

Secular Franciscan Order

Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity



October 17, 2017

Dear Minister,

Although you have already received several communications regarding our upcoming Chapter of Ministers, with this letter I **officially convoke the 2017 Chapter**. Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity (all local Ministers/delegates and the Regional Executive Council) will gather on **Saturday, November 11, 2017, at St. Francis Church Hall, 50 Lodi Street, Hackensack, NJ.** (Enter on Holt Street—directions attached.)

This year's Chapter gathering is particularly important because it is also the **triennial Chapter of Elections**. National Councilor, Joan Geiger, OFS, will preside and will conduct the election process. **It is the serious responsibility of every fraternity minister to be present or to send the fraternity vice minister or a professed delegate to the Chapter meeting in his or her place.** In addition, **any other professed member who has been nominated for office or expects to be nominated from the floor should plan to be present.**

Registration and coffee will be at 9:00 a.m., and the meeting will begin PROMPTLY at 9:30 a.m. with prayer. Proposed adjournment is at 4:00 p.m.

We look forward to the time we will spend together in fraternity and of course, to accomplishing the important business that will come before the Chapter, including the Regional Budget.

To prepare yourself for the business session, please review the enclosed documents: **(Bring the copies with you to the meeting.)**

1. Proposed agenda/schedule of the day *(If you have an item to propose for the agenda, please send it to me by Nov. 3rd.)*
2. Minutes of the 2016 Chapter of Ministers
3. Treasurer's report
4. Proposed 2018 budget
5. 2016 Fraternal/Pastoral Visitation report

Many of you have already told me that you plan to attend. However, **we need the information requested on the enclosed response form** for a complete count including the names of **observers** and of **any delegate** chosen to represent your fraternity. This form should be returned to me via mail or e-mail no later than **November 3rd**.

Coffee, breakfast items and snacks will be provided. We ask that you bring a **brown bag lunch**.

I am looking forward to seeing you on November 11th in Hackensack. Please pray for the success of our Chapter and the Regional Fraternity Elections.

As always, you are in our prayers, and we wish you peace and blessings,

Diane F. Menditto, OFS
Minister, Our Lady of the Angels Region

Enclosed: 1-Agenda; 2-2016 Chapter Minutes; 3/4-Treasurer's report and proposed 2018 budget; 5-2016 Visitation Report **(PLEASE BRING COPIES WITH YOU TO CHAPTER ON NOVEMBER 11TH)**

RESPONSE FORM: Please return via mail or e-mail by November 3rd.

Fraternity_____

Location_____

Minister's name_____ (I plan to attend: yes____ no____)

Spiritual Assistant's name_____ (Attending yes____ no____)

If no, please indicate the name of the person who will attend in your place.

Vice Minister_____ (no letter required)

OR

Other **Professed member** to serve as delegate_____

(Requires a letter from you indicating that he or she is your delegate. This is particularly important because of the election.)

Observers are welcome but have no vote – list names below

Please Return to:

Diane Menditto, OFS
160 Overlook Avenue, 16F
Hackensack, NJ 07601

Or via e-mail
dianefmdfm@aol.com

DIRECTIONS TO ST. FRANCIS HACKENSACK, NJ

50 Lodi Street (enter Church Hall on Holt Street)

Hackensack, NJ 07601

Church phone: 201-343-6243 (Diane's mobile: 201-446-0667)

From GW Bridge (or exiting the Turnpike onto Route 80 West):

Take I-95 to I-80 west local exit 66 Hudson Street, Hackensack.

Get off Route 80 at exit 66 (Hudson Street/Hackensack/Little Ferry),

at the end of the ramp continue to the light and turn left onto Hudson Street.

Proceed to the third light and make a left onto Broadway.

Proceed one block and make a left onto Holt Street.

You will see the church. Park on Holt Street.

From I-80 East:

Take the Hudson Street, Hackensack/Little Ferry exit (66).

From the ramp, make a left onto Vreeland Avenue. At the light turn left onto Hudson Street.

Go under I-80 and proceed to the fourth light (the light before going under Route 80 counts as #1) and make a left onto Broadway.

Proceed one block and make a left onto Holt Street.

You will see the church. Park on Holt Street.

From Route 17 South:

Exit onto I-80 East in Hasbrouck Heights/Lodi area. Follow the above directions from I-80 East.

From NJ Turnpike:

Stay on the Turnpike past the final toll booth. Take I-80 West LOCAL and follow the GW Bridge directions.

From Route 46:

Exit at Teterboro Airport, Huyler Street, South Hackensack. Stay on Huyler Street to the second light. (Huyler Street becomes State Street.) At the second light, turn right onto Lodi Street.

Proceed four blocks on your left to the second church at the corner of Lodi and Holt Streets.

MASS TRANSIT:

From Port Authority bus terminal

Public Service 165 bus

Get off at Hudson Street and East Broadway in Hackensack

Cross Hudson Street and walk one block in on East Broadway

You will see the church in front of you on the left.

Enter on Holt Street (look for signs announcing the meeting)

Chapter of Ministers and Regional Elections
Agenda and Schedule November 11, 2017
Please plan to stay for the entire meeting which will end at 4PM

Host Fraternity: St. Francis Fraternity, Hackensack, 50 Lodi Street, Hackensack, NJ

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 9:00 AM | Registration and coffee |
| 9:30-11:00 | Morning Prayer
Roll Call
Welcome by Regional Minister
Introduction of Presider—National Councilor, Joan Geiger, OFS
Greetings
Approval of Minutes of Chapter 2016
Visitation Report 2016
Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minister’s Report• Spiritual Assistants’ Remarks• Formation Director’s Report• Treasurer’s report |
| 11:00-11:45 | Ongoing Formation: JPIC—Chris Leone, OFS, Regional JPIC Animator |
| 11:45-12:00 | Break and prepare for Mass |
| 12 Noon | Mass— Celebrant: Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM, Regional Spiritual Assistant
Immediately following Mass picture of the Regional Fraternity in the Church Hall |
| 12:45-1:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30-4:00 | Presentation and approval of Budget
New Business
Election of new Regional Executive Council
National Councilor’s Comments
Closing prayer and adjourn
Picture of the new Regional Executive Council |

Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity Chapter of Ministers Meeting and National Visitation

MINUTES

St. Francis of Assisi Church
Hackensack, NJ
November 19, 2016

REC MEMBERS ATTENDING: Bro. Doug Soik, OFM Cap. Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM, Diane Menditto, OFS, Minister, Nancy Conroy, OFS Vice-Minister, Kate Asselin, OFS, Secretary, Ed Wojciechowski, OFS, Formation Director, Richard Spana, OFS, Treasurer, Ron Pihokker, OFS, Councilor, North Jersey Cluster, Mary Frances Reavey, Councilor, Central Jersey Cluster, Sheila Tuohy, Councilor, Westchester Cluster, Pat Clayton, Councilor, Manhattan Cluster.

VISITORS: Mary Stronach, OFS, International Councilor (NAFRA) and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, Spiritual Assistant (NAFRA)

GUESTS: Bob Stronach, OFS

- **Opening Prayer** Ron Pihokker led the opening service in prayer and song, including a prayer in honor of Clare's sister Agnes.
- **Welcome** Regional Minister Diane Menditto welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda for the day. Diane introduced the visitors, Mary Stronach, OFS, and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR.
- **Visitors' Introductory Remarks**
 - **Fr. Christopher** introduced himself, and reflected on the history of his order (TOR), which like the OFS, traces its origins to the group of penitents who first joined Francis in his quest to live the Gospel. Reflecting on his experience, Fr. Christopher expressed gratitude for those who bore witness to the Franciscan charism and inspired him. He spoke about the joys and sorrows of Franciscan family life and admonished us to embrace all of it. In humility and ongoing conversion we find our true desire. Fr. Christopher is pleased and honored to serve as Spiritual Assistant to the OFS. He invoked God's blessing on all ministers present and the fraternities they serve.
 - **Mary Stronach** expressed her appreciation for the "UN flavor" of Our Lady of the Angels Region, reflecting the international charism of the Franciscans and noting that one-third of those present were born in other countries including Haiti, the Philippines, Italy, Korea and African nations.

She reflected that the Fraternal Visit is a moment of communion, of coming together in faith. The visitors seek to learn about our needs and challenges in order to support and encourage our vocational development. Relationships, and the way we interact with each other, are of essential importance. Mary spoke about the ministers' role and responsibility to learn and grow and share all that with their fraternity members.

The OFS is an international Order of some 400,000 people. In that number there is strength and great potential for good in the world! However, we are only as strong as our weakest member. The local fraternity is the heart of the Order. It is the cornerstone upon which the entire organization depends. The clusters, the regions, the national and international levels all build upon and draw strength from the local fraternities. The future of the Order is in the hands of the fraternities and those who lead them.

- **Roll Call** Kate Asselin, OFS
The Secretary read the roll of all fraternities in Our Lady of the Angels Region. A total of 25 fraternities were represented at the meeting.

- **2015 Chapter Minutes**
The minutes from the 2015 Chapter of Ministers' meeting were distributed prior to the meeting and reviewed by the membership. Hugo Bader made a motion to accept the minutes, Madge Cooke seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted as presented.

[The REC adjourned to allow the visitors to speak with the ministers]

- **Treasurer's Report** Richard Spana, OFS
 - Accounts: Bank balances of \$2,017 in checking and \$24,000 in savings were reported as of October 31st.
 - Fair Share: Gratitude was expressed to all fraternities for contributing their Fair Share. There has been 100% participation for the past two years.
 - New Budget: The proposed 2017 Region Budget was reviewed. This is a deficit budget based on a stable Fair Share (\$40 per capita, the same amount for the past four years). At current membership levels, this will generate \$32,000 in income. Savings will be used to fund the remaining expenses detailed in the proposed budget.

Hugo Bader made a motion to accept the proposed 2017 Regional Budget and John Trause seconded the motion. The ministers voted and passed the Budget unanimously.
 - Open Positions: Rick made a plea for those interested in replacing the Treasurer and two other outgoing Council members to step up. Mary Stronach remarked that five ministers had already expressed interest. A Nominating Committee will be formed in anticipation of the 2017 Regional elections.

- **State of the Region Report** Diane Menditto, OFS
 - Diane provided some vital statistics for our Region:
 - Geography: OLAR is the smallest region with the greatest numbers of OFS per square mile.
 - Membership: Currently there are a total of 762 professed OFS (active and excused), plus 39 candidates.
 - Languages: 72% speak English, with 28% speaking Polish, Korean, and other languages.
 - Fraternity Visitations and Elections: Council members visited 10 fraternities this year. Fourteen elections have been conducted and six more are scheduled in coming months.
 - Communications: The Region continues to publish the *Troubador* (in print and electronic form) and to maintain and update its Website. Diane thanked the ministers for sharing various fraternity newsletters with the Region.

- National and Regional Update
 - Formation: Diane attended a NAFRA-sponsored Formation Commission meeting on "Fraternity Challenge & Mission." Local fraternity councils are encouraged to add ongoing formation to meetings.
 - New Spiritual Assistants: We welcome Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM, who has been named Spiritual Assistant to the Region. He joins Regional SA, Bro. Doug Soik, OFM Cap.
 - OFS Gatherings: OLAR members attended the "Q" held last July in St. Louis.
 - New Ministries: Council members have met with Provincial Fr. Nicolas Mormondo, OFM Cap. to discuss collaborative ministry, including planning visits to retired friars in the Region.
 - Cluster Events: Manhattan Cluster is planning a day of reflection to close out Year of Mercy.

- Future Regional Goals
 - Outreach: develop ads, radio interviews and other ways of promoting and increasing vocations to the Order and raising visibility in the community
 - Leadership: Seeking to appoint a JPIC chair; candidates for REC positions for the 2017 REC election; and to build a team with fraternity formation directors
 - Documents: revise mission and vision statements and regional governance guidelines; develop regional handbook.

- Gratitude

Diane thanked the ministers for faithfully submitting fraternity reports, as well as the pre-Visitation questionnaire and especially for their honesty in sharing fraternity needs and challenges, which helps the Council to understand and provide the help they need.

Fraternities across the Region have given generously of their time, talent, and treasure for fellow Franciscans in need and other worthy causes in this Year of Mercy. A collection of \$4,850 for flooding in St. Joan of Arc region is just one example.

Diane concluded these remarks by assuring the ministers that the REC is there for them and their fraternities and thanking them for their prayers.

{Meeting adjourned for Mass with Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, OFM as celebrant and homilist. Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM, and Fr. Sam Monaco, Minister of Holy Name Fraternity concelebrated. Lunch followed.}

- **Ongoing Formation** Ed Wojciechowski, OFS, and Nancy Conroy, OFS
Ed and Nancy spoke about the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. This Holy Year has brought strength and renewal and joy to the community, but God's mercy is never ending, for all time and beyond time, for us and for all.

"Change our hearts, oh Lord," we sing; receiving mercy, we ask, "What return can I make"? As Franciscans, we are "...called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world..." (*Rule 2:14*). We are messengers, seeking to help our brothers and sisters in need.

Time was provided for the ministers to discuss this question *How do we need to grow in mercy?* Responses from the table groups included:

- Become aware of our own sinfulness; pray "Lord have mercy on us"; have patience with ourselves and others

- Recognize the homeless and needy in our midst; defend those persecuted and treated unjustly; work to end human trafficking.
- Take care of the earth, feed the hungry: start a garden in what used to be a dump!
- Save water, so others may drink: Do the little things that add up to conservation.
- Change of heart must come first; encounter Christ, grow in relationship
- Cultivate daily conversion, prayer life and the way will be clear.
- Go beyond our 'comfort zone': we are called to go to places we have not gone before!

References

1. Face of Mercy film You Tube Trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSCyjJKXTb0>
2. Divine Mercy You Tube Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bh9524biYGA>
3. *Laudato Si* You Tube Video Series Episode 8 on Human Responsibility, narrated by Fr. Daniel Horan, OFM <https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-mozilla-002&hsimp=yhs-002&hspart=mozilla&p=Laudato+Si#id=31&vid=1309cab6e3d21ae5ea5a2be3b212484c&action=view>

• **Spiritual Assistants' Remarks**

- Bro. Doug: Brother spoke of finding Spiritual Assistants (SA) for fraternities as a great challenge. Currently, there are four fraternities without a SA. Recognizing the importance of *presence*, he wanted the ministers to know that the Regional Spiritual Assistants are there for the fraternities and he keeps us in prayer. Visiting fraternities is always an uplifting and animating experience and he considers it a privilege to serve the Seculars.
- Fr. Frank: Fr. Frank went to the UN to hear presentation on the relations between Franciscans International (FI) and the UN. Many Franciscans were there including Seculars. FI has special place trying to bring peace to the world. However, it is the OFS who by virtue of their numbers and in the positions they hold in the world, can make a great difference. Together, let us continue to bring joy and peace to all the world.

• **Visitors' Presentations**

Fr. Chris: The Family needs to come together; we need each other. We are not alone: Jesus is with us and thousands of brothers and sisters around the world who are doing the work of the Gospel. Practice conversion and receive mercy every day, not just at particular times or during years of Jubilee. The Lord's Mercy changes us, and it is that interior transformation that makes all things possible.

St. Francis teaches us to *first* take care of people and *then* pray: "the Lord himself led me among them (meaning the lepers, the poor) and I had mercy upon them" (from the *Testament* of St. Francis). If you feel unprepared or unworthy, remember the apostles weren't ready either, but they were willing. They could not deny the Holy Spirit. "I [God] have chosen you."

Become who God intends you to be. Make the Gospel the form of your life. God will give you the grace and the strength to overcome any obstacles along the way. Jesus showed us how to meet people 'heart to heart.' Everyone is invited to the table, no matter who you are. And we are to reverence all of God's creation. Listen to *The Canticle*, to *Laudato Si* and hear the voice of the Lord. Keep Christ the center of your life. Be kind to yourself and one another.

These remarks were followed by discussion of how to put Franciscan values into practice. Comments from the table groups included:

- We need to speak up! Make the voice of peace and justice heard. We are messengers. And we must act, to show people how we live and what we stand for. Remember, 'the

only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing' (*Edmund Burke*).

- The national elections are an opportunity to witness. Our role is to vote, to speak and to minister to the people. Always reference the Gospel.
- Produce Franciscan 'Spots' to frame political issues in terms of Gospel values.
- Examine ourselves as a Region and address weaknesses. We must not let anything divide us; as brothers and sisters, we need each other. Make the sacrifices necessary to "cross bridges" – literally (the Hudson) – and figuratively (interpersonal conflicts).
- Use our God-given gifts and share resources to maintain vibrant fraternity life, apostolates and charity.

Mary Stronach: Referencing an earlier remark by Ed Wojo, Mary said "the future of the Order is in our hands." Echoing Fr. Chris' homily, she reminded us that although we might not feel prepared, "Christ did not call the ready—he called the willing." Our challenge is to mold the Order in the way the Lord wants.

Based on her observations and discussions with the REC and fraternity ministers, Mary delivered her "Report Card" to the group. (The written version will be sent to the REC).

Region Successes:

- **Participation:** Most of the Region's fraternities are represented here today.
- **Responsibility:** 100% participation in Fair Share is outstanding.
- **Growth:** A total of 50 candidates and inquirers is very encouraging.
- **Leadership:** Minister and REC are organized, competent, trustworthy and committed. There is good leadership at the Cluster level as well.
- **Charism:** Council demonstrates vision and understanding of the OFS and what it means to be a Franciscan.
- **Communication:** Very effective communication; the Region website is a model. The *Troubador* is excellent. *E-vents* is a great idea. The fraternities are encouraged to communicate with the REC; this should be a "two-way street". Continue to develop new ways, multiple channels, fresh formats.
- **Apostolates:** There is a wide range and numerous apostolate among the various fraternities, which is a great sign of Franciscan vitality.

Region Challenges:

- **Presence:** The fraternities want to see more of the REC on an informal basis and more opportunities to interact in Clusters as well.
- **Spiritual Assistants:** Invite them to all Region gatherings and events, encourage them to be more involved in the OFS community.
- **Invitation:** Some Region events, such as the Servant Leadership Workshop were under-attended. Recommend that we use Facebook more. "Friend" other people! Invitation is a key to the continuing vitality of the Order.
- **JPIC:** The Region needs a Coordinator. Anyone interested, please contact a Council member.
- **Transportation:** Continue to try to find ways to assist brothers and sisters who find travel difficult, to build relationships, share community, increase event attendance.
- **Youth:** The challenge in the U.S. is competing for attention. Find ways to include young families. Youth are attracted to genuine, loving, joyful adults who are engaged in meaningful activities and can help them find the (Gospel) way.
- **Growth:** The Order is 'graying,' but Franciscans are younger longer, because we have joy in our hearts! Invite some people! Share the Franciscan joy! Make the spiritual journey together!

Region Opportunities:

- Growing multi-cultural/national population, especially Spanish-speaking. Seek ways to give other language speakers a chance to use their voices.
 - Plan time for members to share their culture stories at OFS gatherings.
 - Simultaneous translation to make it easier for non-English speakers to participate.
 - Embed a translation link in the Region website.
 - The FUN Manual and some other OFS documents have been translated. Expand multilingual offerings.
- Lay Spiritual Assistants are the future. Plan now to identify OFS candidates and form/educate them. Review lay SA programs available.

Finally, Mary noted that we are running out of time and recommended that we consider expanding our Chapter meetings to a two-day format.

- **Concluding Remarks:** Fr. Chris, Mary and Diane spoke to the assembled ministers about the need for daily conversion. This is a year calling us to courage, risk and faith. Pray that God may have mercy on the world. Reach out to those in need; give drink to the thirsty and to the earth. Reverence God in creation; encounter Christ in the Mass; live the Gospel as Francis showed us. May our hearts be changed and let us bring hope, and joy to the world. Keep praying!
- **2016 Notes**
Reminder that 2016 is also a year of the Portziuncula indulgence. Most Holy Name fraternity celebrated its 90th anniversary this year. We remember our deceased fraternity members, may they rest in peace, especially Andy Klutkowski, an example to all Franciscans.
- **Closing Prayer** Brother Doug led the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.
- **Adjournment** The Chapter of Ministers/National Visitation concluded at 3:30pm with thanks to the Visitors, ministers and all in attendance.

*Faithfully Submitted,
Kate Asselin, OFS, Secretary
October 14, 2017*

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY					
TREASURERS REPORT					
FOR THE PERIOD		October 1, through October 31, 20147			
		Beginning	Deposits	Ending	Budget
		Balance		Balance	
Cash Balance					
	Checking Account	3499.77	300.00	3799.77	
	Interest				
	Misc. Income				
Cash Held on Behalf of the					
	N. Jersey Cluster	229.76		229.76	
	La Verna Fraternity	256.19		256.19	
Checks issued During the Month				-1213.51	
Account Balance End of Month				3072.21	
Savings Account					
		17078.45		17078.45	
Income Statement:					
		Opening		Closing	
Income		Balance	Additions	Balance	
	Per Capita Income	31456.19		31456.19	36040.00
	Regional Retreat	11563.00		11563.00	
	Misc.	35.50		35.50	
	CIFOS Fund	2773.00		2773.00	
	Flood Victims	7125.00	300.00	7125.00	
Total Income		52952.69	300.00	52952.69	
Expenses					
	Per Capita to NAFRA	13532.00		13532.00	13617.00
	Spiritual Assistant	2500.00		2500.00	5000.00
	Regional Minister	310.90		310.90	500.00
	Regional Council	845.67	22.06	867.73	1200.00
	Office Expenses	112.50		112.50	323.00
	Meeting Place/Storage				500.00
	Newsletter	5138.00		5138.00	5000.00
	Retreat	13835.21		13835.21	1500.00
	Unity Day's	1107.25		1107.25	1000.00
	JPIC Committee	542.16		542.16	300.00
	Formation	1009.39		1009.39	1000.00
	Misc. Expense	840.00		840.00	500.00
	Contributions	11548.00	850.00	12398.00	1000.00
	Vocation/Ret Friars		8.20	8.20	1000.00
	Visitation/Election		164.72	164.72	1500.00
	YOUFRA	217.40		217.40	100.00
	Travel	945.40	168.53	1113.93	2000.00
	La Verna Fraternity	256.19		256.19	
Total Expenses		52740.07	1213.51	53953.58	36040.00
Net Income or Loss					
Attested to: Richard Spana Regional					

**OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL FRATERNITY
BUDGET WORKSHEET FOR THE YEAR 2018**

Account	Type of Income	Amount	Account	Type of Expense	Amount
1110	Per Capita Income*	36900.00	2110	Per Capita Expense (NAFRA)**	13940.00
			2120	Spiritual Assistants	5000.00
1120	Interest Income		2130	Regional Minister	400.00
1160	Chapter Income		2140	Regional Council	1000.00
1170	Miscellaneous Income		2150	Office Operating Expenses	210.00
1180	Retreat Deposits/Fees		2170	Meeting Place/Storage Space	300.00
			2180	Newsletter	5000.00
	Based on 820 Professed and Candidates		2190	Retreat	1500.00
	* Per Capita Income: \$45.00 x 820 = 36900.00		2200	Unity Day/Convivenza	1000.00
			2210	JPIC Committee	500.00
	**Per Capita Expenses(NAFRA) \$17.00 x 820 = 13940.00		2220	National Visitation/Election	500.00
			2230	YOUFRA	100.00
			2300	Formation	1000.00
			2400	Vocations/Retired Friars	400.00
			2600	Miscellaneous Expense	200.00
			2800	Contributions	600.00
			2900	Travel	2450.00
			3000	Savings	2800.00
	Total Income	36900.00		Total Expense	36900.00

Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation Report

Our Lady of the Angels Region Secular Franciscan Order November 18-19, 2016 St. Francis Church, Hackensack, N.J.

Mary Stronach, OFS, International Councilor, delegate of the National Minister, Jan Parker, OFS, conducted the Fraternal Visitation concurrently with Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, a member of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.

Preparatory Information:

The pre-visitation questionnaire and the Annual Report to NAFRA were completed and received by the Visitors. We thank the Regional Executive Council for their diligent work and note the thoroughness of the responses. Both Visitors were very impressed with the wealth of quality information that was provided to us ahead of time and at the Visitation.

Demographics:

The Region encompasses Northern half of New Jersey excluding Trenton and South; NY counties of Staten Island and Manhattan (New York County), plus part of Southern Westchester County.

	<u>2015</u>
Canonically established fraternities:	33 (including 2 Korean/2 Polish/1 Spanish) – net loss of 3 since 2013
Emerging Communities:	1
Newly forming groups:	0
*Active Professed:	362 (net loss of 16 since 2013)
*(Error 762 active/excused members reported for 2015)	
Inactive/Lapsed Members	71
Candidates:	39 (net increase of 18 since 2013)
Inquirers:	11 (net loss of 8 since 2013)
Affiliates:	2 (net increase of 1)
Local Spiritual Assistants:	28
Regional Spiritual Assistant:	2

Documentation Review:

Regional Directory: A Regional Fraternity Directory reviewed.

Mission Statement: Reviewed.

Regional Guidelines: Reviewed.

Permanent Minutes of the Council: Reviewed and all in order.

Treasurer's Documents, Budgets, Income/Expense Reports: Reviewed and all in order.

Past Visitation Reports: Reviewed.

Rule, General Constitutions, National Statutes, and Ritual: All members of the REC have copies of the most recent editions and amendments and that they bring them to Regional meetings.

Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation Report

Communications:

The regional newsletter, *Troubadour*, is very well done. The quarterly Publication is currently available on the regional website and two issues yearly are also in print format. It offers messages from the Regional Minister, Formation Director, as well as Fraternity and member Spotlights. Photos and local stories are abundant with milestone anniversaries, upcoming events and notices. Special features offer inspirational messages and role models for our brothers and sisters and others who get the opportunity to read it. National and Regional events are also covered with engaging photos. Overall, an attractive publication which entices the brothers and sisters to read it.

In addition, the region publishes **E-vents**, generally monthly or as needed to cover upcoming events in the region – both within the fraternity and events and news that might be of interest.

The Regional website <http://www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org/> has been serving the members well for many years, providing a variety of Franciscan resources that assist with formation and ongoing development of our Franciscan charism. It is updated with the newsletters, **E-vents** and announcements. National and regional reports, a call to new vocations, links to sites of interest, a list of fraternities and when they meet, prayer list, and much more – a real treasure house that is easy to navigate.

Its Facebook page has 6342 followers, an amazing number! It is engaging, informing followers of events and offering questions, fun and thought-provoking graphics.

Apostolic Activities:

The brothers and sisters of Our Lady of the Angels Region are active in a variety of apostolic activities on an individual basis, on the local fraternity level, at the regional and national levels. These activities include giving of time, talent and treasure. At the regional level, they supported flood victims by donating \$4850. They also have a ministry of clothes for the homeless. Locally, they are involved in soup kitchens, prison ministry, clothing drives, disaster relief, prayers groups, communion for the home bound, perpetual adoration; they sponsor Holy Hours, visit the sick, donate blood and have a mission to Kenya. They are church lectors, eucharistic ministers and serve on diocesan and on national OFS committees.

Formation:

Formation is a strong priority for the Regional Council, Regional Ministers and all members. In preparation for service at the regional level, the Council had a Visioning Weekend, during which time they deepened their spirituality, built a team spirit and established goals for the region which are being addressed and carried out. This activity appeared to set the tone for the Council and unified them. The Visioning Weekend is an excellent model which we will offer other Regions to consider in helping them build their regional team.

The Region also sponsors a Convivenza – a spiritual and formational event -- where all members are invited to participate. At the last Convivenza -185 attended – that's more than 50% of the order in the region! Wonderful! The region also sponsors Days of Reflection and Retreats which are well attended. Their goal is to have even more events at the Cluster level.

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Spiritual Assistants

The region is very fortunate to have two regional spiritual assistants. They have a total of 27 spiritual assistants who serve 32 fraternities. Six of the fraternities at this point do not have Spiritual Assistants. The absence of local spiritual assistants is a concern. We would have welcomed the opportunity to visit with some of the friar assistants. But more importantly, for the Region. By virtue of their vocation as professed religious and their willingness to serve the Seculars, their presence at Regional gatherings, especially at visitations and elections, would strengthen the bond of unity that connects the local and the national fraternities. That fraternal unity is the bond within the Franciscan Family, visually and pastorally. Their insights and reflections are spiritual food for the family.

JPIC

Presently, the Region does not have a JPIC chair, but it does send out all communications from the National JPIC committee and it provides JPIC news in its newsletter. On the local level, fraternities are involved in JPIC projects.

Youth

Regional is waiting for the National level to provide some guidance as to the direction that this ministry will take.

New Members and Fraternity Growth:

This geographic region is culturally very diverse. There is much opportunity for outreach and service, especially in the Hispanic area.

GENERAL COMMENTARY

Our Lady of Angels Region is healthy, strong and vibrant.

The regional council is open, approachable, responds quickly to concerns, listens and is compassionate and loving. The council uses the gifts the Lord has given to enhance the Order. The regional ministers appreciate their work and understand the effort that it takes. They are amazed at the council's energy and willingness to support their efforts.

Books and documents are well organized and easy to follow. Financially speaking, the Region is stable.

The council organized a very well run annual gathering with worthwhile activities for all. It was a long day but there were many positive comments about what the attendees learned. Most importantly, there was great fellowship among the brothers and sisters. As a one-day event, it limited the amount of time the visitors could spend with the fraternity members – to learn and appreciate the gifts they bring to the order. Despite the limited time, we felt a strong sense of fraternity, generosity and appreciation.

The region is very fortunate to have two spiritual assistants who are active, engaging and truly involved in the fraternity. The region should be thankful and thank these dedicated men often for their commitment.

This region is strong in its effort to communicate with its brothers and sisters at the local, regional and national levels and also to reach candidates. The communications tools, including website, Facebook, yahoo

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groups, e-mails, newsletters, e-vents are all tools for promoting the order, for engaging new brothers and sisters. They are used effectively.

The region is addressing its concern about declining membership by being proactive in its search for vocations, promoting vocations through social media and regional/fraternity websites. They intend to place ads in diocesan newspapers, although the prices are very high. This effort has proven successful with the number of candidates going from 21 to 39 in the last year.

The region's fraternities are involved in a variety of ministries...that's their draw! It's their invitation to potential inquirers.

The local fraternities are excellent in responding to requests from the regional council. They had 100% response for requests for annual reports.

We commend the regional council on efforts you have made to complete visitations. Your model of going as a team, lead by the minister, makes this unique to the order. Your outreach to each fraternity in such a personal way reflects in the fraternal life of the order – both at the local and the regional level. It strengthens your communication and ties with each and every member.

With the regional minister involved at the National level, both on the Formation team and the Vocations team, the region is enriched, empowered and more engaged in these areas.

The region is also very fortunate in having representation on the Evangelization Commission of the Newark Archdiocese. Again, such involvement can only enrich the order and provide additional guidance and support.

The Regional Council has indicated concerns over some small fraternities. Two needed to be deactivated and they assisted the members in moving to other fraternities. Two other small fraternities have been challenged to promote vocations and they are succeeding.

There is much good flowing from each and every council member and the region's ministers ... so much joy ... so much desire to grow, advance, build the order, to serve and to please. The region is an inspiration!

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Leadership

Develop a leadership plan. Make finding and developing new leaders a priority. Remember, your terms of service will come to an end and you need to be mentors for another generation of leaders.

Invite potential candidates to council meetings so they can learn and grow comfortable with the tasks. Invite people by name to volunteer. Keep the tasks simple at first and the goals clear. Be consistent in requests and appreciate what they do.

Continue to nurture your future leaders. There are many among the ministers we met. Keep them involved and show your appreciation of their talents.

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Spiritual Assistance

Continue in your efforts to try to have joint Days of Reflections with our friars. Your meetings will prove fruitful – both for the OFS and the Friars. To plan for the future of the order, and to help secure more local spiritual assistants, invite and encourage OFS members with appropriate talents to take the Spiritual Assistant course. You may want to connect with a neighboring region and take a correspondence course.

“Twinning”

Because of the multicultural nature of the region, we would recommend that your twinning efforts with other OFS across the world be focussed on reaching the same family groups from where your region’s members come -- the Kenyan, Polish, Haitian, Italian, Spanish. Let these brothers and sisters help you reach those in need across the seas.

JPIC

Continue your efforts to find a JPIC animator.

Youth

While waiting for direction from national, the regional and local fraternities should continue to find ways to engage our youth and young adults, including young families. Invite them to Retreats, Fraternity Gatherings, Transitus, Picnics – any family event that would be appropriate. Let them know how important they are to us.

Vocations

Continue to keep your Facebook page active and updated. Add quotes, lines from the rule, events... Invite more friends to like the page and follow. You’re doing great outreach with social media. Continue the effort.

Continue your work in support the small fraternities, guiding them as they work to promote new vocations.

Reach out to the potential Hispanic vocations in Hoboken and Hackensack. Ask to speak at their Masses, go to their special events. Hispanic communities will enrich our order spiritually.

Website:

With the changing population and growth of multinational base, we recommend that the region consider refreshing the website with a new look and, possibly add a translation tool. (Google provides such a tool. While it is not always accurate, it will provide an initial link to new, multinational vocations.) This effort may help your outreach to our younger and more tech savvy generation.

Multicultural Brothers and Sisters

Our Lady of Angels Region is faced with a challenge and an opportunity in its multicultural makeup. 22% (177 members are Korean), 10 are Spanish, 18 Polish and 10 are of other nationalities. While presently the council believes it is addressing the needs of this population by having someone in the fraternities who can assist with communication, we recommend that the council review more ways to assist this group in becoming more engaged and participate with their own voices in fraternity life at regional events. We recommend that the council consider providing interpreters for such events. In

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addition, as much as possible, provide translations of key communications. Also, consider offering an event with a speaker/s from one of their language groups.

Annual Gathering

Consider extending the gathering to two days – at least for visitations. This would allow more time for fraternity, formation, socialization, communication on the issues that need to be addressed and to remember our deceased brothers and sisters in very personal ways.

In closing, let us express our sincere appreciation to everyone in Our Lady of the Angels Region for their fraternal assistance and cooperation. Thank you for sharing and caring. Thank you for the special attention and care you gave for the Visitation. We thank all of you for your kind and gracious hospitality. May the Lord keep all of you in His peace. Please know that we keep all of you in our prayers.

Respectfully submitted,

January 11, 2017

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