

Bearing good fruit with Franciscan JOY!

Dando buenos frutos con ALEGRIA Franciscana

Joy of Francis

프란치스칸 기쁨의 좋은 열매 맺기

Nhảy sinh hoa trái tốt lành với niềm vui Phan Sinh!

*Secular Franciscan Order — St. Francis Region #52 — Southern California
Spring Edition — 2024*

St. Francis Regional News!

Minister's Message

This year Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fell on the same day. Some may think that the two don't go together, but as one ponders the initial meaning and intent of Valentine's Day it is possible to understand that a day that celebrates love shared with a day of fasting and abstinence can better direct us through Lent. Love can become our road map through Lent.

As I thought about this juxtaposition of the two celebrations what came to mind was the life of a now deceased member of my fraternity. Gabe was a man of great faith who willingly shared it with those around him. He traveled widely during his career, including to countries where Christianity was not well accepted. He was comfortable sharing his Catholic beliefs with Muslims, Buddhists, or anyone else, including – and maybe especially – with atheists.

One of the things that has impacted me the most about Gabe was the way he lived his marriage. When his wife, Gaye, had to be moved into a care facility he visited her every day – sometimes twice a day. I accompanied him on a few occasions and saw that Gaye didn't really recognize him anymore. Gabe shared with me that several of the staff members at the facility asked him why he visited so often when she wasn't aware most of the time. His reply has stayed with me: "She is my wife, and I have chosen to love her as long as I live." "Chosen to love" – what a concept!

This isn't the romantic, emotional, passionate type of love that is often exhibited with hearts and flowers. It is the "agape" love – defined as the selfless, unconditional love demonstrated in scripture and by the life of St. Valentine. It is defined as the fatherly love that God has for us, and our reciprocal love for God. It is love with sacrifice, as Gabe exhibited by visiting his wife every day until she died. It is love with sacrifice, as is exhibited by our Lord Jesus on the cross – the ultimate love sacrifice.

We are called to love as God loves. To do so is a choice. Love is a sacrificial choice. So starting Lent on Valentine's Day is appropriate after all. Let love be your road map this Lenten season. Choose to love!

Peace, joy & LOVE,
Caroline

Minister's Message Translations

Mensaje del Ministro

Este año El Miércoles de Ceniza y el Día de San Valentín acontecieron en el mismo día. Algunos pensarán que estas dos celebraciones no van de acuerdo. Pero al reflexionar sobre el significado y la intención inicial de San Valentín, posiblemente podamos comprender que un día en que se celebra el amor compartido con un día de ayuno y abstinencia puede dirigirnos mejor en nuestro caminar a la Cuaresma. El Amor se puede convertir en nuestra guía a través de la Cuaresma.

Mientras reflexionaba sobre la yuxtaposición de las dos celebraciones, vino a mi memoria la vida de un miembro ya fallecido de mi fraternidad. Gabe era un hombre de gran fe y quien la compartía de buen grado con quienes le rodeaban. Durante su carrera profesional viajó mucho, incluyendo países donde el cristianismo no era bien aceptado. Disfrutaba compartiendo sus creencias católicas con musulmanes, budistas o cualquier otro, incluyendo, y quizá especialmente, con los ateos.

Una de las cosas que más me impactaron de Gabe fue la manera en que vivió su matrimonio. Cuando su esposa, Gaye, tuvo que ser trasladada a un centro asistencial, él la visitaba todos los días – a veces dos veces al día. Lo acompañé en algunas ocasiones y me dí cuenta que Gaye realmente ya no lo reconocía. Gabe me compartió que varios miembros del personal del centro le preguntaban por qué la visitaba tan a menudo si ella no se daba cuenta la mayor parte del tiempo. Su respuesta me quedó grabada. Dijo: “Es mi esposa, y he elegido amarla mientras yo viva” “Elegir amar” – ¡qué concepto!

Este no es el amor romántico, emocional y apasionado que a menudo se expresa con corazones y flores. Es el amor “ágape,” definido como el amor desinteresado e incondicional que demuestran las Escrituras y la vida de San Valentín. Se define como el amor paternal que Dios tiene para nosotros, y nuestro amor recíproco hacia Dios. Es amor con sacrificio, como lo demostró Gabe al visitar a su esposa todos los días hasta que murió. Es amor con sacrificio, como el que demostró nuestro Señor Jesús en la cruz, el sacrificio de amor por excelencia.

Estamos llamados a amar como Dios ama. Hacerlo es una elección. Amar es una elección de sacrificio. Así que, después de todo, empezar la Cuaresma en el día de San Valentín es apropiado. Deja que el amor sea tu guía en este tiempo de Cuaresma. ¡Elige amar!

Paz, gozo y AMOR,
Caroline

회장 메세지

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두 기념일을 묶어 생각하면서 세상을 떠난 형제회 회원 한 명의 삶이 떠올랐습니다. 게이브는 주위의 모든이와 기꺼이 나누는 신심 깊은 형제였습니다. 직장일로 출장을 많이 다니면서 그리스도교를 받아들이지 않은 여러 나라를 방문했다고 합니다. 무슬림, 불교, 무신자 등 다른 신앙을 가진 이들과 자신의 신앙을 편안하게 나누었다고 합니다.

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평화, 기쁨, **사랑**

케롤라인

Thư Ngỏ của Trương Phục Vụ

Thứ Tư Lễ Tro năm nay và Lễ Tình Nhân trùng vào một ngày. Có người nghĩ rằng hai ngày này không thể đi đôi với nhau. Nhưng khi suy ngẫm về ý nghĩa và nguồn gốc của ngày Lễ Tình Nhân, ta có thể hiểu rằng ngày tôn vinh tình yêu trùng với ngày ăn chay và kiêng thịt có thể dẫn đưa chúng ta qua Mùa Chay tốt hơn. Tình yêu có thể trở nên bản đồ của chúng ta qua Mùa Chay Thánh.

Khi nghĩ đến sự đối nghịch giữa hai lễ kỷ niệm này, tôi liên tưởng đến cuộc đời của một thành viên trong huynh đệ đoàn của tôi đã quá cố. Anh Gabe là người có một đức tin vững mạnh và sẵn sàng chia sẻ đức tin ấy với những người xung quanh. Vì công việc của mình, anh đã từng đi thăm rất nhiều nơi, kể cả đến những quốc gia mà Kitô Giáo không được công nhận. Anh ta rất thoải mái khi chia sẻ đức tin Công Giáo của mình với những người theo Hồi Giáo, Phật Giáo hoặc bất kỳ người nào khác, đặc biệt hơn cả là với những người vô thần.

Một trong những điều đánh động tôi nhiều nhất về anh Gabe là đời sống hôn nhân của anh ta. Khi chị Gaye vợ anh phải chuyển đến viện điều dưỡng, anh đến thăm cô ta mỗi ngày - có khi hai lần một ngày. Một vài lần tôi cùng đi thăm với anh và thấy chị Gaye không còn nhận ra anh ấy nữa. Anh Gabe chia sẻ với tôi rằng một số nhân viên tại đây hỏi anh tại sao anh lại đến thăm thường xuyên như vậy trong khi cô ấy hầu như không hề hay biết gì. Tôi vẫn nhớ hoài câu trả lời của anh. Anh nói: “cô ấy là vợ tôi và tôi đã chọn yêu thương cô ấy suốt đời tôi”. “được chọn để yêu” – thật là một khái niệm!

Đây không phải là kiểu tình yêu lãng mạn, nhạy cảm, nồng nàn thường được biểu lộ qua hình ảnh trái tim hoặc bông hoa. Nhưng đó là tình yêu “agape” - được định nghĩa là tình yêu vị tha, vô điều kiện được thể hiện trong Kinh Thánh và qua cuộc đời của Thánh Valentinô. Tình yêu ấy được định nghĩa là tình phụ tử mà Thiên Chúa dành cho chúng ta và tình yêu hổ tương của chúng ta đối với Thiên Chúa. Đó là tình yêu có sự hy sinh, như anh Gabe đã biểu lộ bằng việc đến thăm vợ anh hàng ngày cho đến khi cô ấy qua đời. Đó là tình yêu có sự hy sinh, như Chúa Giêsu đã thể hiện trên thập giá – sự hy sinh thể hiện tình yêu cao cả nhất.

Chúng ta được mời gọi yêu thương như Thiên Chúa yêu thương. Đó là một sự lựa chọn. Yêu là lựa chọn hy sinh. Vì thế, Mùa Chay bắt đầu vào ngày Lễ Tình Nhân quả thật là thích hợp. Hãy để thương yêu là bản đồ dẫn đường cho bạn trong Mùa Chay Thánh này. Hãy chọn yêu!

Bình An, Vui Tươi & THƯƠNG YÊU,

Caroline

Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

A Lenten Reflection

I'm on retreat this week with the novices at the St. Francis Retreat Center in San Juan Bautista. As I walked the grounds yesterday passing the Stations of the Cross, I began to notice some of the similarities of the Way of the Cross of Jesus to that of the life of St. Francis.

- 1) Jesus retreated to the Garden at Gethsemane. His prayer was:
 - "Father, Let this cup pass from me."Francis hid from his father in a cave by San Damiano. His prayer was:
 - "Lord, don't let them do me harm."
- 2) Jesus was arrested.
Francis was held prisoner in his father's basement.
- 3) Jesus goes on trial before the Sanhedrin.
Francis goes on trial before the Bishop of Assisi.
- 4) Jesus is ridiculed by the soldiers.
Francis is ridiculed by the people of Assisi.
- 5) Jesus is condemned to death through the will of the Father.
Francis takes his Rule from the Word of God.
- 6) Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
Francis meets the leper.
- 7) Jesus is helped by Simon.
Francis was given brothers by the Lord.
- 8) Jesus was stripped of his garments and laid naked on the naked wood.
Francis was stripped naked and laid naked on the naked ground.
- 9) Jesus is nailed to the Cross as a sign of God's love.
Francis receives the Stigmata as a sign of God's love.
- 10) Jesus' last words were:
 - a) "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)
 - b) "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)
 - c) "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." (John 19:26-27)
 - d) "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34)
 - e) "I thirst." (John 19:28)
 - f) "It is finished." (Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34)
 - g) "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46)Francis' last words were:
 - a) "I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours!" (2Cel:214-b)
 - b) "If I am to die soon, call Brother Angelo and Brother Leo that they may sing to me about Sister Death." (AC:7-a)

- c) "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in your most holy will, for the *second death* shall do them no harm." (AC 7-c)
- d) He himself, as best he could, broke into that psalm of David: "*With a loud voice I cried to the Lord; with a loud voice I beseeched the Lord.*" (1Cel:109)
- e) Then he ordered the book of the Gospels to be brought in. He asked that the Gospel according to John be read to him, starting with the passage that begins: *Six days before the Passover*, Jesus, knowing that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. (1 Cel:110)
- f) "... You know how faithful and devoted Lady Jacoba dei Settisoli was and is ... tell her to send you some cloth for a tunic of religious cloth the color of ashes Have her also send me some of that confection which she often made for me when I was in the city." (AC:8 – a)
- g) ... blessed Francis a long time ago had ordered that in that place no women should enter that cloister out of respect and devotion for that place. Blessed Francis answered him: "This command need not be observed in the case of this lady whose faith and devotion made her come here from so far away." (AC:8 – c)
- h) "Go, tell Brother Bernard to come to me immediately." ... Brother Bernard said: "Father! I beg you, bless me and show me your love. ... Feeling the head of Brother Giles, like a person going blind, he immediately recognized him by the Holy Spirit, and said, "This is not the head of my Brother, Bernard." (AC:12 – b-c)

Francis obviously had a lot more to say than Jesus.

- 1) Jesus breathed His last.
Francis breathed His last.
- 2) Jesus was held by His Mother.
Francis was held by Clare.
- 3) Jesus was laid in a tomb.
Francis was laid in a tomb.
- 4) Jesus descended and Rose from the dead.
- 5) Jesus was seen by the Apostles ascending into heaven Body & Soul.
- 6) Francis' soul was seen by Brother Augustine; "Wait for me, father, wait! Look, I'm coming with you!" The amazed brothers asked him to whom he was speaking, and he responded boldly: "Don't you see our father Francis going to heaven?" And immediately his holy soul, released from the flesh, followed his most holy father. (2 Cel:218)
- 7) Jesus appears to the Apostles.
Francis appears to his brothers:

“At the very same hour that evening the glorious father appeared to another brother of praiseworthy life, who was at that moment absorbed in prayer. He appeared to him clothed in a purple dalmatic and followed by an innumerable crowd of people. Several separated themselves from the crowd and said to that brother: “*Is this not Christ, brother?*” And he replied: “*It is he.*” Others asked him again, saying: “*Isn’t this Saint Francis?*” And the brother likewise replied that it was he. For it really seemed to that brother, and to the whole crowd, as if Christ and Saint Francis were one person. And this will not seem at all like a rash statement to those who rightly understand it, for whoever *clings to God*, becomes *one spirit* with Him, and that *God will be all in all.*” (2 Cel: 219)

These were just my meditations, some of which you may agree with or some not. Try this yourselves as a Lenten exercise. Use the life of St. Francis or use your own life. When have you been afraid? When have you been taken prisoner? When have you been put on trial? When have you been ridiculed? When have you been scourged? When have you been condemned? When has your cross been so overwhelming that you fell? Who wiped your face? How many times have you fallen? Who helped you get back up again? How were you stripped of your garments (self-worth, dignity, hope, identity)? What have you died to? How did God’s grace restore you? How have you been reborn in Christ? How does God continue to show you His love in your life?

Brother Kip

Fraternity News

St Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity

On Jan. 28, 2024, 13 members of St Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Hermosa Beach to obtain the special Greccio Indulgence granted by Pope Francis. This beautiful Franciscan Church is staffed by the OFM, Conventuals. Fr Marek Stybor, OFM Conv. prepared for our visit by reserving seats for the “Secular Franciscans” in the front of the Church. He welcomed us and gave us a personal tour of the church. Fr. Marek took special joy in showing us the shrine to our fraternity patron, St Maximilian Kolbe. The shrine contains first class relics of St. Maximilian Kolbe: strands of hair taken from his beard before he was sent to Auschwitz.

After attending Mass celebrated by Fr. Marek, members all went to Scotty’s on the Strand for lunch. Everyone went home with beautiful memories of our pilgrimage and being nourished both spiritually and physically.



St Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity members with statue of our Patron Saint at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Hermosa Beach.



Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles Fraternity

Yes, this is what I want!" – "Si, esto es lo que quiero!"

November 19th proved to be a most joyful day because after five years of Initial Formation (interrupted by the Covid lockdown), we celebrated the Profession of our brothers and sister from *Nuestra Señora de los Angeles* Fraternity in the church where they were founded, Our Lady of the Angels. Father Salvador Mejia, OFM, who resides at Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, celebrated the regular Sunday evening Mass in Spanish, so the church was filled with family, friends, and parishioners. A full choir led the congregation in singing hymns and the Mass Parts. Because Immaculate Conception Fraternity is accompanying *Nuestra Señora de los Angeles* Fraternity as they rebuild their fraternity, Peggy served as Minister, with Mary Leeds reading the Profession Rite in Spanish. Caroline Yandell served as the Regional Witness. In addition to Fr. Mejia, several friars from Oceanside attended the Mass and reception. After Mass, the celebration continued in the hall, which all the members of *Nuestra Señora de los Angeles* Fraternity, their families, friends, and members of Immaculate Conception Fraternity had decorated, with *NSLA* providing a delicious feast.



Father Mejia, OFM



Minister Peggy Botte, Jesus Olivo and his sponsor, Elena Morales



L to R: Sponsor Maria Pérez for Francisca Contreras, Sponsor Maria Ortega for Martin Contreras, Sponsor Elena Morales for Jesus Olivo, Minister Peggy Botte



Receiving the Light of Christ

Immaculata Fraternity

On January 7, Immaculata Fraternity of Corona held an Epiphany celebration. Carol Bryant, OFS, took pictures of the event.



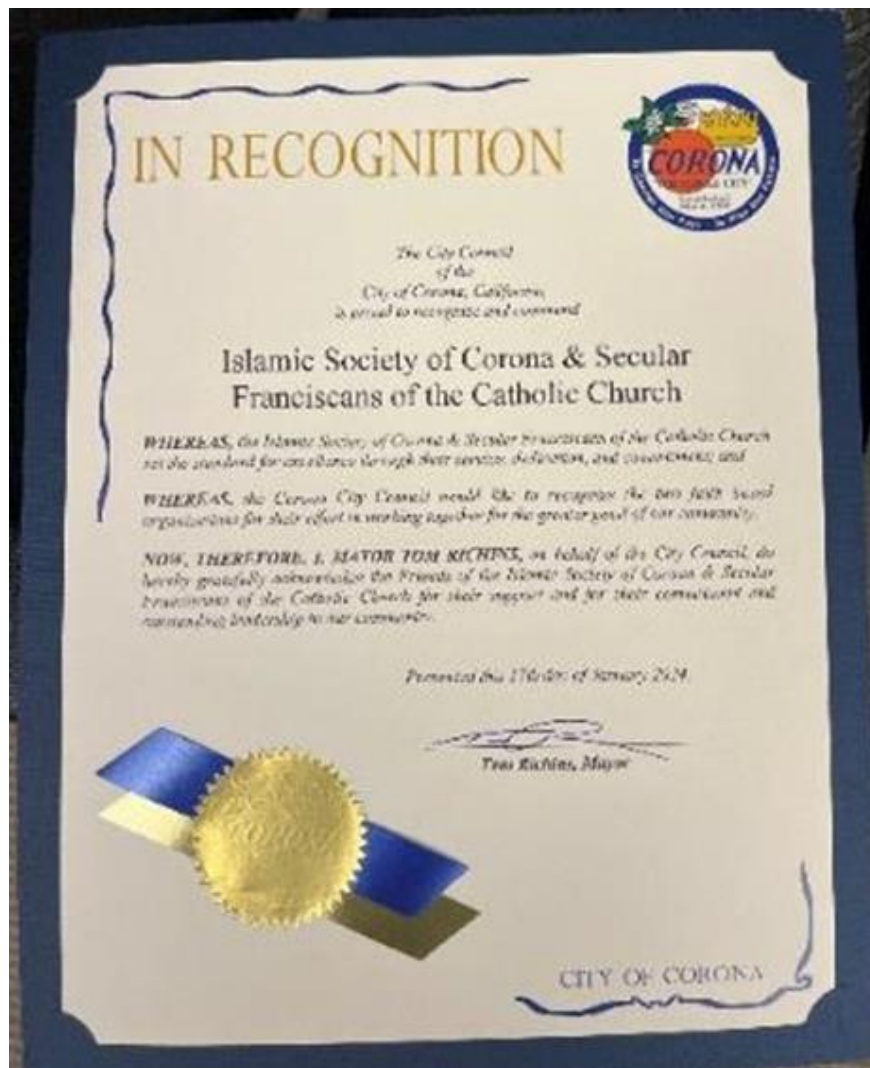
*L-R: Aarne and Mel Lozano, Lisa Boebinger, Mickie Rogers, Lorraine Cardin and Sekoiya Spencer.
Those who had already left: Bruce McAdams and David Burrola*



L-R: Carol Bryant, Aarne Lozano, Lisa Boebinger, Mickie Rogers, Sekoiya Spencer and Lorraine Cardin

On January 17th, 2024, the City of Corona officially recognized the Feeding the Homeless in the Park program, a collaborative effort of the Islamic Society of the Corona Mosque and the Secular Franciscans of **Immaculata fraternity**. The program is an outgrowth of continuing interfaith dialogue between the two groups that goes back over a decade. A recognition by both groups of their shared obligation to assist the poor and neglected – the lepers of our society – as well as a mutual commitment to peacemaking at the local level led to regular efforts to minister to the homeless who live in tents in and around Corona City Park.

In attendance from Immaculata fraternity: Lisa Boebinger, Bruce McAdams, Arsenio Benedicto, Sekoia Spencer, David Burrola. In the pink scarf is Islamic liaison, Henna, and her family.



Photos kindly provided by Arsenio and Christine Benedicto, OFS.

**Immaculata fraternity' Lenten Retreat on February 3rd, 2024
with Fr. Marek Stybor, OFM Conv.**



Pictured above) From Immaculata Fraternity, L-R: Georgia Zepek, Arsenio Benedicto, Velma Chromity, Lorraine Cardin, Marilyn Gunnerson, Bruce McAdams, David Burrola, Carol Bryant, Brenda Rogers and Lisa Boebinger. (on the ground: Fr. Marek Stybor OFM Conv.) Also pictured: members of the Filipino Prayer Group from St. Matthews Church in Corona.

St. Francis of Assisi Korean Fraternity of Los Angeles

Early this February, St. Francis of Assisi Korean Fraternity of Los Angeles welcomed three new candidates into the Franciscan family. Pictured here with Fr. Chris Thiel are newly admitted candidates Rosa Gih, Teresa So, and Clara Lee.



On February 18, **St. Francis of Assisi Korean Fraternity of Anaheim** installed a new Spiritual Assistant. Fr. Macario Koh was welcomed with love in a ceremony at St. Thomas Korean Catholic Center presided over by Fr. Chris Thiel. The fraternity also took time to express their deep gratitude to their outgoing Spiritual Assistant, John Bosco Chung.



San Luis Rey Fraternity

Sister Madeline *by Corinne Helena*

How does one summarize Sister Madeline Fitzgerald, OSC, capturing the essence of her Franciscan love and joy amid factual data? I have been mulling this over for a few weeks and now I'm down to the wire!

I have known Sr Madeline personally since the early 1990s. Sister was the RCIA director and I was the counselor on staff at St Francis Church in Vista, CA. Our offices were across the hall from each other. I used to say that Sister was the only woman I knew who could run in high heels! At eighty-two, she's not in high heels anymore, but she's still running!

It was some time in the mid-90s when the Minister of the San Luis Rey Fraternity, Catherine Wagner, invited Sr Madeline to be the Spiritual Assistant for our fraternity. What an amazing thirty years it's been! As a Poor Clare, Sister is imbued with the Franciscan spirit: she has guided, encouraged, counseled, loved, and laughed with the San Luis Rey Fraternity over the years. What a gift she has been!

Sr. Madeline, the second oldest of ten children, entered the convent at eighteen and shortly after making her final vows was shipped off to America under obedience. She taught in Florida in the old heavy-duty black habit meant for the cool temperate climate of Ireland. Being a bit of a SoCal weather wuss, I'm horrified at the thought of the heat and humidity of Florida without air conditioning in those days! What perfect joy!

Sister came to California in 1977 and has been here ever since. She has provided support and guidance, Franciscan love and joy, and Vatican II wisdom to many councils over the years. Sister stays current with the teachings of the Church, the Synod and Social Justice issues. What a gracious, inspirational gift she has been to our Fraternity!



Holy Spirit Fraternity

We invited 6th graders at Our Lady of the Assumption School to think about the impact of the examples of St. Francis and St. Clare on their lives through an essay contest. Our Vice Minister Randy Rohrer, OFS presented the two scholarships at the school Mass.



We organized a food drive for the unhoused and a parish's food pantry. The trailer was filled to overflowing with food for the unhoused.

In December we put together non-perishable food boxes and together with gift cards which were hand delivered to four needy families.

In January, the Fraternity held their annual Epiphany Party. It began with a carol, followed by an explanation of how the Christmas Carol *"12 Days of Christmas"* was used in Henry VIII's time to teach children about their faith. We used a hybrid meeting to reach out to members who were unable to attend in person including the gift exchange. We concluded with another carol.



Our Booth at the LA Religious Education Congress



Judith with our Friday helpers, Frank and Margie.



Br. Adolfo Mercado, OFM with our Saturday helpers, Remi, Mari, and Juana.



Caroline, Bill and Judith with our Sunday helpers, Cyndie and Ryan.

CHAPTER 2024

January 20 – 21

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center



Attendees



Laura Chun addressing the assembled.



Fr. John DeLaRiva, OFM Cap. and Fr. Marek Stybor, OFM Conv., National Spiritual Assistants on either side of Donna Hollis, OFS, National Councilor.



Br. Kip Ledger, OFM Cap.



Fr. Marek, Tuan Cao, Marie Huynh & Fr. Koh.



Bill Mussatto sharing with the group.



Out-going REC:

Frank Miller – Councilor; John Kwon – Formation Director; Janet Serros – Councilor; Caroline Yandell – Minister; Maria Rodriguez – Secretary; Amelia Sandoval – Treasurer; & David York – Vice Minister.
(Not pictured: Peter Song and Tinh Le – Councilors)



Newly elected REC:

Paul Lee – Councilor; John Kwon – Formation Director; Frank Miller – Vice Minister; Laura Chun – Secretary; Maria Rodriguez – Councilor; Amelia Sandoval – Treasurer; Janet Serros – Councilor; Caroline Yandell – Minister; & Ed Graff – Councilor.

SAVE THE DATE!

Regional Gathering
Saturday, August 17, 2024

Details to be announced.
All are encouraged to attend!

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:
10185 Pinetree Dr.
San Diego, CA 92131-1218



Last Will and Testament

Each of us can play a vital 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."