

Communio

That All May Be One

Newsletter of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

Secular Franciscan Order

Summer 2022

Minister's Message

By DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS
Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Minister



Our Region Vision Statement says “We, the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis, look to Jesus Christ through our Seraphic Father, Francis, to help us live as Secular Franciscans by prayerful and active Gospel living. It is in the same dynamic spirit of St. Francis that we work toward the formation of each member and full communion with each fraternity. Through this spirit of prayer, love and example, we joyfully seek to encourage the growth of the Franciscan family through the building up of the Church.”

I feel we are very fortunate to have the Four Pillars of Franciscan Life to assist us in our journey. These Four Pillars--Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity, and Apostolate--give us focus to show us the way to live according to our OFS Rule. I also feel they are integral to our individual and fraternal growth, the essence of community.

As we gather in Aug. 19-21 for our Annual Regional Gathering, we will once again share our joy together to celebrate, learn, and elect new officers to serve on our Regional Executive Council. Servant leadership is the theme to offer various points to ponder as we look to work for the good of fraternity, not seeking positions of power; but seeking to understand and collaborate with others and make use of the talents of the entire fraternity. “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” 1 Peter 4:10.

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The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate



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It has been a true joy for me to have served you as Regional Minister for these past six years. I am grateful for your collaboration, support, and love--each helping me to grow on my Franciscan journey. I thank God for the gift of each of you in my life. Always remember that God is in charge and to trust that He will guide you every step of the way.

God bless you and keep you! May you consider servant leadership an opportunity for humble service to your brothers and sisters and an opportunity for personal growth.

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.

He watches over us all

By Carolyn Townes
Regional JPIC Animator

Those of you who know me, know that one of my favorite hymns is "*Eye on the Sparrow*." It is a hymn that has not only given me great comfort but also tremendous strength in times of pain and discouragement. The line that strikes me most is, "*His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.*" We read in Matthew's gospel: "*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows*" (Matt. 10: 29-31).



This passage from Matthew's gospel as well as the hymn it inspired should give us hope and courage in these times of violence and division. As Christians, and as Franciscans, we are called to not only work for peace but to be the peace we wish to see and experience in this broken world. The first line of the hymn asks, "*Why should I feel discouraged; why should the shadows come?*" We all fall into the lap of despair at one time or another, only to be reminded that we have the constant care of our loving Father's watchful eye. It is easy to lose our peace or allow the chaos around us to get inside us. We need to fall back on the words of our brother and constant friend, Jesus, who tells us not to be afraid because we are worth more than many sparrows and our Father watches over each one of them.

I have heard many stories of good Christians falling into the pit of hopelessness because the world around them is full of violence and division. Even in a world of violence, hatred, and division, Jesus implores us to work for peace. We are never called to go along with the battles of the world but to be a beacon of light to those who have lost their way in the darkness. This includes members of our own families and fraternities. We are not exhibiting Christ's light when we fail to shine that light on all our brothers and sisters, especially those who are hurting and in tremendous pain. We are not called to shun them, turn our backs on them, or ignore them hoping they will go away. Servant leadership says I will lay my feelings aside because someone else needs my attention and my love.

Servant leadership does *not* say that I must know all the answers or fix all the problems. It does call us to join those in their suffering in prayer and presence. Our Order is an Order created by the Holy Spirit and carefully handed over to stewarded and shepherded by God's chosen. We must
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not simply sit by and allow others to do all the stewarding and leading. We must step up as called and gifted by the Holy Spirit to help animate and guide as the Spirit leads. I invite you to think about, pray about and learn about ways to serve your local, regional, national, and international fraternities. Our beloved former National Minister, Deacon Tom Bello used to say we all belong to four fraternities – local, regional, national, and international – and it is our privilege to serve them as best we can.

I can say as someone who has served on all four levels of our Order, it has truly strengthened and deepened my faith as well as my vocation. I have learned more than I ever could; I have met more brothers and sisters than I ever would, and God has continued to not only bless me in all I do but also in all those lives I encounter each day.

So don't be discouraged or disheartened by what you see happening in the world. Know that the One who has begun that incredible work in you will continue that work in the world if only you say YES! The default answer is YES, and God will be with you, in and through it all. His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches over all of us. May the Lord continue to give you 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, South Carolina.

Go Announce the Gospel of the Lord

By Deacon Thomas Shaver OFS
Regional Spiritual Assistant

Recently I had the opportunity to preach on the gospel of Luke regarding the sending of the 72 disciples.

From my perspective the readings for the Sunday (14th Sunday in Ordinary time Cycle C) had different themes. The first reading from [Isaiah 66:10-14](#) was a promise of hope. The Israelites were returning from captivity in Babylon and were certain that they would only find ruins and grief, yet God promised the joy and renewed hope in His bountiful gifts. In the letter of Paul to the Galatians, St. Paul speaks of a new rule, “For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation. Peace and mercy be to all who follow this rule and to the Israel of God.”(Gal. 6: 15-16)



This passage combined with his comments about carrying the marks of Jesus on his body, speaks to following Jesus and the Gospel (which is the Word, i.e. Jesus) as the new rule, which we as Franciscans must make our new Rule.

Finally, the Gospel referred to the sending of the 72 to proclaim the good news. “He said to them, “The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to
(Continued on next page)

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send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves.” (Luke 10:2-3) This passage reminded me of our call as followers of St. Francis that we, too, are sent out like sheep among wolves, metaphorically speaking.

My thoughts while preparing the homily for Sunday drifted to a few short lines in the passage. First, “the harvest is abundant, the laborers are few.” While we still see vocations to the priesthood, they are down. Our priests are aging at a greater rate than we can ordain replacements. Within the Franciscan family, the friars are aging while recruitment of replacements is waning.

We also see this with the lack of spiritual assistants. The friars that we do have as spiritual assistants also serve various parishes and their time on the weekends are committed to parish life with Sunday Masses, sacraments, and counseling.

Unfortunately, we struggle to recruit candidates for the spiritual assistants’ program to make up for the reduction of available friars. When I speak with members of our region, I hear excuses of time, travel, and commitment to other endeavors as reasons not to get involved in the spiritual assistant program. These are all valid arguments, but in the long run, not helping with the problem.

Perhaps these excuses are the wolves that Jesus speaks about in the gospel passage. We have all committed ourselves to Franciscan spirituality and the Franciscan way of life, but that means more than just attending our gatherings and perhaps joining our brothers and sisters in apostolate activities.

I implore you to consider applying for the spiritual assistant program, taking the course, and becoming commissioned as spiritual assistants to serve some of the fraternities that do not have local spiritual assistants. We have 13 fraternities out of 28 active or emerging fraternities in our region without spiritual assistants. In other words, we, too, have an abundant harvest but few laborers.

As Secular Franciscans we are called to minister and witness to the world as emissaries of Jesus Christ. Our witness is not standing on the corner, shouting and thumping Bibles, but by exercising the corporal works of mercy found in Matthew’s gospel, ***feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead, give alms to the poor.*** (cf. *Matthew 25:31 ff.*)

How are we doing? Have we gotten comfortable? Our witness isn’t just while performing acts of kindness with our fraternity’s apostolate activities. Our witness should be a daily event. The letter from the four general ministers of the first orders and TORS found at the front of our Rule says, ***“This is the intention behind the inclusion of the Earlier Admonition and Exhortation (rescensio prior) as the Prologue, and in the constant references to the teaching and example of Saint Francis. Another cornerstone is openness to the Spirit in the signs of the times.”***

The key phrases being “teachings and example of St. Francis” and “openness to the Holy Spirit in the signs of the times.” You and I are thus challenged to live the gospel in accordance with St.

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Go Announce, from page 4

Francis' admonitions, modified due to the times we live in. We certainly live in a strange society that seems to lack a moral compass. We often need to be reminded that we live in the world, but not of the world, and thus need to be sensitive to where we are and what we are doing.

Yes, we are lambs among the wolves, but we can't let that stop us. A modern axiom attributed to St. Francis (although he probably didn't say it) tells us to preach the gospel, use words when we must.

Words have little effect in today's world. Again, it is our "actions that speak louder than words." So, as I dismiss the congregation at the end of Mass, by your actions, "**Go announce the Gospel of the Lord.**"

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.



Is God calling you to help your Franciscan brothers and sisters as a spiritual assistant?

For more information on how to enter the Spiritual Assistants' Training Program, contact Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS, at tshaverofs@gmail.com



OFS: It's our Order's abbreviation after our names or in other writing and refers to Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis, the official—Latin—name of our Order. In English, we're still the **Secular Franciscan Order**.

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 **Oct. 15, 2022**. Send your stories and photos to Sharon Winzeler, OFS, at swinzeler@gmail.com Please send photos as attachments to your email.

Shepherding Through Formation



By Ellen Ferrone, OFS
BSSF Formation Director

As I write this it is the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our readings today reveal the Shepherd. This provides a wonderful visual of the shepherd searching for the lost sheep, assuring us that we are never alone in the valley.

As professed members we are all shepherds--for our orientees, inquirers, candidates, and each other. Jesus is the One cares for us all, we the many caring for one, two... What a blessing to have our formation directors and a formation team, and, of course, the full council are members of that formation team. Article 23 "...The entire community is engaged in this process of growth by its own manner of living..."

I wonder, why do members leave our fraternities after profession? In answer, I suggest we all pray over the question: "How actively did I support initial formation?" Did I try to get to know our new folks? Sit in on a formation class? Invite new brothers and sisters for coffee to learn their stories, build relationships, and build community?

Did I take my role as sponsor seriously? I have been blessed to be a sponsor several times. What a joy to get to know our new inquirers in a one-on-one relationship. What brought them to search the Secular Franciscan path? Were our journeys similar? How can I support them? Gatherings are wonderful, and they are a vital part of who we are as a fraternity. Yet, there isn't enough time to truly build relationships.

As spiritual assistants, did you have a pulse on the growth and understanding of those in formation? I know in many of our fraternities we don't even have a spiritual assistant. Is there a way to help our SA's have one-on-one time with our candidates? Maybe a short conversation at the gathering? Find moments to build a relationship and check on the candidate's spiritual growth. It's important to have the candidates interview with the SA and formation director before their profession. Let's not wait to the last minute to have the discussion. Are people ready? There should be no surprises. We should have a good pulse on people's readiness throughout formation and make any necessary changes if this is truly a vocation.

Is my formation team broader than the formation director? As a professed member of the fraternity, it's all our responsibility to be involved. Perhaps you could offer to sit in a formation session and share your own secular journey. What does my Franciscan heart look like? Offer to lead a formation discussion.

We are blessed that so many are attracted to Franciscan spirituality. They make the formation journey. We celebrate when they are professed. Let's make sure we have built the lasting relationships that make people say, "I could never leave. These are my sisters and brothers."

Ellen Ferrone is the BSSF appointed formation director. She is vice-minister of the Padre Pio Fraternity in Raleigh, NC,

Bringing a Franciscan Heart to a Secular World



Enjoying the day of Franciscan spirituality are left to right: Helene Ward, OFS, Immaculate Conception Fraternity; Sharon Loiselle, OFS, Emerging Fraternity of St. John Vianney; Ana Valenzuela, OFS, Emerging Fraternity of St. John Vianney; and Javier Cortez, OFS, Emerging Fraternity of St. John Vianney.

By Georgia Edwards, OFS

In May, Immaculate Conception Fraternity of Jonesboro, GA, hosted a day of Franciscan spirituality for parishes and fraternities in the Atlanta area. Entitled “The Franciscan Heart in the Secular World,” the seminar’s first aim was to share the gifts of secular Franciscan life in hopes of stirring a seed of vocation among attendees. The day was also designed to show how the Franciscan charism can help anyone – called or not - navigate a holy life through the trials and chaos of our time.

“This project developed as we emerged from the pandemic,” Minister Laura Cleary explained. “During our fall retreat we realized that, for obvious reasons, we had withdrawn as a fraternity from many things central to our charism, such as service, personal contact and formation outreach. We realized our gears had stopped turning and needed a plan to regain traction for full fraternal life. We also knew the world was hurting and wondered if we had something meaningful to share.”

Every member of the fraternity contributed in some way to the project, with time set aside at each gathering for committees to work on planning the program, marketing, hospitality, setting and choosing music for Mass. A prayer committee girded all efforts with words of petition to “make our souls your sanctuary, Lord.” The minister and vice minister provided oversight and coordination.

The final program teamed Father John Koziol, Conv., and Cricket Aull, OFS, in a presentation of the Franciscan Heart as found in four areas: The Gospel life, commitment to conversion, the
Continued on next page

Franciscan Heart, from page 7

countenance of joy and the resolution to nourish peace. After each talk, fraternity members and attendees discussed reflection questions and members offered additional insight into the ways of the secular order.

The day closed with two fraternity members telling their stories of vocation, formation and profession. One member, Deacon Dennis Arcand, OFS, has been professed over 60 years; Sandra Bailey, OFS, professed only last August. The contrast illustrated the breadth and depth of our membership, as well as the Lord's creative hand in calling souls.

"It was a fresh opportunity to share our varied gifts with each other and with the greater church," Laura Cleary observed. "No two Franciscan hearts bring love to the world in the same way. The attendees saw that. But in fraternity, because we spend time together, and are committed to each other, we can support as a family the work God places in our hands."



Participating in the day of reflection and inspiration are left, Sandra Bailey, OFS, and right, Deacon Dennis Arcand, OFS.

Georgia Edwards is a member of the Immaculate Conception Fraternity in Jonesboro, GA.

St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity in Spartanburg, SC, announces the profession of its newest member, Nick DuFault, OFS. Nick's profession was June 25, 2022, in the historic church. Pictured with Nick is Sara Nell Boggs, OFS, minister of St. Michael the Archangel fraternity.



Journey of a Formation Director

By Paul Semmens, OFS

In this article, the author describes his process of creating and leading a meaningful formation program.

I have been the formation director for my fraternity for almost two years. I happily accepted this position when it was offered because of my positive formation experience as a candidate and the fact when in the military and as a government contractor, I developed and taught training for almost 50 years.

Our fraternity uses the *Franciscan Journey* as its textbook for its completeness and its focus on our Rule. There are many, many other materials available including the useful For Up to Now (FUN) manual. In sitting down to design the formation program for my candidates, I realized right away that the *Journey* was going to be the hub of our program.

I used the same steps to outline my course that I used alongside teams who developed and taught history and operator training programs for the Patriot, National Missile Defense and Terminal High Altitude Air Defense systems. We started with what we called the target audience analysis. This step identifies who we were training and what the desired outcome was for them. This same step in our Franciscan journey is simple: we are training practicing Catholics to follow the Rule of 1978. I thought long and hard about this step and concluded that if candidates truly understood the Rule and internalized it, then I had done my job.

The next step in the Army's training development process was to develop the Terminal Learning Objective (TLO). This was the one big idea that encapsulates everything taught in the course. In other words, one takes the desired outcome and converts it into a concise, clear task. The TLO was super broad something like "Training (X System) operators to successfully engage all threats impacting in their defended area." The TLO is what holds all the course material together, it integrates everything by making it fit and relevant. I didn't spend any time on this when I was starting, and now I think it was a mistake.

I attended a regional formators meeting, literally days after I took over, where our regional formator mentioned that we do not teach enough on Francis and Clare in our instruction. Based on my experience, I just said AMEN!

So, I started reading more on St Francis and especially St Clare. The first step in this process was to develop a timeline of their lives so the students could chronologically understand their conversion stories and the birth of the Order. The best chronology I found was in *Peace and Good*, by Father Pat McCloskey, OFM, which is an excellent daily meditation on the life of Francis. Father McCloskey included a six-page chronology of the life of St Francis that I added to as I read more. Chronologies can be super boring when used for teaching (I recognized that when I foisted mine on my students), but when understood as the foundation of what I would be

Continued on next page



**Paul Semmens
outside the
basilica in Assisi,
Italy.**

Formation director, from page 9

later teaching to them on Francis and Clare, it was well received. I also heavily relied on Jon M. Sweeney's useful collection of Franciscan writings entitled *The Complete Francis of Assisi* which includes another timeline and several other useful works.

I read maybe 10 biographies of St Francis including the classics by Celano and Bonaventure which were both written in the support of his canonization. So much written on our saint is/was goody-goody. I always believed that I followed a great man but like everyone, he was not perfect. At some point, I read Paul Sabatier's biography and it struck a chord for me. Toward the end of his life, with the order disintegrating around him, Francis was crestfallen which explains the barrage of writings he published near the end of his life. My favorite saint was human. A Franciscan priest recommended Arnaldo Fortini's book on St Francis entitled, *Francis of Assisi*, which was useful. Fortini was the mayor of Assisi and had access to the city records and wrote an 800-page book that not only described the lives of Francis and of Clare but also the political and cultural climates of their times. Fortini's thesis is simple: one cannot understand Francis and Clare unless one understands their time. He is right. I relied heavily on the collected writings of St Francis and Saint Clare edited by Regis J. Armstrong and William J. Short (both OFM). They edited the most complete collection of the works of St Francis in a series of large books

I was somewhat comfortable with my facts on Father Francis but even after reading Father Armstrong's compilation of St Clare's writings (which included her Rule and her canonization testimonies,) I still was flat on St Clare; I didn't understand what made her tick. I then read Margaret Carney's (OSF) book on St Clare titled *Light of Assisi* which was an excellent source for me to understand Clare. I also read Wendy Murray's *Clare of Assisi* which is an interesting book. Ms. Murray is not Catholic but has written a book on both Francis and Clare. In her book on Clare, she suggests that Clare was the companion that accompanied Francis during his early conversion process, a fact not supported by Celano or Bonaventure who both indicate the companion was a male. But it is fun to think about it.

I used my research to create 5-7 charts on Francis and Clare for each formation session to get my students inside the thinking of these two great saints. We reviewed in overview fashion the Admonitions, the Rules of 1221 & 23, the Rule of St Clare, our Father's Letter to the Clergy, his final Testament, and other topics, all intended to help us get inside their heads. Our discussion on the lives and works of Francis and Clare were to be supporting tasks to understanding our Rule.

But after two years and studying and researching all things Franciscan I was still struggling to identify the Terminal Learning Objective, a word or sentence that captures the essence of the holy people that we follow.

So, for our June 2022 formation session, I decided to make the Spirit of Francis and Clare a topic for our candidate formation. I made a slide with the words, Poverty, Peace, Service, Gospel, Incarnation, Service, Formation, Love of Cross, Environment, All Catholic, and Fraternity and I then asked the students what was distinctly Franciscan. I think I had given them all or many of the bricks for the Franciscan wall, but we were searching for the phrase, the sentence that was the mortar.

As you can imagine, the debate was most interesting. The ideas of peace and poverty dominated the discussion as those concepts include so many supporting ideas, but no resolution was reached. We concluded that all these characteristics were Franciscan; they were not unique. All

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Formation Director, from page 10

sincere Catholics want peace, many religious orders and even some parish priests take vows of poverty. Franciscans don't have a unique form of prayer, we pray the office, like the rest of the Catholic Church.

Our session this month tried again and based on an article I read by Father Richard Rohr, OFM, where he suggested the way to identify a Franciscan is how they live. Life to Gospel, Gospel to life. I felt like I got smacked with a blinding flash of the obvious. In our discussion, nobody disagreed with that idea, but the hunt for the final answer is still on. I think I will die hunting this answer, and that's not a bad thing.

After all this time and work, I concluded that if we trust in the Lord and ask for the intercession of Saints Francis and Clare often, we will be ok.

So, here's my latest try at an TLO: Secular Franciscans integrate the Gospel principles to their interior and exterior lives attempting to bring peace to the world and those around them.

PS, if anyone has any ideas on my TLO, email me your thoughts at epaulsemmens@gmail.com

Paul Semmens is formation director of Channel of Peace Fraternity in Chattanooga, TN.

Conference Inspires with Music, Prayer, Discussions

By Kathy Gallucci, OFS

About 200 participants assembled June 3-6 at the national conference of the Franciscan Federation in Pittsburgh. Attendees included members of Franciscan orders, Third Order Regulars, and Seculars. The opening ritual, Sunday Mass, and weekend sessions were kindled by original music written for the conference by Cathy Tisel Nelson. The theme, "Hearts on Fire" was apt as the Federation held conversations about young adult leadership, care for creation, peace and justice, and the transformation of the Federation structure.

Brian McLaren, the Saturday keynote speaker, focused on the struggles of youth, relaying those solutions must be approached with humility, joy, hope, and courage. In his breakout session, he discussed how to "Vote the Common Good," as we face the headwinds of American life, particularly the challenges of economics and politics. Ilia Delio's Sunday keynote address, "Chaotically Free: The Creative Spirit of Franciscan Life," centered on the intersection of religion and science and described St. Francis as future-thinking in his view of creation and the Incarnation. She contended that Christ emerges from evolution, what she describes as "Christogenesis."

Highlights of the weekend included an excellent banquet on Saturday night, with entertainment provided by a steel-drum duo stimulating spontaneous dance from some of the attendees. The Pentecost Eucharist celebration on Sunday embodied the theme, "Hearts on Fire," with active participation and festive music, expressing the passion of the members.

As a Secular Franciscan, I was inspired by the message and energy of the Federation Conference attendees. Next year, St. Louis!

Kathy Gallucci, OFS, is a member of the Franciscan Family of Greensboro.

Fraternity's Apostolate Reaches Out to Uganda

One of the apostolates of the Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity of Blairsville, GA, is to support the efforts of "To the Nations" by collecting and packing items needed for mission trips to Uganda. On May 7th, an "extra" gathering was held at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in its Marian Hall to do just this. Brothers and sisters from the fraternity were joined by parishioners and friends to help.

The purpose of this "packing party" was to assemble 130 backpacks for boys and girls who attend the St. Charles Lwanga Secondary/Vocational School outside of Masaka, Uganda. While on a mission trip in January, Minister Stephen H. Smith, OFS, had the opportunity to visit this school and found its conditions unacceptable. Stephen's wife died August 16, 2021, and he decided to make a personal gift to enable a new classroom to be constructed in memory of his wife.

When he returned home, his family wanted to match the gift to construct a second classroom in memory of his nephew who had also passed away the year before. When word got out in the parish, other donors wanted to help with dormitories, a kitchen, and bathrooms. There's still much to finish, but on a June 2022 mission trip the classrooms had been completed.

In addition to the students at the now Mary K. Bauer Smith School of Education, bags were packed for 30 persons who will be living at Fr. Martin Bruno Serunkuuma's Graceful Home for the Aging. It's the first of its kind in Uganda and was the vision of this priest when he visited St. Francis of Assisi Church and a local home for the elderly. In June, it was noted that this too was completed with completion of the chapel still in need of help.

The bags that were packed included shirts, pants, dresses, underwear, toiletries, a rosary and a small gift. The bags were then packed into duffel bags and delivered in June 2022. In addition, a well was dug in the village of St. Maria Goretti.



At left is the original St. Charles Lwanga School in Masaka, Uganda. At right is the new school building in memory of minister Stephen H. Smith's wife who died last year. The Siroki Brijeg Fraternity of Blairsville, GA, has helped support students, the elderly, and others in need in the community.



Ugandan Apostolate (continued from page 12)

Left, members of the Siroki Brijeg of Blairsville, GA, reach out across continents to support those in need. Here they are preparing backpacks with shirts, pants, dresses, underwear, toiletries, a rosary and a small gift. The bags were delivered to people in Masaka Uganda.

Below, the fraternity also supported a local home for the aged and a well-digging project in the village of St. Maria Goretti.

The Ugandans celebrate the installation of a new well at the St. Maria Goretti primary school, providing clean water for the first time for the school and all the



Ceremonies of Profession and Welcoming



St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity of Bessemer, AL, welcomed Mary Erwin, OFS, who was professed on April 24, 2022. She is pictured with Fr. Noel Danielewicz, OFM Conv., who presided at the mass for her Rite of Profession at St. Francis of Assisi Church.



The St. Francis & Clare Fraternity of Knoxville Tennessee welcomed five new Inquirers. From left to right they are Henry Barse, Linda Barse, Velma Burke, Robert Kuhlawi, & Tracy Smith. The welcoming ceremony was held on April 10, 2022.

Retreats return to fraternity calendars

The **Franciscan Family of Greensboro Fraternity** (below) held its annual retreat weekend July 15- 17. The retreat leader was Marie Dennis (right) the past co-president (2017-2019) of Pax Christi International and program chair of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. Her topic was "Living the Gospel: St Francis, Pope Francis and Nonviolence." The retreat was held at St. Francis Springs Prayer Center in Stoneville, NC.



The Franciscan Family of Greensboro blessed its synod report before sending it to Rome. This is the synod committee that worked so hard with the fraternity since February to prepare it.

They are, from left to right: Kathy Gallucci, OFS, Jeanne Kiley, OFS, Fr. David Hymen, OFM, Georgette Schraeder, OFS, and Judith Walsh, OFS.

More on Fraternity Retreats



St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity of Hendersonville, NC, held a one-day retreat entitled “Prayer to the Fire” at the LaForesta Retreat House at the Poor Clares’ Monastery in Travelers Rest, SC. Spiritual Assistant Fr. Bob Menard, OFM, (left) presented a program that focused on Eucharistic revival. This was followed by time for personal reflection before joining together, two-by-two for an Emmaus Walk. After lunch, participants gathered for sharing and discussion on the position of revival, in the church, our fraternity and personal lives. “It was a wonderful day of insight and personal renewal,” said minister Brenda Harris, OFS.



Retreat leader Fr. Steve Kluge, OFM

By Ann Rzewnicki, OFS

Thirty members of the **Padre Pio Fraternity of Raleigh, NC**, took a break from routines and spent the May 13-15 weekend on retreat at the St. Francis Springs Prayer Center in Stoneville, N.C.

In the center’s peaceful, wooded setting, they enjoyed good food, fellowship, and quiet walks along paths that led to an outdoor Stations of the Cross, a labyrinth, and benches, where they reflected on what they heard and discussed in presentations by Fr. Steve Kluge, OFM, over meals and during times for fellowship.

They were invited to consider: “Who are You, Lord, and who am I?” and “What did Jesus discover about the Father? About Himself?” In the evening, they enjoyed comfortable indoor gathering spaces where conversations continued with each other and Fr. Kluge and spiritual assistant Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM.

Retreat booklets titled “Stations of St. Francis and St. Clare,” prepared by Fr. Kluge, guided discussion and reflection times, leading retreatants to consider the circumstances of their own birth, Baptism, family home, memories held from formative years, and the stations of their own lives.

Anna Rzewnicki, OFS, is secretary of the Padre Pio Fraternity in Raleigh, NC.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION
ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING**

Life Way Conference Center - Ridgecrest, North Carolina

August 19 – 21, 2022

“Servant Leadership”

FRIDAY August 19

- 3:00 P.M. **Registration - Mountain Laurel Lobby- (Franciscan Family of Greensboro Fraternity)**
- 2:00** Meeting - REC + National Visitors (Johnson Spring Board Room)
- 4:00** Choir practice for cantors and musicians (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)
- 5:00 **Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)**
- 5:30 - 6:30 **Dinner buffet (tickets required) (Main Dining Room)**
- 7:00 **Welcome, Opening Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)**
- Recognition of New Councils, New Attendees, and Anniversaries
- Introduction of National Visitors
- 7:30 **Presentation –Servant Leadership DorothyAnn Rowland**
- 8:15 **First Call for Nominations**
- 8:30 **Brothers and Sisters time together**

SATURDAY August 20

- 7:15-8:15 **Breakfast buffet (tickets required) (Main Dining Room)**
- 8:15 **Liturgy of the Hours Morning Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor)**
- 8:45 **Second Call for Nominations**
- 9:00 **Presentation – Joshua Molidor**
- 10:00 **Break**
- 10:30 **Celebration of the Eucharist, Procession to Eucharistic Chapel (Stigmata of St. Francis Fraternity)**
- Noon - 1:00**Lunch buffet (tickets required) (Main Dining Room)**
- 1:00-4:30 **Regional Fraternity Council Meeting/Chapter of Elections
Johnson Spring Building 2nd floor, Room 5 A-D**

1:00-4:30 (continued)

Presentations – Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C

1:15 -2:15 **JPIC--Carolyn Townes, OFS**

2:20 – 3:20 **Service as Spiritual Assistants**

3:30 **Break**

5:00 **Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor)**

5:30-6:30 **Dinner buffet (tickets required) (Main Dining Room)**

7:00 **Introduction of New Council**

8:00 **Memorial for Deceased Members of Region**
(Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity)

8:30 **Brothers and Sisters time together**

SUNDAY August 21

7:15-8:15 **Breakfast buffet (tickets required) (Main Dining Room)**
(Time to check out)

8:30 **Liturgy of the Hours Morning Prayer**

9:00 **Presentation - (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)**
Fr. Cid

10:00 **Recognition of newly professed- Renewal of Commitment (all**
Professed)

10:30 **Celebration of the Eucharist**

11:30 **Adjournment - Closing Prayer - Closing Comments**

*****Special info tables on those who are on the slate for the Chapter of Elections will be in the Johnson Spring 2nd Floor corridor area.

*****Display tables for fraternities in rooms 4 A-D across from Azalea meeting room.

FRANCISCAN BOOKS AND ARTICLES WILL BE FOR SALE
(St. Francis Springs Prayer Center)
Johnson Spring Building – 2nd Floor, room 3 A-D

***A Chapel will be open for Eucharistic Adoration 9:45 AM Sat until 9:45 AM Sun.**

Please sign up to spend quiet time with our Lord
(Chapel: Mountain Laurel Building, lower level - conference room #5)

REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL MEETING CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS

Saturday, August 20, 2022 *** 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Johnson Spring Building - 2nd Floor, Room 5 A-D (Across from Azalea Room)**

**Every *elected* Fraternity Minister and REC is a member of the Regional Fraternity
Council.**

Please be present or delegate this responsibility to another member.

OPENING PRAYER

Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

REPORT OF TREASURER

BUSINESS

Approval of Budget for 2023

ARG – 2023: August 11-13, 2023 (Ridgecrest)

**Update on Endowment Funds distributions
Calendar of Visitations/Elections – Sept 2022 to May 2023**

CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS

ADJOURNMENT – CLOSING PRAYER

*****MEMBERS OF FRATERNITIES, NEWLY FORMING GROUPS AND EMERGING
COMMUNITIES ARE INVITED TO OBSERVE THE COUNCIL MEETING AND
CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS)**

BSSF REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RECAP**By Nora Wessling, OFS**

God's blessings of peace, love, and goodness to all.

The Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council met via Zoom on May 28, 2022. The following are the highlights of that meeting.

- Minister DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS presided.
- The January 29, 2022 meeting minutes were approved as corrected.
- The Nomination Committee for the upcoming August 20, 2022 Regional Chapter of Elections—Carmen Madero, OFS and Sharon Loiselle, OFS—reported on the status of the nominations occurring at that time, and nominations were still, (then) ongoing.
- Carmen is also the Chairperson for the Fraternity Charitable Donations, which are funds from a Bequest made to the Region, and reported no new requests for funds have been received. She stated she would send out a reminder again to all the Ministers regarding this and also stated the forms for applications, etc., can be found on the BSSF Region website.
- It was presented that one of the Ministers of a fraternity had questions re: archiving documents and records, and questions re: where to find definitions for terms used on the NAFRA Database for inactive members, and how long inactive members can be listed under those terms. A discussion followed with a final action for the Regional Database Manager to send the questions to NAFRA for their reply. The local Minister was to receive a copy of the reply, but it was felt that it was important that all the fraternities get the feedback because they also have questions.
- The Treasurer's report was given, which included the report from the beginning of the year, our 2022 Regional budget—approved in August 2021 and the Annual 2021 BSSF Region Report.
- Regional Spiritual Assistant, Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS reported on the status of the present Spiritual Assistant Training Program, stating those participating are doing well. He hoped that another group in the Training program will begin with the November 2022 class, with hopes of having an ongoing rotation training occurring. A discussion followed by the REC regarding various recruiting/advertising methods.
- The JPIC Animator, Carolyn Townes, OFS gave her report that included brief summary of programs she is involved with. Some were: Facilitated the Lenten Prayer for Peace gatherings, and JPIC Animators Gathering; co-facilitated the JustFaith course—Faith and Racial Healing; co-founded a Franciscan Action Network Justice Circle for persons with limited mobility, and related other program involvements. She also emphasized the need for local fraternities to have a JPIC Animator and/or a contact person. If there is not a designated contact person—the Vice-Minister is the contact person, and will be on the contact list. She stated the fraternity is to forward to her their information, so the fraternity gets information from her via the Minister and the Vice-Minister. She ended her report by saying with so much violence, and sad times in our nation and world, we need to band together even more so as a Region and as an Order. She expressed that JPIC is also about taking care of each other, that this is about peace and justice, about the people, and she felt people start with us. She expressed we need to continue to take care of us, so we can take care of those who are desperately in need.
- Communio News report given by Sharon Winzeler, OFS, Regional WebSite Webmaster. There have been two *Communio* editions published since the last REC meeting: Winter and Spring 2022 editions. The Summer 2022 edition will be published at the beginning

of August 2022. She stated the BSSF Region website has been updated and she has published some Transitus materials for the Fall. The website also has Reflection Interview Questions for Candidates and for Council Ahead of Profession Interview.

- Formation Director Report was given by Ellen Ferrone, OFS which included:
 - Forwarding weekly Formation Reports to Formation Directors and REC;
 - Forwarding Franciscan Spirituality to Formation Director;
 - Reviewed and modified Rite of Extraction materials—ready to go on Regional website;
 - Submitted article for *Communio*; Conducted a Visitation with Deacon Tom April 2022.
 - Participated in several JPIC activities; Is working on the JPIC Spirituality Young Adult Task Force.
- The Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Report was presented by Minister DorothyAnn Roland, OFS, in Joe Vodenichar's, OFS excused absence.
- Reports from the Six Area Councilors were given. Their reports basically shared what activities were occurring in their Areas, what they were involved in their Areas, as well as any discussions that were needed for each Area. The REC is interested in helping fraternities in the Region and want to help all to succeed.
- The proposed schedule of Visitations, Elections and Events up to mid May 2023 time frame was reviewed with assignments done for the various open positions until mid July 2022. Assignments after this date cannot be done because the Region does not know who the new Council members will be for the Regional Executive Council. The newly elected REC will schedule those persons after the 2022 ARG. The Calendar included the 2023 dates that were requested by Ministers in the Region.
- Preliminary planning for the ARG August 19-21, 2022 was discussed by the REC. A tentative agenda was reviewed and possible topics for presentations were discussed. All were to be finalized at another meeting and time. It is known that the theme will be "Servant Leadership," that ARG registration begins Friday afternoon, there will be a REC meeting Friday afternoon, and a Regional Fraternity Council meeting and the Chapter of Elections will occur Saturday afternoon.
- It is known that Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Bluffton, SC, is doing the Memorial for deceased members of the Region. A couple of other fraternities in the Region are being checked with regarding handling registration, and doing the Eucharistic Procession and handling the Eucharistic Chapel.
- All will be finalized and available to the fraternities in the Region before the ARG.
- Next year's ARG will be on August 11-13, 2023, and there is usually a Guest Speaker. Exploration is being done by REC members.
- The REC discussed having a Quinquennial ad in the booklet for the Q. The ad is a benefit for National and is meant to share a congratulatory word. The REC voted for our Region to have a quarter page ad in the Q booklet.
- It was shared that at that time there were 11 persons attending from our Region who were going to the Q, three of them were REC members along with members of fraternities in our Region.
- There were three fraternities in our Region whose respective Minister or Vice-Minister had sent in requests to Region for fraternity deactivation. They were no longer meeting due to member losses for various reasons and were essentially defunct. The REC members were given the opportunity for discussion, to ask questions, and to give their approval/non-approval for these fraternities' requests to deactivate.
- It was asked if we were helping the members left in the fraternities to find another fraternity- if they wanted to continue, and the answer was affirmative. Remaining

members have been referred to the next closest fraternity, some have transferred, and some have been invited to attend fraternity meetings via Zoom if unable to travel.

- The REC members sadly approved the fraternities’ requests for deactivation. The next step is to inform the Ministers and Vice-Minister of these fraternities that the Region is writing deactivation letters to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant.

These are highlights of our last REC meeting, and we hope it helps to show you not only how the REC is actively involved in serving your needs in the Region, but also how we are interested in helping our brothers and sisters in the region. We are thankful for this opportunity to serve and continue to ask for your prayers as we continue in our role as servant leaders. All of you remain in our prayers and we wish all God’s love, peace, and goodness.

- The next REC meeting, which will be the last REC meeting for this Regional Executive Council, is scheduled for August 19, 2022, at the ARG.

Nora Wessling, OFS, is a member of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Augusta, Georgia, and BSSF Region secretary.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS
SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS AND ELECTIONS
August 2022 to May 2023**

* confirmed

V+ follow-up visit

(observers in parentheses)

August 3-7	20 th Quinquennial Congress “Q” Sheraton Hotel Phoenix, Arizona	
August 19-21	Annual Regional Gathering Ridgecrest Conference Center	E
Sept 30-Oct 1	Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary/Bluffton, SC	V
October 7-8	Crucified Christ/North Charleston, SC	V
October 15-16	St. Thomas More/Wilmington, NC	V
November 9-10	Five Georgia Martyrs/St. Simons Island, GA	V
November 11-12	Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament/Burlington, NC	V

2023

February 18	Blessed John Duns Scotus/Murrells Inlet, SC	E
March 4	Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary/Bluffton, SC	E
May 12-13	Immaculate Conception/Jonesboro, GA	V

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council Roster

Minister: DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS

Vice Minister: Carmen Madero, OFS

Secretary: Nora Wessling, OFS

Treasurer: Ken Brooke, OFS

Appointed Formation Director: Ellen Ferrone, OFS

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

Area Councilors

Area 1

David Cruz-Uribe, OFS; Sharon Loiselle, OFS

AL: Bessemer;

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

TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

Area 2

Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, OFS; Christine Lukesh, OFS

GA: Augusta, St. Simons Island;

NC: Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;

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

Area 3

Martha Roman, OFS

NC: Burlington, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville,
Greensboro, Morehead City, Raleigh, Wilmington,

Winston-Salem;

SC: Garden City

Archivist: Sara Nell Boggs, OFS

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

**Multicultural Commission Chair
Position Vacant**

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

Prayer Ministry (online prayer requests)

Area 1: John Martin, OFS

Area 2: Dorothy Huebner, OFS

Area 3: Bob Sabisch, OFS

Fraternity prayer coordinators submit prayer requests.

**Communio Editor
Sharon Winzeler, OFS**

Prayer for the Servant Leader

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like your own.

That we come together in your name – Lord Jesus, make this my desire. That we all allow the interests of your Kingdom to win out, That your love and truth guide us always, That we truly listen to each other and speak in freedom and simplicity,

That we not think in categories of winning and losing,

That we recognize your gift and your project, That we always choose whatever gives you the most glory.

From the desire to always be right
From the desire to impose my point of view,

From the desire to win out over others,
Lord Jesus, free me.

From the fear of conflict,

From the fear of making a mistake,

From the fear of looking bad,

Lord Jesus, free me.

From rejecting those who see things differently,

From listening only to those who see things as I do,

From all prejudices that prevent me from listening,

Lord Jesus, free me.

From thinking only of myself,

From the difficulty to admit I am wrong,

From all desires and attachments that keep you from acting in me, Lord Jesus, free me

Pour out on us, O Lord, we pray, a spirit of truth,

understanding and peace,

that we may know with all our hearts what is pleasing to you and, with one accord, pursue what we have come to know.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

*Contributed by Jan Parker, OFS
National Minister*