



Our Fraternal Scoop



Spring 2024 • Quarterly Publication



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

In trying to decide what to share with you, I landed on a book my daughter gave to me awhile back. It is "Kitchen Table Wisdom" by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. I pulled it out to read it to help me find some wisdom. Then I decided that I wanted to share some of Rachel's words, in the hopes that it may help us all realize that being Secular Franciscans is not only a way of life but a true gift.



"Most people have come to prefer certain of life's experiences and deny and reject others, unaware of the value of the hidden things that may come wrapped in plain or even ugly paper. In avoiding all pain and seeking comfort at all cost, we may be left without intimacy or compassion; in rejecting change and risk we often cheat ourselves of the quest; in denying our suffering we may never know our strength or our greatness. Or even that the love we have been given can be trusted. Pain may point the way toward a greater wholeness and become a potent force in healing."

In the last few months it seems that our region, including myself, has been dealing with different types of pain – loss of a loved one; being in the hospital; accepting what life is dealing us; surgery; sleepless nights or just plain pain, whatever that may mean. And those are the things I am only aware of. I'm sure as you read this you can think of your own personal journey.

Where is this all leading? Well to this - How grateful I am to have professed to the Franciscan way of life. (I hope you are too!) What I have found to be of great comfort is the realization that there are others praying for and helping me or you in various ways. We can always go to our Franciscan family and be assured that they are there to help, however they can, and be of a comfort. St Francis and St. Clare are our true examples. "The places in which we (Secular Franciscans) are seen and heard are holy places. They remind us of our value as human beings. They give us the strength to go on. Eventually they may even help us to transform our pain into wisdom (Conversion)."



Remember: YOU ARE LOVED

**If we endure all things patiently
and with gladness, think on the
sufferings of our Blessed Lord,
and bearing all for the love of Him:
herein is perfect Joy.
(St. Francis of Assisi)**

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



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?)



JUNE 22 FEAST DAY ST. THOMAS MORE 1480-1535

St. Thomas belongs to that class of Tertiaries who have grasped the true spirit of their Seraphic Father. It is a spirit of deep-seated piety and of contempt for the world, as well as of unswerving fidelity to Holy Church practiced in an exceptional degree and sealed with one's blood.

His father was a knight. Thomas was born in London in 1480. Having been a very devout youth, he became a lawyer. His services were constantly in demand, but nevertheless he always found time to attend holy Mass daily and to perform other pious practices. As the father of a family, he was concerned that his children should be reared in the fear of God. He became famous for his book entitled *Utopia*. By means of his "Kingdom of Nowhere" he scourged in fine satire the evils that were eating their way into the Church and the State.

Through Henry VIII he became attached to the royal court and was finally appointed Lord High Chancellor. The time had now arrived in which the Tertiary was to manifest how sincerely he had grasped the spirit of the Saint of Assisi. As was to be expected, even as a statesman Thomas More continued to make his accustomed religious practices. He set aside every Friday as a day of introspection. His charity was without limit.

He experienced special delight in serving the priest at holy Mass, and he received holy Communion daily. He was told, by way of reproach, that it was unbecoming for a layman with so much work to do and so many distractions to communicate daily. But he replied: "You are advancing the very reasons for the need of frequent holy Communion. If I am distracted, Holy Communion helps me to become recollected. If opportunities are offered me each day to offend my God, I arm myself anew each day for the combat by the reception of the Eucharist. If I am in special need of light and prudence in order to discharge my burdensome duties, I draw nigh to my Savior and seek counsel and light from Him."

But it was not long before his doom was sealed. Blinded by unholy passions, King Henry divorced his lawful wife and married Anne Boleyn, a lady in waiting at the court. When Rome justly condemned his adulterous act, the king severed his connections with Rome and set himself up as the head of the Church in England. Whoever disapproved of his conduct was doomed to die.

The first person who opposed the king was his loyal chancellor, Thomas More. He was cast into prison. There he wrote a pamphlet entitled *Death Endured for the Faith Need Cause No Fear*. When his wife endeavored to persuade him to give up his opposition and prolong his life, he asked her just how long she believed he would still live. She answered, "At least twenty years." "Indeed!" said Thomas More. "Had you said a few thousand years, that might make a difference. But surely even he would be a poor merchant who would run the risk of losing an eternity for the sake of a thousand years." He was beheaded on July 6, 1535.

Pope Leo XIII beatified this great Tertiary, and Pope Pius XI canonized him on May 19, 1935.

REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Your Regional Fraternity Council (Your local Minister or delegate and the Regional Executive Council) met Saturday February 24 at the Franciscan Renewal Center for a day of sharing, fraternal dialogue, prayers and fellowship with a full agenda of much to accomplish in the coming year



Lots is being planned to offer you a fun and spirit-filled retreat July 12-14 at the Casa. Please see details on page 10.

Our region has also been chosen to host the National Chapter this Fall from September 17-22. Much still needs to be coordinated for this special event. Please volunteer to help various committees with Transportation, Hospitality and Liturgy.

Lastly, we invite you to sponsor the Roszharts on their pilgrimage walk to Santiago de Compostelle and help our region raise money for the H2O project. See page 21



MESSAGE FROM OUR REGIONAL JPIC ANIMATOR

There are No Throwaway People



In reading the gospels, it's striking how much Jesus valued inclusion and participation in community. He met people where they were, and invited them to a deeper relationship with Himself and with one another.

He went so far as to heal what were thought of as sin-based physical conditions like leprosy and blindness, and forgave behavioral transgressions such as adultery and tax gouging (think Zacchaeus) that prevented honorable participation in the society of the time.

That graciousness got him accused of eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners. Nevertheless, in his last moments from the cross, Jesus asked the Father to forgive those "who know not what they do."

For Jesus, there are no "throwaway people."

- Can we say the same for us?
- How are we reaching out to the marginalized?
- Protecting the unwanted or excluded?
- Learning to understand their situation?



St. Francis, Notting Hill

"Let us love our neighbors
as ourselves, and
If any one does not wish to love them
Let him at least do them no harm".

- St. Francis, Letter to all the Faithful

Today, we have a multitude of ways to 'do harm' - or offer hope to others:

- by the content and tone used in our literal and digital voices
- by the facial expressions and gestures we show people
- by the anger or mercy we cultivate in our hearts

Let's focus on what brings about New Life

—what will build up and not tear down the Kingdom of God. Only God has the Big Picture.

We humbly pray to know
"what is ours to do."

As per **Article 16 of our Rule**
We are meant to share "in the creation, redemption,
and service of the human community."



William "Bill" Neu, OFS 25th ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION

Bill professed Sunday June 20, 1999 and will celebrate 25 years this year as a professed Secular Franciscan. Our Region will take the opportunity to mark this milestone during our Regional Retreat in July. Bill was born in Dayton, OH. He and Diane have been married 56 years. They have 3 Children, 10 Grandchildren (living), 6 Great Grandchildren.

After a career as an electronics engineer, Bill is now retired. At this time in his life, most important for Bill is his family. The activities which take up most of his time are the Secular Franciscan Order and St. Vincent de Paul Society.

When and how did you discern that you had a calling as a Secular Franciscan?

"I have always felt drawn to the Franciscan way of life. When my family was older and kind of on their own, I made the decision to start my Franciscan journey.

My formation started in 1996 and was at first very old school (postulant, novice). During my formation the Region changed the time requirement from 2 years to 3 years which did not bother me because I felt that I had a lot to learn. One thing that I remember about my first year of initial formation was as part of our studies we had to Study the Acts and read Fr. Murray Bodo's "The Journey and the Dream".

I was professed during the 11:00 AM Mass at St. Mary's Basilica. I don't think that my feet touched the ground for at least 3 days afterwards.

What being a Secular Franciscan means for you today?

Being part of a larger family.

How do you live your vocation in today's society?

Living a simple life and being a quiet example for others.

What activities are you involved in that help you live your Franciscan Vocation?

As part of my vocation, I was called to serve the poor. Prior to joining the Franciscans, the homeless and the poor were some people that I would avoid. Now I do not pass up the opportunity to take the time to talk to them. My focus has been with St. Vincent de Paul.

What assists you in living a life of daily conversion?

Daily Mass and praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

What words of wisdom do you want to leave with your Franciscan brothers and sisters?

Don't shy away from leadership positions, the Holy Spirit will always guide you. I was thrust into leadership positions from the day of my Profession and have served on local and regional fraternities. This was something that I never would have thought that I was capable of but being a Franciscan means saying yes!

Over the years, Bill has definitely applied these words of wisdom to his life as he has faithfully served the council of St. Francis, his local fraternity and our Regional Council for many terms. He now serves St. Clare of Assisi fraternity as their Spiritual Assistant and has also been appointed as Regional Co-Spiritual Assistant.

**CONGRATULATIONS, BILL!
MAY GOD CONTINUE TO
BLESS YOU
ON YOUR JOURNEY**



MEET JAMES A. MCGRATH, OFS (AKA BROTHER MAC) 65 YEARS AS A PROFESSED SECULAR FRANCISCAN

Brother Mac was born in Evergreen Park (Chicago), Illinois. As of 19 December 2023, he has been married 53 years to Marilyn (nee Maas). Their wedding ceremony was held at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, Burlingame, CA. Mac and Marilyn have 3 children:

Their eldest son is Daniel McGrath and spouse Mindy Steinberg McGrath. Their second son is Colin McGrath and spouse Amy McGrath who have two children, Declan (12) and Cora (8). And their daughter is Maggie Sant and estranged spouse Ryan Sant; who have one child, Wyatt (4).

Brother Mac graduated from the University of Albuquerque in June of 1967 with a BA in Political Science and minors in History and Theology. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy, as a Lieutenant. After service, he spent the next 37 years in the telecommunications industry in Sales and Marketing. In his now dotage years besides attempts at exercise, he likes to read and write. As for the other activities that take up his time, he assists in child-care and babysitting for his three grandchildren as well as focusing on adherence to the call of the Secular Franciscan Order by writing biographical notes and stories.

Regarding his Franciscan Journey and when asked when and how he discerned he had a calling as a Secular Franciscan, and, this is what brother Mac shared: *"In reality I had no choice. My parents were Franciscan Tertiaries in the pre-Vatican II days. When I was merely eight years old, they began taking me to St. Anthony Fraternity meetings at Queen of Angels Chapel on the Indian School campus (still an active Indian School in the 1950's). I could not be trusted at home because I terrorized my old sister! At that time the Chaplain at the Indian School was Fr. Pat McCauley, OFM and he took an interest in me. Fraternities pre-Vatican II were run by the priests. I became Fr. Pat's assistant in the Third Order liturgy. After a couple of years Fr. Pat was transferred back to the Philippines (his first love) and we were then led by Fr. Maurice (Ulric) Pax, OFM who carried on my education into the Franciscan way of life. Fr. Pax and my parents' efforts to get me to follow my eldest brother's entry into the Franciscan seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio failed when I realized that there were no girls there! Despite the decision to remain in the secular world, Fr. Pax and my parents did not give up on me. They continued to help me embrace the Franciscan charism of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. In our secular life the virtue of Poverty means that we spurn ownership and practice a stewardship over the possessions that have been entrusted to us. The virtue of Chastity in the secular state calls us to recognize that we are Temples of the Holy Spirit and by the grace of God we are to keep that body/temple clean and pure. And finally, the virtue of Obedience calls the secular to strive to become selfless, listen to the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of the Church and the message of the Gospels.*

About his Formation, Mac tells us: *"As described above the initial formation was from the good OFM's at Queen of Angels Chapel in Albuquerque and my parents. But formation is not meant to be a two- or three-year activity that ends at profession. It is to be our life's journey. I had a close relationship with my brother, Fr. Andre McGrath, OFM (now deceased) throughout my life. Fr. Andre was a moral theologian with a long career as a teacher of youth and seminarians on three continents. His direction and encouragement are still with me. On-going formation is the call to seek out the Gospel life – bringing the Gospel to life by bringing life to the Gospel. Formation will end when we finally walk through that last door into eternal life."*

Brother Mac professed in the Secular Franciscan Order on 6/1/1959 in St. Anthony of Padua Albuquerque, NM. Asked about he remembers about that day, he says: *"What is left in my aging memory banks is that my mother and father stood by me while Fr. Pax asked me who I was to be (we took on new names in those days) I chose Timothy the name my brother Fr. Andre had given up when he was professed into the order. That day in the Queen of Angels Indian School Chapel the members of St. Anthony's Fraternity were mostly native Americans and Hispanics – this old Chapel smelled of the adobe and musk of the wooden frames, altar, and furniture. I was proud that I was now a part of the fabric of history of New Mexico and the Franciscan legacy that helped form this State."*

What does being a Secular Franciscan mean for you today? *"Perhaps it is even more important now than in most of my life to date. We are the antithesis of the status of the world fraught with violence, secular distractions. We are to heed the admonition of our Seraphic Father Francis, "Go out and preach the Gospel daily. Use words if necessary." Live it!"*

Continued on page 8

BROTHER MAC continued

Share how you live your vocation in today's society. *"For me the sharing of the Franciscan charism is covered quite well in what is commonly referred to as "The Prayer of St. Francis," Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace... turn hatred into love, injury into pardon doubt into faith, despair into hope, darkness into light and sadness into joy – just do that and I believe you are close to bringing the Gospel to life."*

What activities are you involved in that help you live your Franciscan Vocation? *"Participation in the Fraternity's monthly gathering, daily mass when possible and reading Scripture and praying the Liturgy of the Hours."*

What assists you in living a life of daily conversion? *"I split my time between the good Jesuits at St. Francis Xavier Parish for the early morning mass and the Diocesan priests at St. Mary's Basilica for the noon mass. The daily scripture readings and homilies give me the challenge to look deeper into the message of Jesus the Christ and the Call to live the Gospel life."*

Why be a Franciscan at all? *"It is more vital today to embrace Franciscan spirituality than it has been in a very long time. Now there is a caution to all who seek to embrace the Franciscan charism - this way of life is not a substitute for being a Catholic Christian - it should be a way to become more deeply Christian. Furthermore, the question of "Why be a Franciscan" is one we should ask ourselves daily. First of all, whose "Way" are we following – Francis' or Jesus the Christ? Who is St. Francis? When Francis was in his early 20's he felt a call of conversion from his worldly life. His first step was to embrace "Lady Poverty." The call to Chastity and Obedience followed and as his following began to form, he wrote a Rule – but one is not a Franciscan by merely following a Rule, it requires a constant conversion. The "how to" lies in Francis' admonition to bring the Gospel to life and life to the Gospel. To each decision point in our lives, we can ask "What would Jesus do?" Francis turned to scripture to answer this question and found what Joshua bar Joseph (Jesus the Christ) had to say, Matthew 23: "11 The greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." And most important in our quest to live the Gospel life we can look to this next scripture passage. When a Pharisee asked Jesus which commandment is the greatest, He responded, Matthew 22: "37j He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the greatest and the first commandment. 39 The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.'" As I said above – the Franciscan way is the Gospel way of Jesus the Christ, turn hatred into love, injury into pardon, doubt into faith, despair into hope, darkness into light and sadness into joy – just do that and I believe you are close to bringing the Gospel to life. And so, my brothers and sisters, let's find those lepers in our lives, get down off our high horse, embrace them and kiss them and we will be at peace.*

For it is in giving that we will receive; it is in pardoning that we will be pardoned; and it is in dying (to self) that we will be on our way to be born to Eternal Life. Amen"

Words of wisdom you want to leave with your Franciscan brothers and sisters:

"Never give up. Never surrender. Into your Hands O' Lord I commend my spirit. Give me the gift of Wisdom that enables me to know how to use Your gifts, talents, and skills that You've entrusted to me at the proper time and in the proper proportion. Life is a continuum. It had a beginning, but it will not have an end.

The transitus for us is a pathway to the light, to the promise of union with and a bonding to the divine."

Article submitted by Br. Mac



NEWS FROM PEACE FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ

Greetings and a very Happy Easter Season to everyone!

Peace Fraternity welcomed six new people at our fraternity gathering. John Lomeli, our Formation Director, has been gathering all their information to help them get off to a great start. They will begin the Journey Book on April 1st. Such an exciting time for all of us.



Many of you may already know Judy Zene, but I would like to share some of Judy's thoughts with you.

[What in the very beginning encouraged you to see what being a Secular was about?](#)

I attended a meeting because I saw an invite to a SFO (at the time) meeting in the Casa weekly bulletin; I had no idea what a Secular Franciscan was!! The Fraternity was thriving and had great leaders and I was hooked!!

[Through your initial formation ...what trials did you have \(internally or externally\)?](#)

There were challenges over the formation time as to whether this was something I really wanted to do. I had great people travelling the journey with me and a great sponsor.

[How did you feel after your Profession?](#)

I was totally elated – felt like I was floating. It was pure joy.

[How has your continued formation helped you?](#)

On-going formation always lifts me - relights my fire – gives me hope going forward in a challenging world.

[What advice could you share with those beginning formation?](#)

Be open to all and everything that comes to you on this journey. There may be challenges but they will result in joy and growth.

[Do you feel there is anything special you would like to see in the future for Peace Fraternity?](#)

We are now on a good journey. We have a great Council and are growing in numbers. I'm hoping we continue to attract new members.

[Please, in your own words, describe what being a Secular Franciscan is like and how it has helped you through your everyday life.](#)

Becoming a Secular Franciscan changed my life. I learned to look at things in a totally different way. It showed me how to see the joy in all things – gave me the strength and security to comfortably share my faith with others - most importantly, it gave me hope in all areas for my future days.

ST THOMAS MORE REGIONAL RETREAT JULY 12-14, 2024

Time To
Register

As we commemorate the
800th Anniversary
of the **Stigmata**
of St. Francis:



How are we signs of our times?

Our speakers:

- Fr. Marek Skybor, OFM Conv
- Fr. Garrett Galvin, OFM
- Joe Makley, OFS, JPIC national animator

REGISTER ONLINE: Go to <https://www.stmregionofs.com/>



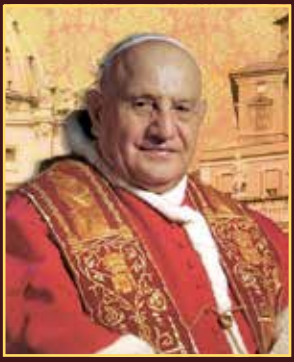
Cost of registration - 3 options:

- **\$200/pers.** Includes retreat program lodging for 2 nights, Fri. dinner, 3 meals Saturday and 2 meals Sunday.
- **\$150/pers.** for commuters Friday through Sunday - Includes everything except lodging.
- **\$100/pers.** for commuters for Saturday only - Includes retreat program and 3 meals.

**Please note: We have a limited number of guest rooms. Register soon!
Registration will close June 25, 2024.**

Questions? Please contact:

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Linda Ressler, OFS lressler2@cox.net
Betty Holler, OFS bettyholler@gmail.com



NEWS FROM POPE ST. JOHN XXIII FRATERNITY Yuma, AZ



On January 7, 2024 Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity in Yuma, AZ celebrated the Epiphany by having a potluck hosted at the home of one of its members, Frances Garcia, OFS. This has been a tradition for the last eight years that everyone looks forward to celebrating. It is a time to get to know everyone on a more personal level and have great fun and food! This year it was a smorgasbord of food from Mexican to Korean to Greek! The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity from Yuma joined us.

We had a group prayer of Thanksgiving where each member took a turn stating what they were thankful for in their lives. It was followed by Liturgy of the Hours led by Sister Mary Teresa Bettag, OSF. It was a great Sunday Gathering filled with lots of laughs, fun and joy , especially after the gift exchange. A final blessing was given by Deacon Paul Perrault who is a visitor along with his wife Mary Beth from Fairbanks, Alaska, where they are both in the Candidacy of their formation.



NEWS FROM OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY FRATERNITY Scottsdale, AZ

Meet Gemma Spina.

She is a member of Our Lady of the Rosary fraternity in Scottsdale. Gemma was asked to share her profile and journey in the Secular Franciscan Order. She graciously agreed and handwrote the following:

She is pictured, here in May 2017 for the Crowning of Mary during one of the fraternity's gatherings.

"I was born in 1928 in Queens, New York which is just over the bridge to Manhattan. I was professed in 1956. Yes, I have been around lots of years.



It was an exciting day to be professed especially that my parents and my uncle priest attended. I worked near St. John Capuchin Church. A priest there told me about the Third Order. I had no idea that such a "thing" existed, so in no time, I signed on the line and became a candidate. I was given a "Tertiary Monthly Pledge". Besides the recommendation, it is a beautiful prayer.

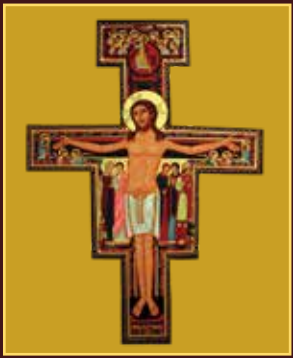
Here are some of the items:

"With God's Grace, I shall assist at Holy Mass on weekdays – whenever possible; Recite my Seraphic Office faithfully; Also attend fraternity meetings regularly. A few more: Be at peace with all, with special solicitude toward sick and deceased members; Like our Ten Commandments. All of this should come pretty naturally. We strive, we strive to be perfect!

I've always enjoyed the open road, even to find it recreation. I am in a group that prays the Memorare. The main intention is to end abortion. Once a month, I call in the number of prayers said. People call in from all over the country. The goal is 600 million and at this date we are in the 500 million figures! This intention is sponsored by Relevant Radio (Station 1310 AM and on all modern means). This organization broadcasts 24/7, Holy Mass, Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Also, there are shows headed by priests and lay. Talk about being fed!

Conclusion: I've come to calling the Catechism of the CC, spiritual reading. Try it, you'll like it. I was so happy to see so much on the Liturgy of the Hours."

Article submitted by Gemma Spina, OFS



NEWS FROM SAN DAMIANO FRATERNITY Glendale, AZ

The San Damiano fraternity held our triennial elections at the March gathering. Cathy Roszhart and Bill Neu represented the regional council and presided over our elections.

For the next three years Cheryl Groeper will lead us as minister. Melanie Spaulding will assist her as the vice-minister. Mike Hart completed his tenure as minister, but just can't stay away from the council so is now the fraternity's treasurer. Katie Ott is once again our secretary. She held the treasurer's position until her election this time. Katie will celebrate her 90th birthday this August and has been a very active professed member in her fraternity for over 26 years. And Virginia Vollmer continues as the fraternity's formation director.

And with our elections complete for three years we gathered for congratulations, a festive potluck, and fraternity.



In picture from left to right: Melanie, Virginia, Katie, Cheryl and Mike

Article submitted by Virginia Vollmer, OFS (Formation Director)



NEWS FROM ST. CLARE OF ASSISI FRATERNITY Phoenix, AZ

St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity Highlights & Sunday Gatherings



December Gathering: *Advent: Meaning in Church Teaching and Sharing of Advent Spiritual Practice.*

We also welcomed our new Inquirer Ann Ngyuenle. Congratulations, Ann!



January Gathering: *“New Year Review of My Franciscan Journey”.*

Fraternity Members reflected on and shared their vocation as Franciscans with each other by using a guided questionnaire. Participants were challenged to know the gospel and live the gospel, and this activity refreshed our Franciscan spirit and strengthened our fraternity bonding!

February Gathering: *Eucharistic Adoration Through the Ages/ Sacrifice of Mass.*

As part of our Lenten journey, Maria Tiznado OFS, who is our beloved fraternity member and JPIC animator, announced the **H2O Project** as part of the JPIC ministry. The idea is that we fast from our daily cup of coffee that we would purchase at, for example, Starbucks, and the money that we save from our fast can be collected and donated. Maria distributed boxes for the purpose of collecting the funds for the project.



On March 2, 2024, members of St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity participated in the annual “Nun Run” at Kiwanis Park in Tempe. The **Nun Run** is a fundraiser for the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration of Our Lady of Solitude Monastery, and we shared the joy with Poor Clare Sisters!



Article submitted by
Kyoko and Alan Tavassoli, OFS
and Toni Monti, OFS (Candidates)



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

As Inquirers, the five of us loved the meaning of the Franciscan TAU Cross. We hope to make it our personal statement as St. Francis did, expressing our true commitment to follow Christ.



During our beautiful Rite of Admission on April 7th, we five were conducted as Candidates into the St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order. Representing the Regional Executive Council from St. Thomas More Region were Julianne Hartzell, Cathy Roszhart, Steve Roszhart, and Amy Sperry. Also attending was our Spiritual Assistant, Patrick Mowrer.



We would like to share our thoughts with you on this special day:

Angie: "I'm so excited to be accepted into candidacy for the SFO. I'm also looking forward to continuing my formation, as I love learning about Francis & Clare, and the Secular Franciscan Order charism and history. I feel strongly that the Holy Spirit is guiding me in this endeavor."

Sue: "I'm very grateful to the Formation Team and our Fraternity for helping us to reach this milestone. To be called to be a Franciscan is an invaluable gift that I will cherish forever!"

Kathy: "I feel like I have found a home with the Franciscans, a community of kindred souls that will help me on my continuous journey following the path of St Francis, living the Gospel, and committing to a life of prayer."

Pat: "Happy to be a candidate and on the journey to learn more about St. Francis and the SFO. So grateful that I have 4 wonderful companions to accompany me on my quest! St. Francis pray for us."

Colleen: "I'm absolutely thrilled to become a candidate! I feel very blessed to have such great co-candidates and Formation Team!"

Article submitted by new candidates



NEWS FROM ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY Tucson, AZ

Remembering Patricia Henrickson, OFS

Sister Death escorted our Franciscan Sister, Patricia Henrickson, OFS to be with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Patricia Henrickson, OFS, passed away peacefully at the Casa De La Hospice at The Hacienda, in Tucson, Arizona on Tuesday, March 12, 2024. Her niece Sandy was by her side.

She was born November 24, 1930 in St Louis Missouri to George & Ellen Watson. She was 93 years young. She lived many years in Florida with her late husband Hank and then moved to Sierra Vista to be next to her late son "my Bill". She attended St Andrew's the Apostle Catholic Church in Sierra Vista, Arizona and LOVED touring and dancing with the parish group. She loved her dear & close friends George and Mary, and enjoyed eating & drinking Mexican food, margaritas and a glass of wine. She also worked many years for VICAP (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program).



Pat, as she was called, was professed on November 30, 2019. She was very active in Saint Anthony Fraternity. Each of the gatherings, she would have a

grand smile and participated actively in formation. Her formation began at Saint Andrew's the Apostle with Sister Joellen, a Franciscan sister and her dear friends Johanne Bowling, OFS; Gertrude Mackey, OFS, and Tina Riehle, OFS. After some time discerning with her friends at Saint Andrew's she joined the community of Saint Anthony Fraternity in Tucson, Arizona.

She will be missed and never forgotten.
Please, pray for her soul.

Article submitted by Benjamin Saenz, OFS
(Minister)

NEWS FROM ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE FRATERNITY Surprise, AZ



St. Clare of Assisi, our fraternity's home parish invited us to participate once again in the parish wide Ministry Fair during the weekend of February 3 and 4.

Members took turns manning a table for all 5 weekend masses, distributing our flyer and prayer cards while inviting St. Clare of Assisi parishioners to learn more about the Secular Franciscan Order.

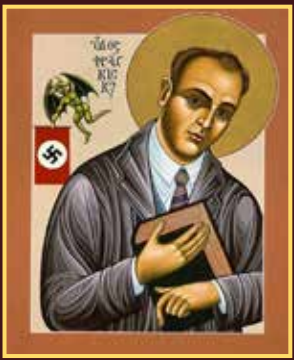


On January 28, our members joyfully witnessed the Admission of Barbara Holton into our Order. Our fraternity now counts 2 candidates and as of Monday March 18, we also have 4 aspirants who started Orientation.



Our members are now actively preparing for their Triennial Chapter of Elections which will be held on Sunday June 23. May God continue to bless our fraternities and our Order!

Article submitted by Cathy Roszhart, OFS (JPIC Councilor)



NEWS FROM BL. FRANZ JÄGERSTÄTTER FRATERNITY Flagstaff, AZ

Greetings and Happy Easter from Northern Arizona!

We have been bundled up through winter since our last newsletter and now are ready to welcome springtime when we joyfully say “Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs”.

Two of our recent ongoing formation topics at the gatherings were based on two of the 800th Centenaries; Greccio in December and the Stigmata in March on Passion Sunday. Other ongoing formation topics included Seeing the Face of Christ in February and a JPIC topic on Pope Francis’s Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum in January. Every three months our ongoing formation is centered on JPIC, and we find this very valuable. Saint Francis’ Office of Passion was used for our communal prayer during Lent, and we will continue this through the Easter Season before we change back to Liturgy of the Hours.

On Good Friday, a few of us prayed a Franciscan Stations of the Cross together. We met at the outdoor stations near the church. Brother Wind joined us as well even though he was not necessarily invited, but certainly welcomed!



San Francisco de Asis parish held a ministry fair in December and Blessed Franz Jägerstätter Fraternity was invited to be at the “vocations” table. It was a blessing to be recognized as a vocation and we had several of our fraternity members volunteer to take a shift at the table. Many parishioners stopped by to hear more about the Secular Franciscan Order and two of those people have attended our gatherings. We continue to explore ways to be visible witnesses to our parish communities and beyond.

More good news includes planning a profession for three of our Candidates! Please keep Janine Anderson, Barbara Reed, and Thomas Reed in your prayer. We will also welcome four inquirers into candidacy within the next few months.

Pace e Bene!

Submitted by Bridget Durham, OFS (Minister)

REGIONAL APOSTOLATE OF HOSPITALITY

A Family's Perilous Journey from South America to the US Border

It was a hot Saturday August afternoon in Phoenix, AZ when St. Mary's Basilica's maintenance man called me seeking help for a homeless family that had showed up at the church hall. I offered him phone numbers for groups that provide assistance to the homeless, but the family didn't have a phone and they didn't speak English. Since I speak Spanish, I went down to the church to meet the family and try to get a better assessment. When I met the family, I was reminded of Joseph's and Mary's flight into Egypt with the Holy Infant. Edixon and his partner Alejandra had fled Venezuela with their two daughters and two sons (all 12 or younger) and were seeking asylum.

Over a two-month period, the family trekked from Columbia through the Darien rainforest to Panama and then journeyed through Central America, Mexico, and finally to the U.S. via the Juárez–El Paso border. For most of the journey, they slept outdoors. Trekking through the thick jungle of the rainforest, they added water purification tablets to the river water, but they still got sick from drinking it. During the remaining journey through Central America, both parents and children suffered from bouts of diarrhea from drinking unfiltered river water. Traveling by bus and taxi through Central America, they were robbed by police before leaving Guatemala. This left them with limited resources, and their progress through Mexico was slowed because they had no money for food or transportation. Upon reaching the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico, the one-year-old and the father were severely ill from diarrhea and dehydration. The condition of the youngest child and the father was so poor that they were close to death. But their fortunes improved, and they both recovered after receiving medical treatment paid for by a good Samaritan. After spending 20 days in Chiapas, Edixon was able to scrape up enough money to enable them to continue on their travels.

Upon reaching Mexico City, the family spent several weeks sleeping near bus terminals, until they were able to catch a train nicknamed the "train of death," also known as "the beast, which took them north toward the U.S. border. Traveling by train through Mexico is a long, arduous trip due to irregular train schedules. Once the family had to wait twelve days camping under a bridge until they could catch another train going north. After traveling on four different trains, they finally arrived at the border town of Juárez.

The family spent 20 days in Juárez waiting for an appointment with the immigration office. Finally, someone told them they could just cross the border and be picked up by U.S. Border Control officers who would then process their request for political asylum rather than applying at the immigration office. On August 12, they crossed the Rio Grande and were picked up by the Border Patrol and then transported to a check point where they requested asylum. After being fingerprinted and registered, they were detained in a short-term facility (where the cells were nicknamed "iceboxes" because they lacked heat) and all their belongings, including medications, were confiscated. After four days, the family was released into a temporary shelter facility in New Mexico. They remained in the shelter for over a week until they were flown to Phoenix, where they spent the night outside the airport. Someone they asked for help finally took them to St. Mary's Basilica because they had no place to live and knew no-one in Phoenix.

After meeting Edixon, Alejandra and their children at the church, I was reminded of the Holy Family. I took them to IRC's Welcome Center that was able to provide temporary shelter for a few days. I tried to get them help from local groups and communities. Because long-term housing could not be found, I decided to offer them a room in my townhouse for a four-week period. After four and half months, Edixon and his family are still living with me. During this time, the family has received food, clothing, gift cards, prayers and dental care from the St. Mary's Basilica - Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Secular Franciscans from the St. Francis Fraternity, support from St. Mary's Spanish speaking parishioners as well as anonymous donations and acts of kindness.



The school-age children have been enrolled in school to continue their education. Lacking a work permit, it has been difficult for Edixon to find paid work. After their long arduous journey, Edixon, Alejandra and their children spent a pleasant holiday at my home and the children received Christmas gifts from the St. Francis Secular Franciscan Fraternity.

Having finally made it to the U.S., the family continue to seek a permanent residence and legal assistance to gain political asylum and to remain in the U.S. Before the end of the year, the family had their initial court appearance on the 29th of December. The judge stipulated that if they represented themselves – they would forfeit the right to have legal representation at future proceedings. Despite our considerable efforts, legal representation could not be found by their next court hearing on January 25. However, our prayers were answered when another judge allowed a continuance of the court case to give them more time to secure a lawyer. The next court hearing is scheduled on April 18 – at which time, they will need to have an attorney present.

Because they are unfamiliar with the U.S. legal system and asylum regulations and do not speak English, it is critical that they have adequate bilingual legal representation to achieve the ultimate goal of their long, dangerous journey: a safe and secure home. They had spoken with Catholic Charities (on 19th Avenue/Colter). However, they were not able to take on any new cases.

The Valenzuela family expresses their deep gratitude to Regional Council, fraternities and individual Secular Franciscans for your prayers, support and generosity. At this time, the family has been able to make the down-payment to secure a lawyer for \$8,500. This is one big hurdle that they conquered with the help of many generous benefactors. The total raised was \$3,595. I opened separate checking account with my bank for the family as they continue to receive donations.

Their most pressing needs are: Thin pads for 12-year-old daughter (and mother), Diapers - size 6 and potty chair for 2-year-old, Booster car seats for 6-year-old girl and 9-year-old boy as well as school supplies. A list of the items and school supplies can be found on google drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iCaJfgrwdlAn20ltpLJuf8i3riLUqp4I?usp=drive_link

If you would like to donate an item, you can merely click on the above link (you will need to request access). When you are able to view the list, just insert your name next to item– as to avoid replication of purchased items. Otherwise, if you wish to donate either to the legal fund or towards the items, funds can be sent to Richard Rivera via Zelle at (602) 628-7502. Please insert note stating the purpose of the donation (e.g., legal representation, school supplies, etc.).

Also, Carmen Durón who is very active in helping the family tells us that she can see a big difference in how all the family members are starting to look and feel better, smiling more and feeling optimistic about the future.

We pray for continued support and prayers for Edixon, Alejandra and their four children.

Peace and All Good,
Richard “Rico” Rivera

For more information, please contact me.
(602) 628-7502 RicoStatGuy@Hotmail.com

Rico is an Affiliate member
of St. Francis fraternity in Phoenix.



H2O Project 2024

“... I was thirsty and you gave me drink...”
(Matthew 25:35)

“Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.”
(Article 15 of our Rule)

One such courageous initiative is the **H2O Project**, an international project to promote Christian solidarity, advocacy and financial support for poor communities who have no access to clean drinking water. In the past, donations helped bring clean water to Jackson Mississippi residents during their city’s water crisis, also contributed toward a well drilling project in Africa.

The **H2O Project** is usually promoted during Lent however contributions are welcome all year. This year, St. Thomas More region is offering another way to participate all together and bring our Regional fraternity, in a collective action to help our brothers and sisters who have no access to clean drinking water.

Steve and Cathy Roszhart, OFS will be walking the Camino in Portugal this Fall. In order to raise money for the **H2O Project**, they ask that you consider sponsoring their journey as they plan to walk from Lisbon, Portugal to Santiago de Compostella, Spain (400 miles). Please ask your local fraternity Minister for details. They were provided a sign-up sheet for donors to pledge a dollar amount for the miles they will walk.

Contributions for our Regional **H2O Project** will be collected early December and sent to our National Treasurer. Make the check will be payable to St. Thomas More Region with **H2O Project** in the memo line. Thank you for your participation!



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

TAU-USA newsletter is now available at

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/tau-usa-newsletter/>

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

May 19 – Pope St. John XXIII Triennial Chapter of Elections

June 23 – St. Maximilian Kolbe Triennial Chapter of Elections

July 12-14 – Regional Retreat - Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale AZ

Sept 17-22 - NAFRA Chapter - Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale AZ

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE NATION

2026 - July 29 – Aug. 2 - 21st Quinquennial in Lexington, KY

SUBMISSION DEADLINES AND PUBLICATION DATES

- T July 1 Deadline for Article Submission
- T July 15 Publication of “Our Fraternal Scoop”

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

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

REMINDER: (A great way to foster your personal Ongoing Formation!)

To receive a daily email featuring, in monthly rotation, The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, the Admonitions of St. Francis, an article from the OFS General Constitutions, the USA National Statutes, Little Flowers of St. Francis, a Franciscan quote, and additionally, the Franciscan saint of the day.
(This is not a discussion list.)

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