



THE **Troubadour** MAGAZINE
CONNECTING SECULAR FRANCISCAN FRATERNITIES THROUGHOUT OUR REGION.

SEPTEMBER
2017

PUBLISHED BY OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGION
OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER — USA



FEAST OF
St. Francis of Assisi
OCTOBER 4

Good St. Francis,
you loved all
of God's creatures.
To you, they were
your brothers and sisters.
Help us to follow your example
of treating every living thing
with kindness.
Amen.

LETTER FROM THE REGIONAL MINISTER

“Transformed by love, Francis’s life became a song of praise to his Beloved.

Indeed, Francis saw beauty everywhere:

in the simplest flower, in the poor,
suffering Christ, in the leper,
in the outcast and in the stranger.”

“The key to recognizing and
experiencing Beauty lies in the ability
to see it where it manifests itself.”

INGHAM, MARY BETH.

*REJOICING IN THE WORKS OF THE LORD:
BEAUTY IN THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION: 6
(The Franciscan Heritage Series)
(p. 10-11). Franciscan Inst. Pubs.
Kindle Edition.*

Photos credit: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I write this, Summer is drawing to a close. Looking back, over the past four months, I realize that I have experienced Beauty in many different ways both in nature and in fraternal contact with you, my brothers and sisters.

I’d like to share with you where I have found Beauty recently.

All through the Spring and Summer, I, along with other Regional Executive members and our Spiritual Assistants, have had the privilege of **visiting many of our fraternities** for elections and Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations. In every case, we were welcomed with open arms and experienced true Franciscan hospitality. Each fraternity is trying its best to live the Rule on their journey to the Father. They are all open to suggestions and are animated by the chance to make their fraternities stronger.

In May, and then again in June, we offered special gatherings on the **Prayer Life of the Secular Franciscan** for those in Initial Formation. The Holy Spirit was truly present on those days! How wonderful it was to see the interest, enthusiasm and emotion that our Inquirers, Candidates and Formation team members showed. There were bright eyes and open minds and hearts—even a few tears of happiness. It was truly inspiring to me—**Beauty was definitely shining through.**

I hope that we will do something like this again very soon.

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LETTER FROM THE REGIONAL MINISTER

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In July, my sister-in-law and I visited San Diego, California. We experienced the beauty of nature—flowers, butterflies, the Pacific coastline and sea lions sunning themselves as we visited Coronado, La Jolla and the San Diego Zoo (Pandas!).

We also attended Mass and prayed at **three of the 21 missions** founded by Franciscan Friars in California—Mission San Diego (founded by St. Junípero Serra); Mission San Luis Rey and Mission San Juan Capistrano (also founded by Saint Serra) with its beautiful basilica.

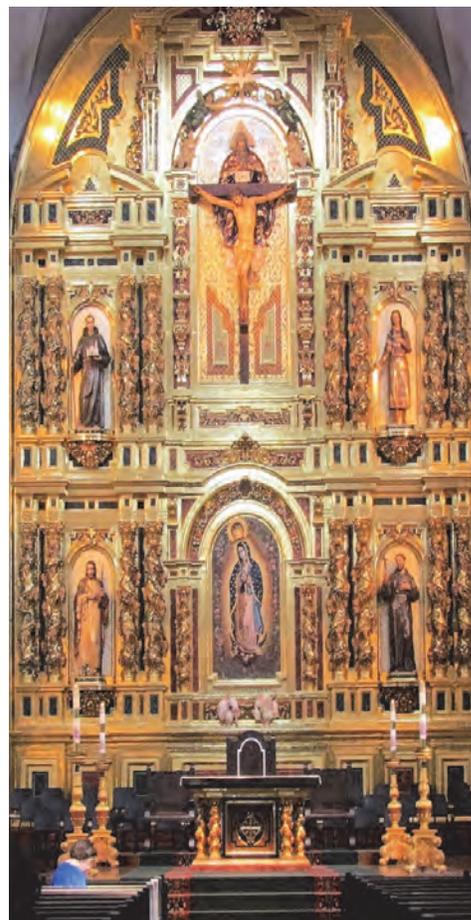
However, it was not only the beauty of nature that made this a very special trip, but the beauty I see in my sister-in-law who has become like a sister to me since my brother's death.

At the end of July, many of us were together at our **Regional Retreat**.

The theme of the weekend was **Conversion**.

Here we experienced the beauty of **God's forgiveness** in an atmosphere of prayer—both contemplative and devotional.

Thank you to **Nancy Conroy, OFS** and her team for making this another outstanding experience for our regional family. I pray that Nancy's dream of building a "robust retreat team" will come to fruition through prayer and collaboration.



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LETTER FROM THE REGIONAL MINISTER

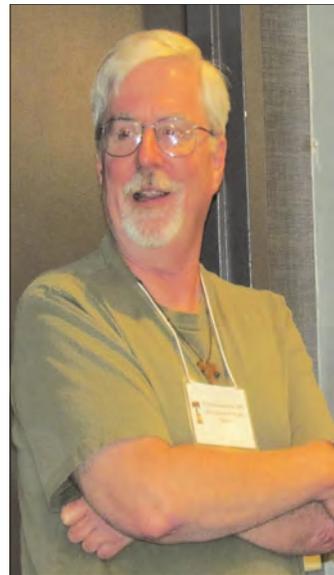
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In August, our Regional Formation Director Ed Wojciechowski and I attended the **National Formation Workshop** in St. Louis.

Once again, there was an opportunity for collaboration and sharing—this time on the National level.

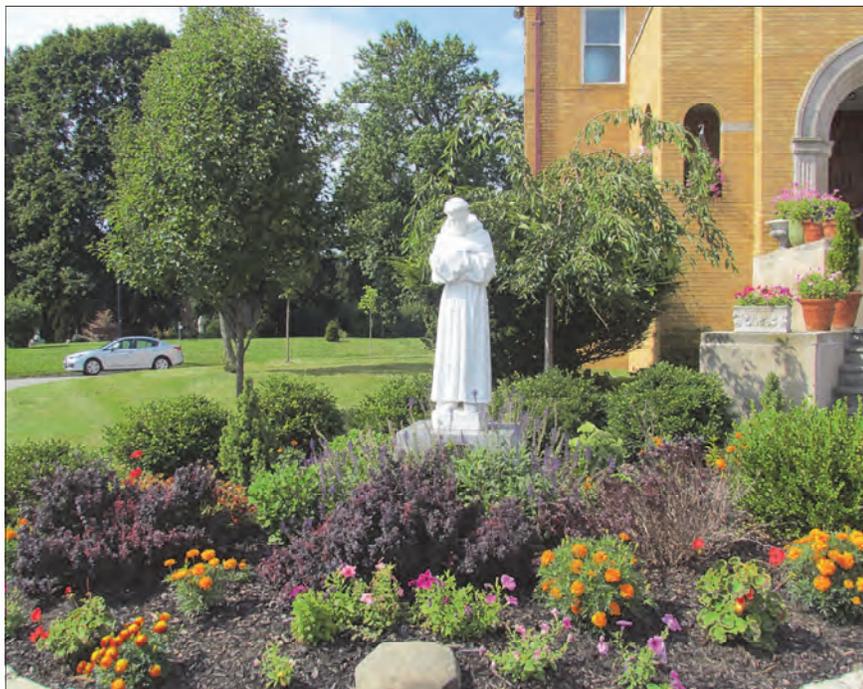


According to what the participants shared during and after the workshop, they appreciated the opportunity to learn from the National team and from one another. I was certainly moved by their good hearts and willing spirits.



Beauty with a capital B shows us **what God has created**, the **vestiges or foot prints** that He has left for us to follow on our journey to Him. If we pay attention, **Beauty** can be found in a fraternity gathering, in a workshop or in a vacation because **Beauty** is found in **RELATIONSHIP**. The beauty that we see in nature helps us to remember the **relationship** of the Father with all creation.

We find Beauty in the **love** we have for our families—relationship. And, as Franciscans, we are particularly blessed by **Beauty as we find it in fraternity**. This, too, is a result of the **relationship we have with one another and with God in the Most Blessed Trinity**.



May we always recognize and experience Beauty in one another and in creation. In this way we can be with God in the overflowing Love of the Trinity at every moment of every day.

Peace and blessings,

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



**OUR LADY
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ANGELS
2014-2017
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2017 REGION CALENDAR

GENERAL MEETINGS



**CHAPTER OF MINISTERS - ELECTIVE CHAPTER
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2017**

9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH
50 LODI STREET, HACKENSACK, NJ



PRAYER FOR OFS LEADERSHIP

Give us, O God, leaders whose hearts are large enough to match the breadth of our own souls and give us souls strong enough to follow leaders of vision and wisdom.

In seeking a leader, let us seek more than our own enhancement; though enhancement we hope for more than security for our own plans and vision; though security we need; more than satisfaction for our own selfish wants; though many things we desire.

Give us the hearts to choose and follow the leader who will work with other leaders to bring Your will to the agenda and help us to fulfill it.

Give us leaders who lead us to virtue without seeking to impose their own version of virtue on others.

Give us leaders who will provide for the advancement of our Order without dictating to others to achieve it.

Give us insight enough ourselves to choose as leaders those who can tell strength from power, growth from greed, leadership from dominance, and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity.

We trust You, Great God, to open our hearts to learn from those to whom You speak in different tongues and to respect the life and

words of those to whom You entrusted the good of other parts of this globe.

We beg You, Great God, give us the vision as Secular Franciscans to know where holy leadership truly lies, to pursue it diligently, to ask it to respect the integrity of every person in the entire Order.

We ask these things, Great God, with minds open to Your word and hearts that trust in Your eternal care.

Amen.

Written by
FR. KEVIN QUEALLY, TOR

The National Formation Workshop

In the spirit of gathering together as a Franciscan Family, the National Formation Commission recently hosted a National Formation Workshop for all of the Regional Formation Directors throughout the United States.

The workshop took place from August 17 through August 20 at the Renaissance Marriott Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. This was the same hotel that hosted the “Q” last Summer, so it was a good location for everyone to meet for 4 days of training and fellowship. By-the-way, St. Louis is also named after the patron saint of the OFS whose feast day we recently celebrated on August 25.

It was my privilege and honor to be able to represent our region at this gathering and I'd like to share my experiences of the workshop in this article.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FRANCISCAN FORMATOR AND THE SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

The first talk of the workshop was given by Anne Mulqueen, OFS, she is the Spiritual Assistant to the National Formation Commission.

The purpose of Anne's talk was to help us better understand and appreciate the important relationship and bond that exists between the Formation Team and the Spiritual Assistant and to help everyone understand the responsibilities that exist within that relationship.

We learned that the Spiritual Assistant's primary responsibility is to assist the Formation Team and help them guide and animate formation in the fraternity and the region. The Spiritual Assistant is a valuable member of the Formation Team and should participate actively in every aspect of the formation process. We also learned that the role of the Regional Formation Team is to serve the local formation directors and to provide them with information, inspiration and training for their ministry.

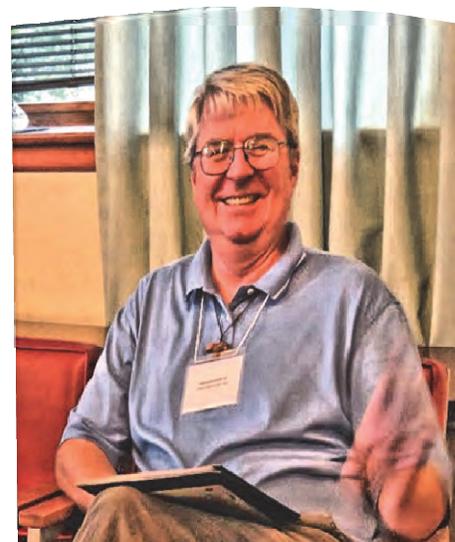


Photo credit: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS

ED WOJCIECHOWSKI, OFS
FORMATION DIRECTOR
OLTAR REGION
edwojo@yahoo.com



Article photos: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS and Ed WOJCIECHOWSKI, OFS

Franciscan Formation is always centered on Christ and the Gospel.

Our Rule tells us that the life of the Secular Franciscan is to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the examples of Saint Francis and Saint Clare.

Formation is ongoing and open-ended. Our formation doesn't end when we make our profession, rather it is a lifelong process of conversion.

As a Franciscan community, we are on a journey of conversion together and we are all called to love and support each other on this journey.

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LEARNING WHO WE ARE, IMPLEMENTING THE F.U.N. MANUAL

After Anne’s presentation, the workshop participants were divided up into groups so that we could create sample formation sessions from the F.U.N. Manual. This working session lasted for more than 5 hours over the next two days and was called “Learning Who We Are - Implementing the F.U.N. Manual”. Our own Diane Menditto, OFS, led this session and helped each of the working groups to attain our goals.

In this session, we learned that we are not teachers, but formators, whose goal is to help those in formation understand what a vocation is, discern whether or not they have a vocation and intensify their understanding of the Catholic Faith. We also learned that Franciscan formation includes the understanding of being a Franciscan and the importance of the OFS Rule in our lives.

After this short presentation by Diane, we broke up into teams to develop formation materials for chapters from the F.U.N. manual. My team was given the assignment of working on the “Vocation, Charism and Mission” chapter in the F.U.N. manual. Each team delivered a short presentation of the materials that they developed and everyone shared with each other what they learned from this exercise.



ONGOING FORMATION — FRANCINE GIKOW, OFS

On Friday afternoon, we were all treated to an excellent presentation on Ongoing Formation by Francine Gikow, OFS. We learned from Francine that ongoing formation is a process of renewal for the entire fraternity that results in developing an environment of continual conversion.

We learned that Ongoing Formation is Trinitarian. As our past National Formation Director, Bob Fitzsimmons, OFS has said, “The real purpose of formation is to set one’s feet on a path leading to an ever-deepening Trinitarian relationship until we can fully say it is Christ who lives in us.”

Francine’s presentation and group sharing was a good way for everyone to wrap up our two long days of efforts at the Workshop. The National Formation Team had us going from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., but I do have to admit that I did get a chance to sneak in a swim or two in the hotel pool during our breaks :)

The National Formation Workshop was an excellent opportunity for me to deepen my understanding of the role of formation in the life of a Secular Franciscan.

Look for future articles and training to the clusters and fraternities on all of the presentations given during this workshop. It was my honor to be able to represent our region at this workshop and I appreciate all the love and support given to me from everyone in our region.

God Bless,

Ed

ED WOJCIECHOWSKI, OFS
Regional Formation Director

JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION



CHRIS LEONE, OFS
CHAIR — JPIC Commission
OLTAR REGION
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908-528-0865

As I sat down to write this column (2017, September), there were many topics I could have picked. The situation in North Korea, the Season of Creation, Hurricane Harvey and President Trump's consideration on a decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program. Since they are all important, I'll spend some time on each.



NORTH KOREA seems to be getting more brazen with each test. I pray that those tests and the vitriol surrounding them does not escalate.

In July, I attended the National JPIC Animate Peace Conference in St. Louis. While there, North Korea conducted another nuclear test. Before we departed, we issued a press release urging the world community "to use prayer, caution, wisdom, earnest discernment and patience" before responding to recent developments on the Korean peninsula.

HERE IS THE ENTIRE STATEMENT:

"We, the National Commission of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) of the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order met July 27-30, 2017 in St. Louis, Missouri for a National Animate Peace Gathering. Twenty JPIC Animators from around the nation gathered for a weekend of sharing, learning and fellowship.

During the gathering, North Korea launched an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), which has heightened tensions in the world.

In the Gospel Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, we urge the world community to use prayer, caution, wisdom, earnest discernment and patience before responding to these recent developments on the Korean peninsula. Any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity and all creation. Our efforts towards mutual respect and understanding should be long-term."

Since then, things have escalated with a hydrogen bomb test and a statement from Defense Secretary James Mattis warning of a "massive military response" to any threat against us or our allies.

Pray that diplomacy and not escalation prevails in diffusing this situation.

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THE SEASON OF CREATION

CREATION



began on September 1st and ends on the feast of St. Francis, October 4th. During this time Christians around the world are praying and caring for creation. We are uniting for one purpose — to Steward the Earth. This is a time for us to turn our full attention to God the Creator and toward our relationship with the whole of Creation.

Our National JPIC Animator, Carolyn Townes, OFS, reminds us that Our Holy Father encourages us to join him and millions of other Christians around the world, to pray and “reaffirm our personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which He has entrusted to our care and to implore His help for the protection of creation as well as His pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live.”



Our Regional Minister, Diane Menditto, OFS, sent a letter to all local ministers regarding an e-mail received from our National Treasurer, Jerry Rousseau, OFS, asking for our help in responding to a request from the *Los Tres Companeros Region* and the *St. Joan of Arc Region* where there has been major destruction from Hurricane Harvey. Those regions, which cover Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi have been extremely hard hit with more rain to come!

As with last year’s catastrophe in the Baton Rouge area, the National Executive Council is establishing a “Flood Victims” Fund to provide direct aid to fraternity members severely affected within these two regions. Our Regional Executive Council voted to send a contribution and has reached out to our local fraternities to consider joining them in this effort. This is a completely FREE WILL offering.



Finally, President Trump is considering a decision to end the 2012 program called the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (D.A.C.A.). This program protects nearly 800,000 undocumented immigrants who were brought with their families to the U.S. as children. DACA affords these young people – appropriately referred to as *Dreamers*, the opportunity to work and study in the U.S. free from the threat of deportation.

For many *Dreamers*, the U.S. is the only home they have ever known. They did not make the decision to enter the country — they arrived with their parents, who came here in search of a better life for their families.

More than 97 percent of them are students or are in the workforce. They are taxpayers. They are law-abiding. This transcends politics. Pray that the President does not rescind DACA and that Congress enacts a permanent solution.

Peace,

Chris

CHRISTOPHER LEONE, OFS



RECAP OF THE NAFRA GATHERING ON THE TOPIC OF YOUTH / YOUNG ADULT GROUP

by **KELLY MOLTZEN, Candidate**
St. Benedict the Moor Fraternity
Manhattan



I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the NAFRA Gathering on the Topic of Youth in St. Louis, Missouri, from July 27-30, 2017.

After having spent my teenage years immersed in experiential learning of the Franciscan charism through Capuchin Youth & Family Ministries (CYFM) in Garrison, NY, this gathering made me feel like I was back at CYFM, only brought to a national scale with my Franciscan fraternity members from across the country. In St. Louis, the prayers and music that leaders and participants shared helped us relive our youth, including Jan Parker's guitar skills and musical talent!

Before attending, we were asked to read several YouFra documents in preparation for the meeting. When reading the responses about youth/young adult engagement by regional fraternities in the fraternities' annual reports and in the Management of the Order Survey, I was surprised to learn how few regions across the country are working on youth engagement. However, at the meeting I was encouraged to learn what others are doing and encouraged by how inclusive and participatory the meeting was.

We had a small group activity to envision what a Franciscan youth/young adult group would look like; worked on revising the vision for YouFra in the U.S. and the YouFra Commission Chair position description.

We discussed many examples of what works when engaging youth that will be incorporated into a toolkit — (Youth want to be listened to, like to do service, may enjoy being asked to write an article about Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC) for a fraternity or parish and that it's best to be authentic when talking to youth).

I was also excited about the idea of collaborating with International YouFra members. It felt very "Franciscan" in nature to be repairing something in need of repair.

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Photos credit: ROBERT STRONACH, OFS

J P I C C O M M I S S I O N

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Another element of the meeting were the talks by Br. Richard Contino, OSF, one of the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn. Br. Richard spoke about, “21st Century Franciscans Gospel Shifts and Ripples: Creating a Culture of Christ through a Holy Silence and a Joyful Noise.” He believes so much in the Franciscan formation of youth that he teaches youth every day.

One of the nuggets of wisdom I got from his talk is that youth are not perfect, but rather than get discouraged and trying to point out everything they’re doing wrong, it’s important to encourage youth by pointing out what they are doing right. He compared it to the Parable of the Weeds (*Mt.13: 24-30*): our role is to let the weeds and the wheat grow together, as God will take care of the weeds.

After reading an article about how youth and young adults of today are “lost,” I was able to share an alternative, that perhaps the Church just isn’t providing enough support in helping youth navigate the environment around them, the way the staff at CYFM did for my peers and me when we were teenagers.

We need to remember that today’s Catholic youth and young adults are being formed by the church and the secular world in the age of Vatican II, which is more ecumenical & welcoming of interreligious dialogue than the Roman Catholic Church has been in ages past.

Pope Francis is a wonderful example of how the message of the Catholic church can be truly “catholic,” or universal, and his message appeals to many Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

For me, and I believe for other young adults as well, being able to connect our religious experience to our secular world experience through the learning about Catholic Social Teaching and JPIC is very important. People need tangible examples of how to live out their faith. The Secular Franciscan Rule (#4) says that “Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.”

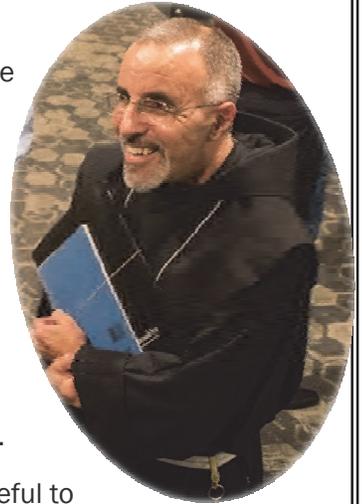
People seek what gives them meaning, and if they don’t see the church bringing the Gospel to Life – unless they have a true Franciscan conviction to repair the institution of the church – they may seek spirituality elsewhere.

It’s hopeful to see more synergy develop within the Secular Franciscan Order’s various commissions.

As the Gathering on the Topic of Youth was happening at the same time as the JPIC gathering in St. Louis, a number of participants of both groups expressed a desire to see more connection between the two commissions.

Carolyn Townes, OFS, the national JPIC Animator for NAFRA, suggested that the three commissions- (JPIC, Youth & Young Adults and Formation) be better aligned in the future.

If Secular Franciscans embody a true witness of the Secular Franciscan Rule, (*which includes all of these parts of the Franciscan charism*), it could set a powerful example for Franciscan-hearted people to get a taste of how Franciscan community can be the beloved community.



BRIEFS

UPCOMING

MARY CAROL CAIEZZA, OFS
mcaiezza8@gmail.com



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY in Hoboken, NJ, prays the Stations of the Cross every First Friday at 6:00 p.m. followed by 6:30 p.m. Mass at St. Francis Church, 308 Jefferson Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

Parish dinner follows in the Parish Center. "All are welcome to join us, as are their dishes".

YOUTUBE CHANNEL "IT'S YOUR WORLD"

is a Secular Franciscan YOUTUBE Channel on (JPIC) Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation produced by **DAWN RUSINKO, OFS MINISTER OF CORTESIA FRATERNITY** from Middletown, NJ.

In this first session, Dawn interviews young environmentalist Jesse Fusco.

They discuss the damaging effects of Global warming on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

[Australia's Great Barrier Reef video](#)

<https://youtu.be/5f9lwkms0rA>



CONGRATULATIONS

to **FRIAR ANDRÉ CIRINO, OFM**, who marked his 50th Anniversary of Ordination on June 10th. Fr. André is the Spiritual Assistant to the **LITTLE PORTION FRATERNITY** in Mt. Vernon, New York.

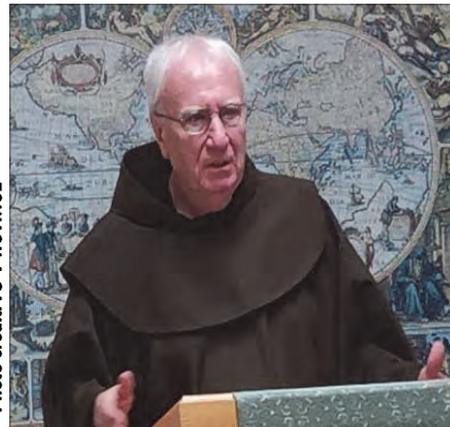


Photo credit: IC PROVINCE

RETREAT

... and speaking of **FRIAR ANDRÉ CIRINO, OFM**

Mark your calendars for an upcoming retreat being given by Fr. André at the Mt. Alvernia Retreat House in Wappingers Falls, New York.

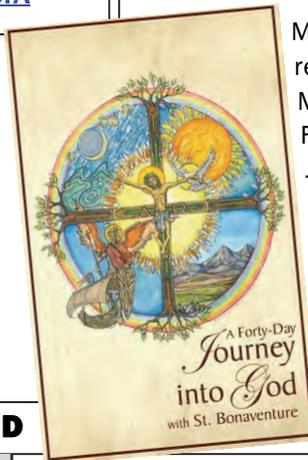
The retreat is a Centennial Franciscan Retreat Experience titled:

SAINT BONAVENTURE'S JOURNEY INTO GOD. It starts August 9 – August 17, 2018.

More detailed information will be published in upcoming issues of *The Troubadour* and *OFS E-vents*.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

For **FRIAR FELIX McGRATH, OFM**, as he recovers from surgery. The much beloved Guardian of Saint Francis of Assisi Friary and Spiritual Assistant to the St. Thomas More Fraternity in NYC is doing well – even a bit better than expected – and is scheduled to enter a Rehab/Therapy program and to remain in Rehab for several weeks from the time he starts. Let us continue praying for him.



2017-20 HNP COUNCILORS ELECTED



Six new councilors were elected at the 2017 Holy Name Provincial Chapter, held June 4 – 9, 2017 at Siena College.

The 2017-20 Holy Name Provincial Council members:

Top row, L-to-R:
 David Convertino, Fred Dilger, Robert Frazzetta

Bottom row, L-to-R:
 Thomas Gallagher, Walter Liss, and Erick Lopez

Photos credit:
 Octavio Duran, OFM.

by JOSEPH BOROWSKI, OFS

St. Mary of the Assumption Fraternity
Pompton Lakes, NJ

On August 11, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. many Secular Franciscans gathered for the *TRANSITUS OF ST. CLARE OF ASSISI* at St. Mary's Church in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey.

FR. RICHARD HUSTED, OFM, (SHOWN IN OPPOSITE PHOTO) SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT TO ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION FRATERNITY celebrated this beautiful prayer service along with Fr. Gonzalo Torres, OFM, their newly appointed Pastor.

Members of the St. Mary's Church participated in the Readings. Music was provided by Carrie Stewart.

As the Celebration ended, two of the Parishes' women at the front of the altar, laid their hands upon our heads and prayed over us. It was a beautiful and emotional end to a wonderful celebration of St. Clare.

After the final hymn was concluded, Fr. Richard invited all of us for wine and cheese and fellowship with one another.

"Party and Prayers," he said, "That's what Franciscans are all about!"

What a lovely evening to rekindle old friendships and begin new ones!

Photo credit: RONALD PIHOKKER, OFS

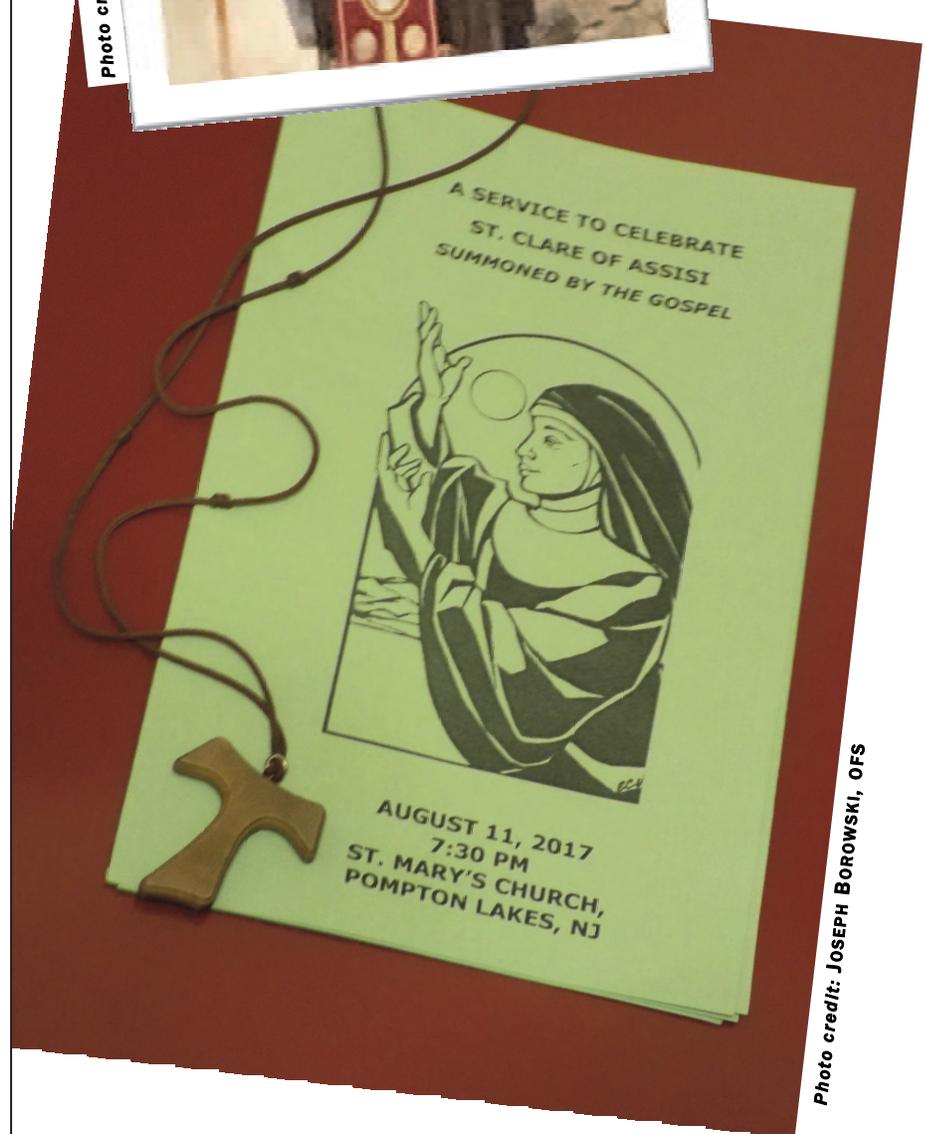
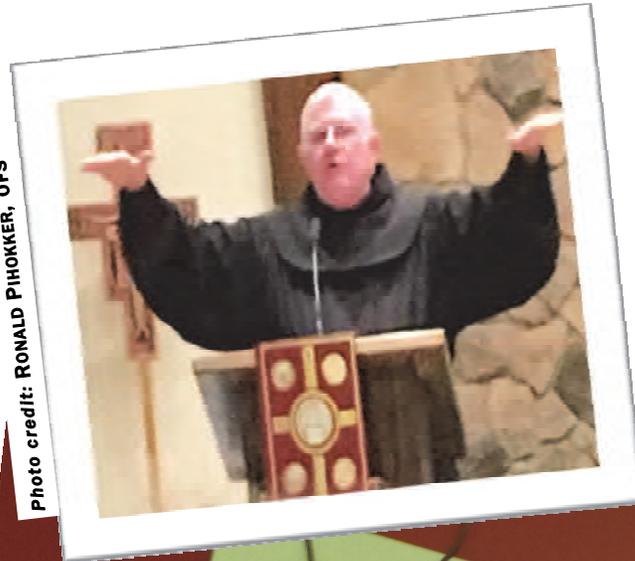
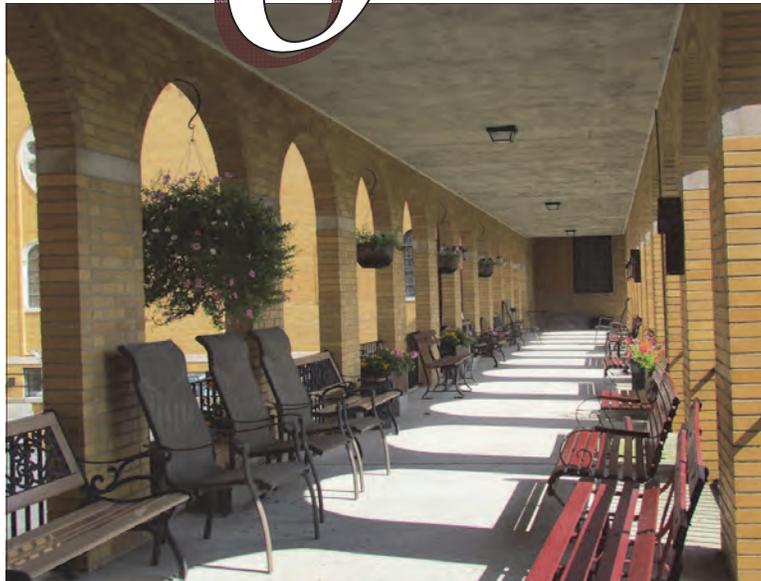


Photo credit: JOSEPH BOROWSKI, OFS



LTAR RETREAT 2017



2017

OLTAR RETREAT

Retreat photo credits: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS; ED WOJCIECHOWSKI, OFS AND MANNY SESE, OFS



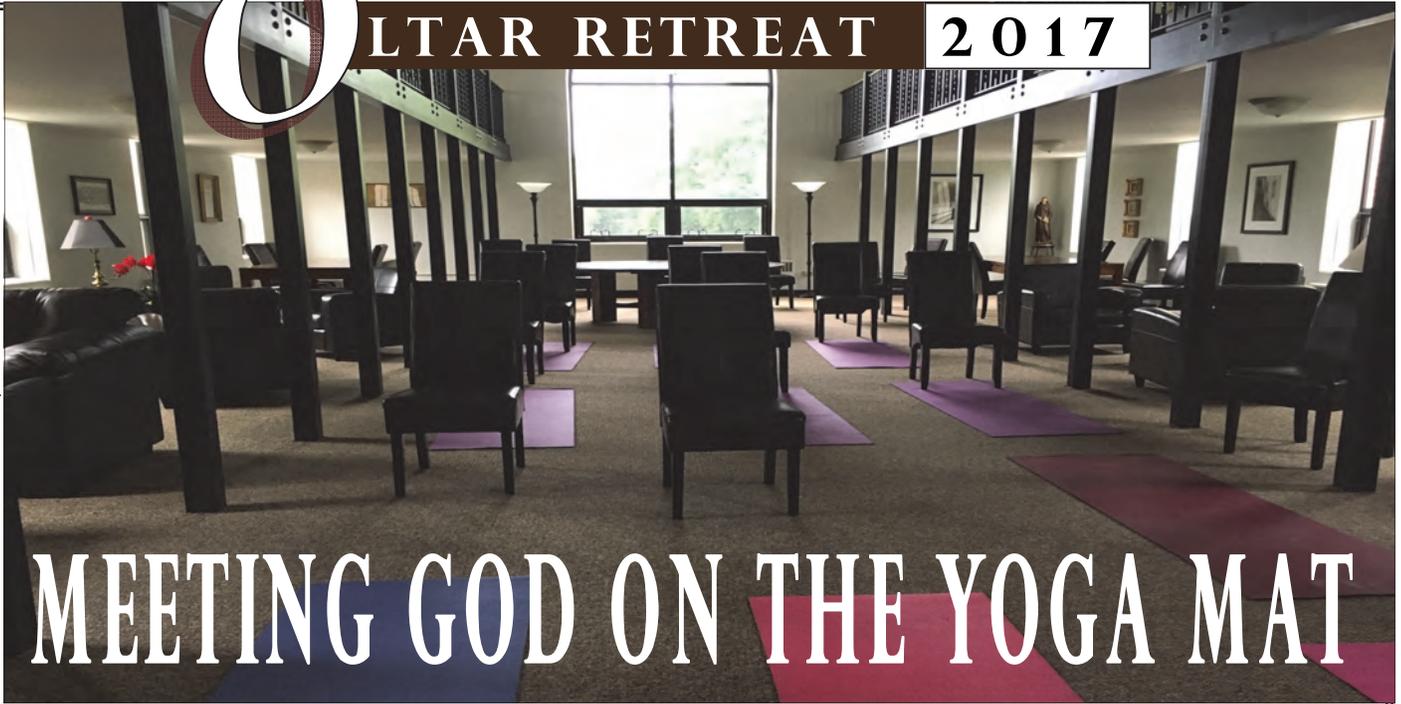


ALTAR RETREAT 2017





Photo credit: TONI MACONI, OFS



MEETING GOD ON THE YOGA MAT

MATS AND CHAIRS SET UP AT MT. ALVERNIA FOR A HOLY YOGA CLASS.

Some people sing
when they pray.
Some people dance.
Others do yoga.

by TONI MACONI, OFS
Little Portion Fraternity
Mount Vernon, NY

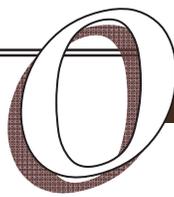
That's exactly what a group of Secular Franciscans did during their annual retreat at Mt. Alvernia in Wappingers Falls on August 4 - 6, 2017. Many got themselves out of bed each day at 7:00 a.m. for a Holy Yoga class. Some sat in chairs, others sat on mats. All faced the huge San Damiano cross hanging in the lounge and took an hour to breathe, move and pray.

The Annual Retreat is a chance for regional Seculars to gather together, break bread, pray and build fraternity. Holy Yoga was first offered to Seculars in 2016 as a retreat option during free time; it was well received and I was invited back to teach this year.

I have been a Secular Franciscan for more than 30 years and an avid practitioner of yoga for 12. I always welcome the opportunity to combine these two passions. I came to yoga late in life, yet immediately I found a spiritual connection in my practice. Over time, I saw that my strongest prayer time was when I stepped onto my mat.

I trained to become a Vinyasa instructor, then discovered Holy Yoga when I attended a class at my church in New Fairfield, Connecticut. I had already been praying privately when I attended traditional yoga classes. I was thrilled to find a class where my Christian beliefs were openly accepted and shared. I soon learned that Holy Yoga, an international nonprofit ministry, had trained more than 1,000 instructors across the world. They teach in churches, civic centers and traditional yoga studios. Holy Yoga, Inc., also operates safe houses for trafficked women and children, offering them medical care, healing yoga and other services. I became a Holy Yoga instructor and this year completed my Masters' training.

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ALTAR RETREAT 2017

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There are many misconceptions about yoga and Christianity. Yoga is not a religion, but rather a spiritual discipline, much like meditation, prayer, and fasting. I've been told by some critics that yoga "opens up the soul to the devil" and that it goes against Christianity. My response to them is that while I have great respect for traditional yoga beliefs, my Christian faith is strong, and doing Downward Facing Dog (or any other yoga pose) is not going to compromise that.

It was brought to my attention on the retreat that Pope Francis has said yoga cannot open our hearts to God. In truth, he was referring to more traditional yoga practices and I believe he would find little fault with a class that begins with a reading of the Gospel and ends with a prayer of gratitude to Jesus.

If anything, my practice has strengthened my connection to God. In a Holy Yoga class, we practice traditional poses, but the focus is different. We strive to connect our entire being – body, mind and spirit – with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We open and close with prayer and scripture. Students are encouraged to make their Sun Salutations (we call them "Son" Salutations) a moving meditation.

During our final resting pose, we do not try to empty our minds, but open ourselves to God's presence and *listen*. I often offer a final blessing to each student, if they wish to receive it, with an anointing of frankincense and myrrh.

When we practice Holy Yoga, we bring to mind **Mark 12:30**: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.* Our practice is not just exercise, but prayer and meditation, using body, mind and spirit.

When we breathe, we think of **Job 33:4**: *The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.* Our breath is deeply connected to God; we recognize that this life breath came directly from him and it serves to nourish our bodies as well as propel us through our poses.

When we step onto our mats, we do so with all our frailties, our weaknesses, our vulnerabilities. And yet none of that is paramount, for we are loved by God despite our imperfections. There is no judgment in a Holy Yoga class. It matters not what your body looks like, or the level of your practice.

The word "yoga" means to yoke or bind.

We come to yoke our breath and movement to God, therefore making our practice a form of worship.

So why should Secular Franciscans practice yoga?

If we can encounter God anywhere, as St. Francis believed, why not on a yoga mat?

When we practice yoga, we are transformed from the inside out. Each asana or pose changes us physically in some way - we become stronger, more flexible and relaxed.



Photo credit: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS

PARTICIPANTS TAKE PART IN A HOLY YOGA CLASS AT MT. ALVERNIA DURING THE 2016 RETREAT.

continued on next page



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Photo credit: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS



PARTICIPANTS TAKE PART IN A HOLY YOGA CLASS AT MT. ALVERNIA DURING THE 2016 RETREAT.

We are then open to God's grace. Our hearts transform as our bodies change, just as Francis was transformed:

***Thomas of Celano, Second Life, Chapter VI: 10**

With his heart completely changed - soon his body was also to be changed - He was walking one day by the church of San Damiano, which was abandoned by everyone and almost in ruins. Led by the Spirit he went in to pray and knelt down devoutly before the crucifix. He was shaken by unusual experiences and discovered that he was different from when he had entered.

Not long ago I visited an art gallery during a trip to Assisi. On the wall hung a huge painting of St. Francis before the San Damiano cross.

He was on his knees, bent forward, head touching the floor, arms outstretched, in what looked exactly like yoga's Child Pose. I thought, *how perfect*. He was surrendering to God's will - and using his body as a gesture of that surrender.

The Seculars who attended those three classes on retreat were invited to bring themselves before God in a new and different way. In keeping with the weekend theme of Reconciliation, we looked at three ways we can be reconciled: with God, with ourselves and with the world around us.

Saints Francis and Clare knew that God's love included forgiveness and that it was important that reconciliation be an important part of life because it brings about hope and change.

Our poses reflected that - heart opening poses to receive grace and forgiveness and in turn, bring that to the world around us.

We practiced forward folds – poses of surrender – in which we offered our weaknesses up so that we might be forgiven.

We went into Child's Pose, arms outstretched, palms face up, as a sign of our willingness to give ourselves over to God's grace.

Throughout all of the classes, we were stretching and strengthening our bodies, in effect, maintaining these beautiful temples we have been given. We moved through our poses with prayerful grace. Our final relaxation pose was a chance to rest in Him.

Yoga can bring you closer to God. All you need to do is step onto the mat.

TONI MACONI, OFS, RYT-200, HYI-95, M-HYI 300, is a member of the Little Portion Fraternity in Mt. Vernon, New York and the author of "Called to Serve: Birth of a Secular Franciscan Fraternity." She is also co-founder of Holy Yoga of Connecticut in New Fairfield. www.holyyogact.net



*The translation from Celano comes from The Pilgrim's Companion to Franciscan Places, published by the Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs. The scripture translations are NIV.

SISTER DEATH



† TRUDY O'KEEFE, OFS

Called home to the Lord- July 26, 2017.



Gertrude "Trudy" O'Keefe, 81, passed away on July 26, 2017. Born in South Boston, MA, the daughter of the late Jeremiah and Mary Mahoney. She was a registered nurse that worked for many different nursing homes in the local area and was also a Navy veteran serving during peacetime.

She was a parishioner and Eucharistic Minister of the St. Anthony R.C. Church in Butler, New Jersey and was a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Secular Franciscan Order.

Trudy was professed into the Order on November 19, 2000 and was a faithful member of the ST. ANTHONY'S FRATERNITY in Butler, New Jersey. She served her fraternity first as Formation Director and most recently as fraternity Secretary. Trudy was a loving and caring Franciscan who was filled with Franciscan joy. She always had a smile on her face and a kind word to share with everyone she met.

† Lucy Cox, OFS

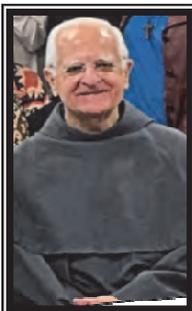
Called home to the Lord- September 13, 2017.

Lucy Ferretti Cox, 84, of Oak Ridge, NJ, passed away on September 13, 2017. SHE was a faithful member of the ST. ANTHONY'S FRATERNITY in Butler, New Jersey and was professed into the Order on November 19, 2000.

† FR. JUSTIN BIASE, OFM CONV. (September 9, 1943 – September 21, 2017)

Called home to the Lord- September 21, 2017.

Fr. Justin Biase, OFM Conv., 74, was ordained to the priesthood on May 30, 1970. He died September 21, 2017, at the hospital due to complications after heart surgery.



He was the beloved Spiritual Assistant of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary fraternity in Staten Island, New York. Fr. Biase was the last Minister Provincial of the Immaculate Conception Province. After the union of the Immaculate Conception Province and the St. Anthony of Padua Province, creating the new Our Lady of the Angels Province.



**INTO YOUR HANDS,
O LORD,
WE HUMBLY ENTRUST:**

TRUDY O'KEEFE, OFS

LUCY COX, OFS

FR. JUSTIN BIASE, OFM CONV.

In this life, You embraced them with Your tender love; deliver them now from every evil and bid them eternal rest. The old order has passed away; welcome them into paradise, where there will be no sorrow, no weeping or pain, but the fullness of peace and joy with Your Son and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

REMEMBERING OUR SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT, FR. JUSTIN BIASE, OFM CONV.

Our Beloved Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Justin Biase, OFM. Conv., passed from Death to Life on September 21, 2017. Although we are saddened by his passing, this Troubadour of the Lord sang the praises of God in perfect harmony as a holy Friar and our spiritual assistant. Fr. Justin was a champion of racial equality and empowerment of minorities. He taught us how to live Joy; being present to each other in fraternity and like St. Francis, trust in God for those who will follow. At the heart of Franciscan spirituality, peacemaking, be a peacemaker. Rest in Peace, Fr. Justin! You will be missed!

DENISE ENRIGHT, OFS / Minister, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Staten Island, NY.

MINISTRY TO RETIRED FRIARS

by JODY PIHOKKER, OFS
Most Holy Name Fraternity
Little Falls, NJ



Our Region's newly formed ministry to retired friars is off and running! At present, there are 62 retired friars living in Beacon, New York, as well as in Butler and Ringwood in New Jersey.

As a ministry to these friars, a small, but dedicated group of about 6 Secular Franciscans began sending birthday cards to each of the friars this past Summer. They will be sending birthday cards throughout the year and in the future, it is hoped to expand this ministry to include such things as sending Christmas greetings, Feast Day cards and possibly paying visits to the friars.

However, with so many friars and only a handful of volunteers, expanding the ministry is no easy task. But prayers have been answered and in the past month, 8 additional Secular Franciscans have expressed their intentions to join the group!

The friars seem to appreciate the cards and the warm thoughts they are receiving from the Secular Franciscans, as demonstrated by some thank you notes.

One friar wrote:

"Thank you for your prayers and the birthday card. It was a very pleasant surprise – and there are few surprises here!"

Another friar, who had formerly been a spiritual assistant, responded:

"The Secular Franciscans have always been close to my heart as my brothers and sisters. I offered Mass for you all and do so frequently, with great gratitude for all you do for the faithful."

Charlene Berg, OFS, (St. John Vianney / St. Elizabeth of Hungary fraternity), who received the thank you notes as a result of the cards she sent to the friars, remarked,

"I was definitely touched by this ministry experience... and hearing back from the 2 friars was wonderful!"

If you or your fraternity are interested in being part of this apostolate, please e-mail your contact information to one of the coordinators listed below and put "ministry to retired friars" in the subject line.

PATRICIA FRANZ, OFS
pattycakes82045@aol.com

MADLINE ROMAINE, OFS
maddiromaine@optonline.net

JODY PIHOKKER, OFS
jodysfo@gmail.com

FRATERNITY MINISTRY

by **DIANE MENDITTO, OFS**
St. Francis Fraternity
Hackensack, NJ

Every year, the **ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY** takes a collection of school supplies and money donations to send to St. Michael's Indian School in Arizona. This year we added something new.

While some of the members packed, taped and wrote labels, others wrote notes to the teachers and students. Everyone was involved in helping with the project and it was a good opportunity for fraternity collaboration.

We were also very pleased to have a visit and a short talk by Fr. Francis Dors, OFM Cap., who is one of the four General Spiritual Assistants to the Secular Franciscan Order. Fr. Francis' talk was on relationship and active service. He encouraged us to reach out to others through our presence.

Fr. Francis is from Cameroon; he presently resides at the Capuchin Curia in Rome.



Photos credit: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS

ABOVE—TOP: Members of St. Francis Fraternity.

2ND ROW: LEFT: Pat Franz, OFS, is the lead member for this service Apostolate.

RIGHT: (L-to-R): Fr. Francis Dors, OFM Cap., Edson Atwood, OFS Fraternity Minister, Fr. John Salvias, OFM Cap., Fraternity Spiritual Assistant.

BELOW:

Members of the fraternity packing all the items.



HELPING SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILIES ADJUST TO LIFE IN THE USA

by JODY PIHOKKER, OFS
 Most Holy Name Fraternity
 Little Falls, NJ
 201-704-4932

MOST HOLY NAME FRATERNITY IN LITTLE FALLS, NEW JERSEY, along with more than a half-dozen other congregations, is part of *North Jersey Interfaith Cares*, a newly formed organization which has been helping Syrian refugee families adjust to their new life in our country.

On Sunday, August 13, a day that dawned bright and beautiful, members of the Holy Name Fraternity joined the organization in hosting a picnic at the Garret Mountain Reservation in Woodland Park, where approximately 20 Syrian refugee families came together for some fun, food and community building.



The aim of the event was to introduce the families to one another. There were families who lived within a few blocks of each other, but who didn't even know they were neighbors. This picnic helped them connect and feel more comfortable in their new homes.

In addition, 75 backpacks, completely filled with school supplies, were distributed to the Syrian children who will be attending grades K-through-12 this year. The supplies and backpacks were all donated by the various congregations that are part of *North Jersey Interfaith Cares*.

The backpack project was a challenging endeavor, but seeing the beaming faces of the students as they picked out their backpacks was a very emotional and inspiring moment that will surely be remembered by every volunteer.

If your fraternity is interested in joining *North Jersey Interfaith Cares*, contact Jody at the above number. We can never have enough people who care!



ELECTIONS

“THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS, for your willingness to be of service to the brothers and sisters of your Fraternity. Please be assured of our prayers and whatever assistance we can provide as you give your best efforts to serve your Fraternity”

**ELECTION RESULTS of September 10, 2017
STs. ELIZABETH AND LOUIS FRATERNITY # 152, NEW YORK CITY, NY**

Photo credit: NANCY CONROY, OFS



NEW COUNCIL AS PICTURED IN PHOTO L-TO-R:

LILLY O'KEEFE, OFS, Secretary; BARBARA LYNE, OFS, Minister; KATHRYN FELDMAN, OFS, Vice Minister; VICTORIA ANGELES, OFS, Treasurer; THEODORA FORSYTHE, OFS, Formation Director; FR. JOHN B. RIORDAN, OFM CAP., Spiritual Assistant.

VISITATIONS

**ST. JOHN'S
FRATERNITY # 151
New York City, NY
July 23, 2017**

**ST. JOHN VIANNEY AND
ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY
FRATERNITY # 110
PATERSON, NJ
SEPTEMBER 15, 2017**

PROFESSIONS & ADMISSIONS

ST. JOHN VIANNEY AND ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY FRATERNITY #110 IN PATERSON, NJ, celebrated the Rite of Profession on October 8, 2017 of:

Photo credit: DIANE MENDITTO, OFS



PICTURED IN PHOTO L-TO-R:

TOP ROW:

FR. DAN GRIGASSY, OFM, Pastor

**FR. FRANK MCHUGH, OFM,
Spiritual Assistant**

BOTTOM ROW:

ELIZABETH KNOLL, OFS

RON LUCIA GUADALUPE, OFS

ANN MARIE ABAD, OFS

ST. THOMAS MORE FRATERNITY #115

IN NEW YORK CITY, NY
celebrated the Rite of Admission
of **FLORENCE PERMANAND (LEFT)**
on July 16, 2017.

Minister Maria Carral Ficken, OFS
and fraternity members joyfully
receive the new Candidate.



Photos credit: STACEY ANTINE, OFS



PICTURED IN OPPOSITE PHOTO L-TO-R:

FLORENCE PERMANAND, New Candidate

ANTHONY MATUS, OFS, Treasurer

MARIA CARRAL FICKEN, OFS, Minister

*** FR. FELIX McGRATH, OFM
Spiritual Assistant**

***SEE SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST FOR FR. FELIX ON PAGE 12**

by **DANUTA WYSZYNSKI, OFS**
St. Stephen's Fraternity
Perth Amboy, NJ



I am very happy to report that on July 12, 2017, we received 3 new candidates to St. Stephen's Fraternity. This wonderful news is an answer to our prayers.

They are: **URSZULA STATKIEWICZ AND A MARRIED COUPLE, ZDZISLAW AND MARIA WIERNASZ.**

Earlier on May 20, 2016 - we received two candidates: **BOZENNA JEDRA AND RENATA LES.**

So together we now have 5 Candidates. Praised be the Lord!

At a recent fraternity meeting on Sunday, July 16, 2017, **MRS. MARIA JAROSZ** attended our meeting and expressed her desire to join our fraternity as an Inquirer.

We feel very blessed and see in this the fruit of our prayers and the help of Fr. Lukasz Drozak, CSsR, the Vicar in our Polish Parish. Fr. Luke, (as he is known in English), is a wonderful priest. He works very hard in our parish which keeps him very, very busy. In spite of his limited time, he promised to help us when I approached him for assistance.

Since 2014/2015, we'd been in a desperate situation. At that time I told him that we were making yet another effort to save our fraternity from closing - perhaps our last - by prayers and sacrifices, but we needed the help of a priest.

I changed the place where I usually sat in the church and moved to the back of the church in front of the statue of St. Francis.

In 2014, we also asked for help from fellow Franciscan, **ANNA ZIELSKA, OFS**, (*St. John Vianney fraternity, Colonia, NJ*) in setting up a Polish/English website for us. Towards the end of 2015, we received a phone inquiry from this website.

Renata Les was looking for a secular Order and had found us on this website as did Bozenna Jedra.

Regional Minister, Diane Menditto, OFS, admitted that before coming for a scheduled Visitation, she thought she might have to close our fraternity. However, seeing life in the Fraternity changed her mind. At that time we had 2 Inquirers.

With the help of Fr. Luke, we organized a Christmas Party and became more visible in the parish with Fr. Luke's ideas. From this experience we can see how indispensable the assistance of a good priest can be.

OF COURSE, PRAYERS AND ST. FRANCIS ARE FOREMOST.

All five candidates are wonderful people, good Catholics, spiritually mature and anxious to be professed; several display leadership qualities.

PAX et BONUM!

PROFESSIONS & ADMISSIONS

MINISTER JOSEPH LEE, OFS shares the good news that **KOREAN MARTYRS FRATERNITY #119 IN NEW YORK CITY, NY**, celebrated the Rites of Admission, temporary profession and fully professed for **18 NEW MEMBERS** on August 6, 2017.





OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGION

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM:

The TROUBADOUR MAGAZINE

e-TROUBADOUR

OFS E-VENTS NEWSLETTER

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REGION DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR
ANNA GERACI, OFS

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE *TROUBADOUR* is a quarterly communications vehicle published by Our Lady of the Angels Region. It is published in 2 formats — printed and electronically.

- The printed magazine, *The Troubadour*, is published twice yearly-- In March and September. It is mailed free to all Professed members and Formation candidates in the region.
- The electronic newsletter, *e-Troubadour*, is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. It is available on the Region website or by e-mail. It is available to all Professed and Formation members of the region with e-addresses from our database.
- 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 it to Anna Geraci, OFS, 161-B Cross Slope Ct., Manalapan, NJ 07726, or e-mail: TroubadourEditor@aol.com Please write **TROUBADOUR** in the subject line. • Note that all changes submitted are also applied to the National database. If you are a Professed member or Candidate and do not receive the National newsletter, *Tau-USA*, please notify me. —EDITOR

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Wherever you see the spirit of Saint Francis at work in the world, in your lives, in your fraternity, in its members and in your hearts—we want to hear from you. Come, share with us.

DEADLINES

All submissions for the next issue must be received by the 15th of the preceding month.

Submissions for the next issue of *e-Troubadour*, December 2017, are due to Editor by November 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, please state fraternity name and location, as well as your name and address.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Please change (or add) the following information.
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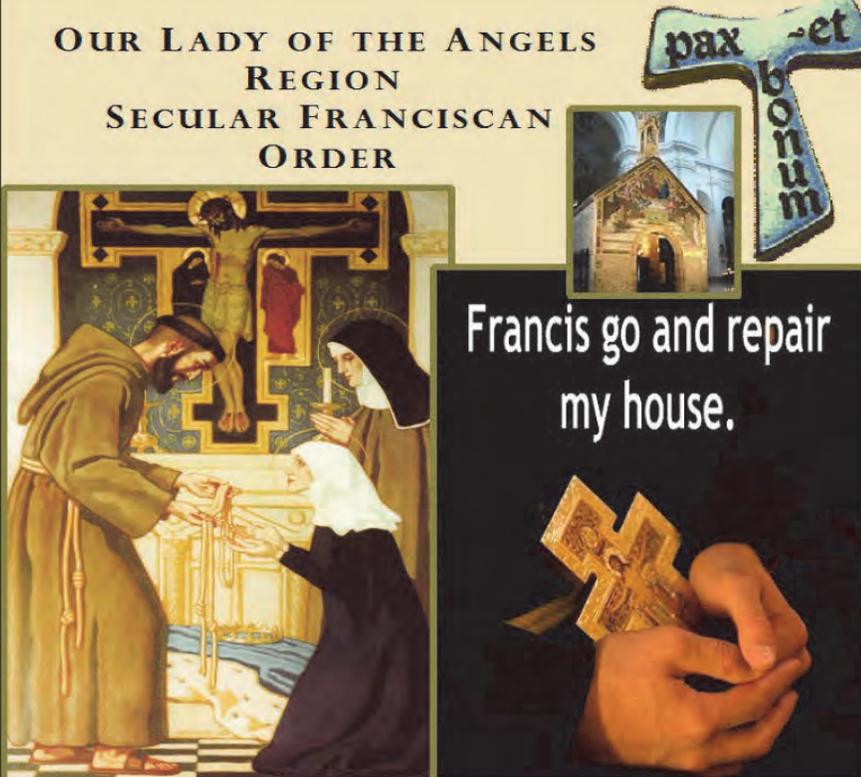
THE Troubadour

SEPTEMBER
2017

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OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGION
Secular Franciscan Order
ANNA GERACI, OFS, 161-B Cross Slope Ct.
Manalapan, NJ 07726-2424

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS
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ORDER



Francis go and repair
my house.

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E-TROUBADOUR (QUARTERLY BY E-MAIL)
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THIS PUBLICATION WAS PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. ON RECYCLED PAPER WITH ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE INKS.