



Our Fraternal Scoop



Winter 2024 • Quarterly Publication



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

May you have a new year filled with blessings and joy!

Did you have a restful and joyful Advent and Christmas season as you brought in the New Year? I sure do hope so! I looked at my calendar and couldn't believe what we have all been doing the last several months. Just being able to talk with you either by phone or even email, has been a true blessing. I love being able to get to know you and perhaps be of some help. This is how relationships are built. Or better yet, this is how a family is built – a Franciscan family!



The last several months seem to have been so busy for our region. There have been so many changes. And with that came an extra amount of work, which required a lot of needed energy from each of us.

Our Ministers and Delegates met for their bi-annual Regional Council meeting at the Franciscan Renewal Center Saturday November 4, to “animate and guide our Regional Fraternity”.

Cathy and Amy were busy training on how to manage the new Regional Database. And your councils, in turn have had to get familiarized with new fraternity rosters as well as preparing their end of the year reports to the Region. Our region was also asked to have each fraternity send a letter to request changing our Altius Moderamen from St. Barbara OFM Province to the new Our Lady of Guadalupe Province.



It seemed that our region also dealt with a lot of emotional energy in various with serious health issues and illness, to the loss of those who were dear to us, in our personal families and our extended Franciscan family. We were constantly getting prayer requests, because we know and believe in the power of prayer.

But then as Franciscans I know we also found joy! We found the love and support from our Franciscan brothers and sisters – even if we didn't know them personally. We were able to attend our gatherings where we could share not only food but the stories affecting our lives, or perhaps getting that much needed hug. All of our fraternities are working hard at answering the question by Pope Francis: “Where are you?” We are finding various ways of inviting others to join our family, with “out of the box” thinking.



Perhaps because of all that we were going through, we have been able to build a closer relationship with God. Or perhaps you learned something about yourself. I know that I sure did!! I need to continue to work on patience! NOT my strong suit!! All of this probably relates to conversion!

So, for now, I would like to leave you with these words from St. Francis of Assisi:

**Be patient in trials, watchful in prayer,
and never cease working.
and remember that YOU are Loved!**

Article submitted by Julianne Hartzell, OFS
and Cathy Roszhart, OFS



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL FORMATION DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Formation,

We play an important part in communication within our Order. Instead of National leaders contacting each and every Secular Franciscan in America, they send updates, news and these formation tips to Regional Formation directors like myself. I have a list of formation directors in each Arizona fraternity (and Las Vegas!) to whom I forward these emails, often with personal comments. When you send them along to your professed members and Candidates, they get to unpack them, reflect on them, add them to their resources and grow in faith. In this way our National Team, made up of Secular Franciscans like ourselves, hopes to touch every single member in our United States. We know as well that the wisdom, ideas and suggestions contained in these letters reach beyond our communities when our members embrace them and make them part of their lives.

What happens, then, when we do not pass these letters around our fraternities? To put it simply, it is like keeping food in a box, or medicine in a locked chest. Nobody profits, grows or finds healing.

We profess a life of living, growing and learning in the footsteps of Saint Francis, who followed Christ. Why would anyone not want others to share this treasure? What are we trying to protect by neglecting this important work of charity...? Where would we be if the Apostles, moving among the various young Churches of their world, had not written letters? What if nobody had been allowed to see them? Are we bringing weekly gifts to our fraternities, or are we standing in the doorway of the Kingdom, refusing to let people enter...?

The journey of faith is personal as well as communal. We need both. We need to wrestle with what God teaches and we need to bring our struggle to understand into a rich and fertile community to see and hear what others think. That can't happen if we never hit the Forward button. Please look at the big message this week from our National Formation Council. Send it to your members. Local fraternities are the growing edge of our Order. They need to be nourished. Ask them to contemplate the questions within these lessons. Give them a place and a pathway to respond. Everything I've seen from National in 2023 has been good and useful for growing.

And if you have any questions, comments or complaints, contact me! I'm here to help.

Submitted by Tom McNamara, OFS
Regional Formation Director

602-840-0673 (voice messages)

602-583-1471 (texts)

5024 E. Virginia Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85008



MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL VICE MINISTER

The following is the “Formation Friday December 29, 2023” which each Formation Director receives from the National Formation each Friday and is asked to share with the fraternity members. Submitted by our National Vice-Minister, Diane Menditto, OFS

2024 - Time to Examine our Love and Commitment

- CONVERSION: the letting go of one’s ego..”
- “One is dying to a false self that tries to BE God, that tries to always be in control.”
- This is a reversal, a “TURNING TOWARD” the Holy Spirit at work within us.
 - *Francis and Jesus by Murray Bodo, OFM*

What can I do to make some beneficial changes in my attitude about fraternity and fraternal life?

1- Prayerfully participate in electing and supporting my local Council.

- Pray for them every day.
- Use my God-given talents to collaborate on and assist with all projects.

ASK YOURSELF: What are some ways I can support my Council? Do I have talents and abilities that call me to serve on the Council?

2- Love my fraternity

- Be present at gatherings.
- Listen to my brothers and sisters.
- Offer to help out.
- Reach out to excused members or to anyone who has missed a meeting. (Phone, email, card).
- Pray for our deceased members and for all those listed on your fraternity prayer list or prayer line
- Take note that for Franciscans, fraternity is a way of life (not just another “thing to do”).

ASK YOURSELF: What talents do I have to offer my fraternity? Do I participate willingly in fraternity activities?

3- Love our Rule

- Be sure that I am aware of what I promised at profession.
- Read, pray and meditate on the Rule—perhaps one or two articles each day.
- Think about how the Rule leads me closer to Christ.

ASK YOURSELF: When was the last time I read the Rule? Do I make the effort to relate the Rule to my everyday life?

4- Love Scripture

- Be aware that St. Francis based everything he said or wrote on Scripture.
- Resolve to read a little Scripture each day.
- Pray the Liturgy of the Hours because it helps us to pray in fraternity (with the entire Church) and is filled with Scripture.

ASK YOURSELF: Do I read Scripture each day? (How can I make time to do this?) Do I go from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel? (Do I understand what that means? How would I explain it to someone new or to a non-Secular Franciscan?)

**MESSAGE FROM
OUR NATIONAL VICE MINISTER *CONTINUED***

5- Strive for daily conversion

- Attempt to be a little better each day.
- Make use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Remember that we are the “Brothers and Sisters of Penance.”

ASK YOURSELF: Do I review my actions and relationship with God each day? How have I changed since I first became a Franciscan? How have I changed since last week?

BEST FOR LAST

6- Love the Eucharist and be changed by it

- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy days and every day if I can
- Take advantage of opportunities for Adoration—holy hours or just a visit to the tabernacle

ASK YOURSELF: What is my relationship to Jesus in the Eucharist? Do I often visit with Jesus when there is an opportunity to attend Adoration?

As we enter 2024, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in everything you do!

**WISHING
YOU A
BLESSED
NEW YEAR
2024**



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL TREASURER

Dear brothers and sisters,

I hope you are having a very merry Christmas season and will have a happy and healthy new year. As the new year approaches, I think this is a good time to again discuss some misunderstandings on what "Fair Share" is and is not.

Lately I have heard some members talking about paying their membership fees or asking how much are "our dues". Since I am more comfortable with numbers than words, I am going to let one of our past National Ministers, Deacon Tom Bello, OFS answer these questions. He sent an excellent article for the March 2014 National Minister's Occasional Message titled Another, Perhaps Lenten, Look at "Fair Share" with a short and a Long Answer. You can also find this article in Deacon Bello's book titled for all the Saints; St. Francis's Five Point Plan for Salvation published by Tau Publishing. This article is as relevant in 2024 as it was in 2014 and I hope it helps clarify the confusion of "Fair Share". Please know that I am available to answer any questions.

Peace and all good,

Steve Roszhart, OFS

Treasurer St. Thomas More Region

ANOTHER, PERHAPS LENTEN, LOOK AT "FAIR SHARE" WITH A SHORT AND A LONG ANSWER

Beloved National Family,

As part of your Lenten "penance," please permit me to share with you another look at "Fair Share" with a short and a long answer.

First, the short answer: People continue to raise questions about what "Fair Share" is. Briefly, "Fair Share" is NOT an assessment on an individual. It is NOT a "tax" or "the dues" that an individual must pay. "Fair Share" is members taking care of members at all levels of fraternity. Please accept my prayers for a Peaceful and, yes, Joyful Holy Lenten Season, Tom

Second, the long answer: Permit me to proceed in three steps. One, the confusion over, yet the importance of understanding, what "Fair Share" is. Two, a look at some "Scriptural help." Three, a look at our documents, plus some commentary.

One. Questions continue to arise from across the membership and country about what exactly "Fair Share" means. At every election, every three or six years, different individuals, groups or even nationalities get confused about "Fair Share." For two examples, a professed Secular Franciscan recently wrote our beloved National Treasurer an email saying he lacked a fraternity, but wanted to send an \$85 check for "fair share dues" so that he could continue receiving the TAU-USA. Then, a newly elected Minister of a non-English speaking fraternity "assessed" each member of the fraternity with set "dues" to be paid at each meeting AND suspended members of the fraternity for non-payment after several meetings.

MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL TREASURER *CONTINUED*

This whole matter is very important for us at National not only during Lent when we are called to sacrifice, to give charitably and always to care for our own, but additionally because the National Fraternity is responsible to provide "fair share" numbers to the International Fraternity (CIOFS) at their Election Chapter in 2014, numbers for which the National family will be held responsible for the next three years, as they (CIOFS) do not perform year to year accounting as Local, Regional and National Fraternities do, but hold us to numbers for each three-year cycle. This is one reason we recently sent out to all the Regional Ministers that dreaded, numbers-heavy Annual Report from which we try in good faith to report our true "Fair Share" to International for the next three years. Our job becomes harder when if every year as last year, 1/10 of our Ministers (3 of 30) do not even bother to submit their Regional Reports. Yikes! Please, Regional Ministers, submit your reports!

Two. Let's look for "Scriptural help" with one reading from the Old Testament, two from the Gospels and one from St. Paul. Let's start with the Old Testament. My favorite Lenten reading on the Biblical meaning of "fasting" is this passage from Isaiah 58:5-7: "Is this the manner of fasting I would choose, a day to afflict oneself? To bow one's head like a reed, and lie upon sackcloth and ashes? Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own." Please note the "not turning your back on your own" even if they are in nursing homes or unable to contribute financially, but are still "your own," and continue to pray and offer what service they can.

From the Gospel of St. Matthew, our Lord evaluates us: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:34-40). Please remember these words when Secular Franciscan article 25 of the Rule stresses the FOUR necessities for our expenses.

And in Luke's Gospel, our Lord says: "Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you" (Luke 6:38). In my local "St. Thomas More" fraternity, which meets between the Pentagon and Reagan National Airport at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, each month with the Newsletter a brown envelop is inserted which members return with whatever contribution they measure. We have always had enough to meet "Fair Share."

Finally, St. Paul encourages us, "Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:7-8).

MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL TREASURER *CONTINUED*

Three. Keeping these Scriptural passages in mind, let's look at our Secular Franciscan Article #25 of our Rule: "Regarding expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity and the needs of worship, of the apostolate, and of charity, all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means. Local fraternities should contribute toward the expenses of the higher fraternity councils."

Please note at least three things here.

First, this is where the notion of "Fair Share" originates, and as you can read, there is no mention of individual responsibility. Rather, the responsibility is a collective one: "all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution according to their means."

Second, the Secular Franciscan Rule has only 26 Paragraphs or Articles, so we only get to "expenses" at the next to the last one, thus offering some sense of their overall importance.

Third, the word "necessary" is paramount, but note the four "necessities": the life of the fraternity, the needs of worship, the needs of the apostolate and the needs of charity. How many of us in leadership think persistently about all four of these "needs" in our budgets? Remembering Matthew 25 above, how many of us have line items in our budgets to cover the needs of the apostolate and the needs of charity?

In addition, the "Official Commentary to the Rule" prepared by the national spiritual assistants' commission, Benet A. Fonck O.F.M., coordinator might be helpful here as well:

Secular Franciscan Article 25 of the Rule "points out that the voluntary contributions of the members finance the fraternity's spiritual and temporal needs and activities. The fraternity, according to its means and agreed-upon arrangements, also contributes to the support of the regional, provincial, national and international fraternities. This paragraph is a contemporary application of the traditional Secular Franciscan values outlined in the very first rule that the members are responsible for taking care of their own in whatever way is necessary." This sense of co-responsibility is stressed in the General Constitutions Article 30, which, to this reader, puts the question of "Fair Share" into a wider context of co-responsibility that includes, but transcends, mere "expenses":

1. The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the Secular Franciscan Order as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world.

2. The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration, in accordance with each one's situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity.

3. In a family spirit, each brother and sister should make a contribution to the fraternity fund, according to each one's means, to provide the financial means needed for the life of the fraternity and for its religious, apostolic, and charitable works. The brothers and sisters ought to provide the means necessary for supporting the activities and the operations of the fraternities at higher levels, both by their financial assistance and by their contributions in other areas as well."

In his Spiritual Commentary on the immediately preceding and very similar version of our current General Constitutions entitled "Called to Rebuild the Church," Friar Lester Bach O. F. M. Cap., in his observations on an almost identical Article 30.3 to the one given above, contrasts how the world views and how we Franciscans should view money:

MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL TREASURER *CONTINUED*

"Money is used in buying and selling in the world. But it is not meant to be so engrossing that God is forgotten and our neighbor receives no love. Instead, it is a gift to share. Within fraternity life, we share our resources in a way that builds up the common fund...

For Franciscans money is a tool to build up, with living stones, a vibrant community centered on Jesus." How many of us really think of money as "a gift to share," as "a tool to build up, with living stones a vibrant community centered on Jesus"?

Friar Lester's final words on this Article 30.3 make good Lenten reading: "Money is a source of power and control. It can drag us into making it our golden calf. Part of the goal of sharing this resource with the fraternity is to gain freedom from such idol worship. Generosity for the sake of others replaces self-acquisition for one's own sake. When we have little money, we give the gift of our service and love in other ways within fraternity life."

Combining Article 25 of the Rule and General Constitutions Article 30, we now visit the National Statutes, particularly Article 18.7, which reads: "The Local Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the Regional Fraternity on a fair share basis from its common fund to underwrite the costs of that fraternity [cf. General Constitutions, article #30.3]. A fair share contribution is made based on the number of active and excused brothers and sisters, but not for those who are deemed lapsed.

a. An active fraternity member is one who participates both by attending fraternity meetings and by providing financial support to the community, or whom the fraternity has excused from such obligations.

b. Those brothers and sisters who neither attend meetings, support the community financially, nor have valid reasons due to health, family, work or distance, and who, after personal invitations to return to fraternity, consciously and deliberately reject or ignore the invitation, will be termed 'lapsed' and will not be carried on the fraternity membership roll nor be reported as a member to higher fraternity Councils [cf. General Constitutions, article #53.3]."

Similarly, National Statutes Article 25.3 reads: "The Regional Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the National Fraternity on a fair share basis from its treasury to help provide for the expenses of NAFRA."

Please note that from Local to Regional and from Regional to National AND from National to International, the responsibility is on the whole fraternity, not the individual member. And remember from the Official Commentary to the Rule that all of this goes back to "the traditional Secular Franciscan values outlined in the very first rule that the members are responsible for taking care of their own in whatever way is necessary."

In summary, again: "Fair Share" is not dues. "Fair Share" is not a tax on individuals. "Fair Share" is not even, really, an individual responsibility. "Fair Share" is the fraternity taking care of its own, members (plural) caring for members.

Please, perhaps especially during this Lenten Season, but always, let us consider creative ways to care generously for all our members.

Again, please accept my prayers for a Peaceful and, yes, Joyful Holy Lenten Season,

Tom



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL JPIC ANIMATOR



BELIEVE THERE IS GOOD IN THE WORLD

The mission of JPIC

is to assist the Professed Secular Franciscans as they reflect on their relationship with God as manifested in the fruits of conversion in their lives.

Our relationship with God is meant to be alive and interactive.

Can I allow God to “enlighten the darkness” of my own heart – and see myself (and others) through God’s eyes?

Am I becoming more loving, peaceful, patient, kind, generous, grateful, forgiving, faithful, hopeful, self-controlled and Christ-like?

This with special regard to the daily choices made in the areas of justice, peacemaking and respect for all created things and people; as brothers and sisters of penance, bringing life to the Gospel and the Gospel to Life.

(Print in brown ink from JPIC Animator handbook, 2018)



JPIC calls special attention to Articles 14 -19 of Our Rule:

“(We) are called to build a more **fraternal and evangelical world** so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.” **Article 14**

“(We) **Promote justice** by the testimony of our human lives and our courageous initiatives ... **Article 15**

“(We) **esteem work** both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption and service of the human community.” **Article 16**

“**In (our) family**, (we) cultivate the **Franciscan spirit** of peace, fidelity, and respect for life...” **Article 17**

(We) **respect all creatures**, animate and inanimate, which ‘bear the imprint of the Most High,’ and ... the Franciscan concept of **universal kinship.**” **Article 18**

“Mindful that we are bearers of peace..., (we) ... seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through **dialogue**, trusting in the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming **power of love and pardon...** (striving) to bring **joy and hope** to others.” **Article 19**

**“We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way.”
- Francis of Assisi**



IN LOVING MEMORY OF BR. SCOTT SLATTUM, OFM



Many came to pay their respect Thursday November 30 in St. Mary's Basilica, downtown Phoenix and pray together for the repose of the soul of our brother Scott.



Fr. Roger Lopez, OFM, Provincial Councilor-Elect of Our Lady of Guadalupe new province celebrated Mass.



Over 25 members from St. Thomas More region joined in praying the Rosary led by Carmen Durón, OFS and attended the Eucharistic celebration. Many others watched the televised Funeral Mass. Kathleen Molaro OFS, our National YouFra Animator who had flown from California attended as well.



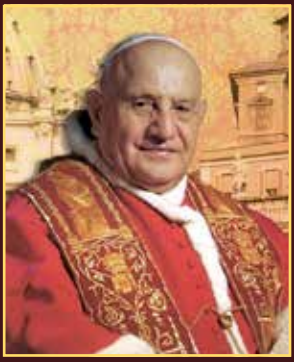
Bishop John Dolan was present and humbly took a back seat, while a large number of Franciscan Friars concelebrated Mass.



During his homily Fr. Sam Nasada, OFM shared that when Br. Scott was asked to name his prime ministry, he would confide that his was a "ministry of presence". Br. Scott was definitely a very significant presence for the lives he touched!



The 10/07/2023 Bishop's Podcast featuring Brother Scott is an amazing interview. You can find it and listen to it at (starts at 32 minutes): <https://thebishopshour.libsyn.com/10723-seminary-expansion-st-francis-of-assisi-weekly-gospel-and-news>



NEWS FROM POPE ST. JOHN XXIII FRATERNITY Yuma, AZ

Memorable November Gathering

On November 19, 2023 Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity in Yuma, AZ celebrated two very special events. The first was a visit from Brother Scott Slattum, OFM and the second was the Rite of Admission for three of our inquirers; Joan Johnson, Maria Jo and Millie Quijano.

Brother Scott's presentation on YOUFRA and his facts were very enlightening and hopeful. He shared some great ideas to attract not just the youth but people of all ages to the Franciscan way of life. Little did any of us know that this would be Brother Scott's final presentation. He mentioned Sister Death and so I will believe that his passing, that same evening was peaceful in the sense that he was not afraid and filled with peace and joy. When we were singing during the Liturgy of the Hours at the gathering I remembered his very angelic baritone voice because I was sitting close to him. It left an impression on me. He will be missed by so many but he definitely left an impact on Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity on his final day here on earth. Here is what one of our fraternity members, Connie Collier, OFS had to say about Brother Scott: "This Thanksgiving I was filled with gratitude for the inspiring encounter our fraternity experienced with Brother Scott. I was reminded of the need to share my Faith-that Faith is a gift that everyone is looking for! Brother Scott's presentation included sociological facts as to why many do not know God, do not know Jesus-namely the turning away from the Judeo-Christian ethic and looking to the here and now of the present world. His compassion and gentle love for the Youth of the Church, for the Youth of this world-was readily seen and felt. Brother Scott was indeed a man of great encouragement, giving all of us reason to Hope." May his soul rest in peace.



In picture above from Left to Right
Diana Orines, OFS,
Joan Johnson, OFS,
Millie Quijano, OFS,
Maria Jo, OFS and
Frances Garcia, OFS.

The hope I have is that our three Candidates will continue on the journey of conversion and to final profession sharing their faith with whomever they come in contact with. Pope St. John XXIII fraternity members will be here to help them along the way. Many thanks to Diana Orines, OFS our Formation Director and Frances Garcia, OFS for their dedication and time in helping our Candidates on their journey.

Article submitted by Denise Carrasquillo, OFS (Minister)



NEWS FROM PEACE FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ

As I write this and find myself thinking about Christmas and without even asking the question: What could have I done to make this Christmas better? My heart knows the answer. Christmas is about joy and love and peace and mostly being thankful. Instead, I am exhausted and sad. Another year of putting myself in a "TIZZY". Can you relate? I actually hope not because if you can't then you may be celebrating

Christmas the best way, just loving and thanking our heavenly Father for the best gift possible: His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

For our December Gathering, Peace Fraternity celebrated with a feast and socializing with everyone's families and guests. We exchanged ornaments and were SURROUNDED BY LOVE. We were very excited to see all four of Our Lady of Angel's Friars join us. As I watched people arrive, I realized I didn't know a few of them! Could it be that the love in our hearts was sending vibes to others? I could only smile and say "Welcome, so happy you are here". We have already requested



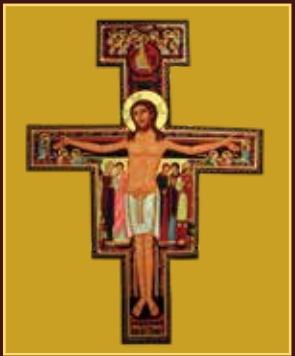
a larger space for next year. Oh, and maybe I should roast an additional turkey next year. John Elder, our minister, brought a delicious pressure cooker of mashed potatoes. There was one tablespoon left! That is Christmas!! When I think ahead about Christmas, I want to, not just be generous materially, but find ways to bring "joy to the world". Let's look for lonely, sad, depressed and the dying, and make sure they feel loved.

Our Fraternity wanted to do something special in November this year. Everyone donated items for the homeless. Bags were made during the November Gathering. Again, there is so much joy in giving.

Now, the New Year is here. All those resolutions are great. Especially, if they help our health. I wonder if we could add a new one this year. Can we add a resolution that is not about helping ourselves. How about making a goal of adding another (I know this is already part of you); but another special service that serves the poor, the sick, the lonely ones, the dying, the imprisoned, the needy? Make it not just a personal goal but invite your Fraternity to also set a similar goal.

Article submitted by Betty Holler, OFS
(Vice-Minister)





NEWS FROM SAN DAMIANO FRATERNITY Glendale, AZ

The San Damiano fraternity was busy the past couple of months. In November we collected canned goods and dry food for the Mother Theresa Missionary Charities.



We also had a memorial service for the deceased members of the fraternity. Over the past decades we have lost 40 brothers and sisters. Each of them was remembered by name.



In December we collected socks and blankets which were delivered to Andre House for the homeless.



We wanted to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the first living Nativity in Greccio as part of the December ongoing formation. Virginia, our formation director, asked us to bring in a miniature Nativity and to share the story about it. Two of the Nativities were from Mexico, another was literally a gift box.

There were also stories of memorable Christmases. Abby spent one Christmas stranded in the Denver airport with many other people who came together to sing Christmas carols and honor the day as best they could. A first Christmas of the newly married can be memorable. Mary Carol shared hers as the wife of an Army private living on base in the 1950s. Each family has food traditions for Christmas as well. Borscht is a specialty of Mark's Polish family.

Chris's family bakes a birthday cake for Jesus with a light up cake topper saying "Happy Birthday".

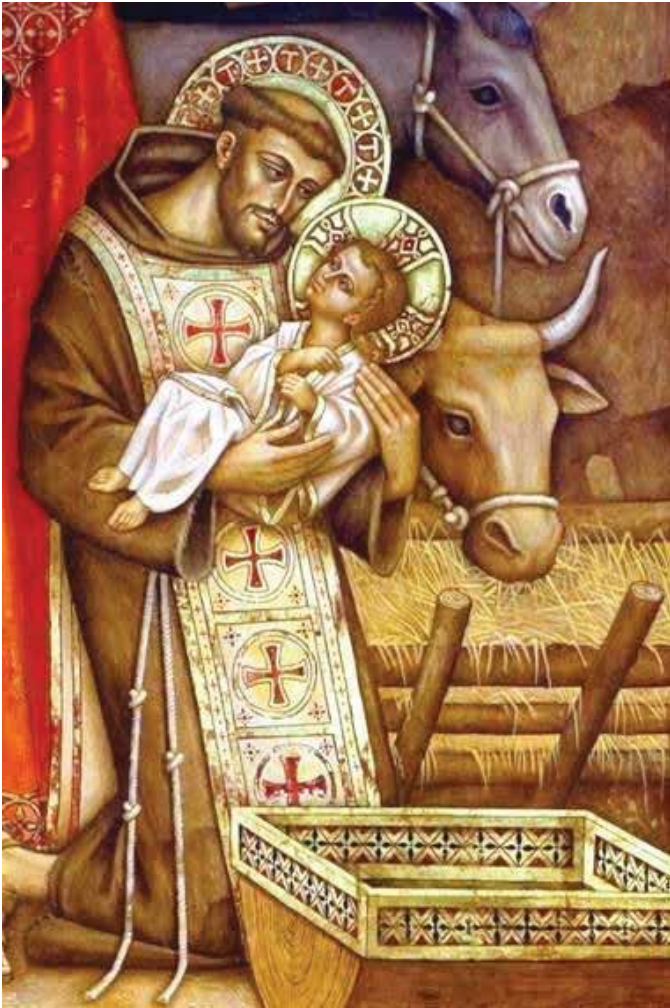


And with a potluck spread of ham and all the fixings, the San Damiano fraternity closed the year with joyful stories and laughter as any family around the world.

Article submitted by Virginia Vollmer, OFS (Formation Director)



NEWS FROM OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ



On December 9, Our Lady of the Rosary Fraternity celebrated our Christmas together. Some thought a potluck was not necessary as we eat too much during the holidays.

However, we as a Council wanted to surprise everyone with a small potluck, besides a traditional reading of Greccio. We also picked names to pray for this person for the rest of December. We were pleasantly surprised to receive a card from the person that prayed for us and once, two were praying for each other!

It all turned out to be an enjoyable way to celebrate a Holy and Blessed Christmas with our sisters and brothers. In reading Greccio, we are reminded that St. Francis is the one who began this wonderful tradition of reliving the Birthday of Jesus for the world as a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.

Article submitted by Jane Massion, OFS (Vice-Minister)



NEWS FROM ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA FRATERNITY Las Vegas, NV

My first visit to St Margaret of Cortona Fraternity in Las Vegas

I was recently assigned as the Spiritual Assistant to the Las Vegas Fraternity. I had the pleasure of making a visit in December for their gathering and potluck lunch. About 18 various people showed up with delightfully tasty food, eager hearts, and a fraternal spirit.

I had met with Ann Tao, OFS, back in early November at a regional council meeting. She has been holding this fraternity together since the COVID pandemic in 2020. Since that time some people have moved away and others have a difficult time attending because of health issues, making it difficult to pull together a new council. Ann has done an amazing job taking many of the council roles as the fraternity gets back on their feet. There are five people in inquiry phase of formation, all seemingly excited about moving into this new way of life. I was privileged to meet two people who showed up, one for the first time, who moved in from other states and now want to join into this fraternity. There were other members there who had been around for a while, along with their spouses. Joy filled the room, along with the aroma of the Christmas potluck. It was exciting to see the five inquirers face to face after assisting in formation the past few months.

When we started the meeting, I was impressed that one of the inquirers wrote an opening hymn based on the song, "O little town of Bethlehem". It seems the story of the Nativity of Greccio had quite an impression on her. I included the words down below.

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark street shineth, the everlasting light:
The hopes and fears of all the years, are met in three tonight.
2. O little town in Italy, there came a Holy saint
Who loved our God so totally, our world was not the same
One Christmas eve he gathered, a donkey and a lamb
And in the manger filled with straw, he placed the holy Child
3. The Friars and the Lady Clare joined him this blessed night
Greccio was a special place to realize this grace
The townsfolk all rejoiced and hailed the birth of Christ
And Francis bowed and saw the child come living once again.

After finishing prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours and a few business items, the gathering was dedicated to sharing in the food and the joys of growing together in spirit and love. In the past, I had only been to the "strip" and that's what I knew of Las Vegas. Since this simple gathering, I left filled with a new passion for the people of Las Vegas and the faith that is present among them.

I will be returning each quarter and continuing to join the group in formation on Zoom for the following 3 years I am assigned to in service. I foresee it to be a great blessing in my life and journey as a Secular Franciscan.



Article submitted by Patrick Mowrer, OFS (Spiritual Assistant)



NEWS FROM ST. CLARE OF ASSISI FRATERNITY Phoenix, AZ

On November 12, 2023, Members of St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity came together to elect new officers of our fraternity, who will serve in leadership for the next three years. Special thanks go out to Patrick Mowrer and Carmen Duron from the Regional Council who conducted the elections in a fair and transparent process!



Minister
Pat Nikolaisen:



Vice Minister:
Kim Rebello



Secretary
Carmen Reyna:



Treasurer:
Myrna Aquino



Formation Director
Margie Kesler:



Councilor at Large:
Clarence Rebello



Councilor of JPIC:
Maria Tiznado



Councilor of YOUFRA:
Amor Obispo



Saint Clare Fraternity Council, "Old and New" - December, 2023

Article submitted by Kyoko and Alan Tavassoli, OFS, and Toni Monti, OFS



NEWS FROM ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY Phoenix, AZ

Members of St Francis Fraternity and Peace Fraternity attended an outdoor Mass for the feast of our Lady of Guadalupe. It was held by Our Lady's shrine at the Casa. It was very cold but the music and fellowship added a sense of warmth.



We had our Christmas gathering with stations for the Christmas season and food and fellowship. Everyone had a good time.

Some of the fraternity members then went to the Spanish Mass.



As part of our Christmas giving, we collected money to help our Venezuelan family have a Merry Christmas.



NEWS FROM ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY Tucson, AZ

“Come and See” At San Xavier Mission del Bac Mission San Xavier



San Xavier Mission Pastor,
Friar Ponchie Vásquez, OFM.



Saint Anthony Fraternity hosted a “Come and See” in front of San Xavier Mission on Sunday October 29th, 2023.

We had two goals:

1. To invite those who were enamored with the Franciscan Spirit to our gathering.
2. To expose our Fraternity to the Tohono O’odham Nation.
The results of our presence were three requests for more information on our Secular Franciscan Order.

We plan to conduct more “Come and See” presentations in 2024.

The pictures tell the story.

Article submitted by Benjamin Saenz, OFS
(Minister)





NEWS FROM ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE FRATERNITY Surprise, AZ

Many members from throughout the region attended the Zoom presentation Greccio, Friday December 15 during which Trish Persson offered a very informative and prayerful session to prepare us all for a meaningful Christmas season.

Members and guests gathered on a beautiful sunny day, Sunday December 17 during which we enjoyed a delicious potluck and fraternal fellowship. It has been our fraternity's tradition to also pray a Franciscan crown together.

Merry Christmas to all and a Blessed New Year!



As we had planned to pack our dishes in disposable containers, Kevin Moshier loaded his car with lots of good food to deliver and share our Christmas feast with our homeless brothers and sisters.

Article submitted by Cathy Roszart, OFS (JPIC Councilor)



NEWS FROM BL. FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER FRATERNITY Flagstaff, AZ

Greetings and Happy New Year from Northern Arizona!

We have had a fruitful 2023 in Blessed Franz Jägerstätter Fraternity. One of the highlights from the year was our Regional Visitation when we were overjoyed to welcome our visitors from the Region to gather with us in Flagstaff. Our visitation took place on May 21st which is the feast day of our Patron, Blessed Franz Jägerstätter so we were doubly blessed.



One of the things I am most humbled by is an email I just received from Megan Quinn, a Northern Arizona University Student that we had the opportunity to sponsor attending the COP27 Climate Summit in Egypt. While COP27 took place in back in November 2022, Megan presented our ongoing formation upon her return in January 2023. In the email we just received, Megan shared that she continues her call to bring creation care and climate action into the life of the Northern Arizona University Newman Center. She planned and completed a hike in Sedona combined with prayer and discussion and was a presenter at an event that drew 400 participants! Her passion for climate justice is infectious and is a fruit of her faith in Jesus. The prayer and meditation she offered on her hike included an awareness that our surroundings are a relative or friend and added that Saint Francis of Assisi called the elements brother and sister. (Megan is 2nd from the right in this photo from COP27.)

August 9, 2023, was the 80th anniversary of the martyrdom of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter, and our Fraternity presented an evening to our parish community introducing them to Blessed Franz. Thirty-five people attended and several of our fraternity members presented portions of the evening. The event was also commemorated in Saint Radegund, Austria which the home of Blessed Franz. We were in touch with people from the Jägerstätter Haus in Austria and assured each other of our prayers for each other on this important day.

2024 will hold just as many blessings! We will welcome three of our candidates into profession soon and have four new inquirers who celebrated in a Rite of Welcoming. JPIC will be a focus in our ongoing formation this year with a session each quarter dedicated to JPIC. This month our JPIC animator will present ongoing formation based on Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation titled *Laudate Deum* which was released on October 4th.

And lastly, this year we celebrate the Centenary of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi. I pray all Franciscans commit to "solidarity with the crucified and excluded of our world" (Secular Franciscan Order – USA).

Submitted by Bridget Durham, OFS





NEWS FROM ST. DAEGUN ANDREW KIM FRATERNITY Chandler, AZ

Members of St. Daegun Andrew Kim Fraternity held our annual Christmas Party gathering on Sunday, December 17, at the St. Columba Kim Korean Community Church in Chandler and we shared delicious food and answered the Quiz from the Formation Director. We also watched an updated DVD version of our 10th anniversary of Canonical Establishment. We practiced dance for the Korean Franciscan Workshop at Casa in September 2024.

Donations were collected from the Fraternity to help homeless people in Phoenix and share the Christmas spirit with them.

God Bless



Article submitted by Michael Nam, OFS (Vice-Minister)

NUN RUN



Participate in the 15th Annual Nun Run 2024
Either in person at Kiwanis Park in Tempe, AZ
Or register for the virtual option.

Please help support our Poor Clare sisters. This is such a fun and worthwhile way to do so. Also consider inviting your family and friends to run (or walk) and pray for the Nun Run.



What: Fundraising for the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration of Our Lady of Solitude Monastery.

When: Saturday, March 2, 2024

Where: Kiwanis Park, Tempe AZ

For more information go to: <https://desertnunrun.com/race-info/>
To register go to: <https://desertnunrun.com/registration/>



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

January 13 – Our Lady of the Rosary Pastoral and Fraternal Visitations
February 18 – St. Daegun Andrew Kim Pastoral and Fraternal Visitations
February 24 – Regional Council Meeting - Franciscan Renewal Center
March 3 – San Damiano Triennial Elections
July 12-14 – St. Thomas More Annual Regional Retreat – Franciscan Renewal Center
September 17-22 - NAFRA Chapter - Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale AZ
October 19 - Regional Council Meeting - Franciscan Renewal Center

2025 – February 7-9 - REC Triennial Elections – Franciscan Renewal Center

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE NATION

2026 - July 29 – Aug. 2 - Quinquennial in Lexington, KY

SUBMISSION DEADLINES AND PUBLICATION DATES

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 📅 April 1 | Deadline for Article Submission |
| 📅 April 15 | Publication of “Our Fraternal Scoop” |

Please remember to notify your council and Database manager of any changes of mailing or email addresses, and new phone numbers

VISIT BOTH WEBSITES OFTEN FOR NEWS AND VALUABLE INFORMATION

National Website: <https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/>

Regional Website: <https://www.stmregionofs.com/>

Questions/Submissions:

Please contact: Cathy Roszhart, OFS croszhart@gmail.com or 309-825-2900

FYI:

In 2022, the OFS-USA obtained the copyright for the text for the Ritual Book and began the process to update its content. As the Ritual book is being revised and ultimately sent to print, it has been difficult, if not impossible to purchase copies to give our new members. Some of you may have purchased several copies in the past and may be holding on to a few copies.



Please contact the Region and let us know, if you might be willing to sell some copies to other fraternities who need them.
Meanwhile it is perfectly fine for your members to share their Ritual for prayers.

You may also find the Ritual online and may download/print any material you need at:

https://secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020_Dec-Updated-OFS-Ritual-s1879Latin-version.pdf