams, OFS, Area 1 Councilor; Lynn Oeser, formation director; Mary Sacavage, OFS, Secretary; Martha Roman, OFS, vice-minister; Becky Bresnahan, Area 2 Councilor; and Ellen Ferrone, OFS, minister. The election was held Saturday, Aug. 20, at the Annual Regional Gathering in Black Mountain, NC.

Coming in the next issue of the Communio: Profile of each council member!

Service Is Another Word for Leadership

By Lynn Oeser, OFS
Regional Formation Director



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings of holy peace. My name is Lynn Oeser, OFS, and I am the recently elected Regional Formation Director of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region. Six short months ago I would not have imagined myself in this role, but here I am, your servant on the Regional Executive Council.

I want to say that I enthusiastically jumped into the idea of a nomination for regional formation director. In truth, it took three invitations. I am one of those people who needs “praying and thinking time.” At the first invitation I could only see a load of obligations that would obstruct my ability to serve. In spite of that, I opened my heart and will to consider. I responded, “Let me pray about it.” At the second invitation, I could see rays of light through my load. The burdens were more loosely packed and there was an inexplicable assistance, a strength, that I had been unaware of. I answered, “Thank you, I am praying about this.” The third invitation came on a Sunday after praying my profession promises. My heart surrendered, “Lord, if this is what you want, I am yours,” and my voice said said, “Yes, I will accept a nomination.” An energy of assurance, fortitude and grace found its way into my spirit, or more accurately, I submitted my will to the Spirit to animate me.

Is that not the way of the perpetual conversion that we are called to? Article 8 Of the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order States:

1. *Secular Franciscans commit themselves by their profession to live the Gospel according to Franciscan spirituality in their secular condition.*
2. *They seek to deepen, in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the OFS: - Rule 7. in a continually renewed journey of conversion and of formation; - Rule 4. open to the challenges that come from society and from the Church’s life situation, “going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel”; - in the personal and communal dimensions of this journey.*

We turn to God as seedlings. We push through the soil. We bud. We bloom. We seed again to grow deeper into the perfect love of Creator God.

Formation is grace for our metanoia. To help with that formation, I along with the formation commission are here to serve each of you and your fraternities. I invite your inquiries, suggestions and concerns. We are for you. As brothers and sisters in fraternity we are for one another.

There are many resources available to support the Formation Pillar.

*The [Secular Franciscan- USA Formation and Spirituality](#) page is an abundant treasury of resources.

*“Formation Friday” is sent out by email each week. You can also view it on the Secular Franciscan USA website and Facebook page. These offerings are nice bites of formation for personal or fraternity exercises. **(Continued on next page)**

The screenshot shows the 'Formation & Spirituality' page with a navigation bar (Home, 2022 Chapter, News, Resources, Pray With Us, Contact, Search) and a central logo. Below the logo are three columns of content:

- Initial Formation:** Initial formation is the process of discernment and education leading inquirers and candidates to profession as members of the Secular Franciscan Order. [Click for Resources](#)
- Ongoing Formation:** Ongoing Formation in the Order is lifelong and continuous, providing Secular Franciscans the means to continue to grow in faith and discipleship. [Click for Resources](#)
- Franciscan Spirituality:** Franciscan spirituality is primarily focused on Christ His Incarnation, His Passion, and His Presence in the Eucharist. [Click for Resources](#)

At the bottom, there is a link for 'Information about the National Formation Commission can be found here.' and a list of reports:

- National Formation Commission Annual Reports to NAFA
- Formation Workshops 2020
- Formation Workshops 2019
- Formation Workshops 2018

Servants, from page 5

In closing, be assured of my prayers for each of you. I ask you to prayer for me, a line from *The Servant Song* by Richard Gillard: “Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.”

In all goodness,

Lynn



Lynn Oeser, OFS, is the formation director at the Fraternity of Brother Francis in Newton, NC, and regional formation director.

Life of Joyful Service Inspires Secular Franciscans

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

Jerry Rousseau, OFS, who helped established the Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Georgia and served on local, regional and national Secular Franciscan councils died on Sept. 21.

He “exemplified being a true servant leader as he truly lived his Secular Franciscan vocation,” said DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS, former regional minister. “He was a people person and able to bring out the best in others and able to see skills in them that they may not have seen in themselves. He was dedicated and looked toward the future, always ready to serve in some capacity, willing to help, and to offer insights and guidance.”



Jerry Rousseau, OFS
Photo courtesy of family

Jerry and Madeline Rousseau were married in 1960. Family was always important. They raised four children and eventually there were nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

He served four years in the Air Force and after a 36-year career with Delta Airlines, he retired as director of Customer Service for North America.

Seeking a quiet life, Jerry and Madeline moved from Atlanta to Blairsville in North Georgia and became parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Jerry served as cantor in the church choir and was active in the Knights of Columbus. Satisfying, but the Rousseaus wanted even more.

“We were looking” Madeline said, “for something to increase our spirituality now that we were retired.”

They found it when they learned that a Secular Franciscan fraternity was forming locally. From the first gathering they attended, around 2001, they were hooked.

“Jerry and I began our formation,” she said, “and we were so excited.” They professed on Oct. 24, 2004.

When the group became an Emerging Community, Jerry was named chosen leader; Madeline helped with initial formation. The community needed a name.

During a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Medjugorje, Jerry and Madeline found it. The
(Continued on next page)

Jerry Rousseau, from page 8

pilgrim group visited the nearby village of Široki Brijeg, site of a shrine to the Franciscan Martyrs of Široki Brijeg: 30 Franciscan friars murdered by Communist partisans on Feb. 7, 1945.

The friars (aged 20–74) refused the partisans' orders to forsake their habits. A partisan tore a crucifix from a wall in the convent and threw it on the floor, telling the friars they could choose to live or die.

“My life just got better because of Jerry. I got closer to God; I got closer to St. Francis. Jerry knew the right thing, and he did it. I think of Jerry as an example of what it means to be a disciple. He was always other-centered.”

--Deacon John Paul McGuire. OFS

“Each one of the friars knelt down, embraced and kissed Jesus; holding tightly the Cross on their breast, each one of them said as St. Francis did: ‘You are my God and my All.’ ... Full of rancor and hate, the persecutors then took the friars one by one; they led them out of the convent and slew them” (Father Jozo Zovko, OFM, *Novena to the Široki Brijeg Martyrs*, p. 12).

“We looked at each other” Madeline recalls, “and said ‘Franciscan Martyrs of Široki Brijeg will be our name’.”

The Emerging Community agreed. At its monthly gathering, after the opening prayer from the *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order*, the members pray for the martyrs' canonization. In the annual Extraction of St. Francis's Spirit, each member draws, not only a Franciscan saint or blessed but also the name of one of the Široki Brijeg martyrs.

In 2006, Regional Treasurer Fran Trecartin, OFS, died suddenly. Then-Regional Minister Judy Haupt, OFS, asked Jerry to fill the treasurer position until the next election, in two years. Jerry protested that he was recently professed and knew nothing about treasurer responsibilities. He accepted Judy's request after she told him that length of time professed didn't matter and that he would learn the responsibilities.

“I was impressed” she said, “by his willingness to step out into space and serve his Region.”

Franciscan Martyrs of Široki Brijeg Fraternity was canonically established during the 2007 Annual Regional Gathering. Jerry was elected minister soon after, while continuing to serve as regional treasurer.

“If he saw there was a need, he would do it,” said fraternity member Jenny Moore, OFS. “He always gave 100 percent. Your brothers and sisters elevate you; Jerry did that. You always felt loved and appreciated.”

“His knowledge of St. Francis,” said Matt Moore, OFS. “He knew all those writings. He was my sponsor. I resolved to read more about St. Francis.”

“My life just got better because of Jerry,” said Deacon John Paul McGuire, OFS. “I got closer to God; I got closer to St. Francis. Jerry knew the right thing and he did it. I think of Jerry as an example of what it means to be a disciple. He was always other-centered. I loved receiving that from him: Jesus at the center. That inspires me. We all need to do that. He's my model. He always had joy. Balance.”

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Jerry Rousseau, from page 9

Jerry was elected regional minister in 2010 and reelected in 2013.

“Jerry Rousseau was the perfect gentleman and host when I came to conduct a regional visitation of Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region,” said Mary Francis Charsky, OFS, a national counselor at the time. “His joy and smile always helped in a situation that we were working on in the National Executive Council. We are grateful for Jerry.”

When he was elected national treasurer in 2015, he had to resign as regional minister, since our National Statutes, Article 11:4, state that those elected to national office cannot hold office at the regional or local level.

The regional vice minister had also just resigned. Jerry asked DorothyAnn Rowland, then an Area 2 councilor, to fill the rest of his term.

She said she needed to pray about it. “After prayerful consideration, I remember getting back to Jerry on Oct. 22, St. Pope John Paul II’s feast day with my ‘yes’.” She was subsequently elected to two terms as regional minister.

“Jerry was a role model for me for all of my years on the Regional Executive Council,” DorothyAnn said. “He was organized, had a great sense of humor, always knew the right thing to do and say (to me, anyway), was prayerful, and just the embodiment of what a Secular Franciscan is supposed to be.

“I remember when I’d discuss issues about any fraternity, Jerry would say ‘if we could only just all get along.’ I adored his wonderful smile and his slight New England accent. Jerry helped me to become who I am today because of his example as a Secular Franciscan and my brother. He is loved, missed, and will always have a special place in my heart and my memories.”

He also helped and inspired members of the National Executive Council.

“Jerry took me under his wing when I came to my first chapter as a new (regional) minister,” said Kathleen Molaro, OFS, now National Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission Chair. “He continued his kindness and help once I started working with the NEC. I found myself often choosing a seat next to him at our meetings like a baby bird seeking a nest. His example as an inspirational Franciscan encouraged my flight into the unfamiliar territory of servant leadership on the national level.”

For most of his last two years, Jerry served his fraternity as formation director, even as he battled the leukemia that finally took him from us.

As Patricia Tomczyk, OFS, Franciscan Martyrs secretary noted recently: “Jerry’s dedication was amazing, not just here but at Region and at National. He did what was his to do, and he did it with joy.”



Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS, is a member of the St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity, Hendersonville, N.C., and former editor of the Communio.

Secular Franciscan News



Ashe Griffin, OFS, center, became a candidate in the Immaculate Conception Fraternity in Jonesboro, GA, on May 21, 2022. Welcoming her are Eugenia West, OFS, left, and minister Laura Cleary, OFS, right.

New National Executive Council Elected



Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, looks on as Silvia (Sissi) Diana, also on the left, leads prayers for the newly elected council. National Executive Council members are right to left: Minister Jane DeRose-Bamman; Vice-minister Diane Menditto; Secretary, Susan Ronan; Treasurer, Claudia Kauzlarich; and Councilors Cherryle Fruge, Joshua Molidor and Donna Hollis. Mary Frances Charsky, OFS, not pictured, was elected international councilor. The election was held at the National Chapter meeting on Oct. 15, 2022, in Detroit.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS
OF ST. FRANCIS
SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS (V)
AND ELECTIONS (E)
2022-2023**

Date	Fraternity	E/V
Oct 28-29	St Thomas More/Wilmington, NC	V
Nov 11-12	Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament/Burlington, NC	V
12-Nov	Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg, Blairsville, GA	E
Nov 12-13	St Elizabeth of Hungary, Elizabeth City, NC	V
Dec 2-3	Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary/Bluffton, SC	V

2023

18-Feb	Blessed John Duns Scotus, Murrells Inlet, SC	E
25-Feb	St Francis of the Hill, Hendersonville, NC	V
4-Mar	Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary/Bluffton, SC	E
12-Mar	Channel of Peace, Chattanooga, TN	E
18-Mar	Seven Dolors	V
26-Mar	Padre Pio, Raleigh, NC	V
17-Jun	Seven Dolors	E

“Blessed be you, my God, for having created me.”
--St. Clare

Transitus at St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Aiken, SC

St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Aiken, SC, observed the Transitus of St. Francis with a church ceremony followed by a meal on Oct. 3. Transitus was held in St. Mary Help of Christians in Aiken.

Deacon Stephen Platte was the presider and Stephen and Michael Platte were the servers (top photo).

Carrying the bier are Karl Odenthal, OFS, and Tony Davino, OFS (bottom left). At dinner starting from the back: Pat Hunter OFS, formation director; Karl Odenthal, OFS; Tony Davino OFS, councilor; Carole King OFS, vice minister; Karen Perry OFS, minister - Vici Jackson OFS, councilor; Sharon Stanley, OFS. (Photo by Mary Welsh, OFS)



Servant Leadership Highlights Talk at Annual Regional Gathering

By Zubair Simonson, OFS
Regional Treasurer



Fr. Cid Joseph, OFM

“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” – Matthew 23:11

The Annual Regional Gathering (ARG) was held at the Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC, on August 19-11. We were very blessed to have Father Cid, OFM, come down to share his wisdom with us.

Father Cid Joseph, OFM, who was born in Haiti and became a friar while living in New York, spoke to us about the topic of servant leadership, as an extension of the Gospel, an example of Christ, and the embodiment of the Franciscan charism. As Franciscans, all of us are called to be servant leaders. We know from the example of St. Francis, our Seraphic father, that the earmarks of servant leaders are a deep respect for all creation, and swiftness to reconcile with our brothers and sisters.

Father Cid pointed out that there is a long list of characteristics defining the Franciscan charism, all pointing to one thing: respect for individual dignity. Those characteristics include hospitality, courtesy, kindness, friendship, openness, truthfulness, fostering loving relationships, serving, caring for the poor and oppressed, concern for social justice, taking responsible social action, altruism, respect for all creatures, simplicity, stewardship, empowerment of people, concern for the environment, healing and reconciliation, conflict resolution, forgiveness, and understanding to eliminate fears.

There are, obviously, many ways to live out the Franciscan charism. We are all called to embrace and live out at least some of them.

Father Cid’s talk ended with a breakout session, that the brothers and sisters in attendance could discuss, and realize, the ways in which we were called as individuals to live out our charism for the common good of the Order.



Zubair Simonson, OFS, is treasurer of the Padre Pio fraternity in Raleigh, NC, and treasurer of the BSSF region.

“Blessed the man who is patient with his neighbor’s shortcomings as he would like him to be if he were in a similar position himself.”

--St. Francis of Assisi

Assisi Is Under Our Feet

By Ron Johnson, OFS

At a recent Franciscan gathering, our formation director shared with us a beautiful photo slide show with narration of his recent trip to Assisi. His presentation was very informative and gave the entire family a knowledgeable talk as the photos moved on.

Being of Italian descent as well as a Catholic Franciscan, I watched with prayerful praise at all the places where St Francis lived, worked, prayed, and lived out his life in a total parallel union with that of Jesus.



Assisi, Italy, photo by Sharon Winzeler, OFS

It was bittersweet knowing that I will probably never have the opportunity to visit. But then the next day a moment of joy came over me. Assisi was to Francis as the Holy Land was to Jesus.

Recalling scripture of Jesus as He traveled about, His ministry had the biggest impact of anyone ever born and yet He stayed within a 40-mile radius of His birthplace.

Although Francis traveled more than Jesus, he always returned to his Assisi to minister and retreat. That's when I realized I have my own Assisi. God is calling me to minister from right where I am.

Our jobs, families with our daily activities as well as our church ministries are our Assisi. I need to be blest with where has planted me. I need to make my life "My Assisi and blossom where God has planted me" just as He did with Francis and His Only Begotten Son Jesus.

It doesn't have to be monumentally effective, just effective. How we live as Franciscans makes an impact on the world just by living in the moment in time and place where God has planted us and doing His Will.

Our place and state in life becomes "Our Assisi" as we go through life living out our Franciscan spirituality.

Where I am right now is my Assisi.



Ron Johnson, OFS, is a member of the Channel of Peace Fraternity in Chattanooga, TN.

"Our place and state in life becomes "Our Assisi" as we go through life living out our Franciscan spirituality."

**Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis
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TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

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NC: Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;

SC: Aiken, Charleston, Columbia, Greenville,
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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



Did you miss the Quinquennial last summer in Phoenix? You can view all the keynote speeches by clicking on the image above. It will take you to the Q page at the national Secular Franciscans website where all the talks are available.



Copies of the Rule with the new softbound, brown cover are now available for purchase from the Gospel to Life Bookstore. To view or print the information download [Gospel to Life Bookstore](#)