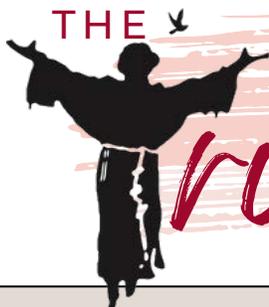


WINTER



THE *roubadour* MAGAZINE

2023

Connecting Secular Franciscan Fraternities throughout our region.



Frances Acosta, OFS Editor

St. Maximillian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, NC

smfranciscanministry@gmail.com

Opportunities

Peace and Grace to all,
With every sunrise and sunset, God gives us daily opportunities to start anew. As we prepare for the start of a new year, let us continue to focus and contemplate on the Holy family. Let us turn to them with splendor, love and most of all with thanksgiving. We pray we will continue as they are to be places of prayer and communion. Let us ask God for forgiveness for the wrongs committed and thank Him for years passed and the one to come. It does not matter how we ended the year, Let us start afresh and dedicate this coming year to serving and loving Him anew.

A New Year Prayer

We Pray...

For healing...prepare us for surprises.

For strength...prepare us for surprises.

For vision...prepare us for surprises.

For transformation...prepare us for surprises.

For messengers and messages...prepare us for surprises.

For community...prepare us for surprises.

For acceptance - of ourselves and others...prepare us for surprises.

For making room at our tables...prepare us for surprises.

For Truth-seeking...prepare us for surprises.

For support...prepare us for surprises.

For Common Ground...prepare us for surprises.

**Walk beside us, O Holy One,
as we question and welcome,
as we challenge and invite,
as we discover and understand,**

as we see, touch, taste, smell, and listen for the Newness awaiting us in 2024.

May we, Your Holy People, walk forward together side by side.

Amen

- Written by Sister Mary Ann Barret, O.P.

Offered by melissa Baumann

A Blessed New Year to all!

Frances Acosta



Frances Acosta, OFS Founder of Stella Mundi Franciscan Ministry



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Chris Leone, OFS
Regional Minister

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Councilor Central Jersey

Jim Andreano, OFS
Councilor North Jersey

Open
Councilor Manhattan

Richard Spana, OFS
Councilor Westchester

Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM
Regional Spiritual Assistant



Listen, Discern, Go Forth

2022-2025 OFS-USA THEME



Minister

Our Lady of the Angels Region

cleonofs@gmail.com

Christmas Message - Our Incarnational Spirituality

*For a child has been born for us,
A son given to us,
Authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace.*

(IS 9:6 NRSV)

*For a child has been born for us – the purpose of
Christ's coming was for "us."*

*A son given to us – Jesus did not happen upon the
earth. From eternity God planned to "give" him.*

*Authority rests upon his shoulders – Jesus will reign
as King of the Universe.*

And he is named... Wonderful Counselor

*– He transcends human understanding. He is
unique among human beings. He reveals the mind
of God. He is a wonder!*

*And he is named... Mighty God – He is God almighty.
All the fullness of the Trinity dwells in him in bodily
form.*

*And he is named... Everlasting Father – or the Father
of Eternity, not to be confused with the Father,
although the Father and He are one (Jn 10:30).*

*And he is named... Prince of Peace – Peace will
characterize his reign on earth.*

*"In the 14th century Blessed John Duns Scotus was
asked, "Would Jesus have come if Adam had not
sinned?" Contradicting the predominant thinking of
his age (and ours), he answered: "Yes."*

*Christ came because the divine Trinitarian
communion of persons wished to express divine life
and goodness.*

*For that reason, the whole universe was made in the
image of the divine Word, and that Word came to
participate in the life of the universe as a created
being, a creature, to show in a concrete, material
way the form and model of all creation, made in the
divine image.*

***The Incarnation, the fact of Jesus, not the fact of
sin, is at the heart of reality. Salvation from sin is
a consequence of the Incarnation, not its
motivating cause. The focus is on "giving life" not
"fighting sin."***

(Source - A Franciscan Language for the 21st Century,
William Short, OFM. Custodians of the Tradition.)

*You see, the Trinity always knew that one of them
would become one of us! The Incarnation is love
based, not sin based. God loves us so much that he
wanted to be one of us! **In Jesus, God became a
human being not just to tell us who and what
God is but also to show us who and what we are
supposed to be.***

Because we share the life of Jesus, we share the
mission of Jesus. Each of us is called to extend the
love and care of the Lord to those around us. We
may not seem, as individuals, to have all that much
to offer but what we do have to offer is eternally
important because it's not just ourselves that we
offer but the Lord Jesus Himself!

The Lord has chosen to need each one of us to get
His work done. Nobody's life is insignificant. The
OFS-USA theme in 2019 was See Christ. Be Christ.
Share the Vision. That has stuck with me. That is
what we are called to do. Our Franciscan spirituality
is Christocentric. As Franciscans around the world,
in all our Orders, celebrate the 800th anniversary of
Greccio we are reminded that what Francis hoped
for that night was for the townspeople to see a truly
human Jesus. Our natural response to a baby is to
open our hearts. As you pray around the Christmas
creche in your homes or churches welcome into
your hearts that same Savior that Francis
welcomed in Greccio.

Merry Christmas!



Chris Leone



Regional Spiritual Assistant

Our Lady of the Angels Region

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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS?

One of my childhood's favorite authors, the late Theodore S. Geisel (best known as "Dr. Seuss"), wrote a poem about the difficulty, but necessity, of making decisions. It reads, in part ...

Did I tell you before about the Zoad
Who came to two signs at the fork in the road?
One said to Place One; the other Place Two.
So, the Zoad had to make up his mind what to do.

Well, the Zoad scratched his head, his chin, and his pants
And said to himself, I'm taking a chance.
If I go to Place One, it may be too hot
And how do I know if I'll like it or not? Place two must be best.
On the other hand, I'd be some sort of fool
if I go to Place Two and find it too cool.
In that case, I might catch a chill and turn blue.
So maybe Place One is the best, not Two.

On the other hand, though, if Place One is too high
I might get a terrible earache and die.
On the other hand, though, if Place Two is too low
I might get some strange pain in my toe.
Place One must be the best – and he started to go.

Then he stopped and he said, "On the other hand,
the other hand, the other hand, though..."
And for 36 hours and half that poor Zoad made starts
and stops at the fork in the road,
Saying don't take that chance, it might not be right.

Then he got an idea that was wonderfully bright.
Safe! Cried the Zoad, I'll play safe, I'm no dunce.
I'll simply start out for both places at once.

And that's how the Zoad, who would not take a chance,
got no place at all, with a split in his pants.

My sisters and brothers in St. Francis, some of us fall into the "split pants" category, to use Dr. Seuss' expression. It is as though we've arrived at a spiritual fork in the road, and we can't decide what to do, which way to go, which sign to follow. Two signs are pointing in different directions, but both read the same: "Follow Me." "Follow Me," says the Lord Jesus. "Follow Me on the road to your life's fulfillment." As we continue on our Franciscan journey, may we meditate on this invitation to follow the Lord, and be open to the Holy Spirit guiding us to walk in the footsteps of our holy father, St. Francis of Assisi.

Happy New Year to all!





Regional Formation Director

St. Elizabeth of Hungary fraternity S.I.,NY

jtk1024@verizon.net

The Lessening of a Great Loss

It seems like 4 years since Alex and I last sat down for a chat together... actually, it's been just four months. We were married a few months short of fifty years when he passed away in early August. What an overwhelming and unsettling jumble of emotions following the death of a loved one!

I'm learning by baby steps how to navigate a whole new world of financial responsibilities, chores and unexpected moments of sadness. I'm so grateful for the gift of faith- and I realize now more than I ever did before, how immensely different the holidays seem to so many who lost a partner, a parent, a friend or even a child this year.

I have been professed since 1992. Over the years, there have been shared joys and sorrows among our members. The fraternity is thriving; we just had four permanent professions in November. I realize that there is an interior bond of unity in our pursuit of conversion to Christ and growth in our spiritual lives.



Everyone was there at Alex's wake and so many came to his funeral Mass. I was elected Minister in June, not aware that the summer would bring such sorrow. Our former Minister and our new council didn't miss a beat in preparing for our first fraternity meeting together. In the unforeseen resignation of the Regional Formation Director, I had agreed to take his place until the next election. After the funeral I was flooded with paperwork and responsibilities that left me unable for a period of time to fulfill the duties I had promised to assume.

The Regional Council was so kindly sympathetic and they shared the obligations gladly in my stead.

Now it's Christmastime. My son, who is an Archdiocesan priest, included in his homily at Alex's funeral Mass endearing stories of his dad, "Mr. Christmas." Our Formation Director had suggested that the fraternity supplement our time together with an Advent/ Christmastime trip, and the Council agreed that a wonderful choice would be to visit the Cloisters Museum, followed by lunch. And so, on December 8th, many of our fraternity members and friends celebrated Mass together for the feast of the Immaculate Conception, then boarded a bus to spend the day in Manhattan.

I was nervous – wondering if something might trigger my feelings at some point. Rather, walking among the treasures of the Middle Ages, listening to instrumental medieval Christmas music, and enjoying light conversations with fraternity members and friends was like a healing balm for my soul. Truly a gift from the Lord! Lunch at Rory Dolan's Restaurant followed, and surrounded by smiles, good food and loving fellowship was joyous.

Our Spiritual Assistant, Brother Thomas Barton, OSF spoke to us about Christmas at Greccio, recalling that in a recent article in St. Anthony Messenger Press by Darlene Pryds, PhD., that the recreation of the Nativity scene needed the collaboration of many people. Connection, support and interdependence became the means of grace for so many that night 800 years ago. Grace is timeless, and grace abounds in our Franciscan fraternities today, where so many members are instruments of peace and love for others. Let us rejoice in our Franciscan vocations each day of the new year.

May your Advent be blessed and the Christmas season find you ever closer to the Babe of Bethlehem.

Joanne



Councilor, North Jersey

Most Holy Name, Little Falls NJ

jimandreano@gmail.com

JUSTICE Ministry - Immigrant/Refugee Assistance

In my role as Regional JPIC Animator, the most frequently asked question the question is "What can we do as a Fraternity? Many of our members do charitable work on their own, but what can we do together?"

This column provides one suggestion - support of immigrants and refugees who have settled, or are about to settle, in your community. As Jesus himself said, *"For I was a stranger, and you welcomed me..."*

There are many common misconceptions about immigration. Probably the most pervasive is: legal immigration is good, but illegal immigration is bad. Why don't these illegals wait their turn the way my ancestors did? Why do they think they can cut in front of the line?

The problem with this rationale is that there is no line. To arrive legally in the US, meet one of the following five criteria. If you don't, you can't get in, no matter how long you wait on the nonexistent line.

Work visa. To qualify for this, have special unique skills. They limit this to professional classes (doctors, engineers, computer professionals, etc.)

Family connection. Have a family member who is already legally here.

Immigration lottery. This increased immigration from underrepresented nations. The chance of being selected in a year is about 400 to 1. Hey, you never know,

Asylum. This is the one that dominates the news nowadays. If you live abroad and fear for your life because of political persecution, you have the legal right (both under US law and international treaty) to apply for asylum. You come to the US, turn yourself in, and have your case heard by a US judge. If you win your case, you can stay. Problem is, the sheer volume of asylum seekers has overwhelmed the system. There is a need for a legislative fix. However, many legislators, and their voters, would rather just spread fear.

Granted a legal asylum, **refugees** often spend years in refugee camps under terrible conditions. Often they arrive in the US within weeks of notification of acceptance, with nothing but a small allowance from the US State Department.

Becoming American is difficult, but some begin the process. If you wish to help show hospitality to our new arrivals, we can help. Recently, a National JPIC Committee put together an Immigration Toolkit to help a Fraternity get started. It is accessible at

<https://www.secularfranciscanusa.org/immigration-toolkit/>.

Or you can contact me directly at JimAndreano@gmail.com and the Regional JPIC Committee look forward to hearing from you!



NEWS AROUND THE REGION



PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

Elections

Divine Mercy Fraternity Clifton, New Jersey



Photo credit: Chris Leone, OFS

Pastoral visitation, followed by an election. The newly elected Council is pictured below.

From left to right:
Jadwidga Szablowski, OFS - **Formation Director**
Alfreda Pawelska, OFS, **Vice Minister**
Krystyna Kanczewski, OFS, **Minister**
Renata Długa, OFS, **Secretary**
Teresa Zaborek, OFS, **Treasurer**

St. Anne Fraternity Fair Lawn, NJ



Photo credit: Chris Leone, OFS

On November 20th
the new 2023-2026 Council

Left to right:
Eleanor Davina, OFS - **Secretary**
Sue Moleti, OFS - **Minister**
Mary Peragine, OFS - **Vice Minister**
Marianne Thorpe, OFS - **Treasurer**
Deacon Bill Joyce, OFS - **Formation Director**

Profession

Porziuncola Fraternity - East Hanover, New Jersey



Photo credit - Fr. Kevin Corcoran

October 7, 2023

Front row - Linda Pasquale, **Minister**;
Therese Steinel, **Secretary**;
Dotti Zoppi, **Vice Minister**
Back row - Hyacinth Lawrence, **Treasurer**;
Kevin Zerrenner, newly professed;
Chris Leone, **Formation Director**;
Fr. Francis Kelly, FPO, **Spiritual Assistant**.

Rite of Admission

Assumption Fraternity - Wood Ridge, New Jersey



Photo credit - Frank Catalano, OFS.

Celebrating the Rite of Admission
for **Joan Van Lowe, OFS.**
November 10, 2023

Front row - Anna Buccini, OFS,
Joan Van Lowe, OFS, Theresa Zito, OFS
Back Row - Dr. Christopher L. Trause, OFS,
Treasurer;
John J. Trause, OFS, **Minister**;
John Buccini, OFS, **Vice Minister**;
Frank Catalano, OFS, **Secretary**;
Gerard Adubato, OFS **Formation Director**.

New Candidates

Servants of God Fraternity Yonkers, New York



Photo credit: Susan Mary Leyden, OFS

October 15, 2023

DIANA ROSA BONILLA and
JEANNIE SWEENEY

were joyfully welcomed into the
Candidacy.
Rite of Admission was held during
our Fraternity's Annual Retreat
at
St. Francis Retreat Center
in Monticello, New York.

New Inquirer

St. Thomas More Fraternity New York City



Photo credit: Stacey Antine, OFS

October 15, 2023

STM welcomed
Michael Cannella as an inquirer .
He joins **Walter and Barbara** as
inquirers on track to candidacy
in January 2024.



FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS



Charity

If you follow Goodness,
Goodness follows you—
and together you walk hand in hand,
in joy:

You love who needs love;
You give who needs receiving;
You listen who needs sharing;
You support who needs help;
You are present and a present to all.

For Goodness is with you,
Who follows Goodness.



Antonia Fusco, OFS
St. Benedict the Moor Fraternity, NYC

“

"During this New Year I resolve to begin
a new life.

I do not know what will happen to me
during this year.

But I abandon myself entirely to you,
my God.

And my aspirations and
all my affections will be for You.

I feel so weak, dear Jesus,
but with Your help

I hope and resolve to live a different life,
that is, a life closer to You."

— St. Gemma Galgani

CHILD IN OUR MIDST

By: **Valerie Moreno**
St. John Vianney Fraternity,
Colonia, NJ



Excited talk filled our town,
"The Poverello is here!"

I knew they meant
Francesco from Assisi,
the little poor beggar.

How could a coddled son
of a wealthy merchant
give up everything,
claiming an encounter with Christ?
SOME SAY HE is mad,
I would decide for myself.

So, up the Greccio mountain we
climbed, candles and torches lighting
the way with joy and singing.
There he was in Deacon's robe,
his smile filling the cave
where an altar stood,
as a live ox and donkey waited
near a manger.
"It's Bethlehem" Many cried,
what clear reality!
Mass was celebrated,
Francesco spoke of Jesus
coming among us.

I looked at his glowing face,
kneeling before the altar, manger.
What happened next is stunning!

A sleeping baby lay there
before my eyes!

Gently, Francesco lifted
the infant now present,
the baby, opened his eyes,
touching Francesco's beard.

I testified as a knight in
good standing about what I saw
in that humble cave,
my signature bearing truth.
I saw, swore, believe.





Christmas at Greccio 1223

by Bret Thoman OFS

Author of *A Knight and a Lady: A Journey into the Spirituality of Saints Francis and Clare*"

This year, the Franciscan Family continues to observe a series of eight-centenary commemorations. In 2023, we are reflecting on two important events that occurred 800 years ago: the Approval of the Later Rule and the reenactment of Christmas at Greccio.

Not far from Rieti, in the northernmost part of the eponymous valley, is the hill town of Greccio. Home to just about 100 residents, the village is famed for an event that took place in 1223. Within a grotto nestled within a cliff, here, St. Francis of Assisi reenacted the first nativity scene.

Referred to locally as the "New Bethlehem," St. Francis desired to recreate a living nativity scene (with live animals and hay) in order to render the feast of the birth of Christ more real. Before this event, the feast of the Nativity of Christ was a minor feast in the liturgical calendar of the church.

St. Francis had been to Greccio several times and was close to a local knight and tertiary named Giovanni (John). Francis told John that he wished to "enact the memory of that babe who was born in Bethlehem: to see as much as is possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and a donkey standing by, he rested on hay" (Thomas of Celano, *First Life*, Chapter 30).

The site was a cave on the face of a cliff some three kilometers (2 miles) from the village. With John's assistance, animals were led to the grotto and hay and a manger were installed. St. Francis, a deacon, served at the Mass. The liturgy came to life spectacularly. The people gathered entered into the mystery of the incarnation in an entirely novel way as they saw with their eyes what Christmas meant.



The grotto where the first nativity scene took place

Afterwards, an altar was constructed over the manger and a small church was built around the grotto. A similar Mass was celebrated the following year. In time, the practice spread to other parts of the region, then all of Italy.

Soon, people everywhere began reenacting Christmas in such a way. Today, Greccio is visited by tens of thousands of pilgrims each year. A hermitage staffed by OFM Franciscan friars safeguards the grotto where St. Francis recreated the first creche. Around the cave is an ancient hermitage where St. Francis recreated the first creche. Around the cave is an ancient hermitage where St. Francis and the early friars lived in the early thirteenth century. It includes a primitive refectory and dormitory.

Above it is the newer hermitage (that is, from the mid-thirteenth century), built during the era of St. Bonaventure, the Minister General of the order. The small, wooden cells can be visited along with the ancient choir and church.

Next to the old church is a modern church with a display of hand-crafted creches along an upper corridor. Particularly striking are those from the school of Naples, known for a long tradition of artisanship and nativity scenes. The message is that the birth of Jesus was not an event that took place remotely in a faraway age and place; rather, our Savior is with us here and now.



The hermitage of Greccio stands out prominently on the side of a cliff.

Reprinted with permission

FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS



Chalk it up!



20 + C + M + B + 24: Epiphany tradition of door marking evokes Magi, asks God's blessings in new year.

The numbers represent the New Year, 2 meanings for **C, M, B** (**Caspar**) (**Melchior**) + (**Balthasan**) traditional names for the magi *CHRISTUS MANSIONEM BENEDICAT*" which in Latin means "**MAY CHRIST BLESS THIS HOUSE**" The "+" signs represent the cross and 2024 is the year of the blessing.

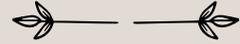
Prayer to say during your Chalking:

*May all who come to our home this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet, that same Jesus who is your incarnate Word, now and forever. **Amen.***

*God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten One to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Savior. **Amen.***

*Loving God, bless this household. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness, and abiding in your will. We ask this through Christ our Savior. **Amen.***

WISDOM of the Saints



Blessed Virgin Mary



Salutation of the Blessed Virgin

Francis had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and her place in his writings demonstrates the centrality of the incarnation within his spirituality.



Hail, holy Lady, most holy Queen,
Mary, Mother of God, ever Virgin;
chosen by the most holy Father
in heaven,
consecrated by him, with his most
holy beloved Son
and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:
on you descended and in you
still remains
all the fullness of grace and every
good.

Hail, his Palace; hail, his Tabernacle;
hail, his Robe, hail, his Handmaid;
hail, his Mother;
and hail, all holy Virtues, who,
by the grace and inspiration of the
Holy Spirit,
are poured into the hearts of the
faithful.

So that, faithless no longer,
they may be made faithful servants of
God through you.

GENERAL INFORMATION



Calling for articles, poems, event photos

THE TROUBADOUR is a quarterly communication vehicle published by Our Lady of the Angels Region. It is published digitally.

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To become a subscriber, you must be an active, professed member, or candidate in formation of our region, and your complete e-mail address must be registered in our database.

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.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES:

All submissions for the next issue of The Troubadour, Spring, March 2024, are due to the Editor: smfranciscanministry@gmail.com by February 15th.

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS:

- The right to copy all material printed in The Troubadour is granted provided you credit the Troubadour and author.
- When submitting articles for publication consideration, please state fraternity name and location, as well as your name and address.
- Photos are limited to 2 or 3. Some submitted photos will be used.

Because of our magazine article regional submission requirements, I am limited in the number of accepted submissions. Therefore, not all articles, poems or event images can be published in the current edition. I will give consideration for future publication.

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