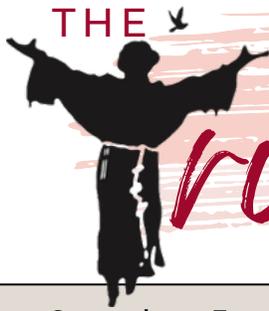


WINTER



roubadour MAGAZINE

2024

Connecting Secular Franciscan Fraternities throughout our region.



Frances Acosta, OFS Editor

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, NC

smfranciscanministry@gmail.com

New Year, New Focus

Happy New Year my brothers and sisters! Yes, it is technically Advent. But we will “Thank God ahead of time” this quote is attributed to **Blessed Solanus Casey**, a saint who believed that gratitude was a vital human quality. So here we go!

A new year brings forth new beginnings and fresh opportunities for personal growth. As you reflect on the past year, a pertinent question to ask yourself is: Have I, at any point, lost my focus? Did I somehow become derailed in my spiritual life along the way?

One of the most remarkable technological inventions that has greatly transformed my daily existence is the GPS. I cannot imagine where I would be without it—most likely wandering and utterly lost! The GPS serves as a reliable guide that offers assistance in navigating seamlessly from one location to another, helps to avoid frustrating traffic congestion, alerts us to potential speed traps, and importantly provides an estimated time of arrival. If only life could be as straightforward as following the simple directions of a GPS! Unfortunately, that is not the case.

How often do we find ourselves feeling disoriented and uncertain about the outcomes of our decisions, or experiencing feelings of being spiritually adrift? In such moments of confusion and solitude, I find immense solace in reflecting deeply on the Good Shepherd. During His earthly ministry, Jesus, in His infinite wisdom, likened Himself to a Good Shepherd. But what does this profound comparison truly signify for us? Shepherds meticulously care for and guide their flocks, intimately knowing their voices and where to lead them with compassion. Just like a shepherd who will risk everything to retrieve a lost sheep, Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself for all of us who find ourselves feeling lost and alone. When we stray in life, He actively seeks, finds, and gently guides us back onto the right path.

We are never truly alone, for if we sincerely tune into Jesus, we will never lose our way. To be attuned to the loving guidance of the Good Shepherd, we must not only attune our ears but also heed His voice with an open heart. Therefore, when you find yourself feeling lost and unsure, embrace the healing power of silence, call out to Him in prayer, and most importantly, listen attentively to His gentle voice.

Remember, you are of immeasurable value to Him, worth more than the ninety-nine others. Keep in mind that He laid down His life for YOU out of boundless, unconditional love.



Frances Acosta, OFS
Founder of Stella Mundi Franciscan Ministry
stellamundi-ofs.org



Regional Council Members:

Chris Leone, OFS
Regional Minister

Joe Wickham, OFS
Vice Minister

Debbie Wickham, OFS
Treasurer

Ed Wojciechowski, OFS
Formation Director

Mary-Frances Reavey, OFS
Secretary

Italia Testa, OFS
**Councilor Central Jersey,
Staten Island**

Jim Andreano, OFS
**Councilor North Jersey and
JPIC Chair**

Paul Beelitz, OFS
Councilor Manhattan

Susan Leyden, OFS
Councilor Westchester

Br. Rudolph Pieretti, OFM Cap.
Regional Spiritual Assistant



Listen, Discern, Go Forth

2022-2025 OFS-USA THEME



Minister

Our Lady of the Angels Region

cleoneofs@gmail.com

Merry Christmas!

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord (Luke 2:10-11).

I'm writing this in early December so I am still in Advent mode, hopefully waiting for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I will switch gears for a moment to celebrate the Incarnation.

Would Jesus have come if man had not sinned? The short answer is Yes. The Trinity always knew that one of them would become one of us. Or, as we say in the Creed, "born of the Father before all ages." Scotus argued that the reason for the Incarnation is Love. The Incarnation in Scotus becomes the unrepeatable, unique, and single defining act of God's love.

If man had not sinned Christ would still have come, since this was predetermined from all eternity as the manifestation of God's love for the creation he brings about in his free act. Jesus is plan A, not plan B.

The Incarnation in Franciscan spirituality is centered on love and not sin. So, does God redeem us from sin because he loves us? No, says Scotus. God loves us and then redeems us. Redemption is an act of love first and foremost, not an act of saving us from sin, and the first act of redemption is the Incarnation. God foresees us in union with him before he sees how sin disrupts that relational dynamic between He and us (Fr. Seamus Mulholland, OFM).

The most important thing in the world is that God is madly in love with us, according to +Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk (Diocese of Cincinnati 1982-2009). There is no reason for it, God just loves us. That's why there is a world. That's why each of us is here. 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.

What the Incarnation shows us is not primarily the need for redemption, but the need that is in each of us for love. Scotus begins with Love, that love which is the very being of God himself. He begins with love in the Incarnation and He ends with love on the Cross.

Fr. Seamus reminds us that if God willed the Incarnation from all eternity, then it was always his intention to become part of sinful creation. Sin determines the manner of that becoming, but it does not determine the fact that it was going to be.

I wish you, your families and fraternities a very Merry Christmas and a blessed year in 2025 as we celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope (see my other article on the Jubilee year).





IN LOVING

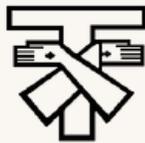
MEMORY

To view Ron's obituary click on the Tau cross



1953-2024

RON PIHOKKER, OFS



We have loved him in life,
let us not forget him after death.

"Of course I will be lifting the entire family up in prayer. We certainly can thank God for the gift of Ron's life."

Jane DeRose Bamman, OFS, National Minister OFS-USA

"Ron was a Secular Franciscan for 47 years and served the Order at the local, regional and national level. He served as our regional minister from 2009 to 2015. He was an encyclopedia of Franciscan spirituality and formed many of our sisters and brothers in Our Lady of the Angels region. He was a mentor but more importantly, a friend."

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

"I am so sad about Ron's passing. He was always my lil' bro. I'm very glad I was able to see him when I was there in June and we talked on the phone last week."

Marcia Stambouljian, OFS, former Regional Minister Our Lady of the Angels Region

"I am saddened to hear of Ron's passing. He was a friend. He added so much to SFO formation. He will be missed."

Bill Wicks, OFS, former National Minister and former National Historian.

"After a gracious and giving life Ron is resting with the Father and can continue to look over all who loved him."

Bob and Patty Fizzsimmons, OFS, Bob was former National Formation Chair

Continues on the next page

NEWS AROUND THE REGION



These are just a few of the condolence messages we have received celebrating the life of our former Regional Minister, Ron Pihokker, OFS. Ron spent most of his life as a professed Secular Franciscan serving the Order at all levels. Before regionalization, he served as Provincial Minister of Holy Name Third Order Province. He was also instrumental in the province's formation programs.

Once regionalization took place, Ron was key in developing formation programs both at the regional and national levels even co-authoring various books and manuals still used to this day. He served on the National Executive Council as Vice Minister for Formation and later served as Regional Minister of Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity.

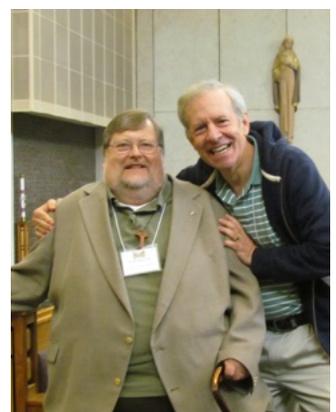
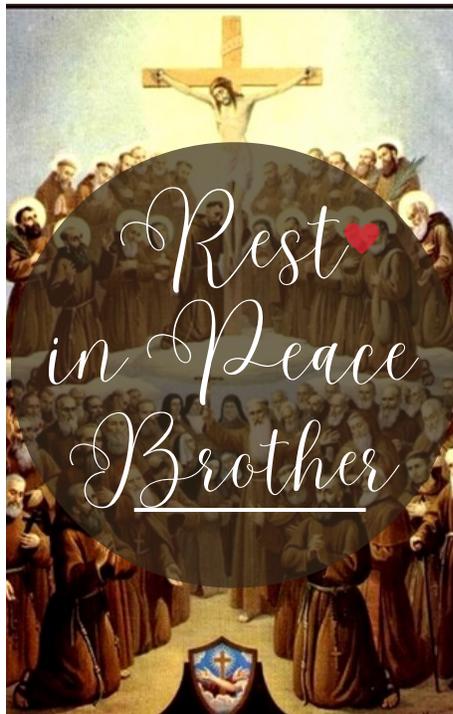
Serving as Ron's Vice Minister for two terms was a valuable learning experience for me. He always included me and invited me to travel with him to National Meetings. Those years with Ron as my mentor and friend shaped my service to our region and presently to the National Fraternity.

Now, a light has gone out in the Franciscan world. I am grateful to God for the blessing of having had Ron as my Franciscan Brother. May the angels greet him and lead him to Paradise, and may the Holy Spirit strengthen Jody and his family.

Good and faithful servant, you have done what was yours to do. Please pray that we will always do what is ours.

Blessings,

National Vice Minister
and former Regional Minister





Regional Spiritual Assistant

Our Lady of the Angels Region

rpieretti@capuchinfriars.org

Under the Tree

Christmas and trees go together like mistletoe and holly. Decorating the house and putting candles in the window are traditions that span generations. Wide-eyed youngsters, family and friends all combine to make this season something quite special. As Christians and as Franciscans we have an added depth to our holiday, namely the incarnation of our Lord and Savior. As the slogan goes, it's the reason for the season. Certainly Francis knew the reason. He was completely enthralled and taken up with the notion that God would become one of us—mortal, human, vulnerable. And because of the incarnation the world and our lives would never be the same. The key point upon which all human history turns, is the birth of Jesus Christ.

Funny how we can so easily become sidetracked by an incidental pebble on the rails. We can get so flustered over things that are inconsequential, transitory and superficial. Francis never lost his focus. He was completely single-minded when it came to the Lord. Nothing, quite literally no-thing meant more to him than the Lord. His panoramic view of the world was funneled into a singular vision of Christ. While he may have lost his sight, he never lost his vision.

With such a stupendous historical happening, one that is reenacted by schoolchildren, printed on greeting cards, depicted in countless paintings and figurines and placed in homes throughout the world from the time of Greccio to the present, the Christmas event silently beckons us to give ourselves wholeheartedly to its embrace. What do we expect will happen this Christmas? What do we wish for, pray for, and long for? Can we yearn for the Messiah like the ancients? Are we so self-sufficient and independent that we smugly settle for tinsel and lights and miss the stark babe who yearns with outstretched arms to bestow upon us countless blessings and graces?

Lord, unsettle me this Advent to the point of expecting something beneath the tree come Christmas morn. Amen.

Bro. Rod





Regional Formation Director

Saint Anthony-Butler-NJ

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The Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures (2025)



The Franciscan Centenary is a multi-year celebration of the 800th anniversary of the key events in the life of St Francis. It is divided into four centenaries over four years reflecting on the Rule and Christmas in Greccio (1223-2023), the gift of the Stigmata (1224-2024), the Canticle of the Creatures (1225-2025), and the Easter of Francis of Assisi (1226-2026). St. Francis understood that everything he had was a gift of God's love. His journey started at San Damiano with listening to God's command to "rebuild my church" and ended with him receiving the stigmata on Mount La Verna. He joyfully accepted God's gifts and chose to return them to the world.

Pope Francis, in his Letter on the Centenary Celebrations, encourages all Franciscans to recognize "the right paths you must follow in order to correspond boldly and faithfully to the charism you have received." He encourages us to use the Centenary as a "time of inner rebirth, of a renewed missionary mandate for the Church which calls you to go out to meet the world where many brothers and sisters are waiting to be consoled, loved and cared for."

In response to the Pope's letter, Franciscans celebrate these five centenaries as one family united in love and harmony..

Why did Francis write the Canticle?

St. Francis was nearly blind when he wrote the Canticle of the Creatures. Despite this, he viewed creation with gratitude and saw the presence of the Creator in everything. To him, all of creatures are siblings because they are created by God. He believed all creation formed a choir that endlessly praises God, who gives generously. He invites all creation, Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire, Sister Water, along with Sister Mother Earth and her fruits and flowers to praise their Creator. The Canticle reflects Francis' life journey of growing closer to Christ and expresses his faith in God as a loving and caring Father. Reflecting on the Canticle

"Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom You give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One."

As Franciscans celebrate the anniversary of the Canticle, we are encouraged to examine our attitudes and how we relate to creation. We need to move from exploiting nature to caring for our common home.

We should consider how we interact with creation. Do we act as rulers who exploit nature? Are we consumers taking what we need? Or are we brothers and sisters who appreciate and protect creation?

These questions pose a significant challenge that could affect our future and that of our planet.

The Canticle opens our eyes so that we can nurture and protect creation. However, caring for the environment requires us to care for our hearts as well. We need true change that is both ecological and spiritual. Only with open hearts, can we replace hatred with forgiveness and promote reconciliation and harmony. Our Rule instructs us to "respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which bear the imprint of the Most High", and motivates us to "strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship." (OFS Rule, Article 18).

Continued on the next page



Regional Formation Director

Saint Anthony-Butler-NJ

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Continued...

But how can we best live the Rules every day of our lives? Franciscans are encouraged to develop a prayerful and contemplative outlook on creation that is able to recognize the presence and beauty of our Creator. We need to deepen our awareness that we all share the same home and must care for it. We also need to grow in the awareness that the human environment and the natural environment can work together in harmony and enrich each other.

With these challenges in mind, I encourage everyone to study the Cantic and reflect on how we can meet the challenges of protecting and nurturing our common home. We need to live our Rule and protect the beautiful gift of creation given to us by our Lord. We may not be able to solve all ecological problems, but we can be an active voice to change the world in the spirit of St Francis.

Pax,
Ed



Picture from Sisters of St. Francis

Cantic of the Creatures

by St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing,
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.
Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.
Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord,
through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.



Councilor, North Jersey

Most Holy Name, Little Falls NJ

jimandreano@gmail.com

Are You Being Called to Bring JPIC to Life?

"I have done what was mine to do" is a phrase commonly attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, signifying that he has fulfilled his own responsibilities and that now it is time for others to embark on their unique journeys. This phrase is often interpreted as a profound call to action, urging individuals to continue the vital work he initiated by dedicating their lives to faith and service for others. The advancement of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) stands as a fundamental aspect of our Franciscan calling. It is not only a principle but, ideally, something that each of us should strive to embody and live out every single day in our interactions and choices.

What exactly is the role of a JPIC Animator?

First, let's talk about what it is not.

- It is not somebody who has to do everything.
- It is not even somebody who **WANTS** to do everything. In a well-functioning Fraternity, nobody has the right to do everything, even if they want to!
- Nor is it an easy way for the Minister to put a check mark in a box, allowing the rest of the Fraternity to proceed with business as usual.

Now let's talk about what the role does entail. In the simplest sense, it is exactly what the name implies.

To animate. To bring to life.

It's more than just being a Coordinator, although that's certainly part of it.

It's even more than being a Servant-Leader, although that's part of it as well. It involves lighting a fire within the minds and hearts of fellow Fraternity members. Or more specifically, to nurture the fire which is already smoldering, to varying degrees, within each member.

What does it take to fill this role?

- The first and most obvious prerequisite - the fire must first be burning within you! You must have a passion for the advancement of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation.
- Must have the mindset that JPIC is an integral part of your vocation, and not an optional extra.
- Must be willing to share that belief with your fellow Fraternity members.
- Must have Administrative and Servant-Leadership skills - but not necessarily on Day One! These can be learned and developed. Your Minister and Fraternity Council will help.
- Full profession is not required, a Candidate may serve in this role.
- Must be mindful and respectful of the diversity of opinions and beliefs of your members.

SO... is there a chance for you to engage in what it is that you are truly meant to do? Is it possible that the important and meaningful role of JPIC Animator could indeed be a significant part of your unique Franciscan calling?

If your answer is "Maybe," I encourage you to consider discussing this matter further with your Minister for more clarity and guidance. There is a very good chance that in your Fraternity, this role is currently vacant, just waiting for you to step up and fill it! Alternatively, if you would prefer to conduct some additional fact-finding or gather more information before making a decision, please feel free to contact me at JimAndreano@gmail.com.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful and prayerful consideration of this opportunity.





The Transitus of St Francis of Assisi 2024

St. Francis of Assisi Church,
Hackensack, NJ

Oct. 3rd

Members of Most Holy Name of Jesus fraternity,
St. Anne fraternity and Assumption fraternity
joined members of
St. Francis fraternity in Hackensack
to celebrate the **Transitus**
at St. Francis of Assisi Church.

At the end of the service, after the friars renewed
their vows, Chris Leone called all
Secular Franciscans present to come to the
sanctuary and renew their commitment
to our way of life.

The photos were taken by Laura Sodano Beaisoleil
of Most Holy Name of Jesus fraternity.





Celebrating the feast of our Seraphic Father



Bishop Sweeney and the friars

On the meaningful feast day of St. Francis, Bishop Kevin Sweeney of the Paterson, New Jersey Diocese, joyfully celebrated Mass at the Franciscan parish of St. Anthony of Padua, located in Butler, New Jersey. The church was filled to capacity with an enthusiastic congregation, including many devoted Franciscan friars, dedicated sisters, and committed secular members of the community!



Bishop Sweeney and Fr. Matthew Pravetz, OFM, pastor.



OUR LADY OF ANGELS REGIONAL ELECTION

Regional Council 2024-2027



Photo credit- Rosanna Ayers, OFS

November 9, 2024

Pictured left to right

Chris Leone, OFS - **Minister**

Debbie Wickham, OFS - **Treasurer**

Joe Wickham, OFS - **Vice Minister**

Paul Beelitz, OFS - **Manhattan District Councilor**

Jim Andreano, OFS - **North Jersey District Councilor and JPIC Chair**

Ed Wojciechowski, OFS - **Formation Director**

Susan Leyden, OFS - **Westchester County District Councilor**

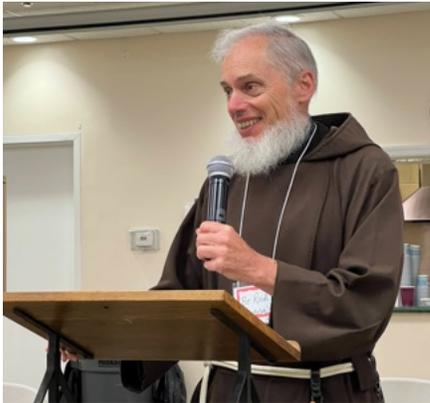
Italia Testa, OFS - **Central New Jersey and Staten Island District Councilor**

Mary-Frances Reavey, OFS - **Secretary**

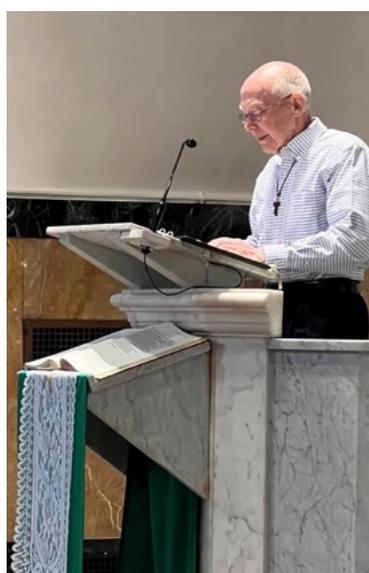
Congratulations!



NEWS AROUND THE REGION



2024 CHAPTER OF MINISTERS





Many Thanks to the team from St. Francis Fraternity who hosted the Chapter of Ministers.

Alessandra Panuccio, OFS,
Domenica Panuccio, OFS,
Josephine Cigna
(candidate),
Mimma LoMiscio, OFS,
Lucy Stamilla, OFS, and
Teresa Iozzia, OFS.

Diane Menditto was attending the General Chapter in Rome from November 9th to the 17th.

Pictured with Diane is our National Formation Director, Layna Maher, OFS.





Jubilee Year 2025 – Pilgrims of Hope

A Jubilee is proclaimed through an official papal “Bull of Indiction”. The “Bull” is generally written in Latin and bears the seal of the Pope. But why is it called the “Bull”? The term “bull” (from the Latin *bullā*, round object) originally indicated the metal capsule used to protect the wax seal affixed to a papal document of particular importance, to attest its authenticity and therefore authority. Over the centuries, the term was used to indicate first the seal, then the document itself.

Each Jubilee “Bull” is identified by its initial words. For example, Saint John Paul II proclaimed the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 with the Bull *Incarnationis Mysterium: The Mystery of the Incarnation*. Pope Francis proclaimed the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2015 with the Bull *Misericordiae vultus: The face of mercy*.

Pope Francis proclaimed *SPES NON CONFUNDIT*. “Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5) for the Jubilee Year of 2025. He continued, “In the spirit of hope, the Apostle Paul addressed these words of encouragement to the Christian community of Rome. Hope is also the central message of the coming Jubilee that, in accordance with an ancient tradition, the Pope proclaims every twenty-five years. My thoughts turn to all those pilgrims of hope who will travel to Rome in order to experience the Holy Year and to all those others who, though unable to visit the City of the Apostles Peter and Paul, will celebrate it in their local Churches. For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the “door” (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as “our hope” (1 Tim 1:1).

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God’s word helps us find reasons for that hope. Taking it as our guide, let us return to the message that the Apostle Paul wished to communicate to the Christians of Rome.”





Diane Menditto, OFS

National Vice Minister, OFS-USA

CIOFS General Chapter 2024 Theme: You Are Love



Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As I write this, I am on my way home from the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order held in Rome from November 9-17th.

The General Chapter, a gathering of the Ministers or the international councilors from all 70 national fraternities from around the world, takes place every three years. In one triennium an elective Chapter is held. The other is devoted to general business.

This year's Chapter was for general business, and it was especially important business since the new Statute of our Order was voted on and passed. The Statute, which will affect all of us in many ways, was issued "ad experimentum" in 2021. The entire Order had a chance to discuss, comment on, and live it since then. An official signed copy in English will be available soon and will be posted on the national website.

The delegates also voted on the priorities for CIOFS, the worldwide Order, for the next three years. These are: **Formation, Family Life, and Vocations**. These priorities, along with the Chapter theme, "**You are Love,**" will surely influence every national, regional, and local fraternity.

The USA was well represented this year. In addition to our International Councilor, Mary Frances Charsky, OFS, who represented us as a voting member, National Formation Chair Layna Maher, OFS, and I attended as observers.

Each day was filled with business, working group discussions, reports of various committees, and reports on projects happening around the world. Peacemaking, education, and environmental issues were some of the main projects.

Each morning, we began with a mass in one of the 4 CIOFS languages (Italian, English, Spanish or French.) The masses were celebrated by each of the General Ministers of the orders to which we are bonded, OFM, OFM Capuchin, OFM Conventual, and TOR (Third Order Regular). Music was provided by young adult councilors serving YouFra international.

In the evenings, each region, North America, South America, Europe 1 and 2, English-speaking Africa, French-speaking Africa, and Asia/Oceania presented entertainment and treats from their countries. For the USA, we led the group in singing the **Canticle of the Sun**. In between each verse, we gave fun facts about the USA translated into English, Spanish, and Italian. Then, everyone joined us in singing the refrain in English.

Our Presidency works very hard to serve the International Order. Because of their excellent planning, we were able to meet our brothers and sisters from around the world and found that we share many of the same concerns and desires. The desire for good formation and knowledge of resources is similar all over the world. They are working for us just as we on the Council of OFS-USA are working hard for you!

Of course, all of you were in our prayers and in the prayers of all who attended.

Pace e bene,

National Vice Minister





Frances Acosta, OFS

St. Maximilian Kolbe fraternity, Charlotte NC

Pilgrimage to Assisi



The olive orchards of San Damiano

Kathleen embarked on a transformative pilgrimage with the Franciscan Pilgrimage program. This profound journey lasted a total of 13 days, allowing the pilgrims to immerse themselves in the rich spiritual heritage of Italy. They spent three meaningful days in Rome, exploring its historical and religious significance, while the remainder of our time was dedicated to the sacred atmosphere of Assisi.

Kathleen went on this pilgrimage with the hope of drawing closer to our father Francis, and that indeed was realized during our time there. However, to her delightful surprise, she discovered a deep admiration and love for Saint Clare and everything associated with her remarkable legacy. Kathleen found immense joy in the San Damiano convent, a place that radiated peace, and the surrounding olive orchards were simply stunning. Each morning, the mist would gently settle around the trees, creating a breathtaking scene that made it seem as if they were growing directly out of the clouds.

"I was fortunate enough to attend prayers and adoration every morning at the Basilica of Saint Clare, taking the opportunity to pray under the cross from San Damiano," which added a remarkable depth to her spiritual experience. During their journey, they visited Greccio on the way to Assisi, a visit that felt like a true privilege as we explored this beautiful hermitage. Additionally, they traveled to La Verna to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Stigmata of our father Francis. Kathleen shared that the natural beauty of La Verna is truly beyond description, and one can easily understand why it was considered his favorite place, with its breathtaking views and serene environment that invite deep reflection and connection with the divine.

Kathleen, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to you for sharing not only the beautiful pictures but also your truly wonderful experience. Assisi is undoubtedly a place of great beauty and spiritual significance that I hope to return to one day in the future.

Kathleen Rogers, OFS is a member of St. Thomas More fraternity in New York City



This photo was taken in a cave at La Verna.



The olive orchards of San Damiano



The cave at Greccio where Father Francis celebrated the Nativity

FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS



Nancy Ihnat , OFS

Saint Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Ringwood, NJ

Members of the St. Francis fraternity



Feast Day Celebration

WOW! What a Glorious and Wonderful Sunny Autumn Day we had in the Ramapo Mountains celebrating the Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi with Sunday Liturgy, the Blessing of the Animals and Sisters of Life on October 6th!

Our Fraternity, Saint Francis of Assisi, started the day attending the 11:00 a.m. Sunday High Mass in the upper church of Saint Catherine of Bologna in Ringwood NJ. In keeping with our dedication of October as Franciscan Month, our Vice Minister, Denise Minissale, OFS addressed the parishioners on what October Franciscan Month is all about including Franciscan Spirituality, Vocational Aspirations and Love for Christ.



SISTERS OF LIFE

At 1:00 p.m. our Pastor Father Pawel and our Spiritual Assistant, Father Michael Tyson, OFM engaged with all the parishioners with their family pets outside the church for the Blessing of the Animals. It was a very beautiful experience to see the love and care inspired by this event with God's special creatures.

During the Blessing of the Animals the Sisters of Life arrived to share in our celebration with the parishioners and their family pets.

At 1:30 p.m. our Fraternity had a Meet and Greet Social with the Sisters of Life from Suffern NY whose vocation inspired us to have The Sisters as our main apostolate. What a great day! Let's do it again!



FR. MIKE TYSON, OFM -
BLESSING THE ANIMALS

Nancy Ihnat, OFS
Minister, St. Francis Fraternity, Ringwood

NEWS AROUND THE REGION



PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

Rite of Election

Most Holy Name of Jesus Fraternity Little Falls, NJ



Photo credit: Laura Sodano Beausoleil

September 9, 2024

Pictured are:

Agnes Czaplinski, OFS, **Formation Director**
Fr. John Gordon, OFS, **Vice Minister**
Debbie Wickham, OFS, **Minister**
Jim Andreano, OFS, **Treasurer**
Cathie Vieira, OFS, **Secretary**

Mary Frances Reavey, OFS,
Regional Secretary and Presider
Sr. Janice Jolin, SMIC,
Spiritual Assistant and Delegated Ecclesial Witness

St. Peter Fraternity Somerset, NJ



Photo credit: Debbie Wickham, OFS.

October 19, 2024

In the photo, left to right:

Joseph McKenna, OFS, **Minister**
Marilyn Harmyk, OFS, **-Councillor**
Carl Westover, OFS, **-Treasurer**
Debra Kubeck, OFS, **-Secretary**
Mary-Frances Reavey, OFS,
-Formation Director
Evelyn Lehr, OFS, **-Vice Minister**

Presider - Debbie Wickham, OFS
Ecclesial Witness - Bro. Rod Pieretti, OFM Cap.

Porziuncola Fraternity East Hanover, NJ



Photo credit: Jim Andreano, OFS.

October 19, 2024

In the photo, left to right:
Kevin Zerrenner, OFS, **- Secretary**
Therese Steinel, OFS, **- Formation Director**
Hyacinth Lawrence, OFS, **-Treasurer**
Dorothy Zoppi, OFS, **-Vice Minister**
Linda Pasquale, OFS, **-Minister**

Presider - Jim Andreano, OFS,
Regional Councillor
Ecclesial Witness - Fr. Francis Kelly

Sacred Heart Fraternity Yonkers, NY



Photo credit: Deacon Candido Pardo, Jr.

October 27, 2024

In the photo, left to right
Marie Veca OFS, **-Vice Minister**
Florence Nicosia OFS
Formation Director
Jenny Echevarria OFS, **-Minister**
Carolyn Holodak OFS, **-Secretary**
Mark Miller OFS, **-Treasurer**
Spiritual Assistant & delegated ecclesial witness
.Fr John McHugh OFM Cap.

not pictured : **Presider** - Rick Spana, OFS,
Regional Councillor

San Damiano Fraternity Newton, NJ



Photo credit: Edward Wojciechowski, OFS

November 12, 2024

In the photo, left to right:
Bea Harrigan- **Minister**
Joanne Jensen-**Vice Minister**
Jimmy Williams- **Secretary**
Theresa Sensbach-**Treasurer**
Beth Baist-**Formation Director**
Carolyn Clegg-**Councillor**

Presider -
Edward Wojciechowski, OFS
Ecclesial Witness -
Fr. Martin Shwartz, OFM, Cap

Rite of Profession

St. Benedict the Moor Fraternity New York City, NY



Photo credit: Anthony Jalandoni

October 5, 2024

In the photo, left to right
Douglas Dugan (center left) and Tony Paul Kozhipatt (center right) professed into the Father Joseph Cavoto presided at the Profession Mass.

Congratulations!





PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

Rite of Profession

St Peter Fraternity SOMERSET NJ



Pictured: Lori Snyder ofs - Newly Professed, Mary-Frances Reavey, ofs Formation Director, Marissa Limjoco, ofs Newly Professed



St Peter Fraternity welcomes their new members.

August 17, 2024

Lori Snyder and Marissa Limjoco were professed into the Secular Franciscan Order.

They were welcomed by the St Peter Fraternity in St Matthias church where we meet. Lori and Marissa celebrated their day with the whole Fraternity and family and friends attending.

Rite of Admission

St Anne's Fraternity Fair Lawn , NJ



October 21 2024

Maureen Neville and Claudia Brockway

Pictured are Angela Rodin, Maureen Neville, candidate, Claudia Brockway- candidate, Deacon Bill Joyce - Formation Director, and Sue Moleti- Minister.

Rite of Admission

Servants of God Fraternity Yonkers, New York



Photo credit: Diana Bonilla, OFS

December 11, 2024

DIANE CERCONE

was joyfully welcomed into the Candidacy. The Rite of Admission was held during our Fraternity's Annual Christmas Gathering at St. Leopold Friary, Yonkers, New York.

From left to right: Susan M. Leyden, OFS; Diana Rosa Bonilla, Candidate; Fr. Lawrence Joseph Schroedel, CFR - Spiritual Director; Diane Cercone, Candidate; Jinny Pineiro, OFS; Jeannie Sweeney, Candidate; Tom Scheuring, Minister; John Blackadar, Guest.



Lord our God, you have sent your Son Jesus Christ to be for us the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that these your people who are asking to be admitted into the Secular Franciscan Order, and all of us, may hear the words of the gospel fully and may observe them attentively.





PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

Members of St. Francis Fraternity and a few guests enjoyed our yearly family Christmas dinner on December 11th.



Each member donated one or more gifts for the children in the Bergen County Hearts program.

We thank our Regional Minister, Chris Leone, who was our guest, for taking the picture.



May our region be blessed at Christmas and always.

Crib DEVOTION

“What he did on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ near the little town called Greccio in the third year before his glorious death (1223) should be noted and recalled with reverent memory. . . He told his friend John, ‘Go with haste and diligently prepare what I tell you. For I wish to do something that will call to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem and set before our bodily eyes in some way the hardships of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he lay upon the hay where he had been placed.’”

By Dominic Monti, OFM
Published in Spirituality & Advent
January 05, 2017

St Peter Fraternity in Somerset NJ enjoyed an Advent program on Saturday Dec 6, 2024.



Through song and prayer members build the manger scene. The scene is unique and the pieces are all different. At the conclusion of the Crib Devotion the scene is blessed and members returned their pieces to their home manger... bring the blessings to all their family.



We Remember



Rufus Davis, OFS,

Saint Mary of the Angels Fraternity



It is with deep sadness we inform you of the passing of our dear brother, Rufus Davis, OFS, Saint Mary of the Angels Fraternity. Rufus passed away on October 7th, 2024. He is survived by a younger sister, Beverly. Rufus lived in Buffalo. He was in the spiritual care of Confidant Bishop John up to his final hours of earthly life. Rufus was Professed on May 20, 1995. He was one of the founders of Saint Mary of the Angels Fraternity. Our brother, Rufus served as the Director of Formation. He embraced the gift of life as a true Franciscan. His heart was open to sharing the gift of faith with zeal for all God's creation.

He is now resting in the loving arms of our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ, Blessed Mother Mary, and seraphic father Francis. He is surrounded by the Angels and Saints, his family of ancestors and community of faith. May his soul rest in peace with the souls of all the faithfully departed for all eternity. Amen.

Catherine M. Skurka, OFS
on behalf of Saint Mary of the Angels Fraternity





Franciscan Saints 2025

click on the Icon below to bring up Calendar



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 messenges...

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 2025.

May we, Your Holy People, walk forward

together side by side.

Amen

- Written by Sister Mary Ann Barret, O.P

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



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.

The electronic format of The Troubadour is published quarterly: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. It is available for downloading on our Regional website.

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 2025, 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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Inspirational

SAINTS

BL. ANGELA OF FOLIGNO



(1248 – January 4, 1309)
FEAST DAY: January 7

“Without humility of heart all the other virtues by which one runs toward God seem – and are – absolutely worthless.”
Angela of Foligno

Third Order Regular. Widow

After leading a sinful life, even as wife and mother, Angela was converted in 1285. Following the death of her husband, her children and her mother, she became a Franciscan tertiary in Foligno and established a community of Sisters of the Third Order Regular. Directed by the friar, Arnold of Foligno, she was endowed with great mystical gifts. Her spirituality is strongly centered in Christ, leading to union with the Most Holy Trinity. Her writings, translated into Latin by Friar Arnold, have been praised by St. Francis de Sales, St. Alphonsus Ligouri and Pope Benedict XIV. She was beatified in 1693.

Reflection (Franciscan Media)

People who live in the United States today can understand Saint Angela's temptation to increase her sense of self-worth by accumulating money, fame or power. Striving to possess more and more, she became more and more self-centered. When she realized she was priceless because she was created and loved by God, she became very penitential and very charitable to the poor. What had seemed foolish early in her life now became very important. The path of self-emptying she followed is the path all holy men and women must follow. The liturgical feast of Saint Angela of Foligno is celebrated on January 7.

