



COMMUNIO

Newsletter of the Brothers and Sisters
of St. Francis Region

Summer 2023 Edition

Welcome to the latest issue of the Communio, your quarterly newsletter from Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region.

In this issue you will find the latest news, including photos and reports from the Annual Regional Gathering held Aug. 11-13.

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Listen, Discern, Go Forth

By Ellen Ferrone, OFS
BSSF Regional Minister

My Dear Sisters and Brothers,
May the Lord grant you his peace!

I'm truly joy filled!

Your Regional Executive Council (REC) has been in office for one year, living article 21 of our Rule, "each fraternity is animated and guided by a council and minister who are elected." It's hard to believe it's been a year.

The year culminated with our Annual Regional Gathering at Ridgecrest Conference Center Aug. 11-13. Lots of planning and preparations went into this Council's first ARG.

On the first evening I spoke of some of the highlights of this past year. I thought I would share them here for those who weren't able to attend.

- Established St. Padre Pio Newly Forming Group, Lancaster, SC, being sponsored by St Clare, Aiken, SC. They will profess seven candidates Sept 30, 2023
- In the Region:
 - 34 newly professed
 - 6 new councils
- Commissioned four new Spiritual Assistants

Continued on next page

Listen, discern, Go Forth continued from page 1

- The REC has had two in-person Council meetings, strengthening relationships in order to better serve you. We had three zoom meetings with the Regional Fraternity Council (RFC), all the ministers. This was helpful in sharing information, making timely decisions, and getting to know each other better.
- An action Item from last's year RFC meeting was to reduce our reserve funds. From our reserve funds we donated \$16,000 to Catholic Charities to the eight dioceses from which we come. This serves to strengthen our relationships with the wider church and donate to the many ministries you serve. Article 6, of our Rule.
- Also, from our reserve funds we have set aside \$5,000 for joint fraternity activity, such as retreats and celebration of Transitus together. Be creative with your ideas.
- The REC has also experienced change, both Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS our Regional Spiritual Assistant and Carolyn Townes, OFS, our JPIC animator have both stepped down. We are grateful for their many years of service. Change is always a challenge and an opportunity for others to consider those roles and how they maybe being called to a significant servant leader role. (See JPIC animator application on page 6 of this issue.)
- I was able to visit several fraternities and be a part of their gatherings. I also attended the profession of three members at St. Elizabeth of Hungry, in Augusta Ga. I'm looking forward to seeing more of you this year and being a part of your fraternity life.

Also taking place in August was the National Chapter, held at the Pallottine Renewal Center, in St Louis, Mo. This was a visitation year with Dina Shabalina, OFS from the Ukraine. Pastoral visitor Fr. Carlos, OFM from Peru., along with an attendance of ~80 sisters and brothers from across the country. As with any Gathering of Franciscans there were meetings, prayer, celebration of the Eucharist and social time with lots of hugs, food and laughter. One highlight was the celebration of the Eucharist at the Cathedral Basilica of St Louis, on August 25th, his feast day. Along with St. Elizabeth of Hungary, he is our patron saint.

There was time for open dialogue with our visitors and the National Executive Council. I'm pleased to let you know, National Minister Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, has formed a task force on racism. The purpose is to go beyond a statement against racism and provide materials for our fraternities to encourage open dialogue. Dialogue and daily conversion so that we love our sisters and brothers as ourselves, as the Lord has taught us.

Fraternal visitor Dina closed with "*live the golden rule, Gospel to life and life to Gospel*".

Pastoral visitor Fr. Carlos closed with "*use not only logic and reason to address our challenges, use faith.*"

As I reflect on our theme, I believe we *listened* this year to several requests; help ARG be more inviting and accessible and reduce our reserve funds. We *discerned* what options and possibilities we had. We *went forth* with 200+ in attendance at ARG, more accessibility with the golf cart and relationship building with our smaller breakout groups and apostolate. We *went forth* and distributed \$16,000 to our bishops and have allocated \$5,000 to be used by our fraternities.

I look forward to the opportunities to love and serve you in the coming years. May the Lord bless you all with peace and joy.

Ellen



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

Franciscan Ongoing Formation Resources

By Lynn Oeser, OFS
BSSF Regional Formation Director

Sisters and Brothers, Peace!

Article 44:3 of the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan order states this:

3 Permanent formation – accomplished by means of courses, gatherings, and the sharing of experience – aims to assist the brothers and sisters: - Rule 4. in listening to and meditating on the Word of God, “going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel”; - in reflecting on events in the Church and in society in the light of faith and with the help of the documents of the Magisterium xvi consequently taking consistent positions; - in updating and deepening their Franciscan vocation by studying the writings of Saint Francis, Saint Clare and Franciscan authors.

It seems to me that this challenges us to a discipline that by God’s grace hearkens us to His call and our obligation to conversion. I follow St. Clare’s advice on this – to gaze, consider, contemplate and imitate. While many sources can aid our formation, our foundation is first and foremost held firm in Christ with prayer, scripture, and sacrament. We are committed to perpetual conversion by our baptism and by our profession.

Blessed are we with an abundance of resources for our Franciscan Journey.

Here are a few:

The Franciscan School of Theology of San Diego

Upcoming Franciscan Zoom Lecture series September 14:

Wisdom Literature and the Franciscan Vision By: Angela Zautcke, Ph.D. Candidate

[Franciscan Zoom Lecture - September 14 - Events \(fst.edu\)](#)

past offerings can be viewed on on their You Tube Channel

[Franciscan School of Theology - YouTube](#)

[The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition](#) offers Early Documents as well as current articles.

[Secular Franciscan-USA](#) is a rich source of formation resources.

Greccio and Beyond the musings of Brother Masseo By Carmen Scuderi OFM is a short, simple, delightful read taken from *The Fioretti (the Little Flowers of St Francis)*. Available on Amazon.

The Franciscan Crown (the book shown at ARG) can be purchased at [The Franciscan Crown: The Joyful Mysteries in the Lives of the Virgin Mary and Saint Francis of Assisi - Confraternity of Penitents Holy Angels Gift Shop \(cfpholyangels.com\)](#)

If you are searching for something, please reach out to me. It is a privilege to journey with you.



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

Fr. Cid's Talk and Reflection Questions On Race and Racism in the United States

By David V. Cruz-Urbe, OFS
Regional Multi-cultural Commission Chair

At the Annual Regional Gathering in August, our provincial spiritual assistant, Fr. Cidouane Joseph, OFM, gave a talk on his personal experience with race and racism in the United States. It was a powerful talk and he concluded it by sharing four reflection questions. As we continue to confront racism in our nation, our Church and in our order, I think these questions are the basis for an excellent ongoing formation and reflection in your local fraternities. I want to share them here with some additional comments and notes on facilitating a fruitful discussion.

Question 1: Have you ever experienced racism in your life, or do you know someone who does? How did it manifest itself?

Discussions about the experience of racism are difficult. If you have brothers and sisters in your fraternity who are people of color (Black, Latino, Native American, Asian, etc.) it is important to create a safe space for them to share their experiences. They may not want to, and you should respect this. When listening to shared experiences of racism, it is most important to *listen*. Do not try to explain them, or minimize them, or question them. Just listen and try to understand the experience of others.

Question 2: Can a Franciscan ever be a racist? Why yes, or why not?

This can be a tricky question as we navigate the difference between what we as Franciscans are called to be, and what we actually are in our fallen world. Also, it might be worth talking about what you mean when you say "racist". Some people restrict this word to overt expressions and acts against people of color; others use it more broadly for participating in sinful structures that perpetuate racism in America. Our bishops, in their pastoral letter *Open Wide our Hearts*, introduced a phrase that may help make this distinction clear: to what extent are Franciscans "*accomplices in racism*"?

Question 3: Is racism really a sin? Why?

This question seems straightforward, but it might be worthwhile to ground it in Scripture and our Rule. What passages in the gospels speak most directly to racism? What articles in our rule? Referring back to Question 2, is being an "*accomplice in racism*" itself sinful?

Question 4: Based on your experience in life, your knowledge and point of view, what should be done in our society, our order about racism? Where should we start?

In his talk, Fr. Cid repeatedly made the point that if all persons worked against racism, then racist structures in our society would dissolve. This question should help you get to the heart of this. There are no easy answers and it may be better to make this question an assignment for further reflection and study. Have people in your fraternity spend some time looking around and try to discern what the next steps should be.

In the months ahead there are some things you and your fraternities can reflect and act on related to multiculturalism.

September 16 is Mexican Independence Day, and the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month in the United

States. This is a good time to learn more about the Latino community (many of whom may be Mexican or Mexican-American) in your area.

October 9 is Columbus Day, though in many places this has been replaced by Indigenous Peoples Day. The history of Columbus is complicated: he is neither the saintly hero many of us were taught about in school, nor the total villain he is now sometimes portrayed as. However, it is worth reflecting on how he is seen by the indigenous people of the Caribbean and the US. Pope John Paul II spoke about the history of colonization and the Church's role in it several times, especially during his visit to the Dominican Republic in 1992, on the eve of the 500th anniversary of Columbus landing on the island he named Santo Domingo. Unfortunately, the majority of his speeches from this trip are only available in Spanish and Italian. This article from the New York Times touches on some key points:

<https://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/12/us/pope-s-mass-at-dominican-monument-to-columbus.html>

November is Native American Month. This would be a good time to learn about Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk, a Lakota Sioux and Catholic catechist who has been proposed for sainthood. You can learn more about him and his cause here:

<https://blackelkcanonization.com/>

<https://uscatholic.org/articles/202105/nicholas-black-elk-fully-lakota-completely-catholic/>

December 12 is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of Mexico and the subject of great devotion by Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Three days earlier, December 9 is the feast of St. Juan Diego Cuauthlatatzin, who was blessed to witness the apparitions of the Virgin Mary and whose tilma (traditional cloak) is imprinted with Her image. This is again another opportunity to learn more about the Mexican and Latino communities in your area. The accompanying image is a detail from a 1691 painting by Manuel de Arellano (Wikimedia Commons, image in public domain).



David Cruz-Uribe, OFS, is a member of St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity in Bessemer, AL, and serves as the BSSF Regional Multi-Cultural Commission Chair.

Energy, Ideas to Engage Youths/Young Adults in Our Secular Franciscan Charism

By Bob Dorsch OFS
Regional Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission Chairman

Wow, what an energized and enthusiastic group we had at Annual Regional Gathering for the Franciscan Youth/Young Adult discussion. The room was full of bright eyes and ideas.

Some take-aways from the discussion include:

- The most difficult step toward connecting with local Catholic youth is the first step. Look for ways to approach youth groups.
- On initiative is to identify the leaders in the Catholic Campus Minister at a local college or university in your area. Make contact, develop dialogue, establish a relationship and continue contacting them in person and by email.
- Understand that folks in those positions most likely have a calendar already laid out for the year. So offer to help and /or quarterback an event might be welcome, much like the Wake Forest event covered in the last edition. Always keeping in mind the goal is establish a relationship and that offer assistance for programs.
- Simple things like attending mass with the students and perhaps getting a few minutes afterwards to share information about the OFS could go a long way. You may be surprised how many stay after with additional questions.
- Sponsoring a dinner is also a great way to continue communication with the group.
- Another avenue to consider is contact the director of religious education or youth minister at your local parish. Pastors and youth ministers have expressed a great need for community for the 18-39 age group. “They come to faith formation, get confirmed, go off to college and we never see them again” is what hear. Volunteer to be part of a vocation day during faith formation.

In summary, take that first step. You might be surprised how fast you go far! Establish relationships with dialogue. Seek opportunities to be present with youth groups. Become that “go to” person for the lead with a full plate. Based on the energy at the meeting I can’t wait to your success! Enjoy the opportunity folks; it is vast!



Bob Dorsch is formation director for the Fraternity of St. Clare in Winston-Salem, NC, and serves as chair of the Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair for the BSSF Region.

Franciscans gather to pray, grow in love of Christ

By Frances Acosta, OFS
St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity

St. Francis during his life, took time away from his mission with a few brothers, to a hermitage during Lent.

Likewise, on a rainy afternoon, on the 5th Sunday of Lent the brothers and sisters of St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity of Charlotte, NC gathered in a small chapel at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory.

Using “Franciscans and the Discipline of Lent” by Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, as a backdrop, Fr. Stephen Hoyt, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, Lenoir, NC, and our Spiritual Assistant, led our day of recollection.

We journeyed with Fr. Steve, as he shared with us Mary’s important role in the significance of the season of Lent in Franciscan life.

The Annunciation and Incarnation are synonymous with salvation. Without Mary’s “Yes”, the word became flesh would be non-existent. The liturgical season of Lent gave us the opportunity to prioritize and grow in love with Christ by dedicating ourselves to continuous conversions of mind and heart.

We concluded the day walking with Christ with the scriptural stations of the cross and benediction. It was a faith filled day. As we walked out, the sun was bright. Jennye Taylor Johnson, our Franciscan sister, said it best. “We started the day in the dark of Lent and ended it in Easter Joy!” What a Blessing!



Members of St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity in Charlotte, NC, gather to grow in the love of Christ and the continuous conversion of mind and heart.

Are you ready to answer the call?
Regional Animator needed
for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

If interested, please complete the application on
Page 8 and return by Sept. 30 to ellenferrone@gmail.com

If you are interested in volunteering to serve as the BSSF Region JPIC animator, please complete this application by Sept. 30. Send it to regional minister Ellen Ferrone at ellenferrone@gmail.com

Application for BSSF Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission Chair

Use additional pages as necessary.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Fraternity: _____

Date of Profession: _____

Please answer the following questions as you feel led. This is just to help us get to know you a little. Answers do not need to be comprehensive.

1. In a few sentences, please tell us about yourself. (family, interests, hobbies, etc.)
2. Please describe any aspects of your educational background, employment or community service that would apply to this position. Include any experience that you have in this area.
3. What OFS leadership, service positions and/or activities (past and present) have you been involved in and at what level of fraternity (Local, Regional, National)?
4. Describe how your gifts, talents and experience lead you to apply for this position.
5. Please give examples of your leadership style (collaboration, communication, organizational skills)?
6. What, in your opinion, are the main purposes of the JPIC Commission?
 - a. what are the main issues that JPIC should be addressing?
7. What do you think the role of the **Regional** JPIC Commission Chair is?
 - a. What excites you about being the Regional JPIC Animator?
 - b. How would you work with the Regional Executive Council as a non-voting member?
8. What is the role of the **Fraternity** JPIC Animator?
 - a. What role does the Fraternity JPIC Animator play on the Fraternity Council?
 - b. How would you work with the Fraternity JPIC Animators?
 - c. What would you like to see regarding JPIC on the local/regional levels?
9. Are you familiar with the National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation website? What are your thoughts? How would you incorporate it into the Regional website? (Again, a brief answer is fine.)
10. Commission chairs are expected to attend all Regional Executive Council meetings (both on Zoom and in person). In addition, you would hold regular JPIC gatherings on Zoom and at the annual in-person at the Annual Regional Gathering. When possible, in person gatherings throughout the Region with the Local Animators. Are you available to fulfill these responsibilities?

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity to serve!

Signature _____

Date _____

Secular Franciscans Pray, Listen, Adore, Serve At Annual Regional Gathering

What happens 200 Secular Franciscans gather for a weekend at the Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC? You have an Annual Regional Gathering that is full of prayer, laughter, love, service, listening and caring.

Some of the highlights this year include:

- Three **talks on nonviolence** by Pax Christi International speaker Marie Dennis, OFS
- A service project that provided 5,000 **gleaning bags** for the Society of St. Andrew
- **Breakout sessions** reflecting on Marie's talks
- A variety of ways of **praying the Liturgy of the Hours**, including the, Liturgical Office of the 12 Our Fathers, the Franciscan Crown Rosary and Lectio Divina.
- Daily Mass
- A **presentation by Fr. Cid Joseph, OFM**, provincial spiritual assistant
- **24-Hour Adoration**
- Commissioning of **four new spiritual assistants**
- A **golf cart** to transport physically challenged folks to and from the dining hall
- A birthday cake **celebrating the 800th anniversary of Greccio and the Rule.**
- A **memorial service** honoring our brothers and sisters who died this year.

Fr. Cid Joseph, OFM, of Boston, provincial spiritual assistant commission four new spiritual assistants for the BSSF. They are from left to right, Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS; Margaret (Peg) Saam, OFS; Helen Neff, OFS; and Charlie Comberrel, OFS. A new round of training for spiritual assistants will start in early 2024. For more information, Contact Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS, at tshaverofs@gmail.com More information is available at <https://www.bssfsfo.org/saprogram/>



Time for Reflection, Sharing on Nonviolence

After each talk by Marie Dennis, OFS, on nonviolence, ARG attendees gathered in breakout sessions to discuss reflection question. Top left, multicultural chairperson David Cruz-Uribe, OFS, helped randomly organize groups.



Photos by Michael Hancock, OFS

Service project nets 5,000 gleaning bags for work of Society of St. Andrew

Secular Franciscans at the Annual Regional Gathering spent their free moments assembling gleaning bags for the Society of St. Andrew.

Some 5,000 bags were made from one large spool of orange netting.

Gleaning is the act of collecting excess fresh food from the fields and sharing it with the poor.

Gleaning helps avoid waste as well as provides nutritious food.

An example of gleaning occurs in the sweet potato fields in North Carolina.

Words of the Lord on gleaning from Leviticus 19:10 are “And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God.”

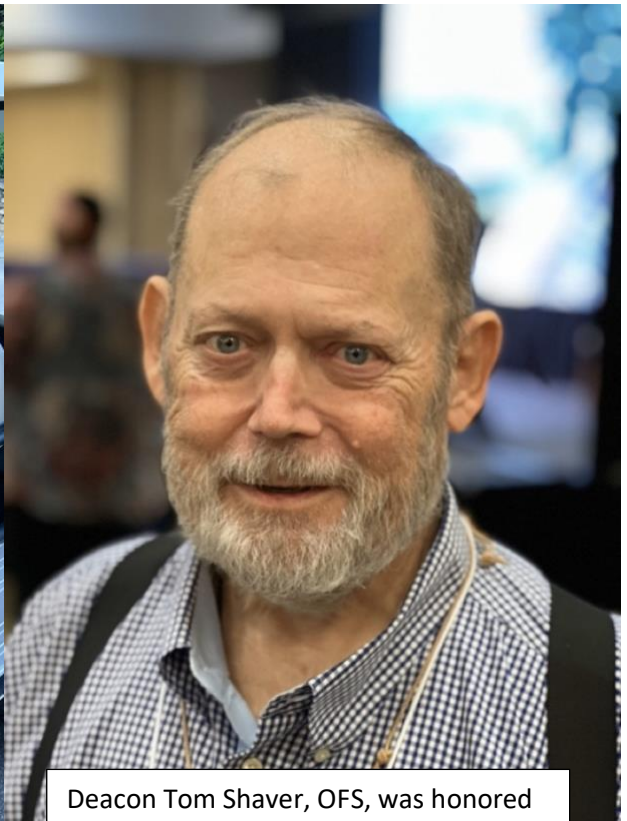




Five-thousand gleaning bags were delivered to the Society of St. Andrew collection center in Durham for use in late summer gleaning.



BSSF Regional Treasurer Zubair Simonson, OFS, was one of the official shuttle drivers to and from the dining room at Ridgecrest Conference



Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS, was honored for his many years of service as regional spiritual assistant.

Franciscans at the Annual Regional Gathering



Newcomer's Reflections on ARG Experience

By Rachel Bongiorno, OFS
Padre Pio Fraternity

While we may age or go through different seasons in our lives, our memories become a part of us. One very special memory that I will always hold close to my heart is my first experience at the Annual Regional Gathering (ARG) held Aug. 11-13 at the Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC.

The joy of being together in communion with such a large number of fellow Franciscans was not only wonderful but also, at times, overwhelming. Overwhelming in the sense that one feels at a family reunion, perhaps. There was a flurry of activity all around, many exuberant conversations and the warmth of the Holy Spirit radiating throughout.

It made me think about the story from the *Little Flowers*, in which Clare and Francis met and the holiness they created made the townspeople fear the little church was on fire because it appeared to burn and glow. The Eucharistic Procession we shared in moved me deeply. We started together from the conference room and began following, the halls echoing with our voices as we sang *O Salutaris*.

People who were not there with us but were having their own retreats, kindly held the doors open as we slowly and reverently made our way across the campus to the chapel where individuals would hold Eucharistic adoration. I knew in that moment, even those who do not understand our practices could see that it was truly holy.

Never in my life have I ever felt so spiritually joined with my brothers and sisters while revering the Lord in such a way. I tend to get emotional when I feel the Spirit in my heart, and this was no exception. My cup overflowed.

I love the Lord dearly, and I will forever be grateful to have shared in this experience with you all, my brothers and sisters in Christ.

We pray for those whose memory has failed them. May they always know how much they are loved by our Lord and their families.



Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, right, and her husband Travis Bongiorno, OFS, left, participated in the procession of the fraternity banners before Sunday Mass at the ARG. Both made their permanent profession on July 15, and this was their first ARG visit.

Fifteen Make Permanent Profession to Order in Raleigh, NC



The newly professed are, front row left to right: Nkem Okereke, Maureen McFadden, Henry Sims, MaryLou Holloway, Valorie Davis, Janette Perez, Travis Bongiorno, and Brian Dennison. Back row, left to right, Richard Hammer, Alma Hammer, Dave Abell, Mary Cockrill, Mercedes Cooley, Anne Evangelista, and Rachel Bongiorno.

Padre Pio Fraternity in Raleigh, NC, welcomed 15 newly professed members at a Mass on Saturday, July 15, at St. Francis of Assisi Church.

The Secular Franciscans began their three years of study shortly before the Covid lockdown began in 2020 and spent nearly a year in formation on Zoom.

Making their permanent profession were: David Abell, Rachel Bongiorno, Travis Bongiorno, Mary Cockrill, Mercedes Cooley, Valorie Davis, Brian Denison, Anne Evangelista, Alma Hammer, Richard Hammer, MaryLou Holloway, Maureen McFadden, Nkem Okereke, m Janette Perez, and Henry Simms.

Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM, spiritual assistant for Padre Pio and parochial vicar at Immaculate Conception Church in Durham, celebrated the Mass.

More than 100 guests honored the professed afterward at a reception in the church fellowship hall.

A recording of the Mass and profession is available for viewing at <https://boxcast.tv/view/secular-franciscans-q6yzhhz5pojs5fhqeglh>

The next issue of the Communio will be published Dec. 15.
Please submit your stories and photos by Nov. 28 to
communioeditor@gmail.com.

Franciscans Feed Minds, Spirits, Bodies of Students



The Welcome Back Dinner held Sept. 6 at Wake Forest University was a huge success. Nine fraternity members from the Fraternity of St. Clare in Winston-Salem, NC, fed over 40 students and two faculty members. The dialogue was fast paced, the energy was palpable, and the event was rewarding. Many students learned a lot about our order and felt some alignment. Our charisms were welcome and embraced by the group. Many seeds were planted. Lasagna, garlic bread, salad and brownies are the magic that helped make the event a success. Local fraternities are encouraged to take that first step with the young adults in their locales.

Regional Fraternity Council Minutes

The Regional Fraternity Council Meeting of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region met Saturday, August 12, 2023. There were 32 total members in attendance.

Some highlights of the meeting include:

2024 Budget:

- Approval of the budget for 2024 will be deferred until the fall via a Zoom meeting. This will allow the inclusion of the actual expenditures from 2023 ARG. A draft of the budget will be shared prior to the meeting. The REC will meet on Friday, October 13 at 7 p.m. (EST) via Zoom to review it. The proposed date to present the budget to RFC via Zoom is Friday, October 27th at 7 p.m. (EST).
- Ministers are encouraged to send any questions to Regional Minister Ellen prior to October 27 to expedite the process.

Initial Feedback from the Letter about Racism:

- Regional Minister Ellen shared that she has proposed that this be an agenda item for the National Chapter meeting to be held August 22 through 27, 2023.
- She shared that Sharon Winzeler, OFS, our Webmaster, has updated the BSSF webpage to have a Multicultural Section and additional reference materials. Many individuals have shared resources and as they are received, they are posted.
- Multiple ministers reported the reactions from their fraternities. All seemed in agreement that this provided an opportunity for fruitful discussion within the fraternities. Many seemed to feel that it will probably be an ongoing dialog. Some expressed negative reactions, “that this only stirred up conflict when things have been going well.” Someone mentioned that “Silence is not the sign that there is not a problem.”
- David Cruz-Uribe, OFS mentioned that he is on sabbatical this next academic year and is available if any fraternities would like him to give a presentation, perhaps even a multi-fraternity event, even to the coastal area or Raleigh/Durham area. He is also available if you need some assistance with resources.
- Regional Minister Ellen was happy to hear that there is interest in on-going dialogue on this issue.

Recruiting a new JPIC Animator:

- Last year Carolyn Townes, OFS had agreed to serve an extra year as JPIC Animator. We have been richly blessed to have enjoyed her willingness to serve for many years. We are now in need of someone to serve in this capacity. The application is available and is due back by September 30th.

Recruiting assistance for Communio and Webmaster:

- Sharon Winzeler, OFS is serving as both Communio editor and Webmaster plus she wears many other hats at her local Fraternity and National Fraternity. She could use some assistance. If you have any suggestions, please let Ellen know.

Recruiting a new Regional Spiritual Assistant:

- Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS has resigned as the Regional Spiritual Assistant. He still plans to serve with the SA formation. So, we are now in need of someone to serve as the Regional Spiritual Assistant. Ellen has been speaking with possible candidates.
- We also have a great need for Spiritual Assistants for local Fraternities. We need to be open to ideas including the possibility of Sisters.

Possible In-Person Meeting of the RFC:

- There is a possibility of having a 3-day, 2-night RFC meeting in a central location, perhaps in February or March of 2024. Most likely this would be in the Anderson/Greenville area since that is the geographic center of our region. There is a possibility of receiving funding from the National Duns Scotus Fund to cover the formation and hotel. The theme will most likely be centered on “Called and Gifted:” to identify individual charisms and discover our joys. This could then be shared with our Fraternities.

Fund for Multi-Fraternity Events:

- Some fraternities have already planned joint fraternity events and have received regional grants. Some examples include using the fund to pay for the retreat director, paying for dinner for a joint transitus celebration, and a joint event for profession.

Apostolate Fund:

- We originally had a donation of \$15,000 and \$7,500 had been set aside to provide grants to local fraternities to help with Apostolates. Approximately \$5000 remains in this fund. Grants have been increased to \$300. Fraternities may submit more than once. The application is available on our website. You do not need to wait a year before reapplying.

Celebration for our Regional 30 year anniversary next year:

- We will plan something special during ARG for our 30th anniversary. There will be cake!

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Sacavage, OFS
Regional Secretary

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate



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

Minister: Ellen Ferrone, OFS
Vice Minister: Martha Roman, OFS
Secretary: Mary Sacavage, OFS
Treasurer: Zubair Simonson, OFS
Formation Director: Lynn Oeser, OFS
Spiritual Assistant:
 Position Open

Area Councilors

Area 1

Margi Williams, OFS; Gabrielle Cruz-Uribe, OFS
 AL: Bessemer;
GA: Athens, Blairsville, Conyers, Duluth, Jonesboro;
TN: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

Area 2

Becky Bresnahan, OFS; JC Liu, OFS

GA: Augusta, St. Simons Island;
NC: Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;
SC: Aiken, Charleston, Columbia, Greenville,
 Hilton Head Island, Spartanburg

Area 3

Lee Cunningham, OFS; Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, 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
 Position Open

Multicultural Commission Chair
David Cruz-Uribe

Youth/Young Adult Fraternal Animator
Robert Dorsch, 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

**Brothers and Sisters
of St. Francis Region
2023-2024 Schedule
Of Visitations and Elections**

Date	Fraternity	Visitation/ Election
Nov. 11-12	St. Clare of Assisi Aiken, SC	Visitation
Nov. 12	St. Thomas More Wilmington, NC	Election
Nov. 18	St. Michael the Archangel Spartanburg, SC	Election
Jan. 12	St. Elizabeth of Hungary Augusta, GA	Election
Jan. 14	Stigmata of St. Francis John's Creek, GA	Election
Feb. 18	Sts. Francis and Clare Knoxville, TN	Election
March 9-10	Channel of Peace. Chattanooga, TN	Visitation
March 24	Padre Pio Raleigh, NC	Election

The Communio is the quarterly publication of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region of the Secular Franciscan Order. We welcome stories and photos from your fraternities. Send them to communioeditor@gmail.com Deadline for the next issue is Nov. 28. Please identify all individuals in photographs.

Peace and all good!