

JOY OF FRANCIS

Secular Franciscan Order—St. Francis Region #52— Southern California
Winter Edition—2020

**FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER
JUDITH MUSSATTO, OFS**

HAPPY 2020 TO EVERYONE

We began this year in St. Francis Region of the Secular Franciscan Order with the annual Chapter. This year it was the Regional Fraternity's turn to be visited by the higher level, the National Fraternity in the persons of National Councilor Donna Hollis, OFS, Fraternal Visitor and Father Jerome Wolbern, OFM, Pastoral Visitor. Like you, when you receive an after-visit report, we will diligently read their report with consideration for application of their recommendations.

Next year's Chapter, January 15 - 17, 2021, will be a Chapter of Election for your Regional Executive Council (REC). I ask you to pray that the leaders we elect in 2021 will be the Servant Leaders that St. Francis Region needs at this time in its history.

Let us with one heart and voice pray the Prayer for OFS Leadership found on the next page of this edition of Joy of Francis. It appears here in English and will be made available in Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese to fraternities that use English as a second language,



May the Lord
always be
with you
and
may you always
be with Him.

BLESSING OF ST. CLARE

PRAYER FOR OFS LEADERSHIP

Give us, O God, leaders whose hearts are large enough to match the breadth of our own souls and give us souls strong enough to follow leaders of vision and wisdom.

In seeking a leader, let us seek more than our own enhancement — though enhancement we hope for — more than security for our own plans and vision— though security we need — more than satisfaction for our own selfish wants — though many things we desire.

Give us the hearts to choose and follow the leader who will work with other leaders to bring Your will to the agenda and help us to fulfill it.

Give us leaders who lead us to virtue without seeking to impose their own version of virtue on others.

Give us leaders who will provide for the advancement of our Order without dictating to others to achieve it.

Give us insight enough ourselves to choose as leaders those who can tell strength from power, growth from greed, leadership from dominance, and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity.

We trust you, Great God, to open our hearts to learn from those to whom you speak in different tongues and to respect the life and words of those to whom you entrusted the good of other parts of this globe.

We beg you, Great God, give us the vision as Secular Franciscans to know where holy leadership truly lies, to pursue it diligently, to ask it to respect the integrity of every person in the entire Order.

We ask these things, Great God, with minds open to your word and hearts that trust in your eternal care.

Amen

Adapted and dated September 1, 2012 by Kevin Queally, TOR, and Anne Mulqueen, OFS



Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

Our annual Chapter – the gathering of all of the regional ministers or their delegates – is over, as is Congress, and it's time to assess what we've received and what we've achieved, and what we have yet to work on. This year brought national visitors, for a fraternal and a pastoral visit. Here I'm going to focus only on the pastoral visit, by Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM.

There apparently were some complaints voiced by some of the ministers in their closed meeting with the visitors, about their interactions with their spiritual assistants. As you know, all Seculars who are appointed as local spiritual assistants have completed the training course run by the Region over the past 15 years. However, that does not make anyone a perfect person! Unfortunately, none of us can claim such a status. What it has accomplished is to make the appointed spiritual assistants knowledgeable about the processes involved in our lives as Franciscans, including "administrative" things such as elections and fraternal and pastoral visits to local fraternities. In the course of the training, the individual spirituality of those eventually appointed as spiritual assistants has also grown tremendously.

If, however, a council experiences difficulty within their fraternity involved with their relationship with a spiritual assistant, then the council has an *obligation* to take steps to remedy that difficulty. The first thing that should be done is to speak directly with your local spiritual assistant. Oftentimes the difficulty is simply a difference in how we communicate with one another. A spiritual assistant is there to *assist*, not to direct, or command, or take charge. If the difficulty can't be worked out with your spiritual assistant, then contact the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants and see if it can be solved at that level. So that you know, spiritual assistants have been removed, replaced, taken from one fraternity and placed in another, and various other solutions. It is important that the council, in particular, have a good, open, trusting and working relationship with their spiritual assistant. Without that, there is little benefit in having the spiritual assistant there. There must be a good "fit" between the spiritual assistant and the local fraternity. If there isn't, then that assistant will be of little value or help to the council and, ultimately, to the fraternity. To a large extent that depends on personalities and how each communicates with the other. Sometimes we have found that there simply is not a good "fit" with a particular fraternity, and likewise, when the spiritual assistant was moved to another fraternity, the whole situation changed positively.

So please, if you have any problems or difficulties involving your spiritual assistant, discuss it with that person, and/or with the regional spiritual assistants. With openness, frankness, and a spirit of humility on everyone's part, we can get most of these seeming difficulties resolved, all for the benefit of our goals of living better Franciscan lives.

Peace and all good!

Sylvia Paoli,

President-in-turn of Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION LUCY IBARRA

The Joy of the Lord is my strength! Nehemiah 8:10

These past few months I have come to understand what these words mean to me.

Let's start with our Regional Chapter 2020. If you have not heard it was our Visitation from National. Oh, to say I was nervous was an understatement, first time jitters. No matter how much my brothers and sisters told me I had this, the fear and doubt were overpowering. I even had a time of hopelessness. As I left the gathering on Friday night I had to setup the meditation table. And as I stood back to see what I had done. I was in awe how the Holy Spirit directed me. It was beautiful and so peaceful. As I meditated and prayed the Lord gave me Nehemiah 8:10. I said to myself "Joy Lord really, yes Lucy really". I left that room with a peace in my heart and a hop in my step. I woke up the next morning ready for this. I gave it all to God. As I walked in to meet with Fr Jerome Wolbert, OFM, I had all my binders ready and sat down. It was one of the most humbling and fruitful experiences I have had. When I was given questions, it was not me who answered but was the Holy Spirit. It was a wonderful visit. The rest of the weekend I was able to share with others on the Joy of my God.

The next time I experienced God's joy was at our Formation workshops. In October we were small in numbers but strong in wisdom. I had an agenda for the day, but the Holy Spirit had another plan. We all shared great ideas and concerns. We all walked away saying WOW!

In February we had our second session. We had a wonderful group of brothers and sisters. We had Formators, REC members and Council members from various fraternities. The round table session was full of wisdom and knowledge. We had a Franciscan who has been professed over 60 years. I feel we all left there with a better understanding of what needs to be done in our fraternities and the work we need to do. Thank you to our Korean Community of San Diego for hosting our gathering. Our next gathering was our REC yearly retreat. We talked about our upcoming year and what we need to do as a council to help our brothers and sisters in our region. What better way to celebrate God's joy.

Upcoming Events

Very important, I would love to have one more session before I finalize our Regional plan. If a fraternity would host a round table session, please let me know as soon as possible.

I will be having 3 days of reflection for our Formators this upcoming year, I received ideas from our roundtable sessions. I welcome any additional subject matter or speaker suggestions.



Our San Diego Formation Session

**Remember if you feel overwhelmed or discouraged, the
Joy of the Lord is our Strength.**

JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

J.P.I.C: Gospel to Life, Life to Gospel

Chapter Two: Article 4

The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.

Every time I read "gospel to life and life to the gospel," I imagine St. Francis walking down the hill from Mr. Subasio, where he sat in prayer, contemplation, and careful reading of scripture, to Rivo Torto where he served the lepers, and then back up again for more solitary time with our Lord. I have done that walk, dear sisters and brothers, and I can assure you it is not an easy hike. But the walk serves as a powerful metaphor – we are called to sit in quiet prayer and contemplation, reading scripture and letting it form us, and then to take it down the hill to the leper, that is, out into the world to serve those who are in need.

Our Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation work begins in the gospel, and begins as we take the words of our Lord into our hearts and let them form and transform us. Our work, then, is inspired by and sourced by the love which God plants in our hearts and nourishes through scripture, as we go out into the world to serve those in need. Who is in need? We only have to look to Matthew 25 for guidance

"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. 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.'"
(*The Catholic Bible: New American Bible*)

St. Francis read this and ran down the hill to serve our Lord with his life. He calls us to do the same.

Let us encourage and en-hope each other as we move forward with our work for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. Let us open our hearts and let scripture give form and shape to the work we do for the Kingdom of God.

Peace and All Good,

J.P.I.C. Animator for the Saint Francis Region

Patricia Grace, OFS

FRANCISCAN BOOK GROUP

Karron Esmonde, OFS



Late in 2014, I was in a Rehabilitation Center, recuperating from an encounter with an automobile. In the course of my stay, several of my Franciscan sisters came to cheer me up. My narrow brush with disaster put me in a reflective state of mind, and before long, we were engaged in lively discussion about faith, fellowship, and our life in God's Kingdom.

During one of their visits, I expressed a wish that our discussions might continue after I left Rehab. To my surprise, the suggestion was well received, and we agreed to meet once a month to share our reflections, questions and experiences as Secular Franciscans. As a focus for discussion, we decided to read a spiritual book – something we'd enjoyed or wished to explore with the group. We felt we could realistically read a book a month, and then discuss it at lunch.

My calendar shows the Group first met at my home on January 9th, 2015, and our first book was Iliia Delio's The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective. Though some loved it more and others less, we enjoyed discussing what we found surprising, interesting, unsettling and/or puzzling in the pages of Delio's book.

In the course of many discussions – over five years now – these meetings became a space for us to discuss our faith experiences and ministries, our joys and misgivings. We share our victories and find empathy in our suffering. Reading books and swapping stories with friends broadens our horizons; in these discussions we share views and attitudes, deepen our mutual understanding and examine our viewpoints and suppositions.

During our discussions, we share lots of information. Family histories, youthful impressions, careers, travels and pilgrimages – the experiences and surprises, memories and convictions that shaped our lives – fly around the table. We raise questions and share insights, agree and disagree, and share thoughts & concerns about our present ministries. We often get and give advice, supply necessary information and offer referrals.

My Franciscan friends are a bountiful blessing and an amazing resource. I respect and admire each of them for their courage, perseverance, honesty and insight. At once prayerful and thoughtful, they each take time to read the book, dwell on its message, weigh its impact, and then join our meeting with an opinion, a premise, a question – as we huddle over the book at lunch.

I believe every group that comes together in the Spirit brings special graces and blessings to each of its members.

I am very grateful for these Franciscan women in particular: for their bountiful gifts, graces, talents, intelligence, and insight. They are a joy. God has blessed me with these good friends on my journey. I feel His delight as we come together each month, to break bread and be renewed once more in His company.

Peace,

Karon Esmonde OFS
Mission San Luis Rey Fraternity

NEEDED: NEW EDITOR OF JOY OF FRANCIS

**OUR SAINT FRANCIS REGION
IS LOOKING FOR**

**A NEW EDITOR
FOR
THE JOY OF FRANCIS!**

Patricia Grace, our current editor, has become the animator for Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (J.P.I.C.) for our region. Over the course of the coming year, she will be holding round table discussions on JPIC across our region as well as preparing study guides and handouts. Therefore, the job of editor is open and waiting for able hands to take over.

In summary, with our new schedule, we publish The Joy of Francis in the first weeks of March, June, September, December - winter, spring, summer, and fall editions respectively. Members of our region contribute articles in the month before the edition is prepared and published. We routinely have submissions from our Minister, our Regional Spiritual Assistants, our Director of Formation, our J.P.I.C. animator, and each of the four districts. In addition, we publish announcements and a calendar. All of our members are invited to submit articles of interest to the Region and to our Order.

At present, we work in Publisher and post in PDF. Previously, we used Word to prepare the newsletter. In short, the new editor can choose the program that works best for her or him. It is our intention to prepare in only one format that will be available online on our website and for printing.

We invite any interested sister or brother to contact our Minister, Judith Mussatto. We plan to have those interested take one of the next three editions and prepare it for publication. Of course, we offer any assistance that will be needed. At the end of the year, the REC will name the new editor.

Consider the editorship as an interesting ministry and a wonderful contribution to our Order. We look forward to hearing from those who want to accept this invitation.

From Your Regional Executive Council

SAN DIEGO DISTRICT
Tuan Cao, OFS, District Liaison



St Francis Region Chapter 2020 in Ontario from January 17 to 19, 2020.



St Anthony of Padua celebrated the Lunar New Year on 2/1/2020 at The Vietnamese Catholic Community center in San Diego

Riverside/San Bernardino William Mussatto, OFS, District Liaison

We met at the Annual Chapter for St. Francis Region and planned our joint events for the upcoming year. We will have quarterly meetings of the ministers, vice ministers and formation directors from our three fraternities. We are scheduling a Lenten Retreat led by Sr. Julianna Vagnozzi on "Praying with the San Damiano Cross Icon and the Passion of John." on March 21st at St Mathews Catholic Church in Corona.



On alternating weeks Immaculata Fraternity visits the Corona Healthcare Center to visit with the elderly there.

Immaculata Fraternity is expanding its Interfaith JPIC work with the Mosque in Corona. Members continue jointly feeding the homeless in the park.



Riverside/San Bernardino William Mussatto, OFS, District Liaison



They also had their annual Holy Spirit Fraternity caroling with the residents at Country Villa Claremont.



The Fraternity also had their annual Ephphany party. This year several guests including the former national minister, Bill Wicks, OFS and the Felician Sisters from the neighboring city of Pomona joined us. The sisters escaped before the photos were taken. As is our tradition, guests received a simple gift, a bible verse, the name of a saint and a Franciscan to pray for. Designated fraternity members delivered gifts to our Emeritus members.

Padre Pio Fraternity had its annual Baby Shower for Jesus where they gathered baby supplies which they delivered to Veronica Home of Mercy in San Bernardino.

Orange District Trudy Weigel, OFS, District Liaison

.On January 11, 2020 San Juan Capistrano Fraternity had an ecumenical meeting with presentations by Father Alexei Smith from the Office of Ecumenism and Interfaith of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and our Father Steve Gross, OFM Conv.



On February 23, 2020 Immaculate Heart of Mary Santa Ana had a retreat given by Margie Rodrigues, OFS. She gave a presentation on the San Damiano Cross with prayers and meditations for lent.



Members of the REC, Spiritual Assistants, District Liaisons and JPIC Animator at the Annual REC retreat held at Pro Sanctity Retreat Center, Fullerton, CA,

Secular Franciscan Order - St. Francis Region #52

Important Announcements

.Scully Fund Requirements

The Scully Fund has been set up to encourage fraternities in the St. Francis Region to participate in charitable activities. When members of a fraternity take an active role in an apostolic activity and use fraternity funds to purchase materials or supplies for the activity, the fraternity may request to be reimbursed by the Scully Fund for half of those expenses by supplying the following:

- A letter detailing the activity, the date it occurred, the number of fraternity members involved, and the amount of expenses incurred.
- Receipts for the purchases or a copy of the check(s) used to pay for the items.
- A request for reimbursement of half of the expenses.

Send the above information to either the Minister or Treasurer of the region.

Vocation Outreach

Once again our region was a presence at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress by manning one of the hundreds of booths in the exhibition hall. And once again Judith and Bill Mussatto set up and dismantled the booth, provided the supplies, and scheduled the members who gave out brochures, pens, and Oreo cookies to those who stopped by. Those included other members of the region, Secular Franciscans from other areas, friends, friars, and many people who were given the opportunity to find out something about our order. Often it is our display of a portion of the *Canticle of the Creatures* that draws people in, and sometimes it is the poster of the Franciscan Family Tree or the pictorial video that Bill created. And maybe even more often it is the Oreos. But whatever it is that draws their attention, we were able to acquire the contact information for over 20 potential members. That includes one Secular Franciscan who wants to reconnect with a fraternity since hers was deactivated. As in past years it was a great opportunity to educate many Catholics

Important Announcements

Last Will and Testament

Each of us can play an important role in preserving and extending our Secular Franciscan way of life, in our own fraternity, and at the regional level. This can be accomplished in many ways, including a bequest in our will.

Suggested beneficiaries:

- Your FRATERNITY
- Your REGION

Suggested wording for your bequests:

1. A BEQUEST FOR GENERAL PURPOSES:
"I give and bequeath the sum of \$ _____ (or _____ % of my disposable estate) to: (name and address of fraternity, or region).
2. A RESIDUARY BEQUEST OF INDEFINITE AMOUNT:
"After payment of expenses, debts and specific bequests, I direct that the residue of my estate be given to: (name and address) or
"I bequeath to (name and address) any part of my estate that other beneficiaries are unable to receive because of death or other reasons."

THE ADDRESS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION IS:
276 E. Green St.
Claremont, CA 91711

Vocation Outreach Continued

about Third Orders, and the Secular Franciscan Order in particular.

For those of you who have never attended the Congress, we recommend you check it out. It is a wonderful event at which to nurture and express our Franciscan JOY. Currently there are workshops in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. We hope that they will eventually add Korean to the cultural mix.

Next year's Congress is scheduled for February 19 – 21, 2021. Hope to see you there!