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Secular Franciscan Order in the USA.



Artist: Peter O'Neill <http://oneillgallery.com>

LETTER FROM OUR REGION MINISTER

APRIL, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As I write this to you, the cold weather is finally beginning to ease and Easter will be upon us before we know it. With cold feet and warm hearts, many of us have been dreaming of all the beauty of spring and the new life it brings.

All of creation was important to St. Francis.

In it he saw the “vestiges” of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Following Francis’s example, Article 18 of our *Constitutions* calls us to care for all creation:



“Moreover, they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which ‘bear the imprint of the Most High,’ and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.”

Paragraph 4 of the same article tells us that we

“...should work with others in efforts that both put a stop to polluting and degrading nature...”



LETTER FROM OUR REGION MINISTER *continued*



With this in mind, I have shared with you this month some pictures I have taken over the years of the beauty of nature. As you view them, please give some thought to what you and your fraternity can do to be “good stewards” of God’s wonderful gift of creation.

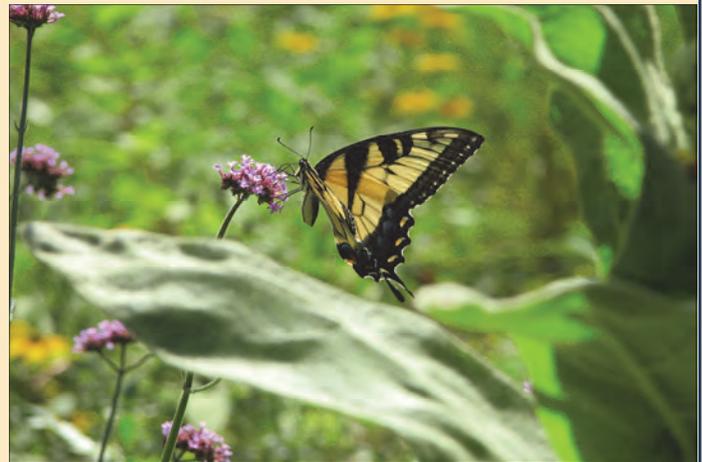
If any fraternity has an apostolate that is dedicated to the environment, we would like you to share this with us, perhaps through an article for the *Troubadour*.

If you have a good idea, your brothers and sisters would love to know about it!

I am looking forward to seeing you at Convivenza on April 25th.
Details have been sent to you and also appear on page 5 in this issue.

May our risen Lord Bless you and inspire you every day of your life.

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





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OF THE
ANGELS
2014-2017
REGION
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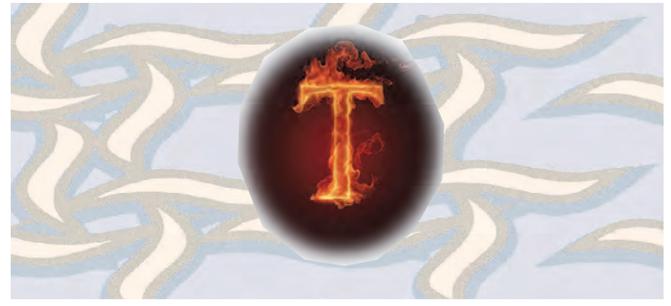
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2015 REGION CALENDAR

*Mark your Calendars,
details will follow.*



O.F.S. GENERAL MEETINGS

CONVIVENZA

— See page 5

Saturday, April 25, 2015
Holy Name of Jesus Parish, West 96th Street, NY, NY

FORMING THE FORMATOR WORKSHOP

— See page 8

Saturday, May 16, 2015, 9:30a.m. — 3:00p.m.
St. Bonaventure's Church, 174 Ramsey Street, Paterson, N.J.
Open to all local Formation Directors, Formation Teams,
Spiritual Assistants and anyone else interested in Formation.
Brown Bag lunch. **RSVP by May 1st via phone or email.**
Contact: Ed Wojciechowski, OFS, Region Formation Director
Phone: 973-492-1035
Email: Edwojo@yahoo.com

REGION RETREAT

— See page 15

Friday, July 31 — Sunday, August 2, 2015
Mount Alvernia Retreat Center, Wappingers Falls, NY

NAFRA ANNUAL CHAPTER

October 13-18, 2015
Our Lady of the Angels Region will host
the National Fraternity Annual Chapter.

O.F.S. CLUSTER MEETINGS

MANHATTAN CLUSTER MEETING

Saturday, May 2nd — 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
St. Francis of Assisi Adult Education Center, Meeting Room # 4
135 West 31st St., New York, NY 10016
Contact: Pat Clayton, OFS, Region Manhattan Councilor
Phone: 917-502-9895
Email: Reap.clayton@gmail.com

NORTH JERSEY CLUSTER MEETING

Saturday, May 30 — 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Location: St. Francis of Assisi Church—Lower Hall, Hackensack, NJ
Guest Speaker: Jim Andreano who will address Environmental Issues.
Contact: Ron Pihokker, OFS, Region North Jersey Councilor
Phone: 973-497-4291
Email: Pihokkro@rcan.org

Photo credit: Diane Menditto, OFS and Ed Wojciechowski, OFS



CONVIVENZA

OUR REGION'S ANNUAL UNITY DAY
A FRATERNAL GATHERING OF FRANCISCAN JOY

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2015 | 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Church of the Holy Name of Jesus | 207 West 96th Street
New York City, NY 10025 | 212-749-0276

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: FR. MATTHEW A. PRAVETZ, O.F.M.
TOPIC: JOY OF THE GOSPEL

- AGENDA (INCLUDES):**
- Registration and Coffee: 9:00 a.m.
 - Morning Prayer.
 - Talk — Joy of the Gospel — Fr. Matthew.
 - Questions and Small Group Sessions
 - Holy Mass celebration, Homily continues Joy of the Gospel theme.
 - Brown bag lunch, refreshments provided by host fraternity, ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS.
 - Power Point presentation by Diane Menditto: Joy of the Gospel and the OFS Rule.
 - Group Sharing.

A VERY SPECIAL DAY IS PLANNED—DON'T MISS IT.

FR. MATTHEW A. PRAVETZ, O.F.M.

Father Matthew is a native New Yorker, growing up in the College Point section of Queens before entering the Franciscan Order in 1964. A graduate of St. Francis College, Brooklyn, most of his full-time ministry has been in the field of education. Early in his career was spent at the secondary level as teacher and administrator in Brooklyn and Long Island.

Fr. Matthew was ordained to the priesthood in 1979 by the then Bishop Theodore McCarrick.

After completion of his training at New York Medical College specializing in the field of clinical anatomy, Father Matthew has been on the faculty of the medical school since the early 1980's where he is presently the director of Medical Gross Anatomy. He teaches medical students and resident physicians in the surgical subspecialties. In addition, he is involved in the medical ethics curriculum.

Fr. Matt has been the Spiritual Assistant to St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity (96th Street in Manhattan) since 2008. It is his first time serving as a Spiritual Assistant, and he says that he is learning a lot!

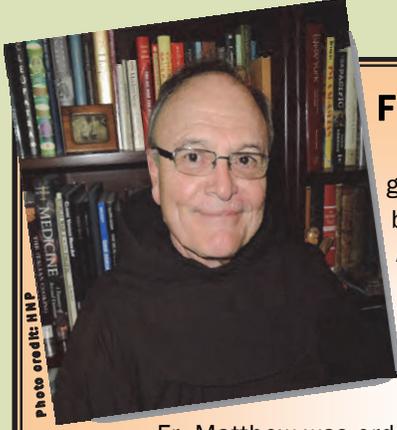


Photo credit: RHP



FRATERNAL TIDINGS

congratulations

ELECTIONS & PROFESSIONS



Photo credit: Diane Menditto, OFS

**Election results of March 11, 2015
St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, NYC.**

Council as pictured in the opposite photo L-to-R:
Fr. Matthew Pravetz, OFM, Spiritual Assistant
Dorothy McWhite, OFS, Secretary
Peggy Ledger, OFS, Minister
Madge Cooke, OFS, Vice Minister
Daisy Guzman, OFS, Treasurer
Gloria Harris, OFS, Councillor

Missing from Photo: Rufus Davis, OFS, Formation Director

Welcome new Inquirers

Sacred Heart Fraternity, Yonkers, NY welcomed new Inquirers in February.

Pictured in photo L-to-R:

Barbara Egan, OFS, Formation Director
Fr. Maurice Moreau, OFM Cap.,
Spiritual Assistant

Inquirers:

- Alice Glover • Charles Aviles
- Cheryl Jenkins • Evelyn Hickey

Benedicta Fonacier, OFS, Minister
Everlyn Pacheco-York, OFS, Vice Minister



Photo credit: Frances Acosta, OFS

HAPPY EASTER

to all our Franciscan
brothers and sisters

from your

Regional Executive Council

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS



DAWN RUSINKO, OFS, CLEM
YOUFRA CHAIR
OLTAR Region
DawnRusinko@yahoo.com

SHINE is the new name for OFS youth and young adults in the U.S. Christy and Sue Nelson, OFS chose this name because they feel it is reflective of our spiritual light shining brightly.

The focus of *Shine* is to bring the next generation of Catholics closer to Christ through Franciscan spiritual experiences. *Shine* will include all youth under the age of 18 and young adults 18-34.

The goals are to create local, regional and national experiences for Catholics 35 and younger to explore their faith through Franciscan charism and to enjoy these experiences while having interactions with OFS members.

This interaction will entail OFS Fraternities participating in community activities, formation, and prayer together with prospective youth. The objective is to encourage early-lifetime profession to rebuild the Order by prioritizing reach-out to young Catholics.

VISION FOR 2015

- Guiding fraternities to form a mindset that will include the youth.
- Initiate two SHINE Ambassadors to participate in two meetings per year advising the council on how to better reach their peers.
- Host two SHINE activities per year.
- Pray for leaders and new leaders to step forward into servant leadership roles.



The World Meeting of Families (WMOF) is a triennial global event that is taking place in Philadelphia this year with Pope Francis in attendance.

Archbishop Charles Chaput~
"I believe that this event has the power to transform, in deeply positive ways, not just the Catholic Church, but our entire community."



To attend the conference or just learn more details can be found at:

Website: <http://www.worldmeeting2015.org>
Facebook: [World Meeting of Families 2015](#)
Twitter: [@WMF2015](#)



Highlights of the event include not only the Pope's visit, but an International YouFra gathering and Cardinal Sean Patrick O'Malley, OFM as one of the keynote speakers.

If you are interested in helping me to animate and guide Fraternal life to encompass more families and youth please contact me.

Pax et Bonum,
Dawn Rusinko, OFS, CLEM

EASTER: 2015

by
ED WOJCIECHOWSKI, OFS
Formation Director
OLTAR Region
edwojo@yahoo.com

A Time for Formation and Conversion



AS Secular Franciscans, we profess to conform our “thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls ‘conversion.’” (*Rule, Chart 2, Article 7*)

One of my favorite conversion stories appears in the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Easter. (*John 20: 19-31*) This Gospel narrative tells the story of the Apostle Thomas and his journey from doubt to belief. After the death of Jesus, Thomas was fearful; he did not fully understand the mission of Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and to rise from the dead in three days. The experience of the passion and death of our Lord on Good Friday was so great that Thomas was overcome by fear and needed physical evidence of Jesus’ resurrection. The mere testimony by his fellow Apostles of the resurrection was not enough for Thomas! He needed to “see the mark of nails in his hands” and “put his finger into the nail marks” to remove his doubt. All of his doubts and fears were erased when Thomas later encountered Jesus and proclaimed “My Lord and my God.” (*John 20:28*)

The Gospel account of Thomas reminds us that no one is perfect and that we all experience times of doubt and difficulty. Doubt creeps into our lives when fear and uncertainty takes up residence in our hearts and souls.

BUT HOW DO WE AS SECULAR FRANCISCANS OVERCOME OUR DOUBTS?

One way is through our personal commitment to a ‘continually renewed journey of conversion and of formation.’ (*OFS Constitution, Article 8, paragraph 2*)

The OFS Constitution provides a roadmap for our formation as Secular Franciscans when it directs us to meditate “on the Word of God” and deepen our Franciscan vocation “by studying the writings of St. Francis, St. Clare and Franciscan authors.” (*OFS Constitution, Article 44, paragraph 3*)

I often turn to Franciscan writings, especially those of St. Anthony of Padua, for guidance and inspiration.

In his Sermons for the Easter Cycle, St. Anthony tells us to place our trust in God so that He “may grant us peace, absolve us from our sins, and take away all doubt from our hearts.” (*St. Anthony of Padua, Sermon on the First Sunday after Easter*)

So then, let us follow the advice given by St. Anthony and use this Easter Season as a time for renewal and conversion as we place our trust in our loving and merciful Lord.

Let us fraternally support each other as ‘Brothers and Sisters of Penance.’

As part of our Region’s ongoing commitment to formation, the Regional Formation Team is planning to hold several events throughout the year.

On **May 16**, the Formation Team will be hosting a “**Forming the Formator**” **W O R K S H O P** that is open to all Formation Directors, Formation Teams, Spiritual Assistants and anyone with an interest in Franciscan Formation.

A letter will soon be sent out to all Ministers, Formation Directors and Spiritual Assistants in the Region with further details about this workshop.

Also, I encourage everyone to visit our regional website:

www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org



often for more information about this workshop and other formation events.

**A Blessed and
Happy Easter
to you and your
loved ones,**

Ed Wojciechowski, OFS

LENT 2015

BAG OF RICE FOR AFRICA

by
JADWIGA SZABLOWSKI, OFS
Minister
Divine Mercy Fraternity
jagasz63@wp.pl

Under this motto, the Divine Mercy Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in Clifton, NJ, in unity with the Franciscan Province of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Gdansk, Poland, collects Lenten Alms for the poor of the World.

The symbolic 100-gram bag of rice is often the only meal for many throughout the day. The young people of our parish help the fraternity fill the bags with rice to give out in return for a donation. The bags of rice are distributed in the parishes, and obtained offerings will be forwarded to the Poor in Africa, specifically in Kenya, where the Franciscans of the Province of St. Maximilian in Gdansk are ministering.

The Franciscan Brothers have been serving the Missions in Kenya for over 30 years; helping the poor, the sick, leading schools, orphanages and health centers.

Since 2010, they are also building the National Marian Shrine in Subukia. This Ministry requires a lot of dedication, patience, and time, but also financial resources.

Following the voice of the Gospel, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me." (Mt 25: 40)

We would like to respond to the Voice of the Lord; by contributing Lenten Alms to help not only the Poor, but also ourselves. May the Lord bless you!

Jadwiga Szablowski, OFS



THE OPEN WINDOW



Beginning at 12 Noon
on Holy Saturday,
visit each room of your house.
Open a window and say the
following prayer. Continue
until you have visited all rooms
saying the prayer each time.

by
DIANE F. MENDITTO, OFS
MINISTER
OLTAR REGION

Each year at this time, I like to share a tradition that my mother's family had. On Holy Saturday, at 12 Noon, we opened the windows and said a prayer welcoming Jesus into our home. The prayer was in Italian. After Mom passed away, I tried to capture the meaning in a new prayer. If you would like to carry on the tradition, the prayer is below. Many blessings for Holy Week and Easter. —Diane

**"Lord Jesus Christ, remove from this house
and my heart all anger and bitterness.
Cast out all evil through this open window,
and come into my home as a most welcome guest.
Fill this house and my heart with the fresh air of
your love and the healing power of your Resurrection.
Remember, also, those who have gone before us in faith,
especially _____
That they may rejoice with you in Paradise this Easter."**

Prayer Excerpts
from the

HOLY HOUR FOR PEACE



**“We have
been called to
heal wounds,
unite what
has fallen apart and
to bring home those
who have
lost their way.”**

**St. Francis
of Assisi**

Opening Prayer

Father, you have given all peoples one common origin. It is your will that they be gathered together as one family in yourself. Fill the hearts of mankind with the fire of your love and with the desire to ensure justice for all. By sharing the good things you give us, may we secure an equality for all our brothers and sisters throughout the world. May there be an end to division, strife, and war. May there be a dawning of a truly human society built on love and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

Litany of Peace

Lord, have mercy. R. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy. R. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy. R. Lord, have mercy.

The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace. Nm 6:26
R. Lord, grant us peace.

May the Lord bless his people with peace. Ps 29:11
R. Lord, grant us peace.

Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. Ps 34:15
R. Lord, grant us peace.

I will listen for the word of God; surely the Lord will proclaim peace. Ps 85:9
R. Lord, grant us peace.

Love and truth will meet; justice and peace will kiss. Ps 85:11
R. Lord, grant us peace.

Too long did I live among those who hated peace. Ps 120:6
R. Lord, grant us peace.

When I spoke of peace, they were for war. Ps 120:7
R. Lord, grant us peace.

The Divine Praises

Blessed be God.
Blessed be His Holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ,
true God and true man.
Blessed be the Name of Jesus.
Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy
Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit,
the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God,
Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and
Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary,
Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be Saint Joseph,
her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in His Angels
and in His Saints.

Closing Prayer

God of Compassion, hear the cries of the people of Syria, Iraq, Africa, Ukraine and all areas of the world where there is war, persecution, suffering, and death. Comfort those who suffer violence. Console those who mourn the dead. Give strength to all neighboring countries to welcome the refugees. Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms and committed atrocities. Protect those who are committed to peace.
God of hope, inspire leaders to choose peace over violence and to seek reconciliation with their enemies. Inflammate the universal Church with compassion for all victims of violence and war. Give us hope for a future built on justice for all.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and Light of the World. **All: Amen.**



by
NANCY CONROY, OFS
St. Benedict the Moor Frat.
New York City, NY



Photo credit: Amelia Jalandoni, OFS

News reports of mounting violence and atrocities in the world confront us daily. We may feel collectively sickened by vivid coverage of extreme acts of persecution on the evening news. How are we, Catholics in the Secular Franciscan Order, dedicated to living the gospel life, called to respond?

St Francis of Assisi remains enormously popular and the well-known patron saint of peacemaking. We recall the words of St Francis to his family:

“We have been called to heal wounds, unite what has fallen apart and to bring home those who have lost their way.”

Horrific, demoralizing acts of violence in the Mideast, Nigeria, and other parts of God’s world are not happening at a great distance. The suffering, grief, pain and fear of our brothers and sisters of all faiths affects us in a very intense and personal way because we are members of the same family, created by God in His image. Violations against human dignity around the world are committed against us, as well. Many of us may feel paralyzed over the enormity of evil and uncertain over what we can meaningfully do to fulfill our responsibility to bring the gospel to this urgent crisis. I draw attention to a famous quote by Dr. Martin Luther King:

“History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period...was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.”

Jesus promised he is in our midst when two or more are gathered in His name. What is more powerful than the will of God? Do we truly rely on the power of God and trust in His love? We have a great tradition in the Catholic Church of gathering as a community of believers, coming together in perfect faith and with complete confidence that our prayers are heard by God and always answered.

God our Father desires that we turn to Him at all times, especially in times of great trial. The gospels do not call us to the sidelines, but to ever-deepening engagement in the world. We dedicate ourselves to illuminating our world with the light of Christ’s love and mercy, and to using our voices to promote reconciliation and healing. Our faith fills us with hope and confidence in the power of Christ’s love conquer evil.

In response to our shared anguish and pain over the death and persecution of countless, innocent victims in the Mideast and the world over, a Lenten Day of Reflection and Holy Hour for Peace (*based on the USCCB Holy Hour for Peace*), sponsored by the *Manhattan cluster of Our Lady of the Angels Secular Franciscan Region and St Benedict the Moor Fraternity*, was held on February 28, 2015 at St. Francis of Assisi Church on West 31st Street.

Fr Steven Mimnaugh, OFM, gave a talk on the Charism of the Peace Prayer of St Francis in the morning session, and Deacon Luke Conroy, OFS, lead the Holy Hour for Peace and delivered a Lenten homily in the afternoon session.

The Secular Franciscans extended the invitation to all parishioners, in multiple parishes. The event was well attended and feedback very positive!

Participants joined their hearts in ardent prayer and song before the Blessed Sacrament for the victims of violence, world leaders, and the souls of the enemies. Many of those present stated they will include the Litany for Peace in their daily prayers and asked for another opportunity to gather before the end of the year.



by
VALERIE MORENO, OFS
St. John Vianney Fraternity
Colonia, NJ

THE TEACHER AT THE POOL

Based on the Gospel account

Like many others, I was brought to the pool early that day. Unable to move, I was carried on my mat to the edge of the gentle water as a gesture of hope and some silent determination of others.

Yes, I had hope too, though the dark wind of weariness pulled at the hem of my tenacity. Every now and then, an angel of God would stir the serenity of the water and for a brief time, healing would be given to those who reached the flow first.



Day upon day, this precious gift came to others around me. Leaps and shouts of unspeakable release would ring across the sun-swept ground as those freed from sickness and despair testified to God's glory.

Nearly trampled by suffering souls seeking the blessed touch of the angel, I was left to the bleak circumstance of paralysis and the clumsy attempts of neighbors who tried to get my motionless form into the pool in time. They were too late every time.

The sun beat down like heavy linen this day as I was left at my usual spot awaiting God's angel. I was thirsty and my head ached from the thickening heat, making my eyelids close from descending sleepiness and pain. My heart seemed to weaken under a cloak of weary sadness. Those I'd come with had gone off, leaving me in the midst of the downtrodden and cast-asides like me.

A change in the restless heat caused me to open my eyes, a shadow falling across my vision. It was the form of a man, sturdy and steady, clothed in the poorer garb so familiar to me. His feet were dusty with dirt, ordinary meager sandals covered his feet.

Dark hair flowed about his kind, unassuming face his eyes met mine, the color of the blue sky above. He gazed at me as I lay there looking into those eyes that were gently reading my very soul. I felt no fear or intrusion, just a deep, sweet sense of calm and acceptance.

"Do you want to be healed?" His fine, soothing voice seemed to flow through every part of my body, heart, mind and spirit. My eyes glistened, yet I was neither humiliated or embarrassed. Holding his gaze, I said, "Yes, but each time I am put in the pool, I am too late."

He listened to my words and the endless agony behind them. Slowly, he crouched beside me. I could not, would not, take my eyes from his as he reached out and touched my arm.

"You are forgiven," he said with sublime authority. "You are healed." His face broke into a confident smile. "Rise, take up your mat and walk."

Soothing warmth began coursing through muscle, vein, and organs. Liquid energy rose and tingled through legs and feet, arms and hands long unused. It was as though soft flames were rising throughout my being.

I had no hesitation. I pushed up with steady arms and found myself on my feet and legs that held. He was still smiling, standing now as I drew up the prison of my mat and held it on my shoulders. I could not speak or cry out, yet I understood that he read my heart and the awareness came to me that his authority was not earthbound.

continued on next page



continued from page 12



Much later, he was put to death under claims of treason—the hardest death of all—crucifixion.

I was among the throngs who lined the way to Golgotha, some came to curse him. I followed his sad, horrific steps weeping freely.

He'd been beaten close to death before the tumultuous walk with the thick cross, already crimson with his blood. A crown of large thorns dug into his scalp. He remained three hours hammered to that cross.

Many strange things took place after he was crucified—darkness, torrential rain, earthquake—all recorded in writing and by spoken word.

It's said he is risen, seen in Jerusalem, then ascended into the heavens. I ponder ... I wonder.

He was more than a mere man—look at my healthy limbs and decide.

I know what he did for me. I believe. I can never forget his touch, soothing voice, the reality of pure love and sincerity in his blue, blue eyes.



A Call to Holiness

by
DOLORES JULES, OFS
St. John Vianney Fraternity
Colonia, NJ

I wonder what I have to do
to find the best in me.
Can God give me a little hint
and help me what to see.

It may not be the easiest,
my will must have a say,
“the easy way is better,”
will I choose the holy way?

The call must be fulfilling
to give up what we crave.
How much will you be willing?
How much will you save?

To abandon all your pleasures,
do you think it would be right?
But God will give the guidance
and you will see the light.

I give the call to each of you
to enter deep inside,
To know the good that you must do
and let it be your guide.

Can you perceive the holiness
in the way you lead your life?
Show them the way to others,
but do not show the strife?

So what do you imagine
might well become the call,
or will it be much too hard,
are you afraid to fall?

With the call to holiness show
God that you are willing,

And, even though, unworthy
in the end will be fulfilling.

Don't know the way to holiness
or what you might endure,
Let God guide your footsteps
and you will be secure.



THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

by
JIM QUILLINAN



The simple story of the Road to Emmaus, like most Gospel stories, has many meanings. The two disciples walked on this road out of Jerusalem – shattered beyond belief. They had pinned their hopes on the restoration of Israel on this itinerant preacher – so much hope for the future, and now, He was dead. They were so bound up in their own grief and misery, that they did not recognize Him as He walked with them and talked to them. They spent the whole day with Him thinking He was a stranger.

Some biblical commentators say that it was more that they did not know Him before the resurrection – they thought they knew Him, however, this is the real Jesus; their eyes must be opened before they can recognize Him. The miracle of the resurrection enables them to see Him for who He really is, for what He really is, not what they imagined Him to be. What was partially seen, is now fully realized!

Mary Magdalene encounters Jesus outside the tomb – thinking He is the gardener she asks where have they taken Him. When Jesus calls “Mary” she recognizes Him. She simply did not expect to see Him – how often that is with us! We can sometimes encounter God and Jesus in the most unlikely of places and in the most unlikely of people. They don’t fit our ideas, our pre-conceived notions! The miracle of Easter has much to do with opening eyes.

What prevented the disciples from fully recognizing Jesus is removed. In some ways, they were meeting Jesus for the first time. Removing the blindfold or transforming the blurred vision takes a bit of work – Jesus spent the whole day with these two disciples before they could see Him in His actions. That ‘day’ as it were, is the symbol of a lifetime’s journey.

There is a story told about two monks, one elderly and one youthful. The young monk was returning from his annual retreat. Waiting for him was the older monk who always criticized and even belittled him. “Out wasting time again,” the old monk greeted his companion, “Out swanning around again? And in spite of your very expensive retreat, you still look no different to me.” The young monk replied – “Ah well, maybe. However, you look different to me!”

The Emmaus Story is about transformation, about finding the Risen Christ. In other words, finding the Risen Christ can be a lifetime’s journey for each of us – removing the blindfolds that prevent us from seeing Christ, from seeing the image of God in others. Who in my life reveals something about God to me? Is there anyone who has touched me most with the presence of God?

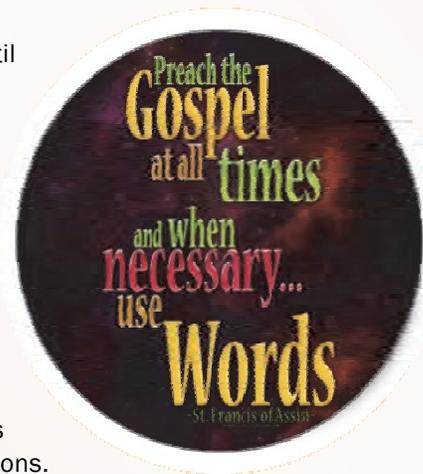
These two disciples on the journey to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus until He broke bread with them. Their eyes were opened and they finally recognized who He was. In other words, they recognized who He was by His actions.

When they recognized Him by His actions, they could hear what He said.

There are times when we cannot ‘hear’ the message people want to tell us because they lack credibility – their actions do not ring true.

Christian witness, the Church tells us, is the first act of evangelization, the first way we introduce people to the message of Jesus. First in time and first in importance. Do our actions as Franciscans, or friends, or parents, or workers in any part of the vineyard stir those questions in others?

The old adage (often attributed to St. Francis) that action speaks louder than words remains true today – people hear us in our actions.



2015 REGION RETREAT

We will once again be utilizing the beautiful facilities at Mt. Alvernia Retreat Center in Wappingers Falls, New York, for our regional retreat from **July 31 – August 2, 2015**. The cost is \$175.00 per attendee.



OUR RETREAT MASTER IS FR. THOMAS HARTLE, OFM

Fr. Tom is a member of the Friars Minor of Holy Name Province and currently resides at St. Anthony's Friary in Butler, NJ. In the truest sense, Fr. Tom is an itinerant preacher. In addition to offering retreats, he also conducts pilgrimages to Assisi and Rome. Fr. Tom has the privilege of being the Spiritual Assistant to the Holy Name Federation of Poor Clares.



Photo credit: HNP



Join your Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters at our annual region retreat where you will share time in prayer, fellowship and spiritual growth. Additional retreat information will be available soon, but remember space is limited, so mark-your-calendars or if you prefer, register now using the form provided below.



Photo credits: Diane Menditto, OFS and Ed Wojciechowski, OFS

2015 REGION RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

Please check one Professed Candidate

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Fraternity: _____ Single room Double room

Special Needs: _____ Room with: _____

Send completed registration form with \$175.00 check, payable to "Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity" to: RICHARD SPANA, OFS • 332 Warburton Avenue, Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706 • Phone: 914-478-2010.

The Registration Form is now available on our region website at: <http://ourladyoftheangelsregion.org>



FRATERNITY SPOTLIGHT



Photos credit: Diane Menditto, OFS

by
ED ATWOOD, OFS
St. Francis Fraternity
Hackensack, NJ



ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY

The fraternity was founded in 1926 as an Italian-speaking fraternity with the first three professions taking place in April of 1927.

The English-speaking fraternity was established in January, 1962.

The fraternity is located in Hackensack, NJ.

FRATERNITY MEETINGS ARE HELD

ON THE 2ND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH,
7:30–9:30 P.M.

ST. FRANCIS CHURCH HALL
50 LODI ST.
HACKENSACK, NJ 07601

MINISTER:
ED ATWOOD, OFS

CONTACT EMAIL:
Dianefmdfm@aol.com

FRATERNITY WEBSITE:
<http://franciscanhackensack.tripod.com>

St Francis Fraternity, Hackensack, NJ, is located in the County Seat of Bergen County, NJ. One of our neighbors is the Bergen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center.

According to their website, *“The center is designed to serve individual men and women who are homeless, individuals and families who are precariously housed, and others who require linkage to community services.”*

As one of our fraternity apostolates, we collect new hats, gloves, scarves, warm socks and small toiletries to help the residents of the shelter stay warm throughout the winter. From December-through-March, members bring these items to our monthly gathering.

Some members ask their friends to donate items instead of bringing hostess gifts to their holiday gatherings. Other members knit the scarves to be donated. Those who attended our recent North Jersey Cluster meeting saw one of our members knitting a scarf while participating in the Cluster discussions! At that time, we also invited the other fraternities in our Cluster to help us next year.

We also have enlisted the collaboration of our parish Youth Ministry in adding to what we collect. The young adult group and the Confirmation group, announce the collection to the parish at Masses and in the bulletin.

They have a collection box at the entry of the church on four Sundays during the winter months. Their appeals have been very successful. Donations from the parish and from the fraternity are dropped off at the Center frequently during the winter.



L-to-R: Pat Moclair, OFS and Pat Franz, OFS.

continued on next page

TELEVISION EVENTS



The epic **"A.D. The Bible Continues"** picks up where the smash hit, "The Bible" left off, continuing the greatest story ever told and exploring the exciting and inspiring events that followed the Crucifixion of Christ. The immediate aftermath of Christ's death had a massive impact on his disciples, his mother Mary, and key political and religious leaders of the era, completely altering the entire world in an instant. Watch as the disciples struggle to survive and share their beliefs, guiding us from the sorrow of Christ's ultimate sacrifice to the awe-inspiring wonder of the Resurrection and the Journey & saga of the early Christians as the early Christian church begins!

On NBC beginning Easter Sunday, April 5th, and continuing for 12 weeks!

"Beyond A.D." the first-ever NBC Entertainment Digital talk show companion series, will launch on **Sunday, April 12**, just one week after the premiere of "A.D. The Bible Continues". On Sunday mornings, 9:00 a.m., available on Facebook, Instagram, and Tweeter, make sure to enter: **#ADTheSeries**. Hosted by Jason Kennedy, each episode of "Beyond A.D." will be taped weekly before a live audience at the Real Life Church in Southern California. The half-hour digital companion series will serve as a discussion platform. It will cover both the historical and spiritual topics depicted in the broadcast and offer the chance for fans and audience members to interact with cast, producers, and special guests.

continued from page 16

We recently received a heartfelt thank you from the Director of the Health and Human Services Center which said in part,

"...we appreciate that you have taken the time to consistently think of those less fortunate and what their needs may be.

Your compassion and generosity supports the Center and its guests in the daily effort toward rebuilding lives and regaining hope."



Bergen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center.

2014

THE DAY OF THE 4 POPES

A recap of CNA/EWTN News



It was dubbed 'the day of the four Popes,' an unprecedented occasion in the history of the Church. The April 27, 2014 ceremony led by Pope Francis was attended by 87-year-old Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who rarely ventured out of seclusion during the previous year when he became the first pontiff in 600 years to step down.

'It was an event that Rome had never seen in its history:

The canonization of two Popes in the presence of two living Popes,' said Monsignor Liberio Andreatta, the head of the Vatican agency for pilgrims.

Pope Francis made that point clear in his homily, praising both men for their work associated with the Second Vatican Council, the groundbreaking meetings that brought the 2000-year-old institution into modern times. John convened the council while John Paul II helped ensure its more conservative implementation and interpretation.

Rome had prepared for the event, dubbed by one Italian newspaper, *il grande P-Day* for months. Twenty giant screens were set up throughout the city to relay the ceremony in multiple languages to those unable to squeeze into St. Peter's Square.

Hundreds of thousands of Catholics poured in from around the world, and more than 4000 coaches converged on Rome from across Europe.

The ceremony was attended by 19 heads of state, 24 heads of government and dozens of cardinals. Two giant tapestry portraits of the new saints had been draped from the front of St Peter's Basilica.

Relics of the two former pontiffs were presented to the giant crowds; for John Paul II, a vial of his blood.

For John XXIII, a piece of his skin, removed from his corpse when it was exhumed for his beatification in 2000.

2015-2016 A HOLY YEAR OF MERCY

A recap of CNA/EWTN News



POPE FRANCIS announced an extraordinary jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, to highlight the Catholic Church's "mission to be a witness of mercy." "No one can be excluded from God's mercy," the pope said March 13, marking the second anniversary of his pontificate by leading a Lenten penance service in St. Peter's Basilica. "I frequently have thought about how the church can make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy," he said during his homily; that is why he decided to call a special Holy Year, which will be celebrated from **December 8, 2015 until November 20, 2016.**

The biblical theme of the year, he said, will be **"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,"** an admonition that applies "especially to confessors," the pope said with a smile. Traditionally, every 25 years the popes proclaim a holy year, which features special celebrations and pilgrimages, strong calls for conversion and repentance, and the offer of special opportunities to experience God's grace through the sacraments, especially confession.

Extraordinary holy years, like the Holy Year of Mercy, are less frequent, but offer the same opportunities for spiritual growth.

The doors of the church "are wide open so that all those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness," Pope Francis said at the penance service, which featured individual confessions. It was part of a worldwide celebration of "24 Hours for the Lord," in which Catholic churches were staying open for prayer,

Eucharistic adoration and confession. At each of the dozens of confessionals in St. Peter's Basilica, as well as in simple chairs scattered along the walls, priests welcomed people to the sacrament. The pope removed his liturgical vestments and went to confession before putting on a purple stole and hearing the confessions of others. "God never ceases to demonstrate the richness of his mercy over the course of centuries," the pope said in his homily, which preceded the confessions. God touches people's hearts with his grace, filling them with repentance and a desire to "experience his love."

"Being touched by the tenderness of his hand," people should not be afraid to approach a priest and confess their sins, he said.

In the confessional, one has "the certainty of being welcomed in the name of God and understood, despite our misery."

"The greater the sin, the greater the love, which the church must express toward those who convert," Pope Francis said.

The Gospel reading at the penance service was the story of the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. Every time one goes to confession, the pope said, "we feel the same compassionate gaze of Jesus" that she did. Jesus' love, he said, allowed her to draw near, to demonstrate her repentance and to show her love for him.

"Every gesture of this woman speaks of love and expresses her desire to have an unshakable certainty in her life, that of having been forgiven."

"Love and forgiveness are simultaneous" in the story of each person, just as in the story of the sinful woman, he said. "God forgave her for much -- for everything -- because he loved her much." Through Jesus, the pope said, God took the woman's sins and "threw them over his shoulder, he no longer remembers them."

Jesus' encounter with the woman took place in the home of a Pharisee named Simon.

Unlike the woman, the pope said, Simon "isn't able to find the path of love. He remains stopped at the threshold of formality. He is not able to take the next step to encounter Jesus, who brings salvation." The Pharisee is concerned only with following God's law, with justice, which is a mistake, the pope said. "His judgment of the woman distances him from the truth and prevents him from understanding who his guest is." Jesus scolds Simon, pointing out how the "sinful woman" has shown nothing but love and repentance, the pope said. "Jesus' rebuke pushes each of us to never stop at the surface of things, especially when dealing with a person. We are called to look deeper, to focus on the heart in order to see how much generosity the person is capable of."

Pope Francis has asked the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization to coordinate preparations for the Holy Year so that it would be "a new stage in the church's journey in fulfilling its mission of bringing the Gospel of mercy to each person."

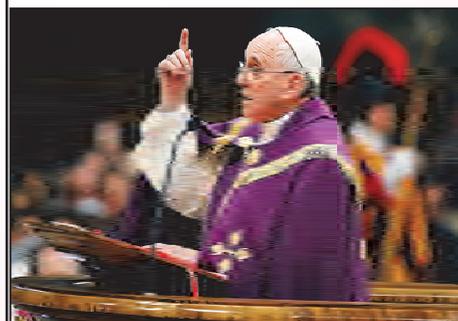


Photo credit: CNS photo by Paul Haring

THE EUCHARIST AS THE SOURCE OF LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT FOR FRANCISCAN COMMUNITIES

by
FR. ARKADIUSZ
MIROSLAW CZAJA, OFM

The Holy Eucharist commemorates the agony, death and rising from the dead of the Son of God. The very word "Eucharist" derived from the Greek language means "thanksgiving." It is the source from which the Church exists and continues to grow. Celebrating the Holy Mass is an activity of Christ and the Church; when the Redeemer, through a priest, offers Himself as a sacrifice to God the Father for all people. He gives Himself to the faithful as spiritual Food that will nourish them on their path to holiness. The Eucharist is a sign of unity of all Christians, therefore, active participation in the Eucharist on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is very important, as it indicates the way and strengthens men and women on the way to salvation.

The Eucharist aids the constant renewal of a personal bond with God by cherishing spirituality, typical of Saint Francis's charism, and gives Franciscan communities strength for missionary activity. It is also the source of life and development as well as a sign of unity of all Franciscan communities worldwide, which follow Christ in their lives as the Saint of Assisi did. The Saint treated the Holy Eucharist with great reverence and paid it respectful worship.

While adoring Christ, he was deeply moved by the humble submissiveness of the Son of God, who wanted to stay with us under the appearances of bread and wine and exhorted us to receive Him in Holy Communion. This humbleness and the invitation to the Eucharistic Feast arouse the feeling of deep humility in Saint Francis's heart together with the desire to dedicate his life to the service of Jesus.

We should remember that the Eucharist is the central and most important focus of living with God and people in Franciscan spirituality. Therefore a sacramental life, which enables a person to live through and ponder the living presence of Jesus Christ, is characteristic of Franciscan spirituality.

Through the vows of profession, the Franciscan devotes himself to God, which is done consciously and voluntarily. Through the vows of profession, he responds to the call, dedicating his life to serving Christ in a special way. The vocation for living Franciscan spirituality means being a Christian and following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Christ is the center of Franciscan spirituality, therefore Franciscans are encouraged to participate in the Holy Mass frequently, to study the Word of God and to try to find the time for spiritual meditation and prayer every day. Prayer makes life meaningful, strengthens and stimulates us to serve God with passion and to serve people, which is associated with doing by performing our Christian duties conscientiously.



continued on next page

Frequently Asked Q & A of the Regional



Recently I have been receiving phone calls from various fraternities concerning problems they encountered opening new accounts or changing signatories on existing accounts. This is due to the new IRS regulations banks are required to follow.

Realizing the vast majority of our fraternities were formed prior to regionalization it was common practice to use the tax identification number assigned to the province the fraternity was bonded to. After the region was formed all fraternities should have obtained their own tax identification number.

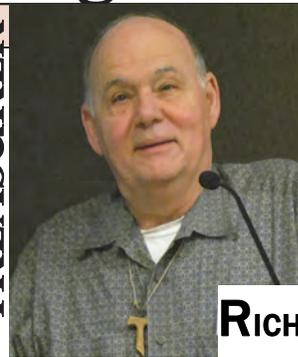
To obtain this ID number go to the IRS website and complete form SS-4 Application for Employer Identification Number.

Under section 9a check Church or Church controlled organization. The IRS will notify you of the number assigned to your fraternity.

Take this notification plus a letter signed by the secretary stating the name and possession of each of the signers and the date they were elected.

You also may want to take a copy of the current fraternity minutes with you.

TREASURER



RICHARD SPANA

Remember each bank has different requirements. In case your bank requires letters stating you are a tax-exempt organization, please contact me at rickspanasfo@aol.com and I will forward a Department of the Treasury notification. 

The regional elections were last November and since then we had been attempting to add Diane Menditto, OFS, Regional Minister, as a signatory to the regional checking account. This was just accomplished last week.

Tip- If you deal with Chase bank, in your correspondence always refer to the minister or vice minister as minister/president and vice minister/vice president. Also note, the secretary must be a signatory on the account

continued from page 20

These particular principles of living are entirely compatible with the real Franciscan ideal. The Franciscan ideal of living is still attracting many people all over the world in our times, as it did in the past, attracting those who are striving for evangelical excellence. Fascinated by Saint Francis's example, all members of the Franciscan Family are trying to do their best to follow Jesus Christ, living in fraternal communities, committing themselves with public vows to keep the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, and devoting themselves to apostolic activity.



Saint Francis also teaches us to take care of the sacred places we have been given, such as churches, chapels, altars, sanctuaries, and graveyards. The Saint of Assisi was very strict when it came to poverty, however, he spared no expense on Eucharistic worship. He insisted that the brothers should make an effort to keep churches, altars, and other items used to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice clean. Saint Francis reminds us that a sacred place where the Holy Mass is celebrated should be clean and beautiful. He suffered greatly when a church or chapel he entered wasn't clean and neat. Therefore, when going to preach the Word of God, he would bring along a broom in order to clean the church when he saw that it had been neglected. Hence, it is the Catholic's and even more so the Franciscans' responsibility to take care of sacred places where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated.

Saint Francis of Assisi, whose way of living is based on the Eucharist, is an example of love of God and people. For him, the measure of love is the ability to follow Christ in His poverty. He wanted to become like the Savior - by becoming a servant to everyone. The Saint becomes poor and humble following Christ, who became poor and humble for us and for our salvation. The salvific suffering of Christ was the source of contemplation for St. Francis.



FRATERNAL TIDINGS

by

RONALD L. PIHOKKER, OFS

COUNCILOR - North Jersey

OLTAR Region

pihokkro@rcan.org

Northern New Jersey Cluster Gathers

Finally, after a delay of several weeks due to a snowy winter interruption to plans for a meeting in January, the fraternities of northern New Jersey gathered in the Church Hall at St. Bonaventure's Church in Paterson on Saturday morning, February 28th. Between 50-60 participants gathered on a cold, but crystal clear morning to share fellowship, engage in dialogue and hear about upcoming plans as well as contribute to the plans for future cluster gatherings.

Ron Pihokker, Regional Councilor for Northern New Jersey led the membership in morning prayer followed by an impromptu presentation on the Holy Spirit and a reflection on the Hebrew name of God—Yahweh— as the sound of our breathing. (The presentation was an on the spot improvisation because a technical equipment failure made a planned video impossible to view.)

This was followed by table discussion and sharing. After a break, fraternities present took turns in sharing their upcoming plans and their recent accomplishments. Members took the opportunity to share their upcoming plans and events, and heard about the plans of the Region in hosting the upcoming November National Elective Chapter. Members were quick to respond to the call for volunteer assistance.

Ed Wojciechowski, Regional Director of Formation discussed future plans to develop cluster level initial formation gatherings at which those in initial formation from all of our cluster fraternities will be invited to join together for a presentation and sharing in line with the intention of the General Constitutions.

The local fraternity of St. John Vianney and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, which meets at St. Bonaventure's, provided a wonderful welcoming atmosphere with lots to eat and drink. Many thanks to Marie Palazzone, fraternity minister, for her help in organizing the refreshments and for rolling out the red carpet for the brothers and sisters.

The meeting ended with a prayer of blessing by Brother Doug Soik, OFM Cap., Regional Spiritual Assistant.



Photos credit: Diane Mandito, OFS and Ed Wojciechowski, OFS



**OUR LADY OF
THE ANGELS
REGION
COMMUNICATIONS
TEAM:**


**The TROUBADOUR
&
e-TROUBADOUR**
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**REGION WEBSITE
ADMINISTRATOR
DIANE F. MENDITTO, OFS**

REGION WEBSITE
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angels region.org/](http://www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org/)


**YAHOO LIST ADMINISTRATOR
PEGGY LEDGER, OFS**

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


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DIANE F. MENDITTO, OFS**



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Order/257320867672618](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Our-Lady-of-the-Angels-Region-Secular-Franciscan-Order/257320867672618)


**REGION DATABASE
ADMINISTRATOR
ANNA GERACI, OFS**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Troubadour newsletter is a communications vehicle published by Our Lady of the Angels Region. It is published in 2 formats— printed and electronically.

- The printed version named, *The Troubadour*, is published twice yearly in March & October, and is mailed free to all professed members and Candidates of the region.
- The electronic version named, *e-Troubadour*, is published monthly and is available on our Region website or by email only. It is available to all professed and Candidate members of the region with e-addresses from our database.
- If you do not have computer access to a website, it is recommended you speak with your fraternity Minister and try to set up a buddy system.
- Please notify me if you have a change in your name, address, phone, e-mail address or membership status. Please fill out the form below and surface mail to Anna Geraci, OFS, 161-B Cross Slope Ct., Manalapan, NJ 07726, or e-mail me at: TroubadourEditor@aol.com Please write **TROUBADOUR** in the subject line.
- Note that all changes submitted are also applied to the NaFra database which we maintain for our region. If you are a professed member or Candidate and are currently not receiving a copy of the *Tau-USA* National newsletter, please notify me. —Editor

• CALL FOR ARTICLES •

Wherever you see the spirit of St Francis at work in the world, in your lives, in your fraternity and in your hearts—we want to hear from you. Come Share With Us.

• DEADLINES •

The Troubadour / *e-Troubadour* format is published on the 1st week of the month. All submissions for the next issue must be received by the 15th of the preceding month. **Submissions for our next issue, *e-Troubadour*, May 2015, are due by April 15th.**

• ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS •

- The right to copy all material printed in the Troubadour is granted provided you credit the Troubadour and author.
- Not every article received may be published in the upcoming issue. Every consideration is given for publication in a future issue.
- When submitting articles for publication consideration, don't forget to state fraternity name and location, as well as your name and address.
- All photos and original art will be returned upon publication completion.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Please change (or add) the following information to the region database:

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail address

Fraternity Name and Location

Date of Profession

Date of Candidacy

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS
REGION
SECULAR FRANCISCAN
ORDER



Francis go and repair
my house.



OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS
REGION COMMUNICATIONS

REGION WEBSITE: www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org

e-TROUBADOUR (MONTHLY BY E-MAIL ONLY) **AND**
The TROUBADOUR NEWSLETTER (PRINTED TWICE YEARLY):
<http://olangels.tripod.com/troubadour.html>

YAHOO GROUP: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OLTARegion>



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