

Joy of Francis

*Secular Franciscan Order — St. Francis Region #52 — Southern California
Spring Edition — 2021*

*FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER
JUDITH MUSSATTO, OFS*

Remember

On February 22, 2021, the bells tolled at Washington National Cathedral, 500 times. 500 lit candles lined the South Portico of the White House.

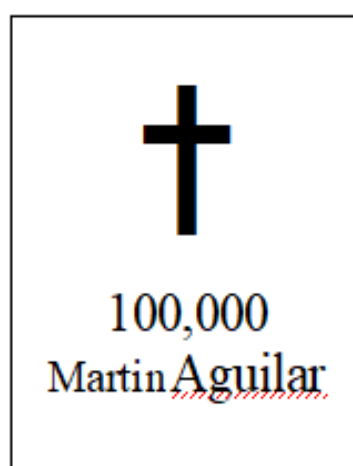
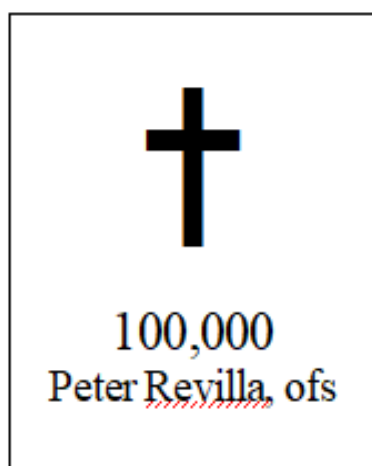
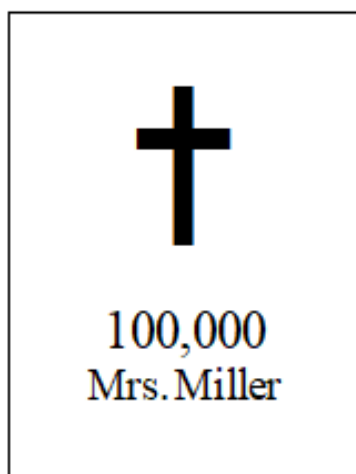
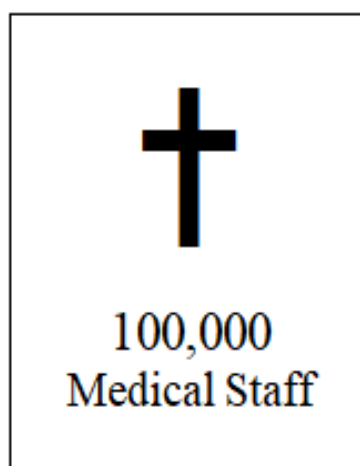
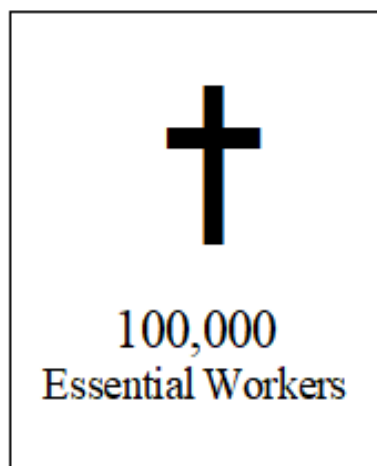


500 - one for every 1,000 deaths from the Covid19 virus.

In the foyer of Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, Italy, my alma mater, there was a large bulletin board. When a member of the Salesian Community or one of their relatives died, all announcements on the board were replaced by a cross on a single sheet of white paper. Under the cross would be the name, date of death, name of a relative, date, time, and place of the memorial Mass.

On August 17, 1986, while walking the streets of Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, the bulletin board flashed before my eyes. I could see the cross on the paper. I was unable to see the words below the cross. I remember asking myself. "Who has died?"

Fast forward to a morning in early September of 1986. I walked into the foyer at the university. On the board was a single sheet of white paper with a cross. Under the cross, *Thelma Cornelia Nelson*, my mother. Under her name was my name, followed by date, time and place of the memorial Mass. She died unexpectedly around the time I experienced that flash in Dubrovnik.



With these five crosses on a white background, I memorialize the 500,000 +, who died of Covid19. There are sisters and brothers in our Franciscan family whose mother, father, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, friend, co-worker, or acquaintance, is among the 500,000. Those of us who attended weekend retreats at Serra Retreat Center, would have interacted with Martin Aguilar, enjoyed his Friday night fish and chips, Saturday enchiladas and appreciated his welcoming spirit in the dining room, as he worked to accommodate our dietary needs. Martin died of Covid19 on January 16, 2021.

May the choirs of Angels greet them.

May God's love enfold them.

Grant us who remember, the gifts of:

Joy

Hope

Peace and

Compassion

as we

Cover our mouths and noses with masks when we are around others.

Stay at least 6 feet away from others.

Avoid crowds.

Wash our hands often.

and

Register to be vaccinated.

None of us can face this pandemic alone. "We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead ... to dream together ..." Pope Francis. *Fratelli Tutti* (8).

Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

I know a lot of you have many resources for use during Lent, but I would just briefly like to share one thought with you. It was put forth by Fr. Patrick Mullen, pastor of Padre Serra Parish in Camarillo, and former New Testament professor at the seminary. On Ash Wednesday, he suggested that people *not* give up something – like chocolate, or TV shows, or drinks or whatever – for Lent. He said we have lived through a “lent” for the last 11 months. Instead, he suggested that we do something more positive for Lent this year.

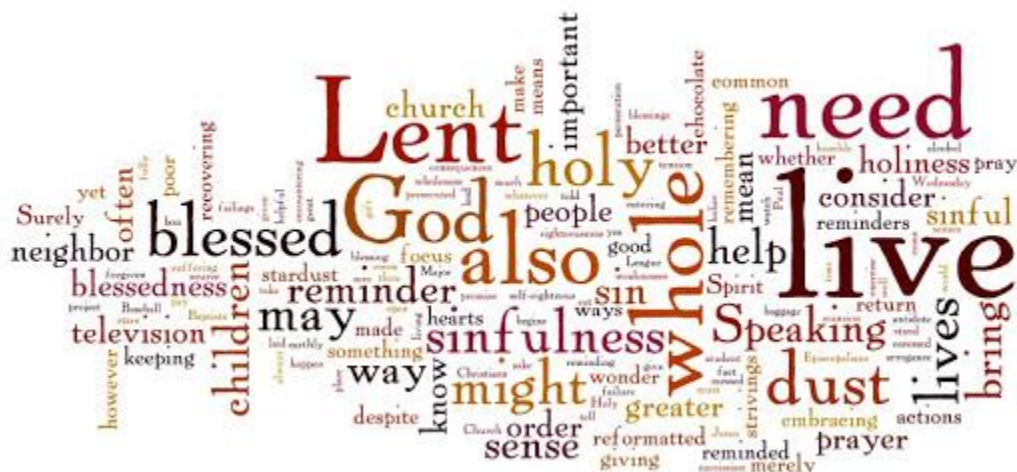
I think he made an excellent suggestion. There are so many positive things that we can do – even in this restricted pandemic period we’re all living in. If you are in the upper age ranges where the safest thing you’ve been able to do is simply stay home and away from groups of people, you can still do positive things like read good spiritual material that will improve your spiritual life, things like papal encyclicals and exhortations, especially those by Pope Francis, or good Franciscan-authored spiritual books. You can pray more, practice different types of prayer. Get into serious meditative or contemplative prayer. Pray for specific people, groups of people or even countries who need prayers. Support more charities if you are able. If you need help with anything, ask for it. That, too, can be a positive thing. We are all very good at giving and helping, but not very good at asking for ourselves.

Get on the telephone and call friends and family that you haven’t been in touch with for a while. It’s amazing how uplifting a call from an old friend or a relative can be when you’ve been isolated for so long. Write some letters or notes to friends and family.

These are all things that you can do that will help you and others without ever leaving your home. And remember – wherever we are, God is present there with us. Let’s trust in Him to bring us out of this difficult time, hopefully teaching us something in the meantime.

Peace to all!

Sylvia Paoli, OFS, Regional Spiritual Assistant



Called to Serve

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are attempting to proceed with some semblance of normality in the middle of a worldwide pandemic. In this case we are preparing for Regional Executive Council (REC) Elections.

The date set for the elections of the next Regional Executive Council for St. Francis Region is June 5, 2021. We do not have a complete slate for the elections; therefore, **the period for the acceptance of nominations has been extended to March 31, 2021**. Nominations are being accepted for all positions: Minister, Vice-Minister, Secretary, Treasurer and Councilors. In St. Francis Region the Formation Director is appointed.

To have a local fraternity you must have a fraternity council. Similarly, to have a Regional Fraternity you must have a Regional Executive Council. Here are the statistics from your annual reports.

Professed	588
Emeritus	74
Candidates	55
Inquirers	31
Orientation	19
Affiliates	4
Lapsed	5

As you can see, at least based on these numbers, this is not a dying region. Please prayerfully review the Nominations packet that was sent to the ministers in late 2020. If you are learning about these elections for the first time ask your minister to share the information in the packet with you, then make your nominations. You are choosing those who will animate and guide the region for the next three years. Lisa Hernandez, OFS, and Janet Serros, OFS, will continue

to serve on the Nominations Committee. We have added a third person to the committee.

Here is your New Nominations Committee:

Margaret (Peggy) Botte, OFS. 6235 Emerald Lake Ave. San Diego, CA 92119-3332.
Phone: 619-698-4365. (Will receive nominations by regular mail only).

Lisa Hernandez, OFS. 638 E. 105th St. Los Angeles, CA 90002.
Phone: Home 323-754-2378. Cell: 323-490-6814. E-mail: lisapetra.sfo@gmail.com

Janet Serros, OFS. 24661 Singer St. Moreno Valley, CA 92557-7811
Phone: 951-242-7307. Cell: 909-519-4448. E-mail: jserros@gmail.com

Please contact your Nominations Committee if you need to have the Nominations Packet resent to you or for any other information related to the nominations process.

Let us continue to pray for each other.

Your Sister in Christ, Judith.

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION

LUCY IBARRA

Blessings my Brothers and Sisters!

We have been given an awesome gift from Pope Francis. "Fratelli Tutti," I will be honest I have only read the Introduction and part of chapter 1. How rich and blessed it is.

I have joined a Lenten Reflection group with our brothers and sisters from our Region. I am not a book reader but decided if I join a group it will not just sit on the shelf.

Paragraph 8 from this Encyclical states:

"It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women. "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. **How important it is to dream together..."**

Wow how important is it to dream together? I often love to dream alone in my own little safe space with no one else but me and my God. This got me thinking how wonderful to be part of a family (fraternity) that is bigger than me and my own thoughts. Can we really dream alone?

Next month will be a year since I have been working from home and keeping my Mom safe due to Covid. Not seeing family, especially my grandchildren. Missing my office mates, those wonderful morning coffee chats and sharing about our lives. Talk about being alone. But something amazing has happened. I have found I needed to reach out more. I have made more phone calls to family members. I have joined zoom meetings with friends, family and coworkers and through virtual conferences I have helped those in need, made grocery pickups, kept doctor appointments, the list is endless.

Paragraph 8 continues to state:

"By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together." Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth, which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all."

Can you even begin to imagine what we can accomplish if we dream together, bringing who we are to our Fraternities'? This past year has brought on so much sadness with the death of so many, young and old. And especially our fellow brothers and sisters. Our Fraternity has lost two members this year. Where do we find hope? It is in our dreams that we share and work together bringing them into the light. We need to pray and fast together as a family giving each other strength and encouragement.

We should be praying that our Region will prosper and grow the way our Lord dreams of. But most important to love and respect each other. As my mother turns 83 this April, she has been a Secular Franciscan since 1963, she loves to be part of all these zoom functions. But it takes time to prep her and remind her over and over what we are doing, but this is a gift God has given me, I am helping her with her dream, let's all do the same. DREAM BIG MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

If you have not bought this book it can be found on Amazon but better, it is free online. "Fratelli Tutti on Fraternity and Social Friendship – Pope Francis"

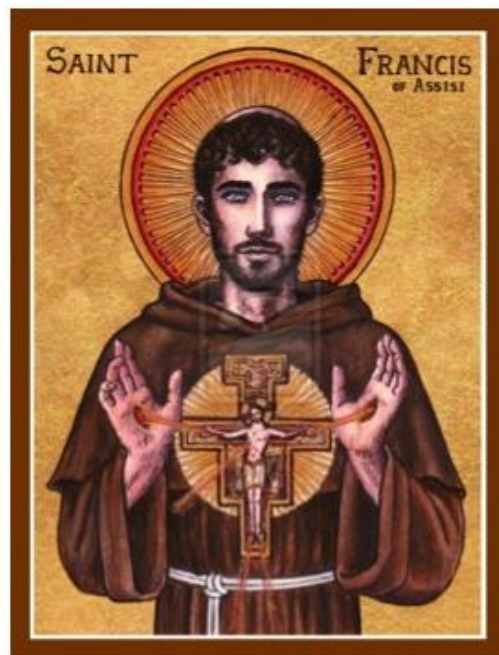
Events: Please pray for our upcoming Elections!

The Encounter

An article from the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Mercy

Francis' road to Easter began with a profound encounter with Jesus Crucified. Praying before the crucifix in the church of San Damiano outside Assisi during the first years of his conversion, Francis heard Christ address to him the heart-shaking words: *Francis, rebuild My house!* The future saint *felt a mysterious change in himself, but he could not describe it.* This was the beginning of his spiritual Easter.

St. Francis journeyed to Easter transformation by contemplating and imitating Jesus in the mysteries of His poverty and humility. Seraphic love even compelled the Poor Man to ask Christ to grant him to feel in his body the pains of the Passion and to feel in his heart the love which urged Christ to die for sinners.



St. Francis of Assisi, Man of the Gospel, Icon of the Crucified, Easter Saint,
pray for us!

Blessing, Lucy Ibarra, Formation Director

*Prayers from 2021 Regional Chapter to the
Holy Virgin of Guadalupe for the Protection from Coronavirus*

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas.
We fly to you today as your beloved children.
We ask you to intercede for us with your Son,
as you did at the wedding in Cana.

*Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all
our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels,
that we may be spared the worst of this illness.*

*For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.
Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful,
wipe away their tears and help them to trust.*

*In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and
to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.
We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother,
health of the sick and cause of our joy.*

*Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms,
help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

Oración a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe para la protección contra el coronavirus.

Virgen Santísima de Guadalupe, Reina de los Ángeles y Madre de las
Américas. Acudimos a ti hoy como tus amados hijos. Te pedimos
que intercedas por nosotros con tu Hijo, como lo hiciste en las bodas
de Caná.

*Ruega por nosotros, Madre amorosa, y obtén para nuestra nación, nuestro
mundo, y para todas nuestras familias y seres queridos, la protección de tus
santos ángeles, para que podamos salvarnos de lo peor de esta enfermedad.
Para aquellos que ya están afectados, te pedimos que les concedas la gracia
de la sanación y la liberación.*

*Escucha los gritos de aquellos que son vulnerables y temerosos, seca sus
lágrimas y ayúdalos a confiar.*

*En este tiempo de dificultad y prueba, enséñanos a todos en la Iglesia a
amarnos los unos a los otros y a ser pacientes y amables.*

*Ayúdanos a llevar la paz de Jesús a nuestra tierra y a nuestros corazones.
Acudimos a ti con confianza, sabiendo que realmente eres nuestra madre
compasiva, la salud de los enfermos y la causa de nuestra alegría.*

*Refúgianos bajo el manto de tu protección, manténnos en el abrazo de tus
brazos, ayúdanos a conocer siempre el amor de tu Hijo, Jesús. Amén*

VIETNAMESE

Lạy Đức Trinh Nữ Guadalupe,



Lạy Nữ Vương Thiên Thần và Mẹ của dân tộc Hoa Kỳ.
Chúng con bay đến đây để thăm viếng Mẹ hôm nay như
những người con dấu yêu của Mẹ.

Chúng con xin Mẹ cầu bầu cùng Con Mẹ cho chúng con,
như Mẹ đã làm tại tiệc cưới Cana.

Lạy Mẹ dấu yêu, xin Mẹ cầu cho chúng con,
và xin các thánh thiên thần bảo vệ cho đất nước chúng
con và thế giới,

cho tất cả mọi gia đình và người thân của chúng con,
để chúng con có thể không bị nhiễm cơn dịch tệ hại nhất
này.

Chúng con nài xin Mẹ ban ơn chữa lành và giải thoát
những người đã bị nhiễm bệnh dịch này rồi. Xin Mẹ lắng
nghe những tiếng khóc của những ai đang bị tổn thương
và sợ hãi,

Xin Mẹ lau sạch nước mắt của họ và giúp họ phó thác vào Chúa.

Vào thời buổi thử thách này, xin Mẹ dạy cho tất cả mọi người chúng con trong Giáo Hội biết yêu
thương nhau, biết nhẫn nại và đối xử tốt với nhau.

Xin Mẹ giúp chúng con đem bình an của Chúa Giêsu đến cho đất nước chúng con và đón nhận bình an
của Người vào trong lòng của chúng con.

Chúng con đến viếng Mẹ với lòng tin tưởng,
biết rằng Mẹ thực sự là người Mẹ có lòng thương xót,
làm cho những ai bệnh hoạn được khoẻ lại và là nguồn vui của chúng con.

Xin Mẹ hãy cho chúng con trú ẩn dưới tấm áo bảo vệ của Mẹ,

Gìn giữ chúng con trong vòng tay của Mẹ,

Xin giúp chúng con luôn nhận biết tình thương của Con Mẹ, Chúa Giêsu. Amen

KOREAN:

과달루페의 거룩하신 동정녀시여,
천사의 여왕이시며 아메리카의 어머니시여.
오늘 저희는 당신의 사랑하는 자녀로서 당신께로 나아갑니다.
카나의 혼인잔치에서 하셨던 것처럼
당신의 아들이신 주님께 저희를 위해 중재해 주시기를 간청합니다.

사랑하올 어머니, 우리나라와 세계를 위해,
우리 가족과 사랑하는 사람들을 위해,
당신의 거룩한 천사들의 보호 아래서
최악의 질병을 피할 수 있도록,
저희를 위해 기도해 주십시오.

이미 질병으로 고통받는 사람들을 위해
치유와 구원의 은총을 내려주시기를 기원합니다.
연약하고 두려운 사람들의 외침을 들으시고
그들의 눈물을 닦아주시며
그들이 믿음을 잃지 않도록 도와주십시오.

이 시련과 시험의 시간에
교회안에서 서로 사랑하고 인내하고 친절하도록
저희 모두에게 가르쳐 주십시오.
우리 나라와 우리 마음에 예수님의 평화가 임하시도록 도와주십시오.

당신이 진정으로 저희들의 자비로운 어머니시라는 것과
병든 사람의 건강과 기쁨의 원천시이라는 것을 확신하며
저희는 당신께로 나아갑니다.

당신의 날개 아래 저희를 보호해주시고,
당신의 팔로 저희를 안아주십시오.
언제나 당신의 아들,
예수님의 사랑을 알 수 있도록 저희를 도와주십시오. 아멘.
USCCB 회장 호세 고메즈 대주교

JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Regional J.P.I.C. Animator Patricia Grace, OFS

The Apostles' Creed and JPIC

Patricia E. Grace, OFS
JPIC Animator, St. Francis Region

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I was recently reflecting on The Apostles' Creed and in the reflection deepened my understanding of its call to discipleship. Walk with me through the creed as we discern God's revelation of His Holy will for our Franciscan lives.

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,"

God, indeed, is Creator and Sovereign, and creates us, His children, in His image and likeness. Therefore, we are called to create. We are led immediately back to Genesis and the Lord's acts of creation. "Let there be light and there was light." Where are we called to bring light to the world? We look around our planet today and there are pockets of darkness in so many places. We pray for God's grace and guidance on how we are to carry His Divine light to those places, how to carry His compassion and healing to the brokenness and darkness, how to reflect his creativeness, as our Rule tells us to seek creative initiatives for justice (Chapter Two, Article 15).

"...and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,"

When we pray this part of the Creed, we once again touch that eternal truth of the power of Encounter with Jesus. Just as the wise men went back by a different way after their encounter with the Holy Child, we, too, go a different way after we experience the encounter with Jesus and He reveals to us the mission of love for which He has sent us.

"...who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,"

These words remind us of the sanctity of all life, that life begins at conception, and is to be protected from that moment forward. God is there and we must be also.

"...suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;"

We are called to contemplate the role of suffering in our own lives. If we pray that our suffering and the suffering of others is united with the suffering of our Lord, and the Lord surrounds it with His love, we can experience the power of Divine Love in our own lives and in the lives of others. We are asked to carry that Divine Love to all who suffer.

“he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead;”

He rose again from the dead and is the Living Lord. Our Holy Father Pope Francis reminds us “May our struggles and concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.” (Laudato Si’, paragraph 244). We embrace new life in the resurrection and walk in hope and joy as we work for justice, peace, and care for creation. “he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;” from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.”

The Lord Jesus told us He has gone to prepare a place for us. As we reflect upon the moment when we meet our Lord face to face, let us prepare to give Him great thanks for the privilege of the work He allowed us to do on this earth, and gratitude for His ever-present guidance and grace.

“I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints,”

What a powerful reminder that we are all part of Christ’s body. All of us, All of His Holy Creation. Our wonderful Franciscan scholars have taught us of the Divine presence in every leaf, every blade of grass, every animal of the sea and air and land, all peoples, regardless of their statehood, race, religion, and regardless of the misguided choices they and we may have made, we are all part of the body of Christ and are called to honor all as Christ.

“the forgiveness of sins,”

The Lord reveals himself in scripture. Throughout scripture, there are multiple calls to forgiveness, calls to act with mercy and justice, regardless of the underlying dynamics and opinions of the body politic. We are called to forgive and move forward in faith.

“the resurrection of the body and life every lasting.”

Life wants to live and we, as disciples of the Life Giver, are called to the resurrection and eternal life. Our beloved Saint Francis gives us guidance in our Rule:

“As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans, with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.” (Emphasis added) (Chapter 2, Article 13, The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order).

Therefore, sisters and brothers, as we recite this creed, as we pray, as we reflect upon the Rule we professed to follow, let the words of the creed, the prayers on our lips, and the reflections of our hearts, animate and guide us as we care for creation, create conditions of life for all peoples, seek creative solutions so all people are treated justly, and work for peace in our homes, our communities, and our world.

Peace and All Good, Patricia

J.P.I.C. Announcements

CALL FOR FORMATORS

*Pope Francis insists "The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty."
(Laudato Si')*

In *Laudato Si'* our Holy Father Pope Francis calls us to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. At our Regional JPIC ZOOM session in December we focused on the cry of the earth. Deep gratitude to Karron Esmonde, OFS, for her beautiful and thoughtful presentation. In the future we will focus on Care for Creation Part Two: The Cry of the Poor. I would so appreciate working with other Franciscans around the region to develop a workshop using your experiences working with the economically poor in our world. Please reach out to me and let us join voices to speak out in invitation to all to hear the cry of the poor. My email is

patriciaelizabethgrace7@gmail.com.

THE CROSS AND JPIC FRANCISCANS IN BOLIVIA: A CASE STUDY MEET BY ZOOM

**MARCH 27, 2021
1:00 TO 3:00 Pacific Time**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The cross is the most universal and profound symbol of our faith. It speaks to us and the world in so many ways. Let us reflect together on how our Lord united heaven and earth and all of the world on the cross. He drew all to His Sacred heart in love. After reflection and prayer, we will learn about Franciscans around the world, focusing on Franciscan groups in Bolivia. Nora Pfeiffer from Franciscan Action Network, who was a missionary in Bolivia and then a representative there from Franciscans International will present on her experiences. Brother Ignatius Harding, OFM, who served our Lord in Bolivia for 45 years, will present on his experiences. We can walk in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Bolivia and deepen our understanding of our Franciscan work for justice, peace, and integrity of creation throughout the world.

Please circulate this invitation and the attached flyer to all in your region. Please R.S.V.P. to patriciaelizabethgrace7@gmail.com.

THE CROSS AND JPIC
FRANCISCANS IN BOLIVIA:
A CASE STUDY

MARCH 27, 2021
1:00 TO 3:00 PACIFIC TIME
RSVP: patriciaelizabethgrace7@gmail.com



PRESENTERS:
PATRICIA GRACE, OFS
JPIC ANIMATOR, ST. FRANCIS REGION
NORA PFEIFFER, FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK
9 YEARS IN BOLIVIA WITH FRANCISCAN MISSION SERVICE AND
FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL
AND
IGNATIUS HARDING, OFM (BROTHER IGGY)
45 YEARS IN BOLIVIA AS A FRANCISCAN

On the Journey: Loving God and Doing His Will

by Karron Esmonde, OFS

Because we love God, we seek to do His will.

As a Franciscan in Lent, I ask, "What does God want me to do now?" and "What's God's will for me?" To my delight and surprise, I came across this passage last week:

*To understand what Jesus meant by God's will, we might best translate it as "the common good." The common good is whatever is best for the whole human family or the whole community of living beings or the whole universe in its grand unfolding. We are not isolated individuals. We are parts of a greater whole ... A part exists for the good of the whole because the identity of the part is precisely to be a part of this whole." **

So, by reaching beyond my selfishness and acting for "the common good," I do God's will. I know this sounds extremely simple, but simple is often a good place to start. And I notice "God's will" allows me time for prayer and meditation.



Another friend of Mother Earth

By contrast, lives ruled by "I, me, mine--first, last and always" is often accompanied by suspicion, loneliness and misery.

As a Secular Franciscan, I'm not alone on my journey. My brothers and sisters reach out to *provide* and *receive* companionship, encouragement, inspiration, knowledge and support. Walking the Earth, Jesus and his disciple Francis experienced all creation as brothers and sisters, loved them accordingly, and treated them with tenderness and compassion.

Time to React - or Reflect

Now in this season of Covid, house-bound and unable to travel, there are fewer distractions. With scant in-person visits and no indoor assemblies, we are all more isolated and prone to concerns about health and safety.

I think there are two ways to hold these restrictions on our usual activities. One is to bemoan the inconvenience, the trips not taken, and opportunities lost. This one is "I-ME-MINE" to the max.

Alternatively, these restrictions could make this Lent a great time for retreat and reflection. A time to be mindful of God's support and loving solicitude. And time to reflect on the many ways Nature provides and sustains for God's children as a beautiful and loving Mother, an expression of God's heart, as Artist and Creator.

Here in my study, there's a wooden desk. The desk was a tree, cut for lumber. Same for my house, built of timber. The clothes I wear are cotton, grown in fields that were once forested. Driving to the store, I'm surrounded by thousands of pounds of steel, iron and copper extracted from deep in the earth – and powered by the gasoline burned every time I turn my key in the "ignition."

Moving through the grocery store, I see thousands of items: a cornucopia of vegetables, fruit, dairy and meat. There are sauces, snacks, confections, condiments, bread and cereal of all kinds. This food is the bounty of our good Mother – available everywhere, in stores all over the country. You get the idea.

It's so easy to take Earth's gifts for granted. Through my life, she graciously and wordlessly provided food, shelter, comfort and convenience. In an environment of overwhelming beauty, she continues to be a wonderful hostess for this guest – while I've mostly ignored her.

Now I see that much of what's been extracted from our Mother - used, cast off and piled up as junk - is making her ill. This causes great suffering and death among the birds, trees and creatures – people included - who are a vital part of Nature's family.

A Lenten Petition

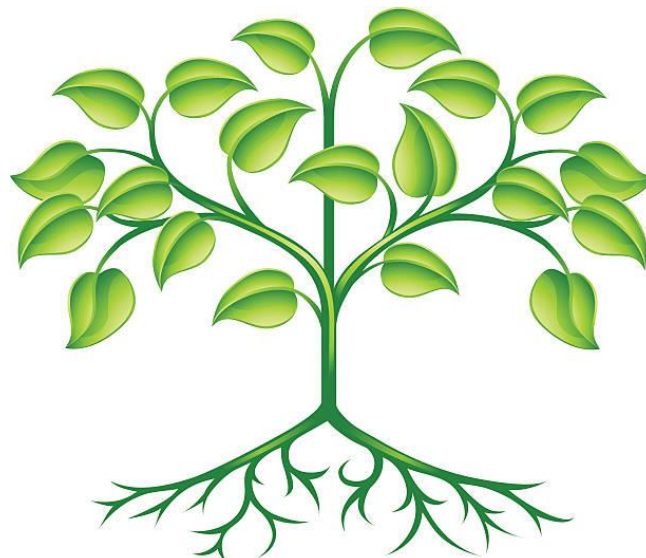
For this Lent, I have a suggestion. Thankful for Earth's kindness, let's pray for Earth's healing. And to end the rudeness of Earth's guests. In thanksgiving, we could act "for the common good" and for the good of Mother Earth:

- Substitute vegetable protein for animal protein – eating more live food and less meat helps relieve global warming. Growing less beef makes more grain available for people.
- Drive less by packing several errands into a single trip. Less driving saves gas and time lightens traffic reduces emissions that cause global warming.
- Lower the thermostat a few degrees this winter and save energy.

These are small changes, easy to make. Together, these little things can be a great help to our Mother Earth and have a real impact on "the common good."

**Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom by Albert Nolan, O.P.*

Karron Esmonde, OFS
JPIC Animator, San Luis Rey Fraternity
Member, JPIC Regional Team



Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

by Linda Whitman, DC, OFS

Is Lent a season of penance and sacrifice, or is it a season of joy? It is both. Or, rather, it is a season of penance and sacrifice in a spirit of joy because we know we are being prepared for our own resurrection, since we are Easter People. We know Christ is Risen, and that is the best news.

Often we hear that Lent is about taking on new ways of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These are things we should do all year, not just in these weeks before Easter! But at least in Lent we get a chance to reassess and decide what needs working on.

Myself, I have tried to be more faithful to at least one or two (morning and/or evening) sessions of the Liturgy of the Hours. I don't always get a chance to do both, but I try. I have found a YouTube video/audio of monks singing the Office that I enjoy reading along with. I have committed to a daily Rosary. My mother gave me book on the Holy Souls, too, which I find both uplifting and educational. Spontaneous prayer, too.

Fasting is a challenge, with wonky blood sugar like I have. So, frequently I just restrict the amount of food at each meal, rather than eliminate food altogether, especially on a workday. I have decided that a fast from social media is a good one. Fasting from a nightly glass of wine, as well. Offer any suffering to my new friends, the Holy Souls...

Almsgiving is also a challenge in this time of COVID, with income being reduced. Nonetheless, I have discounted service in my office on occasion. I do have some charities, but instead of finding more of them to which to contribute, I have reduced the number, and increased the amount. Another way to look at almsgiving is how much time, energy, and devotion can I give - especially when I'd selfishly really rather not.

Also, it's well to ask, "in crisis, what do you do? To whom do you rely?" Over 365 times in Scripture are we told "do not be afraid." More than once for every day, they say. I think a better way to think of that phrase is to think "Be fearless." or "Be courageous." Concentrate less on the word "afraid." People watch us - unbelievers that we know or associate with. They watch us for one of two main reasons: they are curious, or they want to see what happens when we are in crisis. Do we fall?

Prayer is the most powerful weapon we have. Yes, God may know what we need before we ask Him, but He still wants us to talk to him. Even, and especially, not when we are asking for things.

So Lent is also a time to build your spiritual muscle. In order to build physical muscle, you have to train regularly. So with spiritual muscle. Train in prayer, fasting, almsgiving, reading the Word. Get passionate about God. Start your prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to give you clarity, direction, humility, courage - whatever qualities you need to go "all in." People will notice, and you will preach the Gospel - even without words.

Riverside/San Bernardino

William Mussatto, OFS, District Liaison

The three fraternities in the district continue to meet virtual for monthly fraternity and council meetings.

The Holy Spirit Fraternity had a virtual Epiphany Party, but it was not the same. We are still chasing down who didn't get their gifts, saint names and funny bible quotes. <sigh>. Some members also meet for an informal gathering once a month. Both initial and post profession formation classes are continuing virtually. Recordings of the monthly Fraternity meetings are available for members who, because of work commitments, are unable to attend the monthly meetings.



Padre Pio Fraternity has also added a monthly rosary, virtually of course, as an experiment. Socially distant, in place, initial formation is being used.

Immaculata Fraternity is meeting virtually as well as Formation is being held virtually twice a week, one with an inquirer and one with a candidate. We will be resuming the feeding of the homeless in the park in a couple of months. The target is April 7.



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 St. Francis Region.



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



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 your 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."