



Published by Our Lady of the Angels Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the U.S.A. © 2022 All rights reserved.

Second Annual World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, Sunday, July 24.



In 2021, Pope Francis instituted the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. It is celebrated closest to the Memorial of Sts. Joachim and Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is on July 26.

- Make a display table of photographs of deceased grandparents and elderly
- Create a memory scrapbook
- Remember your grandparents by doing something they love(d), (cooking a favorite recipe, listening to music, going fishing or some other activity).

In his message this year, Pope Francis said, “The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is an opportunity to proclaim once more, with joy, that the Church wants to celebrate together with all those whom the Lord—in the words of the Bible—has “filled with days.”

Let us celebrate it together...
 Let us make sure no one feels alone on this day.
 Expecting a visit can transform those days when we think we have nothing to look forward to; from an initial encounter, a new friendship can emerge.
 Visiting the elderly who live alone is a work of mercy in our time.”

<https://www.usccb.org/topics/marriage-and-family-life-ministries/grandparents-elderly>

- Pray the Novena of Sts. Anne & Joachim for Faith and Perseverance

<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/upload/nfp-sts-anne-joachim-novena.pdf>

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES FOR CELEBRATING WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY:

- Have children and grandchildren bless the Grandparents
- Visit an elderly neighbor and be a blessing to them; do a service or bring a small gift

A LETTER FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

WHEN WILL IT BE ENOUGH?

I realize that this is a very sensitive and polarizing subject to be writing about. Maybe some of you are responsible gun owners and I respect that but I am sickened by children being slaughtered by those who do not respect life. This is not a political issue for me, it is a moral one.

Article 15 of our Rule states “let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in **promoting justice** by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives.” Article 19 reminds us that “mindful that they are **bearers of peace** which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.”

I was not going to write about this subject but I received a letter from someone in the region who said she was told that the issue was “too unwieldy for a local fraternity to handle.” I agree. Oftentimes, those discussions get heated and cause hard feelings and probably should not be discussed in fraternity meetings. Let me present what is solely my opinion on this subject. I am not trying to convert anyone or project that differing opinions are wrong. Some of the material I will present is from the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conferences.

Since the tragic event in Uvalde, Texas on May 24 where 19 children and 2 adults were murdered and another 17 injured, there have been, as of June 9 when I’m writing this, 40 mass shootings in 18 states with 43 killed and 180 wounded. 40 mass shootings in 16 days! Mass shootings are incidents involving 4 or more killed or wounded. There have been 230 mass shootings in 2022 to date.

These are not just school shootings. These shootings have taken place in workplaces (including a Catholic hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma), at family BBQs, at graduation parties, in bars, and at block parties. The deadliest of them were committed with an AR-15 or other assault type weapon. These are weapons of war and should not be in the hands of individuals. You do not need an assault rifle to hunt. Assault weapons, weapons of war, were not what the founding fathers had in mind when they wrote the Second Amendment, in my opinion.

In 1994, with bipartisan support, Congress pushed through a federal assault weapons ban. That ban was limited – it covered only certain categories of semi-automatic weapons such as AR-15s and applied to a ban on sales only after the act was signed into law, allowing people to keep hold of weapons purchased before that date. It also had in it a so-called “sunset provision” that allowed the ban to expire in 2004.

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FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

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The 10-year life span of that ban – with a clear beginning and end date – gives researchers the opportunity to compare what happened with mass shooting deaths before, during, and after the prohibition was in place.

According to a study by Michael J. Klein, Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery, New York University, the proportion of deaths in mass shootings in which an assault rifle was used was lower in 1994 than it is today. Yet in this earlier period, mass shooting deaths were steadily rising.

The 1994 to 2004 period saw lower average annual rates of both mass shootings and deaths resulting from such incidents than before the ban's inception. The data shows an almost immediate – and steep – rise in mass shooting deaths in the years after the assault weapons ban expired in 2004. According to Klein, it is difficult to say conclusively that reinstating the assault weapons ban would have a profound impact, especially given the growth in sales in the 18 years in which Americans have been allowed to purchase and stockpile such weapons. However, given that many of the high-profile mass shooters in recent years purchased their weapons less than one year before committing their acts, the evidence suggests that it might.

According to an article by Thomas Reese on Religion News Service, “In response to recent mass shootings, Pope Francis and the U.S. Catholic bishops have called for gun control measures that would save lives. This undoubtedly surprises some people who think that abortion is the only public policy concern of the church's hierarchy. Sadly, the media and the bishops themselves give too little attention to the larger “life” agenda.”

While praying for the children killed and their families in Uvalde, the Pope did not hesitate to say, “It is time to say enough to the indiscriminate trafficking of arms.” Pope Francis has frequently denounced gun trafficking. On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the chairs of four conference committees issued a statement urging all members of Congress to action in response to the killings. They urged dialogue and concrete action that “addresses all aspects of the crisis, including mental health, the state of families, the valuation of life, the influence of entertainment and gaming industries, bullying, and the availability of firearms.” They called for “the passage of reasonable gun control measures,” echoing the Pope's pleas that “It is time to say, ‘no more’ to the indiscriminate trafficking of weapons.”

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FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

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In their letter on June 3rd to Congress, these bishops got into specifics on what they considered “reasonable” gun control. They encouraged Congress to improve “the firearm background check process in favor of the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021 (H.R. 8) and the Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2021 (H.R. 1446).” They also supported extreme-risk protection orders (the so-called red flag law) through the passage of the Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2021 (H.R. 2377). They complained that “In the ten years since the massacre of children at Sandy Hook, very little has been done by Congress to regulate these weapons and prevent another catastrophe. We urgently call on members of Congress to work together in a bipartisan fashion to make these horrific attacks less likely to happen again.”

The bishops call for “a total ban on assault weapons and limitations on civilian access to high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines,” including bump stocks. They cite studies showing that limitations on high-capacity magazines can reduce the number of people killed in mass shootings by as much as 38%, and those injured by as much as 77%.

They also support universal background checks for all gun purchases and criminalizing gun trafficking. The bishops added their support to recent proposals to set a more appropriate minimum age for gun ownership.

The USCCB website has additional recommendations: “Regulations and limitations on the purchasing of handguns; measures that make guns safer, such as locks that prevent children and anyone other than the owner from using the gun without permission and supervision.” Another page on the website provides visitors an easy way to write their senators and representatives in support of these gun control measures.

Thomas Reese reminds us that “Catholic social teaching has been referred to as the church’s best-kept secret. The bishops’ response to gun violence should no longer be a secret. It should be preached from the rooftops.”

As I was told in the letter I received “if not us, then who? If not now, then when?”

Peace be with you!



Chris Leone, OFS
Minister, Our Lady of the Angels Region
cleoneofs@gmail.com

Free Zoom Seminar on Fratelli Tutti by Franciscans Living in Community.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

May the Lord give you His peace!

I hope you are doing well and enjoying the summer.

I want to share with you an opportunity I received for a FREE Zoom seminar on Fratelli Tutti by Franciscans Living in Community (FLIC) on Tuesday, August 9, 2022, presented by Br. Richard Contino, OSF. The session is also available in person at St. Anthony High School, 275 Wolf Hill Road, So. Huntington, NY 11747.

Here is the link to join the Zoom Meeting (Video Option)

9:00 Mass / 10:30 Presentation / 1:00 Presentation / 2:00 Holy Hour

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81958424032>

Meeting ID: 819 8542 4032

Dial by your location (Audio Option) - +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

To register and attend in-person or by Zoom, please email or call BOTH
Dcn. Bob Campbell, OFS at arcyc@aol.com (516-599-4256) AND
Judy Heffernan, OFS at jmblessings@optimum.net (516-524-9939) by August 1st.

Please see the flyer on the next page for further details.

Peace,
Chris Leone, OFS
Minister, Our Lady of the Angels Region

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Franciscans Living in Community

The FLIC Committee is pleased to inform you of plans for our August 9, 2022 Day of FLIC. There are two options for attending the day: it will be available for in-person attendance at St. Anthony High School, 275 Wolf Hill Road, So. Huntington, NY 11747 and on Zoom.

Theme of the Day: "Fraternity and Social Friendship" – A reflection on Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)*. It is recommended that you prayerfully prepare for the day by reading the encyclical. It can be downloaded from the Vatican website – Vatican.va. or purchased from USCCB.org (store), Amazon, or at your local religious book store.

Presenter: Br. Richard Contino, OSF – Br. Richard has been our key presenter at FLIC since 2017. He has served the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn in administrative positions, and has offered retreats, missions, and days of recollection.

Cost: FREE

Schedule of the Day

- 9:00 AM – Mass (live and streamed)
- 9:45-10:30 – Breakfast for in-person attendees
- 10:30-11:30 – Br. Richard (Presentation)
- 11:30-12:00 – Small group discussion for in-person attendees
- 12:00-1:00 – Lunch (Brown Bag – bring your own)
- 1:00-2:00 – Br. Richard (Presentation)
- 2:00-3:00 – Holy Hour and Benediction; Closing Remarks

Here is the link to join the Zoom Meeting (Video Option)
9:00 Mass / 10:30 Presentation / 1:00 Presentation / 2:00 Holy Hour
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81958424032>
Meeting ID: 819 8542 4032
Dial by your location (Audio Option) - +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

To register and attend in-person or by Zoom, please email or call
BOTH
Dcn. Bob Campbell, OFS at arcyc@aol.com (516-599-4256)
AND
Judy Heffernan, OFS at jmblessings@optimum.net (516-524-9939)
by August 1st. Many thanks!

DIANE F. MENDITTO, OFS
 REGIONAL FORMATION DIRECTOR
Diane.menditto@gmail.com

Love: Food for Fraternity

Last month after our local fraternity gathering (which happened to be our fraternity elections), I got to thinking about what makes our fraternity so special to me.



Many of you may have similar feelings about your own fraternities. Thinking about why I look forward to being with my brothers and sisters and realizing that this good feeling is evident even to visitors, was instructive, and it didn't take me very long to realize that what I was feeling was the **love we all have for one another**.

Then I thought, just how does loving each other make for such a good fraternity experience? We are all very different, and yet, we get along. Days went by, and I was still thinking about it. I Googled the word "love" and found the ancient Greek words for the four types of love mentioned in the Bible—*Storgé*, *eros*, *philia*, and *agápe*.

Storgé describes love that shows **natural empathy**, like the love that parents feel for their children.

Eros, as you might expect, is romantic or intimate love. That one didn't fit in this context.

Philia is defined as warm affection, friendship between equals. Loyalty to friends, family, and community. That was closer.

Agápe is used by Christians to express the unconditional love of God for His children.

This type of love was further explained by Thomas Aquinas as "*to will the good of another*."

Ah! That's it. "**To will the good of another.**"

Bringing the idea back to fraternity life, I departed from Google and the ancient Greeks and turned to Sacred Scripture. Of the many, many places (over 250) where love is mentioned in Scripture, three stood out to me.

John 15:12 tells us that Jesus said, "This is my commandment: **love one another as I love you.**"

In **1 Cor 13:4-8a** St. Paul elaborates: "Love is **patient**, love is **kind**. It is **not jealous**, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it **does not seek its own interests**, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It **bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.**"

Then, finally, in **Romans 12:9-18**, we read, "**Let love be sincere**; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with **mutual affection**; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.

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Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute [you], bless and do not curse them. **Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another;** do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, **live at peace with all.**”

The love we feel for one another in fraternity is powerful when it is an authentic, “self-emptying” love. It is the **kind of love that helps us to find what is lovable** in someone we might disagree with or not like so much. It’s the love that wants what is good for the whole group even if it requires work, sacrifice, and **letting go** of a personal agenda. It is **listening** to my brothers and sisters when I’d rather listen to what is going on in my own head. It’s **being present** to one another in fraternity, not because we have to be there, but because we genuinely look forward to seeing one another.

Our Rule, of course, gives us further assistance in living a gospel-centered life:

Article 5 “*Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to **encounter the living and active person of Christ** in their brothers and sisters...*”

Article 12 “...they should **set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.**”


Article 13 “...so the Secular Franciscans with a **gentle and courteous spirit** accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.”

Article 19 “...they should seek out ways of **unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue**, trusting in the presence of the **divine seed** in everyone and in the **transforming power of love and pardon**. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring **joy and hope** to others.”

True love of any kind **takes sacrifice**. Making sacrifices for our families is automatic and expected. But as followers of Christ and St. Francis, we are called to open our hearts to all of our brothers and sisters. We are called to love people we may not even like. This takes true **daily conversion**, and it can feel like a struggle. We are given the **gift of fraternity** to help us **hone our capacity to love**. In fraternity we can experience the self-emptying love that reaches out to others. We can learn to **forgive** more easily; to **be generous** with our time and talents; to **be gentle** when fraternal correction is necessary; to **pray** for the fraternity and for the individual members, both living and dead. We learn from the Holy Spirit how to love as Jesus loved.

Oh, how beautiful it is when we love one another. We feel happy to be together. We feel connected, nourished, valued, and appreciated because we are in a relationship with Jesus and with one another. This is what makes fraternity so special when we are all humble enough to love as Jesus and Francis loved. The glow can be seen by others, and they want to join us. It is a gift that we practice in fraternity and take with us when we go out into the world, into our families, parishes, and workplaces. The Holy Spirit gives us this gift freely. And, what a gift it is!

With blessings and love,



JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

JIM ANDREANO, OFS
REGIONAL JPIC COORDINATOR
JimAndreano@gmail.com

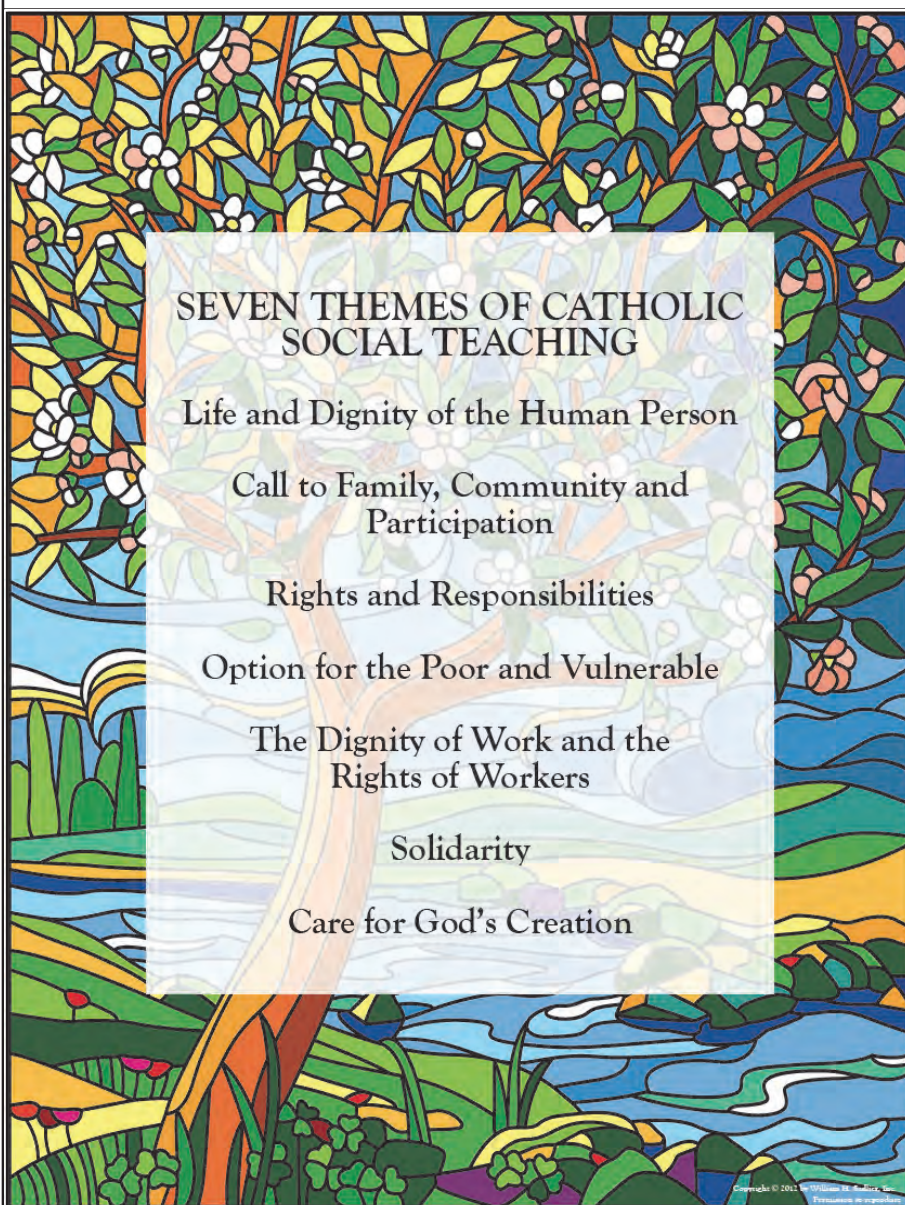
“A good Catholic meddles in politics.” -Pope Francis

In my prior column on this topic, I referred to JPIC simply as “Gospel Living”. That is something that all of us as Catholics, and in particular as Franciscans, are called upon to do. But what does Gospel Living mean to me and my Fraternity? Where do we start?

One good place to start is with the **SEVEN THEMES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**, as published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The seven themes, with a brief synopsis of each, are listed below.

THERE IS PLENTY TO CHOOSE FROM:



LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia.

The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means.

We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

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CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

The person is not only sacred but also social.

How we organize our society – in economics and politics, in law and policy – directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy must serve people, not the other way around.

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

SOLIDARITY

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences.

We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that if you want peace, work for justice. The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

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As I said, plenty to choose from! It is all part of the “seamless garment” – the consistent ethic of life which encompasses Catholic Social Teaching. Human life is to be protected and revered from conception to natural death, and everything in between. It’s all there in the Seven Themes. I have listed some of the major issues below:

- Abortion
- Euthanasia
- Death Penalty
- Avoidance of War
- Peaceful Conflict Management
(Which does not mean Conflict Avoidance!)
- Gun Violence
- Mental Health Issues
- Strengthening of Family Institutions
- Working for the Common Good
- Protection of Fundamental Human Rights
- Preferential Care for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Worker’s Rights
- Immigration
- Racism
- Solidarity – We Are Our Brother’s Keepers
- Stewardship of Creation – Now and for future generations

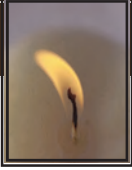


It is of course impossible for any individual, or any Fraternity, to focus on all of the above components of the Seamless Garment. Everyone’s time, resources, and energies are limited. A Fraternity can and should focus on those specific aspects of Catholic Social Teaching that touch its heart – while respecting and supporting others who place their emphasis elsewhere.

So let’s say you’ve decided where you want to put your focus. What now? Now we go back to the three-fold foundation of Gospel Living: **Prayer** (which for us should be a given), **Charity, and Advocacy**. Charity and Advocacy are really two sides of the same coin. Sometimes we are called to be the Good Samaritan, investing our time, resources, and energies (and most importantly our love!) for folks whom we may not know or never even meet. Other times we are called to be Moses, speaking truth to the powerful Pharaoh. Which means meddling in politics. The Pope said it’s OK.

None of this is easy. The Regional JPIC Committee is ready to help. If your Fraternity would like some assistance in starting or advancing its JPIC Program, please feel free to contact me at JimAndreano@gmail.com.

SISTER 2021



DEATH 2022

† ROBERT V. HUBER, OFS
NOVEMBER 3, 2021
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
FRATERNITY, NEW YORK CITY, NY
PROFESSION: MARCH 2, 1986

† AGNES ARENA
MARCH 2, 2022
MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS
FRATERNITY, LITTLE FALLS, NJ
PROFESSION: FEBRUARY 15, 2004

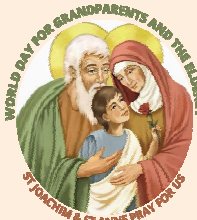
† GLORIA SCHAFER, OFS
JUNE 7, 2022
LITTLE PORTION FRATERNITY
MT. VERNON, NY
PROFESSION: OCTOBER 4, 1991

† JAMES BRENNAN
APRIL 13, 2022
ST. ANTHONY FRATERNITY
BUTLER, NJ
PROFESSION: NOVEMBER 19, 2000

† TRUDY GASSENHEIMER, OFS
JUNE 2, 2022
ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY
HACKENSACK, NJ
PROFESSION: APRIL 1, 1989

† MARGARET "PEGGY" JANKOWSKI
APRIL 13, 2022
PORZIUNCOLA FRATERNITY
EAST HANOVER, NJ
PROFESSION: JUNE 12, 1993

continued from Front Cover



PRAYER FOR THE SECOND WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

I give thanks to you, Lord,
For the blessing of a long life
For, to those who take
refuge in You,
Grant always to bear fruit.

Forgive, O Lord,
Resignation and Disillusionment,
But forsake me not
When my strength declines.

Teach me to look with hope
To the future you give me,
To the mission you entrust to me
And to sing your praises
without end.

Make me a tender craftsman
Of Your revolution,
To guard with love my
grandchildren
And all the little ones
who seek shelter in You.

Protect, O Lord, Pope Francis
And grant Thy Church
To deliver the world from
loneliness. Direct our steps
in the way of peace.

Amen.



ORD, WE PRAY FOR
OUR FAMILY
OF
FRANCISCAN
BROTHERS
AND SISTERS
WHO HAVE ENTERED
INTO
ETERNAL LIFE.

WITH THE ARRIVAL
OF SISTER DEATH,
THE LIFE WE KNOW
IS CHANGED,
NOT ENDED.

SADNESS GIVES WAY
TO THE
BRIGHT PROMISE
OF IMMORTALITY.

OUR DEPARTED BROTHERS
AND SISTERS REMAIN A
PART
OF THE
COMMUNION OF SAINTS
AS WELL AS OUR
FRATERNITIES.

PLEASE KEEP THEM
LOVINGLY IN
YOUR PRAYERS.
AMEN.

ELECTION RESULTS of May 12, 2022

ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY 137, HACKENSACK, NJ



NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL
PICTURED *L-TO-R*:

ROSELLINA IACONO, OFS, Treasurer
ALESSANDRA PANUCCIO, OFS, Secretary
DOMENICA PANUCCIO, OFS, Vice Minister

IN FRONT:

DOMENICA LOMUSCIO, OFS, Councilor
DIANE MENDITTO, OFS, Formation Director
ANTHONY BUDA, OFS, Minister

ELECTION RESULTS of June 18, 2022

ST. PETER FRATERNITY 113, SOMERSET, NJ



NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL PICTURED *L-TO-R*:

FRANK CRYAN, Treasurer; DEBRA KUBECK, OFS, Councilor;

VIVIAN 'PENNY' GLEASON, OFS, Secretary; MARY-FRANCES REAVEY, OFS, Formation Director;

JOSEPH MCKENNA, OFS, Minister; EVELYN LEHR, OFS, Vice Minister.

ELECTION RESULTS of May 22, 2022

ST. JOHN FRATERNITY 151, NEW YORK CITY, NY



Photo credit: BARBARA LYNE, OFS

NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL PICTURED IN THE PHOTO FROM L-TO-R:

CONCEPTION MALLONGA, Formation Director; PATRIA FAUSTO, OFS, Treasurer;
LORNA LOPEZ, OFS, Secretary; MARIE CECILE NDIAYE, OFS, Vice Minister;
CORAZON PONTEJOS, OFS, Minister; FR. JOHN B. RIORDAN, OFM CAP., S.A.

ELECTION RESULTS of April 10, 2022

ST. LOUIS FRATERNITY 125, NEW YORK CITY, NY



NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL
PICTURED L-TO-R:

THERESA KIM, OFS,
Treasurer
DAPROSA LIM, OFS,
Secretary
JOSEPH KIM, OFS,
Minister
DOMINGO KANG, OFS,
Formation Director
PETER LEE, OFS,
Vice Minister

Photo credit: CHRIS LEONE, OFS

ELECTION RESULTS of April 2, 2022

O.L. OF GUADALUPE FRATERNITY 118, RED BANK, NJ



NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL
PICTURED L-TO-R:

PATRICK MULLEN, OFS,
MINISTER

KATHRYN BRYAN, OFS,
Treasurer

DAWN RUSINKO, OFS,
Formation Director

KARYN FUSCO, OFS,
Secretary

MISSING FROM PHOTO:

ANNE MARIE GARRAMONE, OFS,
VICE MINISTER

Photo credits: CHRIS LEONE, OFS



OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS TEAM:

- THE TROUBADOUR EDITOR
- REGIONAL AND NATIONAL
DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR

ANNA PEDREIRO-GERACI, OFS
161-B Cross Slope Ct.
Manalapan, NJ 07726
E-mail: acpg@aol.com

Website:
[http://olangels.tripod.com/
troubadour.html](http://olangels.tripod.com/troubadour.html)



REGION WEBSITE ADMINISTRATOR
DIANE F. MENDITTO, OFS

REGION WEBSITE
[www.ourladyofthe
angels.region.org/](http://www.ourladyoftheangels.region.org/)



YAHOO LIST ADMINISTRATOR
PEGGY LEDGER, OFS

YAHOO GROUP
[http://groups.yahoo.com/
group/OLTARegion/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OLTARegion/)



FACEBOOK ADMINISTRATOR
DIANE F. MENDITTO, OFS
[https://www.facebook.com/
pages/Our-Lady-of-the-Angels-
Region-Secular-Franciscan-
Order/257320867672618](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Our-Lady-of-the-Angels-Region-Secular-Franciscan-Order/257320867672618)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Please change (or add) the
following information.
(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail address

Fraternity Name / Location

CONGRATULATIONS

PROFESSIONS

Sacred Heart Fraternity
in Yonkers, N.Y.,
celebrated the
Rite of Profession of
CAROLYN HOLODAK
(right side) on
June 24, 2022.



St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity
in Middlesex, N.J., celebrated
the Rite of Profession of
VANESSA CARLOMUSTO on
June 13, 2022.

Sacred Heart Fraternity in Yonkers, N.Y.,
celebrated the Rite of Profession of
MARK MILLER AND JUNE TREACY on May 14, 2022.

“Congratulations to Mark and June on their Secular Franciscan Profession of Faith! We are so blessed to have these two fine people in our community. They are kind, prayerful, and compassionate people who are always looking for ways to serve. Our fraternity was happy to witness their profession today and embrace the Franciscan way of living. We look forward to continuing to walk beside them on this wonderful journey.” —Fran



CONGRATULATIONS

CANDIDATES

St. Francis Fraternity in Hackensack, N.J., celebrated the Rite of Admission of **MAUREEN MENAKIS AND PAM SWORDS** on June 9, 2022.



St. Thomas More Fraternity in New York City, N.Y., celebrated the Rite of Admission of **ELIZABETH ALFONSO** on May 15, 2022.



O.L. of Guadalupe Fraternity in Red Bank, N.J., celebrated the Rite of Admission of **JOAN CURCIO** on March 5, 2022.



CONGRATULATIONS

INQUIRERS

On April 2, 2022,
MELISSA BAHR AND
ROSEMARIE SPEDALIERE
(*IN CENTER*) were
Welcomed into the
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Fraternity in
Red Bank, N.J.



On April 10, 2022,
NIMBLE HIPOL was Welcomed
into the Sacred Heart Fraternity
in Yonkers, N.Y.

On March 19, 2022,
MARISSA LINJOCO was
Welcomed into the St. Peter
Fraternity in Somerset, N.J.

On April 23, 2022,
LORI SNYDER was Welcomed
into the St. Peter Fraternity
in Somerset, N.J.

WELCOME

On January 14, 2022, **ONYINYE PHILOMENA EMEJULU** transferred into the St. Peter Fraternity in Somerset, N.J. Onyinye transferred from St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, in Nigeria, and was Professed on 10/16/2011.

FORMATION TEAM

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Peace to you!

On June 25th, the Regional Formation Team invited all Inquirers, Candidates, and local formators to attend a special session on the Rites of Admission and Profession. We are sharing below, the link to the video of this session. We are hopeful that you will share it with members of your fraternity, especially with the newly professed and those in initial formation who could not attend the session. I have also attached a PDF of the comments made in the breakout groups.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/veLE1dymWPyr9OUArhm3HsWdljcXQoye2IFsuFk0PDBPoPnKA2531UIwB2tyMcc.KzjyDxNLCCGuYil>

Passcode: 1H\$hJBwO (You will need to copy and paste the passcode when asked in order to view the video.)

To those who attended the session, it was wonderful to meet you! We are looking forward to having another session in the not too distant future.

Peace and blessings, Diane (On behalf of the Regional Formation Team)

*Diane F. Menditto, OFS
Chair, National Formation Commission
Formation Director, Our Lady of the Angels Region
Formation Director, St. Francis Fraternity, Hackensack, NJ*

These are the questions you discussed with your breakout groups on June 25th at our session for Inquirers and Candidates.

The comments that were submitted follow.

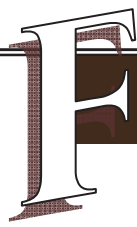
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Pass code: 1H\$hJBwO

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FORMATION TEAM

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Questions to Ponder—Based on the Rites of Admission and Profession

Please give thought (and perhaps jot a few notes) to the following questions for our discussion.

- **+Key Learnings:** For you, what are the four most outstanding parts of the Rites of Admission and Profession? (Underline on your copy.)
- **+Understanding our Promises:** What are we asked to promise that might present a challenge to you? Give an example and tell why it is challenging.
- **+Conversion:** The Holy Spirit speaks to each of us in a very personal way. As you read the Rites of Admission and Profession, how did they touch and change you and bring you closer to God? Give examples.
- **+Discernment:** *The Rites do not transform us into Franciscans. They celebrate the change that has already taken place in you throughout your discernment. We are celebrating the fact that God has called you from the time of your Baptism to live out your life as a Catholic and as a Franciscan. God delights in our acts of love for him. He calls us first. The Holy Spirit has planted the seed of our vocation in us from the very beginning.*
Give an example of how this is taking place in you already.
- **+Key Takeaways:** Please list three key takeaways to living as a Franciscan that the promises you make (made) during these Rites will help you to achieve.

Comments submitted by breakout groups

Submitted by Bernadette Paccione (Group made up of Candidates)

Question #1

To live the Gospel of our Lord
We need to be humble every second of our life
We are all a work in progress
Follow the Rule which makes you feel more focused

Question #2

Pray to God for His graces in order to keep our promise and therefore we need to be careful what we offer to God, We want to be sure that we actually do what we promise Him.
The Rule is a way of life. We need to incorporate it in daily prayer, but first we need to know all the Rules; familiarize ourselves with them.

Question #3

We were born "empty". Baptism from the beginning makes us strong. The Holy Spirit is always guiding and protecting us. We must ask Him what the fear/temptations are and to keep us from them.
Once we retired, we have more time to read the Bible in depth; go to Bible study.
The Holy Spirit "nudges" us. We must be open to what is being spoken to us. Listen. We learn from experiences. We are humbled. Our faith gets stronger and our relationship with God deepens.

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FORMATION TEAM

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Submitted by Sui San Mui (Group made up of Candidates)

1. Key Learning: For you, what are the four most outstanding parts of the Rites of Admission and Profession?

- The opportunity to live our faith in a different way even though married, etc.
- Boosting the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Humbling to stand before the fraternity and witnesses of the Church.
- We are in the presence of God and affirming the vocation of the life of the SFO.
- Everyday conversion and softening to allow the HS to direct me.
- To become closer to Christ.
- Living the Gospel.
- Letting the Holy Spirit direct our lives
- Being non-judgmental
- Following Francis

2. Understanding our Promises: What are we asked to promise that might present a challenge to you? Give an example and tell why it is challenging.

- Binding myself more closely to the Church when there are divisive elements in America against Pope Francis and against the inclusion of LGBTQ+, immigrants, etc gives me pause.
- It is a struggle to love others as God wants us to love others.
- Seeking to understand others is hard.
- It is a challenge to interact with the fraternity when physical connectivity between members has been lost during the pandemic and older members are not able to leave their homes.
- Being the only candidate is a lonely place to be.

3. Conversion: The Holy Spirit speaks to each of us in a very special way. As you read the Rites of Admission and Profession, how did they touch and change you and bring you closer to God? Give examples.

- I experience the Holy Spirit fervently directing my steps to the Rite of Profession. It is life-affirming. I'm feeling a sense of peace from the depth of my heart.
- I am doing the Rosary everyday. My prayer life is deepening.
- Reading the Rite of Profession reignites the fire of my first feeling called into the SFO.
- It is humbling and intimidating - it pulls us toward being bigger than ourselves.

Submitted by Anthony Civiletti (Group made up of Inquirers)

Key Learnings:

Rite of Admission

Lori: "The Church and the Franciscan Family accept and confirm your sincere intention."

Rosemarie: "Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?"

Soon: "The spirit of the Lord will rest upon them..."

Tony: "...that we may live more intensely and faithfully the grace and dedication of our Baptism..."

Rite of Profession

Lori; Tony: "May the Holy Spirit confirm you in the work He has begun..."

Rosemarie: "You have been called to give witness to the Kingdom of God..."

Soon: He renews the promises of our Baptism..."

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FORMATION TEAM

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Understanding Our Promises:

Lori: The challenge to give witness when overwhelmed or frustrated.

Rosemarie: The challenge to persevere through overwhelming duties.

Soon: Maintain the narrow path and live a humble life.

Tony: Maintain a spirit of fervor and perseverance throughout my Christian/Franciscan journey.

Conversion:

Lori: The Rites provide a sense of family with Fraternity and confidence that the Holy Spirit will guide me.

Rosemarie: Confirmation of an ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit and for Him to be our guide and provide us with the graces that we need.

Soon: Live by the Holy Spirit to draw closer to God and have confidence in His abiding love.

Tony: Through our Baptism and Confirmation, to draw upon those graces to freely accept His invitation to strengthen our Franciscan journey.

Submitted by Adam Kuczynski (Mixed Group—Inquirers and Candidates)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Alignment with the Church's teaching
 - Speaking to the ultimate connection to God.
- Mystical promptings of the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit works in many ways, and will continually work within us and around us.
- Alignment of Gospel life through the lens of St. Francis
- Striving to live the Gospel with St. Francis as a guide.
- This is not easy, but a worthy conversion.
- The simplistic lifestyle can be difficult and even confusing, but ultimately rewarding.
- Importance of learning the Rule
 - This is not a club, but rather a community and life commitment.
 - The Rule will help with the journey and conversion.
- Importance of biography of St. Francis
- God shows the way through St. Francis, and he serves a figure to help us yearn for that conversion.
 - He is also active in our lives – not just a historical figure .

Discussion Notes:

Rites of Admission/Profession

Noraima:

Renewal of baptism

Receiving the gift of His grace – outstanding for me

Reminding of us that Jesus died on the Cross for us for love of us

Strengthen our union with God

Lydia:

Before we can get to the rite of admission – we are supposed to be Baptized and Confirmed.

We belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

We are ready to follow the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare.

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FORMATION TEAM

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Charleen:

Living the Gospel life, fully bringing that into your life

As I read, I think about the biography we are working on of St. F and how he lived the Gospel and how I have to try to get to that point – which is a big mountain to climb.

Baptism- Focusing on I came as a baby through baby and now I am this point in my life and what is expected of me – my parents and Godparents were there to support me through the infancy. Now I am at the point of my life where I am trying to attain to a higher standard through my formation.

Understanding our promises:

Nina:

Live in magisterium with Church and with Gospel. I am still struggling with that – the simplicity of that? Knowing we are loved and a child of God? And though that we have a vocation to be a Christ among others? That is my challenge, what is the formation of St. Francis that sets up apart? I would love to have some feedback from others.

Charleen:

I would say to say there are challenges that I am going to see going through this because I didn't realize how you have to be so simple in your – I have a lot of distractions in life – you are living the live the quintessential American middle class life – it does not subscribe to the St. Francis life – simplistic poor my biggest challenge in my brain – where should I be where what should I have and what I shouldn't have. Like St. F gave everything away – I can't do that – I have all these things and I am living my life. To get to that point where we are living bare minimum – I don't I guess that is the mountain to climb – to see what we need and what we don't need. I guess you have to look through the lens of St. F – and you get there over time.

Elizabeth:

For me, it is actually joining the Franciscan decision. I was Baptized catholic but atheist for 35 years. When I came back I started looking for a nice model of how to live Gospel life. I went to Assisi two times and I felt this call to be part of the Franciscan family. I would already think that I have an idea how to live the Gospel call – conversion is a continuous process. It is a choice for me. I was touched by Diane when it is the softening of the soul for it to grow. I am being fed. The rules and St. F and the Gospel – I believe that I t will not be a struggled anymore – not the preconceived notion but an idea how what the Gospel is all about from the Dominicans, NeoCats, Jesuits, but the Rule and the Tau, but I don't know why it had a special touch to me. I felt the closeness to the community – even though I didn't know the rest of the people. The key learning for me the value of my Baptism although the background in the family is basically agnostic. But I am so thankful my parents Baptized me as a Catholic and now I can embrace that as a Franciscan and St. Francis as a oneness with the gospel. You can almost not separate the Gospel from St. Francis.

It is not a promise that if I break then I will be punished but that I will be conscious of it and live the Gospel through St. Francis and other saints. Divested a 5-bedroom house to a 1-bedroom and working to a minimalist life and I am happy house. Conversion for me is process for me and will continue until I love this earth. I am so thankful for this.

Conversion:

Adam:

The conversion is so much deeper than just a self-help – but heavily involved with the Church. It is deeper than I thought – because of this intertwining of the Church and the SFO. It is that realization that this conversion is continual – because the goal is so immense. However, that does not scare me away, rather it encourages me to strive to continue to reach for it, exactly because it is so immense. It speaks to me that it is of God, and therefore, it is sometime to yearn for – and it encourages me that this community will help me continue that conversion.

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FORMATION TEAM

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Lydia:

Before I select the SFO, I was already with the Dominicans – St. Mary’s – what we do is we always pray the rosary in the church. First, I became a high school teacher and I always teach the rosary. Then when I came to the rosary it suddenly changed my mind when I encountered the bio of St. F because he lived a very, very simple life. I used to buy things, and now I am very thrifty and if I have money I give money to those who are in need. Love to help the people who are very sick and sometimes I care for those who are in the hospital. That is what became of me when I became a Franciscan.

Nina:

Youngest of 5, simple and quiet – Sr. Trinity, I called her my second mother, she ran the shop in the Franciscan basement – I would go to her and she would give me permission to do the stations of the cross outside – I would find myself there sitting by the Blessed Mother – I have been tied to nature and simplicity of nature. How the forces of nature have this attraction to me without my request. As a result, my father introduced me to St. Francis at a young age because I was quiet and it was relatable. As I read through my formation and saw how intelligent St. Francis was, and bringing the wealthy merchants back to the church - but were marginalized because of their wealth. St. Francis showed the pope that these gifts were God-given. Also, he believed in simplicity of just walking away when his words were not heeded go walk away and preach to the fish.

I had mystical experiences with God’s creation and realized there was something more going on in my life that could be humanly explained so I expressed myself to St. Francis.

I was finishing my divine office, I started hearing music. I turned off office, it was a beautiful string playing – had a mystical experience before- all I could attribute is it preparing me today the music of heaven was welcoming into this discussion and one of many mystical experiences, I have had without prompted. I just continue to thank God.

Those are the kinds of discernments- the Lord prompted in direction with the Holy Spirit – I embrace that – I used to be afraid. The Lord does hear us and answer us in mystical ways. I want you to take away that – it is not just what we can understand when it comes to the intercession of the Holy Spirit through the holy way of St. Francis.

Submitted by Marissa Limjoco (Group of Inquirers)

Key Learnings

- Called by the Lord, acknowledge presence of God and turn to him in prayer, moved by the Holy Spirit
- Renew our faith
- Holy Spirit gives us the courage to sustain our formation
- Take our baptism and confirmation and take it further
- Rehearing the word of the Lord through St. Francis
- How to attain is by living our religion everyday
- Living the gospel life
- Rebirth, renewal
- Formation gives new light and new teaching

Understanding our Promises

- Maintain teachings of the church as presented by St. Francis
- Live the gospel way of life
- Go through catechism, virtues, etc.
- Typically take easy way out, now rethink (e.g., usually avoided homeless, now pray or give them a smile, transform internally)
- Take opportunities to evangelize, not to criticize

Conversion

- Renew and rekindle love for religion

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FORMATION TEAM

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- Belief in God got stronger with each fraternity meeting
- Harder to practice what we promise or to change
- Holy Spirit constantly speaks to me
- The rite itself may not bring change, but internal transformation
- Encourage sacrament of reconciliation, eucharist, to be united with the Lord and living the life of Christ

Submitted by Susan Mary Leydon (This group was made up of formators)

Key Learnings

Rite of Admission:

- + Readings (soulfully read *Romans* and *Responsorial Psalm*) are special, supportive, who we are and are becoming
- + Receiving of "*The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order*" book to carry in purse/pocket. sharing it with Priests/Pastors, the secular
- + Tau Cross

Rite of Profession:

- + Opportunity to invite & evangelize through sharing the *Ritual* (written) with attendees, "*Missalette*" hand-out to attendees to take home (St. Francis quotations, Liturgy, beauty); video/photos as thank-you's to all.
- + Recalling the beauty and significance of our own Professions with each other (fraternity) and others (secular); how we felt, stand-out moments, fruits
- + Damiano Cross

Understanding our Promises (Challenges)

- + Holy Gospel lifelong, need to live it in our encounters in the secular world.
- + Holy Spirit, leaning on for when we feel challenged in prayer, focus, discerning
- + Some fraternities have no Spiritual Advisor/Assistant - Invite as Guest Speakers to initiate discernment
- + Touched by Profession so much, caused trembling (taken very seriously)

Conversion

- + See the face of Jesus in every face (soul)
- + Reliance on Holy Spirit more as Guide, right words to say, Gift & Fruits more now than before
- + Holy Spirit is the channel to us from the Trinity; As we follow, we are in union with the Triune God
- + Day of Pentecost (Scriptures) reflecting the speaking in all languages
- + Daily, at times hourly

We shared much Franciscan humor. laughter, wisdom, and fraternal respect/compassion

- * Our Franciscan vocation/ideals/etc. are useful as Catechists, RCIA, Church ministries, Grandparents,...
- * Each discussed our current formation meetings; formats, benefits of technology, zoom meetings, hybrid meetings, adapting to the Covid climate, need to resume human contact, what's working and what's not.
- * We will share resources through e-mails to each other.
- * Agreed these meetings are beneficial ("great" "a gift"), we share what we have in common, ideas, challenges. That WE ARE NOT ALONE !!!

IMPORTANT NOTICE:
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A Day to Remember

by MARY STRONACH, OFS

On Monday morning, November 15, one hundred Chapter participants woke up anticipating another day of work and adventure. Their morning agenda featured a forty-minute trip on three busses through the winding streets of Rome, with an amazing view of Roman ruins and medieval sculptures.

After arriving at the Vatican, they found that they would have to go up approximately 300 winding steps and go through halls covered with Renaissance art. The journey, however, was not to provide an intense cardiac experience, nor to study the art and architecture. And, despite their huffing and puffing, nothing else mattered; they had entered the vast room where Pope Francis would meet them for a private audience.

That room was Clementine Hall, also smothered with wall and ceiling art.

In the front rows with Minister General Tibor Kauser and his wife Agnes were members of the Presidency Council, the General Spiritual Assistants and the CIOFS volunteers, spouses and staff. After being given the protocol to be followed, the Pope's staff, dressed in dark suits and tuxedos, ensured that all was set for the Pope's entrance. The photographer and cinematographer were in place, the OFS group was given instructions: only applaud when the Pope enters and leaves, no shouting greetings like "viva il papa." And, "You may remove your masks."

Once the Pope entered and sat at his papal chair, Tibor shared the Secular Franciscan story and charism.

Seculars in the room who were able to understand the Italian experienced joy, pride, a true sense of belonging, a realization that our Order held importance in the church, and with that importance, also came responsibility – to be witnesses in the world, to bring the Gospel to life and life to the Gospel. He closed with the moving words: "We are convinced that this way of life, for which God has called on us, is a beautiful life, and our vocation is a grace and a privilege. We must be grateful for this call from God and do our best to live accordingly. For this we must always keep in mind what St. Francis said in the last days: 'Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, because so far we have made little or no profit!'" (1 Cel. 103).

Continued on next page.



Pope Francis meets with members of the Secular Franciscan Order (Vatican Media)

Continued from previous page.

The Pope spoke to the Assembly next. His message resounded with a call for the Secular Franciscans to be witnesses in the world, to bring the message of Christ's love and then, he said, "I remind you of Francis' desire that the entire family remain united, certainly with respect for the diversity and autonomy of its various components and also of each member. But always in a lively mutual communion, to dream together a world in which we are all, and all feel, that we are brothers, and working together to build it (cf. Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti*, 8): men and women who fight for justice, and who work for an integral ecology, collaborating in missionary projects and making yourselves artisans of peace and witnesses to the Beatitudes."

To everyone's surprise, a private audience this time actually meant an individual greeting – hearts started beating harder as the anticipation grew. And we had been provided some specific instructions: The Vatican staff reminded us that the Pope is a man just like all others and didn't need any special treatment (easy for them to say; they see him every day). But, they prepared us: "When you go to meet the Pope, do not kiss his ring, do not kneel. You may say something briefly, shake the Pope's hand and then move on."

As we waited our turn to meet Pope Francis, we kept asking ourselves, "what would we say?" My husband's simple words put my thoughts to rest: "Your holiness, we're celebrating 50 years of marriage this year."

The pope's face lit up with a smile and he gave us a personal blessing. As we moved on, the papal assistant gave each of us a blessed rosary as a memento. But, more than that, each of us had our own moment. Our own special memory which we will always carry in our hearts... and, thanks to the papal photographer, even our own individual photo with the pope.

Our faith, our spiritual journey, our secular Franciscan charism were lifted to a new level of commitment on that beautiful day. We were Secular Franciscans and WE had met the Pope. He spoke with us as his brothers and sisters. He reached out, asking for our support to care for the Church, God's people, and God's creation. If we didn't know it before, we knew it then.



An historic event for the OFS

by ATTILIO GALIMBERTI, OFS

We often do not realize that we have just experienced a historic event until after the wave of emotions has washed over us. This is what it was like for the members of the General Chapter of the OFS and the Franciscan Youth in November 2021

Article 1 of our Rule states, among other things, that the Franciscan Family unites all members of the People of God -- laity, religious and priests -- who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi.

Following in these footsteps, 812 years after Francis and his first companions went to Rome to Pope Honorius III to be confirmed in their choice of life, the members of the OFS from throughout the world, gathered in Rome in their General

Chapter, returned to the Lord Pope Francis on 15 November 2021, for a private audience which will undoubtedly be a significant event in our Order's journey.

In comparing this meeting with what the Franciscan sources tell us about that meeting more than 800 years ago, it is no surprise that we can find many similarities.

Back then Francis went to the Pope to receive confirmation of the model of evangelical life that he planned to lead, and which responded to the model preached by the Church, and therefore to receive his *beneplacit* to live it. Today, the minister general of the OFS, Tibor Kauser, in his greeting, reconfirmed the commitment of the members of the Order "to live in full communion with the Pope, the

bishops and priests, in a trusting and open dialogue of apostolic creativity" (cf. OFS Rule, Art.6) being present and available where no one else is ready to serve, "in the hospitals, parishes, on the streets, in homes for the elderly, helping and serving the poor, but poor themselves, at the side of the infirm, although sometimes being infirm themselves". He also mentioned that we too, members of the OFS, "seek to respect and protect creation, nature, and every human life throughout its course"

The Holy Father's reply, following some general thoughts on the lay vocation that is born of the universal call to holiness, entered the specific nature of what it is to be a Secular Franciscan. For a Secular Franciscan

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Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS, addresses Pope Francis.

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the call to holiness brings, according to the words of Pope Francis, “a conversion of heart attracted to Him who is the only Holy One, who is ‘the Good, All Good, the Highest Good.’ ... This is what makes you penitents. In his Letter to All the Faithful, St. Francis presents doing penance as a journey of conversion, a journey of Christian life committed to doing the will and the deeds of the Heavenly Father”.

In the process of conversion, the Holy Father reminds us, it is God who takes the initiative and leads the penitent to places where he or she may have never wanted to go, and if he or she let themselves be led and agree to place themselves at the service of others, doing mercy with

them, the result is happiness (cf. the Testament of St. Francis where he speaks of the lepers)

“This”, the Pope stated, “is what I urge you to bring about in your life and mission,” without confusing “doing penance” with the “works of penance”.

After having invited those present to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the heart of the Franciscan charism, to follow it *sine glossa* and making it their form of life, he concluded this passage stating that “in this way it will be the Gospel, or rather Jesus Himself, who will shape your lives in such a way that you can take on poverty, minority and simplicity as your distinctive signs before all.”

The next passage of his address is what marks what I have called a historic event because in it Pope Francis actualizes the mandate that the Rule and Constitutions give to all the professed members, but which we always tend to underappreciate and esteem.

In the previous passage he had invited us to follow the Gospel and recalled what our distinctive signs should be. Now he tells us (and his words are sweet but strong if taken *sine glossa*):

“With your Franciscan and secular identity, you are part of the ‘outgoing Church.’ Your preferred place is among people and there, as lay men and women, celibate or married,

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priests and bishops, each according to his or her specific vocation, to bear witness to Jesus with a simple life, a life without pretense, always content to follow the poor and crucified Christ I encourage you, too, to go out to the margins, today's existential margins, and to help the Word of the Gospel resound there... and like the fraternities of penitents who characteristically founded hospitals, dispensaries, soup kitchens and other concrete works, ...so too the spirit is sending you today to exercise the same charity with the creativity required by the new forms of poverty. ... And may you be men and women of hope committed to living and organizing it, translating it into everyday concrete situations, in human relationships, in social and political involvement... living in fraternity and realizing that you are part of the

great Franciscan family”.

Conversion, following the Gospel *sine glossa*, bearing witness in concrete situations, men and women of hope, social commitment... how many times we spoke of these in our formation meetings, in our gatherings, but unfortunately, perhaps all too often they remained as a topic of discussion without these words and all they express becoming action or, to put it in Franciscan terminology, “becoming flesh”....

The Holy Father, certainly enlightened by the Spirit, read our hearts and, in a few words, reconfirmed what should be the life's program of all Secular Franciscans: let actions follow your words, and he specified what our role in the Church today should be, because this is what the Church needs from Secular Franciscans.

It is for these reasons that I consider this meeting “historic”, which takes us beyond the joy of having experienced the emotion of a private Papal audience.

So, “let us be led” where God wants us to be. And the priorities expressed a few days later by the General Chapter lead us in this direction.

And now: “Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God” and do what the Pope has told us to do, “for up to now we have done little or nothing” (cf. 1. Cel 103) and whatever the Lord tells us is our part (not through some extraordinary communication but simply through the situations in which we find ourselves living, in the persons we meet, with their needs and their gifts, and the voice of our Councils at every level and aided by the *altius moderamen* of our Spiritual Assistants.)



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

Consilium Internationale
Via Vittorio Putti, 4/int. 6 - 00152 Roma
Tel. +39 06.45471722 Fax +39 06.45473094
E-mail: ciofs@ciofs.org
www.ciofs.org

Prot. n. 3476

Roma, 3rd of June, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Celebrating the feast of Pentecost, I invite all of you to pray and ask God to grant us the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that we may live our vocation and our fraternal spirit, and serve the fraternities and those who need our service, in an always better way.

Let us ask the **seven gifts of the Holy Spirit** focusing now on fraternal life, on our vocation, on our identity.

Let us ask for the gift of **wisdom**, so that we may test the things we face to see whether they are from God and thus for the good of our brothers and sisters, or not.

Let us ask for the gift of **insight**, recalling what pp St. John Paul II told us: *Duc in altum!* Let us go, and be not afraid of the depth, let us do not remain on the surface, in the shallow! Let us discover the beautiful depth of our vocation!

Let us ask for the gift of **council**, because in this world it so often is really hard to discern, to speak properly, to stand for the right and just. Let us ask the grace of this gift, which helps us to do the best for our brothers and sisters.

Let us ask for the gift of **strength**, amidst the many things that want to weaken us, that want to take away our conviction, that want us to give up our firm position, even to give up our Secular Franciscan identity. Let us ask for this gift specially for those who are living in extremely great difficulty, in war or in any kinds of crisis.

Let us ask for the gift of **knowledge**, so that we may know what is good and what is evil, what should we do to strengthen our fraternities and what should we avoid.

Let us ask for the gift of **piety**, in order to put always God into the focus of our thoughts and of our acts, into the focus of the life of our fraternities. Let us *put prayer and contemplation be the soul of all* what we are and what we do. (cf. OFS Rule 8.)

Finally, let us ask for the gift of the **fear of God**, because our fraternities need brothers and sisters, who put the will of God above their personal interests and plans.

With these simple thoughts I wish you a blessed feast of Pentecost!

Tibor Kauser
CIOFS general minister