



THE JOY OF FRANCIS

Secular Franciscan Order | St. Francis Region #52 | Southern California

Future Newsletters

The 2017 planned publication dates for *The Joy of Francis* are February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15. **Submission Deadlines** for information to be included should be received by Feb 1st, May 1st, Aug 1st, and Nov 1st. Please notify the editor if you wish to submit on another day. Local Ministers, as well as District Liaisons, are encouraged to submit information about their fraternity’s activities. Information should be sent as a Word document to patriciadervish@yahoo.com **NEW!!!**

MINISTER’S MESSAGE

Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister

Homework

The presenter at our Regional Gathering on October 8, 2016 was Rt. Rev. Alexei Smith. At the end of his presentation on St. *Francis and the Sultan* Rev. Alexei gave us “homework”. We are to establish contacts with people of the Islamic faith. Less than one week after the gathering I opened my local newspaper and there it was! My opportunity to start my “homework”. The announcement stated that an INTERFAITH WALK FOR PEACE would take place on Sunday October 16, beginning at City of Knowledge Islamic School, the walk would proceed to the Islamic Center of Claremont before heading to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with the final stop at Temple Beth Israel.

On the day of the walk, along with an Imam (religious leader of Islam) welcoming us to the School of Knowledge was a Rabbi (religious leader of Judaism). They directed us to a table where we saw bins full of 3” x 6” zip lock bags which contained colored beads. We each chose a bag of colored beads that represented our religious/non-religious tradition. We were instructed to exchange beads and brief stories about our religious traditions. The color for *Christians* was purple. I exchanged beads with: *Agnostic/Atheists* – clear, *Judaism* – blue, *Buddhist* – orange, *Baha’i* - lime, *Unitarian Universalist* – yellow, *Islam* – green. Among the many members of Islam with whom I exchanged beads and stories were Ahmed, a retired Professor of Engineering who had come to the

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Calligraphy by Father Fong, OFM



United States as a student forty years ago. He was born in Aleppo, Syria and still has family members in that city. Fatima, with whom I exchanged greetings and a few sentences in Italian, was born in Somalia (a former Italian colony). She teaches History and Geography at City of Knowledge Islamic School.

At each stop, there was a brief presentation by a representative of that tradition and organizers of the event. At the Islamic Center, we learned that a refugee family had arrived from Syria and there were plans to receive more families in 2017. At Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, two of the six children in the Syrian family were introduced and the local liaison to that family asked those present to consider the many ways they can make our community a welcoming place for the refugees who will arrive in 2017. At Temple Beth Israel, a light meal was served and we were invited to be part of the celebration of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles which marked the close of the harvest season (what has become our Thanksgiving) for the Jews of ancient Palestine.

In the Fall 2013 issue of the TAU-USA there is an article by Anne Mulqueen, OFS, titled *Walking Together* in which she asked: “How familiar are you and your fraternity member with the Vatican II documents especially *Unitatis Redintegratis* (Christian unity), *Nostra Aetate* (non-Christian religions), and Blessed John Paul II’s encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* – (‘that they may all be one...’)? This was one of Rev. Alexei’s questions to those present at the Regional Gathering. Another of Anne’s questions was “In your Inquirers/Candidates’ formation groups, do you discuss or visit other churches, synagogues, mosques or other houses of worship as part of their preparation?”

Rev. Alexei’s presentation and the re-reading of Anne’s article caused me to reminisce. I grew up in a country, Trinidad and Tobago, where respect for each other’s religion became the norm. We do not *tolerate* each other’s religion. We *celebrate* each other’s religion. In school, we sat next to each other

and played together. Families partook of each other’s foods specially prepared for feast days. In a Northeastern corner on the island of Trinidad there is a small shrine dedicated to the Blessed Mother. Both Catholics and Muslims use the space to honor Mary.

Here in Southern California the possibilities to meet people who are sometimes referred to as “*other*” is not as difficult as we may think. Our Rule, Article: 4, states that we are to follow the example of St. Francis. St. Francis went to Egypt to connect with Islam. We need only to become more aware of the opportunities that are available in our local communities. Many of our parishes are represented on Interfaith Councils. Local Mosques welcome visitors. Use this link <https://crcc.usc.edu/california-mosque-map/> to locate a Mosque near you to visit our brothers and sisters who, in a different way, worship the same God whom we Catholics worship. “Homework” can be a joyful, enlightening, Spirit-filled experience. On October 16, 2016, we walked together, talked together, ate together, prayed together. I did begin my “homework”, more importantly (Rule, Article 5), I encountered the living and active person of Christ in *my brothers and sisters*.

Your Sister in Christ
Judith



VICE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

From Southern California to Central Italy

Frank Miller, OFS
Vice Minister, St. Francis Region



In October this year, I had the opportunity to make my first visit to Assisi as a Secular Franciscan. This was actually my second visit to that beautiful town in the Umbria countryside, but my first with a Tau around my neck. In my prior 1994 visit, I had enjoyed the quiet simplicity of the medieval town, stopping only briefly at the Basilica of St. Francis to see the frescos and visit his tomb. In October 2016, the visit took on so much more personal and spiritual significance. I was now a member of this amazing Franciscan Family, professed to a Gospel way of life, inspired by this unassuming Italian Friar who lived 800 years ago.

My best friend went along with me on this 2-day pilgrimage, a break from our week-long Holy Year trip to Rome. Even though he is not a Secular Franciscan, I must confess that he often lives our charisms better than I do. So it was a special grace to be able to share this visit with him. We made our way by train from Rome's Termini station, and after a 2 ½ hour ride we were deposited at the small train station in Assisi. We had planned to spend our first day visiting and taking in the beauty of the Basilica of St. Francis, and use our second day to visit St.

Mary of the Angels & the Portiuncula, along with the Basilica of St. Clare, her tomb, the historical location of the textile store of the Bernardone family, and just enjoy walking around the town.

As it turned out, our plans (and the local city bus!) took a bit of a detour on the first day and set us back a few hours. By the time we went through the very heavy security at the Basilica of St. Francis, there wasn't much time before we had to head off to check into our lodgings for the night. Once we got our things settled, we got back to the Basilica in time for a 2-hour visit before sunset brought the closing of the church for the day.

What a wonderful visit it was, spending time in the large church, surrounded by other pilgrims and visitors, some who were deeply in prayer, while others enjoyed the history all around them in stone and art, as well as the ever-present Friars "shushing" the crowds when they got loud. I made my way around the side chapels, spending a few minutes in each, then returned to the main nave to sit and speak in my heart to St. Francis. I spoke in gratitude for his gift to the Church, to the world, and his inspiration to me. I recalled many of the *Little Flowers* stories, some true and maybe some exaggerations, about this remarkable man from Assisi. And lastly I prayed that our Lord would fill me with the same zeal for the Gospel that St. Francis had.

As I made my way downstairs to the lower church, I was impressed with how the noise of the main church contrasted to the remarkable quiet of this underground area. Here, in the dimly lit space, lies the tomb of our Seraphic Father, Francis, surrounded by his friends and companions, Brothers Leo, Rufino, Angelo and Masseo. Also resting here are the remains of the woman whom many consider the first Secular Franciscan, "Brother" Jacopa dei Settesoli. The peace of this chapel fully envelopes you. The tomb of St. Francis is encased in large blocks of stone, surrounded by an iron grill. I approached all four sides of the tomb, reaching past the grill to touch the bare stone. As I made my way around the tomb slowly, I prayed for my family and friends, I prayed for my own fraternity and for the

Fraternities of St. Francis Region. I asked God to bless, through the intercession of St. Francis, the holy men and women who lead our Order at the local, regional, national and international levels. I prayed for all members of the Franciscan Family and for the Holy Father, Pope Francis. And lastly I asked the Lord to send His Spirit, so that I can fulfill my promise of Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel.

The following day, I had the chance to offer the same prayer at the beautiful tomb of St. Clare of Assisi and at the Portiuncula within the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels (which my home Fraternity is named for). I was especially moved by the time I spent in awe and silence before the original San Damiano cross that spoke to young Bernardone, giving me the opportunity to say:

“Most High glorious God, bring light to the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, insight and wisdom, so I can always observe Thy holy and true command. Amen.”



The trip to Assisi in October was an ideal chance to renew my commitment to our Order, my commitment to serving my brother and sister Secular Franciscans, and to once again be inspired by a humble Italian who walked this small Umbrian town eight centuries ago.



National Chapter 2016

There is Secular Franciscan presence in 116 countries. We have 79 established National Fraternities, and 37 groups comprised of Emerging National Fraternities and Secular Franciscan presences. A remarkable event occurred three weeks before Chapter. The National Executive Council learned, for the first time, of a Secular Franciscan presence on the island of St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. The group has been in existence for twenty-five years. Two of the group's members Simon Gaston and Patricia Griffith were observers at Chapter.

Here are excerpts from the opening addresses of our Visitors from the International Fraternity (CIOFS) to the US National Fraternity.



International Vice-Minister Maria Consuelo Chelito de Nuñez, (Celito), OFS, resides in Venezuela.

Chelito, our Fraternal Visitor, had lived in the US and visited the US many times. However, Chapter was the first time that she was present at a gathering of Secular Franciscans in the US. She felt overwhelmed by the generosity of her American Franciscan sisters and brothers. She received over 100 lbs. of medicines which will be shipped to Venezuela to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis being experienced by the people of that country. Commenting on the

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questionnaire on the Management of the Order that was sent out world-wide to all Secular Franciscans, she stated that they were being processed and the results will be shared with all the fraternities. The Presidency of CIOFS needed to hear from each of us, to learn how everyone feels about the Order. She stated that the Catholic Church is moving forward in new directions and the Order needs to do the same. We must become new people because each one of us is responsible for the Order. Our Rule will be 40 years young in 2018 and it is time to assess where we are as an Order and how we should move forward. "No one is a stone guest. You do not sit and say this is their problem."



Fr. Francis Bongajum Dor, OFM, Cap.
one of four General Spiritual Assistants.
A native of English Speaking Cameroon.
He lives in Rome.

Fr. Francis, our Pastoral Visitor, stated that the General Council has the responsibility to overview the Order and to promote communion. That mission is universal and the presence of the Visitors is an expression of that universality of the Order. We are not limited to our little corners. He reminded us that the Rule embodies a very important element of Vatican II, the universal call to holiness. That Rule was given to the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) to serve as a pathway to holiness. All our structures, our Rule, our documents are instruments which we need. They are our GPS (Global Positioning System) that help us find that path to holiness.

Fr. Francis further stated that holiness is symbolized by the candles we all receive at Baptism. The lights of those candles need to shine in us, through us, wherever divine providence takes us.

Regarding serving the Order he said that we are looking for expertise when we are called to serve and that makes it too heavy for us to serve at any level. When we are attentive to God's call we realize that God has been forming us throughout our lives

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for that particular service to the Order. We do need expertise and God is wise enough to send us brothers and sisters who are well prepared in different domains. Holiness is allowing ourselves to be use by God. "You need to relax. You do not hold the Order in your hands. You are in God's hands. You need to relax and allow God to work through you. You are loved by God."



National Fraternity at San Pedro Retreat Center, Winter Park near Orlando Florida

FROM THE REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

Greetings and peace to all!

As all of you know, the Region has had classes for formators and spiritual assistants for almost 10 years now. We've completed four classes, and the benefits to our fraternities has been very obvious to fraternal and pastoral visitors over these last several years. However, you must know that we will forever need to have a program to train Seculars to be spiritual assistants to fraternities, as there is not likely – at least in our lifetime – to be sufficient friars to fill all those positions, and our documents make it *mandatory* that every fraternity have a spiritual assistant.

We are going to try a new format and new name starting with the 5th class beginning in 2018, in the hopes of getting more people from the "edges" of our region – those in San Diego County and those in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. That format will be: three complete week-ends a year for two years, plus homework and other contact (by computer or phone) in-between the week-ends. The week-ends will be held at Pro-Sanctity Center in Fullerton. For those of you who haven't been there, it is a small retreat center at 205 So. Pine Dr., Fullerton, a block from St. Philip Benizi

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Church. The cost of the Center is \$150 per week-end, which includes two nights and 5 meal. The cost per student for regional expenses will be \$15 per week-end (up from \$10 for all the past years). That sum goes to pay for copies, stipends, and other related costs.

The first week-end for Class No. 5 will be April 28-30, 2017. It will be the first class of the Leadership Training Program. That Program will include those interested in servant leadership: potential council members, including formation directors and team members, and spiritual assistants. It is critical that Secular Franciscans continue to step up and be willing to serve – something we all promised when we were professed. It is also critical that, once you commit, you remain faithful to that commitment, barring major problems like health crisis, etc. I mention that because we had scheduled two make-up week-ends for those in the last two classes who were not able to complete the class due to major health problems of their families or themselves. About 12 people committed to attend the two week-ends, but at the last minute, several backed out, making it necessary to cancel the 1st week-end, as Pro-Sanctity has a minimum of 10 to use the facility for the week-end.

Ministers, please consider the members of your fraternity and send us the names of those you would consider as people who should be in the Leadership Training Program. Also please talk this up in your fraternities at every meeting from now on.

In closing, let us all remember that in our profession we each promised to “consecrate myself to the service of His Kingdom.” In making that promise, we have each become God’s property, placing ourselves at God’s total disposal. The Church considers our promise a true and proper profession, with the dignity of a solemn and religious commitment that is not inferior to that of “religious” although the two are different in content. Jesus calls us to be “on fire” for Him – at all times. That is a difficult thing to maintain, but if we are all walking with Him in prayer and trying to live the Gospel every minute, 24/7, then we will accomplish what we promised at our profession.

Sylvia Paoli, OFS
Regional Spiritual Assistant



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DISTRICT NEWS

2016 Orange District Events

June 2016



Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity at St. John Vianney Church in Hacienda Heights hosted a Day of Recollection presented by Sylvia Paoli, President of the Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants. The subject focused on our Profession.

The sessions focused on Profession as a memorial of our Baptism, the Grace and the Promise, how God gives grace to those who profess to live the Gospel, how the Holy Spirit is the Source of a vocation, the importance of the action of the Church, and how the fraternity is an integral part of the process to profession.

There was time for silent reflection after each presentation followed by sharing. It was a wonderful experience for those who were able to attend.

July 2016

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity professed 6 new members in San Luis Rey along with 3 members that were professed from the San Luis Rey Fraternity.

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September 2016

The Orange District and San Juan Capistrano Fraternity hosted a special celebration of the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis with a special pilgrimage through the Holy Doors and invited all in the St. Francis Region to attend. We were joined by parishioners from St. Killian Parish who walked seven miles to the Basilica to process through the Holy Doors and celebrate the mass with us. Our celebrant was Father Steve Gross. The beautiful mass was followed by a potluck in the Basilica Pastoral Center.



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October 2016 Orange District Transitus Celebrations:

San Juan Capistrano

San Juan Capistrano Fraternity celebrated the Transitus of St. Francis with a scripted reading on the life of St. Francis. We heard the story of St. Francis life and passing presented by the San Juan Capistrano Fraternity in the Old Mission Church.

St. Clare Vietnamese Fraternity

St. Clare Vietnamese Fraternity celebrated the Transitus of St. Francis on Sunday October 2. They do this because a lot of their members cannot go to an event on a weeknight since they must get up early the next morning for work.

The Transitus was an audio-visual dramatic presentation depicting the life of St. Francis. This was followed by a mass celebrated by Father Bui Cong Hien Linh of the Order of St. John of God.

San Diego County

On September 3rd, St Anthony of Padua had a Profession ceremony for two members, Mary July Nguyen and Maria Minh Do. Congratulations.



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On September 17th San Juan Capistrano Fraternity hosted the Feast of Stigmata of St Francis. Fr Stephens Gross, OFM Conventual, was the celebrant at the mass. The turnout was tremendous. The Church was packed with members from different Fraternities from Orange and San Diego counties. Thank you very much to the Council and all the members of the St Juan Capistrano Fraternity. Pictures of the event can be found with the Orange County submission above.

On October 8th 2016 we had a Regional gathering at Our Lady of Guadalupe church in La Habra. The guest speaker was the Right Reverend Alexei R. Smith, Director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The theme for the day was "Francis and the Sultan." It was an interesting topic because from that story Father showed us how to have a good dialogue with the different religious. We had a small but appreciative group. Thank you for the Fraternity at Our Lady of Guadalupe for hosting this event.



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The Thanksgiving gathering for San Diego District was hosted by the Council and members of the Immaculate Conception on November 13th, 2016 at St Patrick Church in San Diego. The minister, Caroline Yandell, led a beautiful reflection on Eucharist as Thanksgiving. We then gathered around an altar with pictures of our recently deceased, and prayed together for the departed members, for deceased members of our family and friendship groups, and to appreciate all the blessings we received throughout the year. While we shared a Thanksgiving feast with foods from all of our fraternities, we shared our life experiences about the love, the happiness and the hard times in our lives. We talked, we laughed, we ate together in joy. What a beautiful day that Lord gave to us with peace and all good. We hope next year we will have more members from all five Fraternities in San Diego. Here are some pictures of the day:



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San Bernardino/Riverside District

On October 9th, Regional Vice Minister, Frank Miller, OFS had a Fraternal visit to Holy Spirit Fraternity in Claremont. On October 29th, the Spiritual Assistants met at Our Lady of the Assumption for ongoing formation. During October, members of several of our Fraternities participated in events in support of the 40 Days for Life. Several members of each Fraternity attended the Regional Gathering. Following it, members of the Holy Spirit Fraternity attended an Interfaith Walk for Peace in Claremont where we dialoged with members of several different faiths. Each of our Fraternities have several people in initial formation. The next District meeting is planned for November 12th at St Thomas, Riverside parish where we will discuss Initial and Ongoing Formation as well as possible district retreats being planned for the last quarter of this year. Holy Spirit Fraternity is beginning a Facebook page as a means of outreach.

Announcements

National

- ❖ Frank Miller, OFS, is the incoming Secretary of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA). The appointment will take effect in January 2017.
- ❖ Br. Alexander Escalera, OFM, Cap. is the new President-in-turn of the CNSA.
- ❖ William Mussatto, OFS, has been appointed member of the NAFRA Computer Committee.
- ❖ Photographs from the National Chapter: If you wish to see photographs from Chapter. visit the Meetings and Resources page on the NAFRA website (follow the embedded link or click "Meeting Materials" on the NAFRA home page, nafra-sfo.org), you will currently find the link to Bob Stronach's first set of photos under the 2016 NAFRA meeting section.

Regional

- ❖ Lucy Ibara, OFS, is the new Formation Director for St. Francis Region.
- ❖ Kata Tan, OFS, is the incoming On-line Calendar Coordinator. The appointment will take effect in January 2017.

Recently Professed

St Anthony of Padua Fraternity: Maria Minh Do, OFS, Mary July Nguyen, OFS,
Blessed Luchsius and Bounadonna Fraternity: Regina Wha Soon Kim, OFS,
Paul Seung Hoon Ahn, OFS, Mateo Han Joo Lee, OFS, Michael Chang Hoon., OFS.



Regina Kim, Paul Ahn, Mateo Han and Michael Hoon on the day of Profession with Fr. Chris Thei, OFM, Cap. Presider and Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister

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Our Deceased:

Pam McCarthy, San Juan Capistrano Fraternity. 10/2016.

Fr. John Sullivan, OFM. Regional Spiritual Assistant of Francis of the Praries Regional Fraternity and Provincial Spiritual Assistant for Sacred Heart OFM Province. 11/7/2016.

Calendar:

12/03/16	Regional Executive Council Meeting, Claremont.
01/08/17	Our Lady of Guadalupe Pastoral Visit with Armando Lomeli, OFS.
01/13-15/17	Regional Chapter St. Francis Region, Best Western, Ontario.
02/04/17	Regional Executive Council Meeting, Claremont.
02/12/17	St. Clare (K) Westminster, Pastoral Visit with Sylvia Paoli, OFS.
02/24-26/17	Religious Education Congress, Anaheim.
03/3-5/17	Regional Executive Council Retreat, Fullerton.