



Connecting Secular Franciscan Fraternities throughout our region.



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Reflecting on the Magi

When I was principal, our High School students would participate in the Posadas celebration, visiting the elementary school attached to our campus on the last day before Christmas break. Las Posadas are traditional nine-day Christmas festivities held from December 16th to the 24th that reenact Mary and Joseph's challenging journey to find lodging in Bethlehem. The customs include a procession with carolers, some dressed as biblical figures, (my students did) who stop at various homes to sing and ask for a "posada" (inn). At the end of each night, the group is warmly welcomed into a home to offer prayers and share a joyful feast. I am truly happy to know that this beautiful tradition continues to be practiced to this day. It serves as a wonderful reminder of the Journey and the spirit of perseverance and faith. The Magi, too, journeyed, but unlike Mary and Joseph, they carried precious gifts.

Take time to ponder the Magi's journey, their courage to follow the guiding star, and their deep willingness to worship Jesus in such a humble, unexpected setting.



Reflect on their sincere act of worship and how they chose to leave "to their country by another way," demonstrating a profound change in their hearts and minds after encountering Christ. This shift reveals the deep impact of their experience, guiding them onto a new path filled with renewed purpose and faith. Like the Magi, we too can bring our gifts to offer. I don't mean for you to think only of physical gifts or material things. Rather, I am referring to the unique gifts and talents that God has graciously given each of us. Yes, we are all given gifts in various forms. Some may believe they don't possess any special gifts or abilities. But oh, ye of little faith! I respectfully disagree. No one is without a gift from God, no matter how small or hidden it may seem. Everyone has something valuable to contribute.

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"Go into the world and proclaim the good news."

2025 - 2028 OFS-USA THEME



Minister

Our Lady of the Angels Region

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My dear sisters and brothers, welcome to the season of waiting!

I remember as a child waiting for my birthday, waiting for Christmas, waiting for school to start, waiting for school to end, waiting for the next episode of my favorite TV show, waiting to be old enough to do the things that my big sister was doing. When this issue is published Advent will officially be over, but our time of waiting will continue.

As I'm writing this we are in the middle of Advent, and we just had a mini retreat at our parish. Fr. Paddy O'Donovan who ran the retreat spoke of a season of Hope during the "Year of Hope" (which will be over by the time you read this), and he was speaking of singing while you work, or play, or walk. . . basically singing through life to bring some hope into our life and those around us. It reminded me of the musical arrangement by Trans Siberian Orchestra – Christmas Eve / Sarajevo, but it's the story behind the music that will change the way you hear it forever. The music is the story of Vedran Smailvic, a Sarajevo-born cellist who returns home during the Bosnian War to find his village in ruins. While his family and friends go to bomb shelters, he climbs to the top of a pile of rubble in the town square and plays his cello. He does this every night to inspire Hope in his people and to bring a sense of normal back to his village.

We need to be the bearers of hope to the people around us. We need to let our lives sing with the Gospel message and bring the hope of Christ to all we meet. It may not be prudent to actually sing all the time, especially if you have a voice like mine that could scare people away. But let people see the joy that is within you and the reason that you live the Franciscan life that you do.

It has been a pleasure these past couple of months to serve as your Minister and in getting to meet so many of you, and I look forward to meeting so many more as I travel around the region visiting Fraternities and at chapter events. This is an exciting year coming up, we have our Regional Visitation in March, the Quinquennial in July, our Regional Retreat in August, and then our Chapter of Ministers in November. I pray that you all have had a Joyous Christmas and will have a blessed year as we celebrate the Easter of Francis.

Your servant,
Joe





Regional Spiritual Assistant

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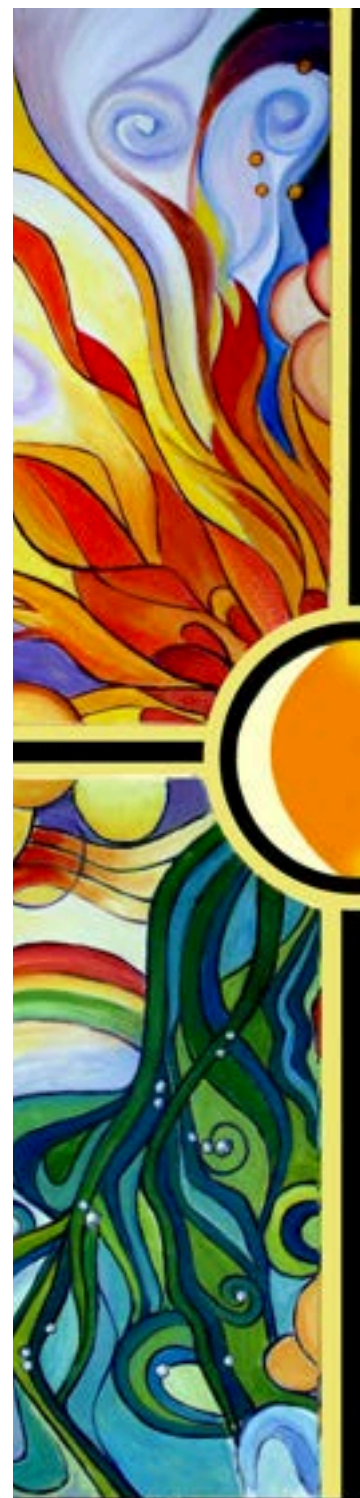
Were you ever cc'd? I don't mean, carbon copied, I mean completely confused. You know, remember when you were at the airport desperately trying to locate your flight on the monitor and it kept showing every other flight but your own? Or when you were at the train terminal and the board flickered a hundred and one stops except yours? There are times when we are lost, both figuratively and literally.

Sometimes being confused is like having mental vertigo, everything is in motion except yourself, and you just can't seem to find a foothold to take the next step. And that's exactly what we need—a foothold, a point of reference, a fixed peg in the board of life. From these markers we get our bearings, evaluate the situation and make the necessary decisions. Sometimes we can quickly process the information and know which end is up in a flash. And at other times we need to be more patient and prayerful as we give ourselves to a discernment process that may take months or even years before we can finally wholeheartedly commit ourselves to a particular venture. We need points of reference, guideposts and order in our life.

The focal point for the saints was the Lord. He was their rock and foundation. Substituting the Lord for anything else is building on sand—and to our own detriment. I once attended a funeral Mass for a woman who had her share of trials and tribulations in life. During the eulogy her son quoted her as saying, "In the end, all that matters is God."

Many of us were able to attend the Transitus service commemorating the death of our beloved St. Francis. He was anything but confused as he lay dying. He knew exactly where he had come from, what God had called him to be and do, and where he was going. In so many words he told his followers, "I have done what was mine to do, may the Lord inspire you to do what is yours."

As all of nature is preparing itself for the sleep of winter, reminding us of our imminent death, we pray for the grace to recognize the markers the Lord puts before us for guidance and direction. Divine Order is embedded in all of creation. Let us pray for the grace to be Completely Clear about who we are, where we are going, and most importantly, who God is.



Bro Rod



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The Secular Franciscan Identity

When I introduce myself as a Secular Franciscan to someone in my parish or during my daily routine, they often display a puzzled expression. It's likely that they've never encountered a Secular Franciscan before and are unfamiliar with our existence and practices. Occasionally, they express interest in the Franciscan lifestyle and seek to learn more about us, curious about what makes us tick.

As Secular Franciscans, we acknowledge our membership in the Franciscan family, which includes the Friars Minor, Poor Clares, and all the various members of the Third Order. As a canonically established order, we have an intimate connection to the life and mission of the Catholic Church. As Catholics, we are part of the faithful who embody the Franciscan charism in our everyday lives and activities.

What is the Franciscan Charism?

Anne Mulqueen, OFS, addresses the charism of the Secular Franciscan in the FUN Manual where she poses the following questions about our identity:

- Who are we?
- What is our purpose?
- To whom do we belong?
- What do we do?

In this column, I hope to give a brief overview of these key questions and how they relate to our Secular Franciscan identity.

Who are we?

We are all part of God's creation. In the Book of Genesis, we learn that God "created mankind in his image" (Gen. 1:27). God created us and loves us unconditionally. We all possess unique gifts and talents that God wants us to share with one another to build up the Kingdom of God. God created each and every one of us with a specific purpose in mind and invites us to live in communion with Him and each other.

Through the sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist and Confirmation, we were all made into members of the Mystical Body of Christ. We are the "living stones" which make up the "one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic" Church. Through our profession we have been "united more intimately with the Church" and we "should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ" by our lives and words. (OFS Rule 2:6)

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The Secular Franciscan Identity

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What is our purpose?

As witnesses to Christ, we are to live and proclaim the Gospels in our daily lives. United by our vocation, we conform our “thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel calls “conversion.” (OFS Rule 2:7). We are faithful stewards of creation and are called to build a “more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought out more effectively” (Rule 2:14). We are at the forefront of promoting social justice “by testimony” of our daily lives and our “courageous initiatives” (OFS Rule 2:14)

To whom do we belong?

First and foremost, we belong to Jesus Christ. He is our Lord and Savior, As part of the Franciscan family, we are united with “all members of the people of God - laity, religious and priests - who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi” (OFS Rule 1:1) As Secular Franciscans, we are intimately united to each other by our vocation and are “motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel” (OFS Rule(2:7))

What do we do?

We live the Rule of the OFS to the best of our abilities each and every day of our life. How do we do this? We live the Gospels. Reflecting on the Gospels, particularly the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), we are reminded to use the gifts bestowed upon us by God wisely. However, there is also a cautionary note for those who choose to conceal their talents, as stated in Matthew 24:29: “For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

Therefore, we must embrace the talents God has given us and generously share them with our families and communities.

By profession, we made a promise and a lifelong commitment to live the Gospels in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare. We also live in full communion with the Pope, and the Catholic Church. Our mission in life is simple, we go forth into the world to preach the Gospel in our words, deeds and actions. This is who we are. This is our identity.

Pax et Bonum,

Ed



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A DEBATE ON DEBATE, AND LET'S HEAR FROM POPE LEO

Earlier this year, we were all saddened by the assassination of Charlie Kirk. We pray for his eternal rest and that his family may find peace.

Kirk built his fame, fortune, and personal brand as a fierce defender of free speech, specifically, the art of debate. We all feel blessed to live in a nation where free speech is valued and protected. We pray that it may always be so. However, it would be a mistake to equate "speech" with "debate". The two are not synonymous. As Franciscans committed to the quest for peace, I believe we are called to debate less, and to dialogue more.

Both debate and dialogue are learned skills which can be improved with practice. But the mindsets of their practitioners are very different.

MINDSET OF THE DEBATER	MINDSET OF THE DIALOGUER
I am right. Prove me wrong.	I believe that I am right, or at least partially right. But you may be partially right too.
I'm really not interested in your opinion, except to the extent that I can refute it.	I am genuinely interested in your opinion, and my mind is open to change.
The name of the game is to win.	The objective is to get to the truth. And it's not a game.
Facts are optional. Inconvenient facts which weaken my argument are to be avoided.	Since getting to the truth is what matters, facts are all-important, even if not "helpful".
The other person is my opponent, and potentially my enemy.	The other person is exactly that, a person. And potentially my friend.
Anything I can do to get my opponent "off their game" is fair game. Anything.	Civility, courtesy, and just plain good manners still matter.
Nothing that transpires during our exchange will change me.	If we haven't each grown a little as a result of our exchange, maybe we've missed an opportunity.

To be clear, debate does have its place. As Franciscans, we are called upon to evangelize, which can involve persuasion. But how we go about it is all-important. We cannot act as though we have a monopoly on the truth, because we don't.

Consider Francis' encounter with the Sultan. Francis began that meeting with the mindset of the debater. That is, he would convince the Sultan that he (Francis) was right, or he would die trying. Had he persisted with that approach, the second option would have been likely. However, sometime during the process, the two of them discovered a third way - that of true, respectful dialogue. Of listening to, and learning from, one another. Ultimately, Francis was unsuccessful in his objective of converting the Sultan.

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A DEBATE ON DEBATE, AND LET'S HEAR FROM POPE LEO

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But he succeeded in providing us with a model of dialogue and mutual understanding, which serves us well to this day.

To sum up, we thank God for our freedom to engage in free, unfettered debate, without regard to the sensitivities of our "opponent". We have that right. But the fact that we have the right to do something, does not make it the right thing to do.

Also... a nice thing about having an American Pope is that he is well positioned to speak on American social justice issues. Recently Pope Leo made the following statement on what it means to be Pro-Life in America. I offer it unedited and without commentary, as I have nothing to add or subtract from it:

"It is important to look at many issues that are related to what is the teaching of the Church. Someone who says 'I'm against abortion', but says 'I'm in favor of the death penalty', is not really pro-life. So someone who says 'I'm against abortion, but I'm in favor of the inhuman treatment of immigrants in the United States', I don't know if that's pro-life.

So they're very complex issues. I don't know if anyone has all the truth on them, but I would ask first and foremost that there be greater respect for one another, and that we search together, in this case as American citizens or citizens of the state of Illinois, as well as Catholics, to say that we need to really look closely at all these ethical issues, and to find the way forward as Church.

Church teaching on each one of those issues is very clear."



[photo credit: Fran Acosta, OFS with the assistance of AI]

FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS



Carlo

There you were, young boy, wiser than your fifteen years .



blessed with Heavenly grace.
Your heart turned to God,
Jesus was your best friend,
His church was your refuge
The Eucharist was your highway to Heaven.
Simple life with deep wisdom, shown in kindness,
love for poor, generosity unbound joy of spirit, radiant smile.
Pizza, chocolate, internet were favorites, sports as well.

Tech savvy, you coded every miracle of the Eucharist online.
Loved to pray.

Rare Leukemia at fifteen defied medical treatment,
you suffered much, yet always filled with peace.
You requested burial in Assisi wearing sneakers, jeans and hoody.

Your life was studied, all who knew you said you were a wonderful soul, genuine boy and friend.

Miracles and conversions occurred after your death as people heard your story, you were asked to pray in Heaven.

In a dream, you told your mother she would have more children.

Francesca and Michele were twins!

When your tomb was opened, you were incorrupt, as though asleep.

Pope Francis signed the decree of Beatification in 2020.
Unexplainable miracles glorified God, a saint with laptop proclaiming Love and Mercy to all.

Notes: Carlo Acutis was born in 1991 and died in 2006. His website of proven Eucharistic miracles was made an exhibition traveling the world.

**The Holy Eucharist is the bread and wine offered at Mass by consecration by the priest that becomes the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ. Ref. Accounts of Last Supper in the Gospel and John, entire Chapter 6*



Medieval
memorable
rich, affable
popular
leader
ambition
imaginative
loved banquets, Balls
generous
knighthood his goal
captured

Perugia
imprisonment
ransomed by father
weak and sick
he came home

nothing felt right
old pleasures faded
he longed for more,
in caves
he poured his tears
awakening
to God's voice
calling

"Rebuild My Church"
he began stone by stone
prayer with trust in Jesus' love-
"My God and my All!"
Riches cast away
heart on fire
the poverty of fulfillment was the suffering people creatures earth
all brothers and sisters--sun, wind, rain, moon

Il Poverello

he went to Rome before
Pope and papal majesty
in humble respect given
verbal approval of
his mendicant Order.
Men joined him,
Clare became mother of
Poor Clare nuns,
a lay third order followed

begging food
owning nothing
they took the Perfect Joy
in living Jesus to the world

Il Poverello
little poor man
Francesco
sang praise to God
in simple faith
love
commitment
on La Verna he
received the wounds of
Jesus,
hands, feet, side after
praying to feel
some of Christ's pain as
much as it was possible

at death he sang the
psalms and
larks flew above
as his soul was
carried to Heaven

By **Valerie Moreno ,OFS.**
St. John Vianny, Colonia, NJ

(photo credit: Fran Acosta , OFS with the assistance of AI)



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Ask yourself what special "gifts" God has graciously given you – these may include your natural talents, spiritual gifts, material blessings, or even the time you have each day. Take a moment to carefully examine your "worship": reflect deeply on how you are currently using these gifts. Are you offering them in a way that truly honors God and serves others, much like the Magi who brought their precious gifts to honor and worship Christ?

Commit to meaningful change: Reflect thoughtfully on areas in your life where you can more fully "worship" God by offering your gifts. This might be through intentional acts of charity, dedicated service to others, or by using your unique talents and abilities with greater generosity and purpose. Use your gifts wisely!

Take time to reflect and make a detailed list of your talents, skills, and abilities, including both natural talents and spiritual gifts. Consider what activities bring you joy and what tasks come easily to you, as these often highlight your unique strengths. Make it a habit to thank God sincerely for the specific gifts you have received. Recognizing and appreciating the divine source of your abilities helps deepen your understanding and inspires responsible use of these precious gifts.

Regularly pray and seek God's wisdom to discern how best to use your gifts. Request clarity on how your talents can most effectively glorify God and serve those around you in meaningful ways.

Commit yourself to actively improving and honing your abilities through practice, learning, and growth. Don't allow your talents to remain unused or neglected, but nurture them consistently.

Intentionally put your gifts into action by serving others. Remember, your gifts are given not for personal gain or selfish reasons but to contribute positively to the lives of others and the wider community.

Consciously set aside negative emotions such as fear, laziness, or selfishness that can hinder you from fully using your gifts. Courage and generosity open the way for your talents to flourish.

Strive to be a good steward by using your time and talents thoughtfully and purposefully. Take advantage of all opportunities to wisely and effectively employ your gifts for the glory of God and the benefit of others.

How can you use your gifts in your fraternity?

Using your gift actively and generously can lead to its multiplication or growth, allowing it to flourish in ways you might not expect. You can make a positive impact: By sharing your gifts, you have the opportunity to inspire others, create beauty in the world around you, and profoundly change lives for the better.

If you neglect to use the gifts you have been given, there is a risk that they may be diminished or taken away, so it is important to nurture and develop them. When you use your gifts to serve others and follow your calling, it ultimately brings glory and honor to God, reflecting His love through your actions. What better way to live out the call of faith than by embracing this truth! The 2025-2028 theme for the Secular Franciscans (OFS) is ***"Go into the world and proclaim the Good News,"*** a perfect invitation to put these gifts into action.

Heavenly Father, thank you sincerely for the many precious gifts you have graciously blessed me with. Please help me to use these gifts wisely and faithfully, in a way that brings true glory and honor to your holy name. May I always serve your people with love and humility, just as the Magi humbly honored and worshiped your Son with reverence and awe. Amen.



Stable became Sacred



Greccio, a small Italian village, changed in the cold winter of 1223. St. Francis of Assisi, our seraphic Father, transformed this once unremarkable village when he recreated the Nativity scene with a living ox, sheep, and donkey. He turned a forgotten hillside grotto into what would become the world's first crèche.

St. Francis yearned to see and experience the miracle where divine became human, in one of the most obscure, uncared, and filthy spots.

He wanted his followers, the people who loved him, to touch, to understand the profound humility of God's entrance into human history. He hoped they would look, feel, and understand what Isaiah had prophesied centuries before: "The ox knows its master, the manger its owner's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand" (Isaiah 1:3).

Before that holy night in Bethlehem, a manger was nothing. Just a feeding trough for farm animals, made from rough-hewn wood or stone, stained with hay and cattle drool amongst the waste that included cattle excrement. Hidden in the shadows of stately homes, stables remained unnoticed, unremarkable, and forgotten in its obscurity. One rarely thinks twice about such a place. Let alone memorialize stable, the lowly farm animal shed.

Yet St. Luke tells us that Mary "wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). In that moment, everything changed. The forgotten became unforgettable. The lowly became highest. The manger—that crude, utilitarian object—became the first throne of the King of Kings, and in doing so, it became one of the most iconic symbols in human history. Today, mangers carved from olive wood in Bethlehem, cast in precious metals, painted in masterpieces, adorn homes, and palaces, churches, and cathedrals. All because Christ entered our world in a manger.

This alchemy of divine presence reminds me that when offered to God, anything however humble, becomes sacred. The manger reminds me that holiness is not about grandeur but about availability. When room is made for Christ in the forgotten corners of our lives—in our brokenness, our ordinariness, our rough-hewn hearts—those spaces become blessed. They become, like St. Francis's cave in Greccio, places where heaven touches earth. On a side note, it is said that the hay taken from the manger was later found to have miraculous properties, curing diseases in cattle and other animals. I heard this from volunteer at the Nativity scene at St Peter's square when our family celebrated our silver jubilee and handed me a piece of hay.

The Holy Family, I felt, knew something about forgotten corners and unwelcoming spaces. Soon after the manger scene, they would become refugees. Matthew's Gospel tells us that Joseph, warned in a dream, took Mary and the infant Jesus and fled by night into Egypt, escaping Herod's murderous rage (Matthew 2:13-14). La Sagrada Familia – 'the Holy Family' became immigrants, displaced persons seeking asylum in a foreign land, fleeing persecution before the child had spoken his first words.

How long did they walk those dusty roads? How many doors closed in their faces? Did the Egyptian villagers welcome them, or did they encounter suspicion, the wariness strangers receive? The Gospels are silent on these details, but Isaiah had already sung the song of their journey: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined" (Isaiah 9:2). The Holy Family carried that light with them, even as refugees, even in exile, even when the world seemed to have no room.

This is the indignity and the glory of the Incarnation: God does not wait for us to prepare perfect spaces, stable kingdoms, or secure borders. He comes into the chaos, the displacement, and the rejection.

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He comes as a refugee infant who will grow to say, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). He knows what it means to be unwelcome, homeless seeking shelter, to depend on the kindness of strangers in strange lands.

As winter settles upon us and I begin to recreate our Nativity scene—one that holds deep meaning for me and evokes cherished memories of my parents and childhood—I find myself reflecting during this Advent season leading into Epiphany, following in St. Francis' footsteps.

I might ask myself: What are the mangers in my life? What forgotten, overlooked, ordinary spaces might Christ wish to enter and transform? And perhaps more uncomfortably: Am I creating room, or am I, like the innkeepers of Bethlehem, too occupied, too full, too settled to accommodate the Holy Family at our door?

Whenever I volunteer at the St Francis Breadline on 31st Street, I wonder, "Could there be a holy family among these people, escaping persecution, domestic abuse, or poverty?"

What more can I do?

Most times I just say a short prayer for that guest."



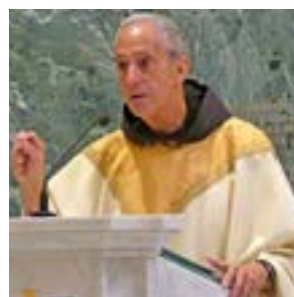
And as I pray at the permanent Nativity display at St Anthony's shrine, at the basement church again at 31st Street, I touch the piece of the rock from that manger placed there. It reminds me that Christ often comes disguised in vulnerability—as an infant, as a refugee, as the stranger seeking shelter. It remains an aspirational goal for me to welcome them, make room in the mangers of our hearts and homes, we participate in the same transformation that happened in Bethlehem and repeated at Greccio. The ordinary becomes extraordinary. The forgotten becomes sacred. The obscurity becomes a sanctuary.

This winter, I aspire to learn from St. Francis' simple faith and the Holy Family's difficult journey. May I recognize that the spaces I think are too humble, too broken, too inadequate are precisely where Christ wishes to dwell. And may we remember that when we open our doors to those who, like Mary and Joseph, seek refuge and a place to lay their heads, we might be entertaining angels unaware—or perhaps, the Holy Family themselves.

For the manger teaches us this above all: there is no space so lowly that God will not enter it, and no place so forgotten that love cannot make it sacred. When we allow divinity to mingle in our humanity, human becomes divine.

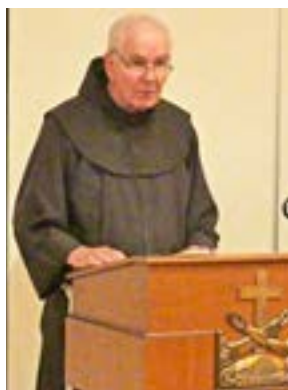
AFP Kozhipatt , OFS – 'Tony Paul' is a published author
and a member of
St Benedict the Moor Fraternity New York, New York.

(photo credit: AFP Kozhipatt , OFS)



30th Anniversary

HIGHLIGHTS



Plures Annos !
Many More Years!

Photo credits:
Anthony Jalandoni



Assisi Speaks

I heard its call. At first it came through as barely a whisper. It kept repeating itself though, making it impossible to ignore. Then it picked up in volume and rhythm and I realized I was being invited, welcomed to join.



Panoramic view of Papal Basilica of St. Francesco....

I accepted Assisi's invitation and excitedly set out on the journey well before my trip. The time and attention I put into planning my first solo adventure out of the country was pure joy. To walk where Francis and Clare walked, to pray where they prayed and to be still with the Lord where they joined Him in eternity was looking to be the experience of a lifetime!



The Habit St. Francis was wearing when he received Stigmata

I wondered if St. Carlo Acutis was behind that whisper. He'd been teaching me truths about the faith and interceding for me and I sensed his handiwork.

So, I book-ended my plans for October 2nd - October 13th, through both Francis' and Carlo's feast days. I flew into Florence and stayed overnight on Mount La Verna. Waking on October 4th, our patron's feast day on the sacred mountain was worth every bit of the transatlantic trek to arrive at that holy place! By spending the day of honor devoted to our Seraphic Father, in the place of our Holy Lord's visit to him, my soul was readied for my descent down to Assisi. As everyone forewarned me, I fell in love with Assisi. What an incredible and holy little city on the hill! Though the setting was different from the wilderness feeling on La Verna, the spirit in Assisi was the same.

Purity among the people. Peace within the throngs. Stillness within the hustle. Quiet despite the chatter. The same otherworldly something that envelops you, fills you.

I was equally moved by deep emotion at the Church of San Damiano in St. Clare's dormitory, the place of her passing, as I was in the caves on Mount La Verna and the spot of Francis' stigmata.



The hill outside the Monastery



Scenic garden with the symbol of Tau and the word Pax written in the grass, outside the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi



Fr. Linus Mulenga, OFM, Conv. Confessor



Assisi Speaks continued

I took that feeling with me and spent time outside at San Damiano by the statue of Francis on the hill overlooking the valley of the city he loved and understood exactly why he loved it and blessed it. Why Clare devoted herself for 41 years to Jesus in Assisi and relied upon the Eucharist to save it. Such history!



An OFM, CAP Friar animating Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio on the Assisi Streets



Assisi archway and sunset

I invited Saints Francis and Clare to take the walk with me to St. Carlo's tomb. I had been in awe of young Carlo's interest in Francis, Clare and Assisi and of the clarity with which he saw, heard, felt and acted on God's will for his life and death, even in choosing his own burial in Assisi. I spent my days in a state of captivation, gratitude and awe. Within the prayers, thoughts, lessons and whispers, it was on my last day, Carlo's first official feast day as Saint Carlo, Sunday October 12, in the silence of Assisi that I learned a secret after returning once more to his tomb.

Assisi told me that as Saints Francis and Clare were spiritually espoused, Carlo was the spiritual product of their union, of their pure spiritual love! St. Carlo is St. Francis and St. Clare's boy! A product of their spiritual fulfillment! This brought me once more to tears of joy.

Carlo had a longing to be buried by his spiritual Madre and Padre. To be home. Don't we all?

God bless their souls and may they continue to influence all souls toward our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



The bare floor St. Clare died on



The marked spot over the precise Rock Francis was on when he saw the Lord and received His wounds



The chapel with marking on the place of Stigmata is above the formation.

(photo credit: Karyn Witter-Fusco, OFS)

Karyn Witter-Fusco, OFS
is the Treasurer of her fraternity:
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Red Bank, NJ



PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

Rite of Election

Assumption Fraternity WOOD RIDGE NJ



Photo credit: Ed Wojciechowski, OFS

September 5, 2025

New Council

Pictured left to right

Secretary - Frank Catalano, OFS

Treasurer - John J. Trause, OFS

Minister - Dr. Christopher L. Trause, OFS

Vice Minister - John Buccini, OFS

Formation Director - Gerard M. Adubato, OFS

Br. Rod Pieretti, OFM Cap served as **ecclesial witness**.

Ed Wojciechowski, OFS served as **President** of the election - not pictured.

St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity MIDDLESEX, NJ



October 19, 2025

New Council

Pictured left to right:

Mary-Frances Reavey, OFS, **President**

Laura Vaz, OFS, **Secretary**

Msgr. William Benwell, OFS, **Minister**

Fr. Sean Kenney, OFS, **Formation Director**

Italia Testa, OFS, **Vice Minister**

Patricia Stelle, OFS, **Treasurer**

Not pictured, Fr. Rudolph Pieretti, OFM Cap, **ecclesial witness**.

In Memoriam

Harry Henky

St. Francis Fraternity

Hackensack, NJ

He was professed in 2005.

He served the fraternity as

Minister from 2009-2012.

He also served as **Formation Director**.

When Harry was no longer able to attend gatherings, he always stayed in touch. The fraternity held a special place in his heart.



Harry on his profession day with his wife Rosemarie and Fr. Brian Tomlinson, OFM Cap.



Diane F. Menditto, OFS
Vice Minister, National Fraternity,
Secular Franciscan Order USA



PROFESSIONS, ADMISSIONS & ELECTIONS, ETC

Aspirants

SERVANTS OF GOD FRATERNITY YONKERS, NY



Photo credit: Br. Mariano Bonaventura Ravazzano, CFR - Spiritual Assistant

December 10, 2025

Following Mass, gathering around the Creche (Incarnation), San Damiano Crucifix (Passion), and Altar / Tabernacle (Eucharist) at St. Leopold Friary for Advent/Christmas.

Standing l-r: Salvatore Monastero, **Aspirant**; Tom Scheuring, OFS - Minister; Rosa Cerrato, **Aspirant**, Jinny Piniero, OFS - Treasurer; Susan Leyden, OFS - Secretary.
Kneeling: Veronica Monastero, Jeannie Sweeney, OFS

Rite of Admission

ST. ANNE'S FRATERNITY FAIRLAWN, NJ



Photo credit: Eleanor Davina. OFS

October 21, 2025:

Rite of Admission for Nina Conn

Pictured left to right

Mary Peregrine - Vice Minister, Fr Jim Bernard - Spiritual Assistant, Sue Moleti- Minister, **Nina Conn**- Candidate, Marianne Thorpe- Treasurer, and Eleanor Divina- Secretary.

Professions

St. John Vianney/ St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity PATERSON, NJ



photo credit: Chris Leone, OFS

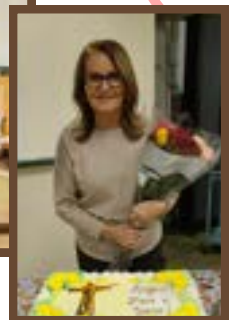
September 21, 2025
professed 6 candidates at
St. Bonaventure Church

Pictured left to right:
Front row - Paulette Santos, OFS, Jennifer Ruiz, OFS, Minerva Arroyo, OFS, Patricia Beesley, OFS and Rosemarie Ingersoll, OFS
Back row - Fr. Luis Moreno, OFS and Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM Spiritual Assistant

St. Francis Fraternity HACKENSACK, NJ



November 13, 2025
Profession of Josephine Cigna



CONGRATULATIONS

to all!

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.

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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 2026, 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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SAINTS



Saint Blaise was a bishop of Sebaste in Armenia during the 3rd century, who ultimately became a martyr. He is renowned for a legend in which he rescued a boy from choking on a fishbone, earning him the title of patron saint for those suffering from throat issues. Additionally, he is linked to wool combers, as he was famously tortured with wool combs prior to his execution.

