

Published by Our Lady of the Angels Region of the
Secular Franciscan Order in the USA.



LETTER FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER

OCTOBER 2015



Photo credit: Diane Menditto, OFS

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

AS I watch the clouds roll by below the plane on which I am traveling, I am thinking of you. Our region formation director, Ed Wojciechowski, OFS, and I are on our way home from The National Formation Directors workshop in Independence, Missouri.

Why did we travel such a distance? Why did we spend one of the last weekends of summer away from family and friends? The simple answer is that we want to serve you better!

Ed is going to tell you about some of what happened at the workshop in his column, but I would like to share a few of my impressions as your Regional Minister and as a National Formation Commission member.

About 30 regional formation directors gathered in FRATERNITY this weekend. Some of us had already met at other times and in other places, but during our time together, we all got to know each other better. We listened to each other, we shared our love of Jesus and Francis, we came to trust one another and we learned from each other. We spent a good portion of our time talking about YOUR NEEDS.

Through our weekend together, we were transformed into a fraternity of formators. We were and are united by our desire to serve the Order by providing all of our members with the best understanding of what it means to be a Secular Franciscan ... to help our members **“Be who we say we are.”**

Good formation is the future of our order. Whether we are talking about initial formation for inquirers and candidates or ongoing formation for professed members, the time we spend learning about the Rule, Constitutions and the life we have professed should be very important to us.

When we talk about formation, however, we need to remember that this does not only refer to all the INFORMATION that we gather, listen to, read about, talk about and impart to others. The whole purpose of formation is TRANSFORMATION—that is, actually BECOMING and BEING who we say we are. If we are to grow as followers of Jesus and Francis, everything we learn should only serve as the “fertilizer” that helps us to mature and ripen into beautiful Franciscan plants. What good is quoting from the Rule, or the Gospel for that matter, if we don’t put those words into practice? (Isn’t this what our Holy Father has been telling us over and over in his homilies and writings?)

Although this can be applied to many areas of our Franciscan lives, right now I want to put emphasis on how we treat one another in community.

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LETTER FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER *continued*

As I travel around to different parts of our region for Visitation, I am happy to see what beautiful fraternities make up Our Lady of the Angels Region. Many are thriving. Others are on their way back and are attracting new vocations. But, no matter how big or small the fraternity; how healthy or challenged, there is almost always a request from the council or the individual members to learn about conflict resolution—

“How do we deal with challenges presented by disagreements among fraternity members?”

How can this be? We are brothers and sisters, right? Apparently, the same thing that happens in our biological families happens in our Franciscan family. We stop LISTENING to one another with empathy. Our personal agendas and goals overtake all of our good intentions. We pre-judge what another person means without really listening to what he or she has to say. We lose our sense of BALANCE. We are all human beings with a soul given to us by God. This means that every one of us is worthy of respect whether or not we agree with one another. I don't have to agree with you to love you because it is your God-given soul that I love—not your appearance or your opinions!

Reach out to one another!

If you have a serious disagreement with someone in your fraternity, ask *in all humility*, for an impartial mediator to help you get back on track.

Pray about it by using the Gospels, our Rule and the Constitutions. Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you. Many times the answers we seek can be found in those three places if we read them with the eyes of faith and humility in our hearts.

We also find that new councils often forget that former Ministers, Formation Directors or other councilors are excellent resources. We should not “push them aside” just because their time in office has ended. We should not stop listening to and discussing suggestions that come from our former servant leaders.

By the same token, former Ministers and Council members need to remember the balance I spoke of—stepping down and stepping back are great acts of humility. Even St. Francis had to step away from his newly formed Order. New Ministers and Councils need to be encouraged to learn to fly on their own with everyone supporting their efforts.

Granted, all this is not easy, but it is what we are called to do as Catholics and Franciscans.

Take the time to read and meditate on the portions of our Rule and Constitutions that speak about fraternity life.

Let those words go deep into your heart and always remember that we *promised* to live out what they say.

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Photo credit: Diane Menditto, OFS

National Formation Directors

LETTER FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER *continued*

THE RULE:

PROLOGUE:

"All who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength (cf. *Mk.* 12,30), and **love their neighbors as themselves...**" (cf. *Mt.* 22,39)

ARTICLE 2:

"In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, **strive for perfect charity** in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of St. Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church."

ARTICLE 5:

"Secular Franciscans, therefore, should **seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters...**"

ARTICLE 12:

"Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, **they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.**"

ARTICLE 13:

"...so the **Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.**"

ARTICLE 19:

"Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should **seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue**, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the **transforming power of love and pardon.**"

ARTICLE 22:

"It (the local fraternity) **becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love.**"

THE CONSTITUTIONS:

Article 15: #4:

"They should love and **practice purity of heart, the source of true fraternity.**"

Article 26: #2:

"**In the fraternity, the brothers and sisters should promote mutual understanding** and they should see to it that the **atmosphere of their meetings is welcoming and that it reflects joy.** They should **encourage one another for the good.**"

Article 32: #1:

"They (the ministers and councilors) should, above all, **cherish peace and reconciliation in and around the fraternity.**"

Article 42: #4:

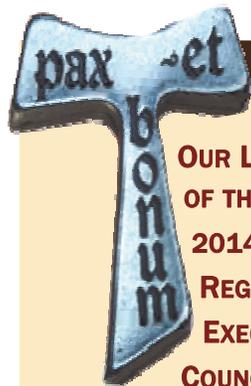
"**Profession does not only commit those professed to the fraternity, but also in the same way it commits the fraternity to be concerned with their human and religious well-being.**"

Many blessings to you and to your fraternities,



2015 REGION CALENDAR

GENERAL MEETINGS



**OUR LADY
OF THE ANGELS
2014-2017
REGIONAL
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THE ENTIRE OLTAR REGION IS INVITED TO ATTEND THE:

NAFRA CHAPTER MASS

OCTOBER 15, THURSDAY - 5:30 p.m.

THE CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART

CELEBRANT: BISHOP CRUZ

89 RIDGE STREET

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07104



OLTAR ANNUAL CHAPTER MEETING — See page 6

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

NORTH JERSEY CLUSTER MEETING

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 — 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Location: St. Francis of Assisi Church—Lower Hall, Hackensack, NJ

Contact: Ron Pihokker, OFS, Region North Jersey Councilor

Phone: 973-497-4291 • **Email:** Pihokkro@rcan.org

DOUBLE CELEBRATION:

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21st – 11:00 a.m.

STS. ELIZABETH AND LOUIS FRATERNITY will be celebrating their namesake's feast day celebration with a special Mass;

ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR FRATERNITY will also profess 4 candidates at this same Mass.

Light refreshments to follow in the Clare Room. All are invited.

ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR FRATERNITY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 — Details to follow.

50th Anniversary of the commissioning of the fraternity.

Holy Mass celebration followed by light refreshments in the San Damiano Hall of St. Francis of Assisi Church, 135 W. 31st Street, New York City 10016

Contact: Pat Clayton, OFS, Region Manhattan Councilor

Phone: 917-502-9895 • **Email:** Reap.clayton@gmail.com

At the end of their MANHATTAN CLUSTER meeting on September 12th, the group made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, packed them up (including bananas) for all to distribute to the hungry on their way home.

—Great Idea!

UPCOMING EVENTS

OLTAR

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2015

Annual Chapter

LOCATION:

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH HALL

50 Lodi Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601

AGENDA:

- 9:00 a.m. Registration and coffee
- 9:30 a.m. Opening prayer
- 9:45 a.m. Roll Call
Welcome
- 10:00 a.m. **Laudato Si** presentation:
Video Clips
Short Talk
Discussion and Sharing
- 11:00 a.m. Break
- 11:15 a.m. REC Reports
- 12:00 noon Holy Mass
Celebrant and Homilist
Fr. Frank McHugh, OFM
- 12:45 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Regional Fraternity
Business including
discussion and approval
of the 2016 budget.
- 2:00 p.m. New Business/Open Forum
Local fraternity needs
and challenges.
- 3:00 p.m. Closing prayer
Adjournment



FORMATION

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

Be Who
Be Who
We Say
We Say
We Are
We Are

This past August, it was my pleasure to attend the National Formation Workshop for Regional Formation Directors at the Franciscan Prayer Center in Independence, Missouri.

The workshop was the brainchild of the OFS National Formation Commission and featured three days of prayer, presentations, group discussions, and fellowship with Formation Directors from throughout the United States.

The National Formation Commissioners: Mary Anne Lenzi, OFS; Patti Reynolds, OFS; Diane Menditto, OFS; who along with Spiritual Assistant Anne Mulqueen, OFS, provided a forum for building and forming strong relationships among the workshop participants that will carry over beyond the workshop and help to strengthen the OFS in the United States.

The theme of the workshop was **“Be Who We Say We Are”** and the presentations given by the National Commissioners centered around nurturing our personal relationship with Christ, each other and creation. The workshop encouraged the participants to grow in our relationship with Christ with an ongoing awareness of how we share in the charism of Francis and Clare so that we can go forth into the world and spread the Gospel.

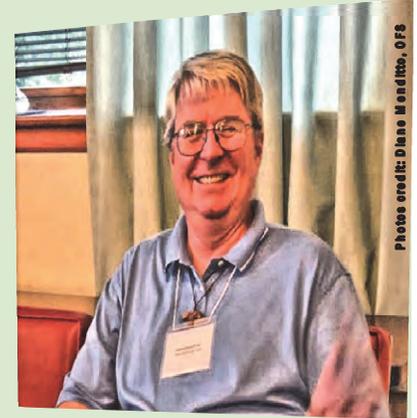


Photo credit: Diane Menditto, OFS

Presentations on ‘Following Francis’, ‘Belonging’, ‘Communication, Dialog, Listening and Respect’ and ‘The Spirituality of the Formator’ filled our days and evenings. I will be addressing each of these topics in greater detail and sharing what I’ve learned at the workshop in upcoming columns in the *Troubadour*. After each presentation, participants were given the opportunity to dialog with each other and share the successes and challenges we have experienced in our regions.

The workshop also allowed me the time to re-examine and reflect on my commitment to living the Gospel and the OFS Rule. Our General Constitution that says Secular Franciscans should:

“Seek to deepen, in the light of faith, the values and choices of the evangelical life according to the Rule of the OFS.” (*General Constitution 8:2*)

The faith journey of a Secular Franciscan is both personal and communal as we rely on the “dynamic power of the Gospel” to “conform our thoughts and deeds to those of Christ” (OFS Rule 2:7). United by our vocation, we “seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ” (Rule 2:5) in our Brothers and Sisters. To quote the National Formation Committee,

“When we understand relationship, and how to be in relationship, we will ‘be who we say we are’, following Jesus just like Francis.”

One way we can build and strengthen relationships with our Brothers and Sisters is at our Fraternal gatherings. Our gatherings should be a special place where we can freely and openly share our joys and setbacks with each other. It is a place for us to grow and build a more fraternal and evangelical world so as to build up the Kingdom of God in our communities.

We bring to our gatherings our successes and failures, and our hopes and desires to share with each other in a safe and loving environment. When we enter into our gathering space, we should strive to bring hope and joy to each other, and leave our egos and personal agendas at the door, so that we can be united in our efforts to live our Rule in peace and harmony. In this way, we can ‘be who we say we are’, a Franciscan community of love united in the love of Christ.

Pax et Bonum, *Ed*

SPIRITUAL TIDINGS

by
DEACON LUKE CONROY, OFS
St. Benedict
the Moor Fraternity
New York City, NY

ADDITION BY SUBTRACTION

A couple of Sundays ago, the 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Church placed before us a very challenging reading taken from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. It comes from the 5th chapter, verses 21-32. Here Paul dares to suggest that followers of Christ be subordinate to one another. Most of us modern folk cringe when we hear the word "subordinate." When we hear this word uttered, especially in the Scriptures, many listeners are mortified, just as the disciples in that day's Gospel reading are when they hear Jesus say that He is the Bread that has come down from heaven.

But I want you to consider for a moment the concept that subordination actually sets the stage for Creation. I want you to understand subordination as a Creative Act. For instance, there comes a moment for every group when they have to make a decision: Are they going to stay together or will each member go their separate way? This happened in the history of this country. After we won the War of Independence, we were still not a nation. We had only gone from being thirteen colonies to being thirteen states. In time, representatives of these states gathered in Philadelphia to determine what kind of union they would have. They agreed that they all wanted things like common defense and open commerce, but at the same time, each state guarded its own rights and what they felt would be important for their own state. Just imagine the heat generated by this collection of lawyers, merchants, and planters. There was, indeed, a great deal of arguing. Finally, one young man had heard enough. James Madison stood up and said in so many words that you cannot form a nation based on each one defending their self-interests; each state will have to make some sacrifices so that they can effectively work together. The delegates amazingly accepted Madison's proposal and instead of remaining thirteen individual states we *became* the United States. The delegates, by listening to Madison's words were given a glimpse of the creative possibilities that can come out of subordination. It was a defining moment for our country and the world.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians says something similar about marriage. You cannot form a marriage by a man and a woman while they are jealously guarding their own rights. It involves what he calls "subordination". And what that means is that each person, not just the woman but *both of them* have to sacrifice something. They must both give up any agenda that is self-centered. When that happens the man and the woman are no longer simply two people living together. Instead, the two *become* one. They *become* the beautiful sacrament that marriage is meant to be. The act of subordination teaches us that we give not in order to get, but we give in order that we can *become* something greater.

In the Gospel, we see the followers of Jesus reaching a moment of decision. After Jesus announced that He was the bread from Heaven and that we must feed on Him to have life, almost everyone left Him. Only the twelve remained, but it must have been incredibly difficult to remain. Amazingly, Peter exclaims, "Master, to whom shall we go?"

You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that You are the Holy One of God." With that, Peter, speaking for the Twelve, is subordinating their fear, their confusion, their anxiety, their doubt... so that their relationship with Jesus could become more meaningful and that their journey together may continue. With this act of subordination, they stopped being merely a collection of individuals. This group of twelve became one Church, a reality that would be fully realized at Pentecost.

Subordination can be a creative act. It helped create a nation, it helps bring a Sacrament such as Marriage to fruition, making a man and a woman one, and it transformed a group into a Community that is called the Church. It is an essential component to any meaningful relationship. Subordination is not the surrender of your personal dignity, but it is the discovery of personal dignity.

Your task and my task everyday is to honestly determine if there is anything in our lives which may prevent us from deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ and people that we have contact with. By subordinating these obstacles to the Gospel Message a doorway is not closed, but a doorway is opened and by entering we can be transformed from being isolated spectators into being brothers and sisters of Jesus, Ambassadors of Jesus, possessing a sense of wholeness, authenticity, and maturity.





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&
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GENERAL INFORMATION

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

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

—EDITOR

• **CALL FOR ARTICLES** •

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

• **DEADLINES** •

The Troubadour / e-Troubadour format is published on the 1st week of the month. All submissions for the next issue must be received by the 15th of the preceding month.

Submissions for the next issue of The Troubadour, November 2015, are due by October 15th.

• **ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS** •

• The right to copy all material printed in the *Troubadour* is granted provided you credit the *Troubadour* and author.

• Not every article received may be published in the upcoming issue. Every consideration is given for publication in a future issue.

• When submitting articles for publication consideration, please state fraternity name and location, as well as your name and address.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

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

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail address

Fraternity Name and Location

Date of Profession

Date of Admission

FRATERNITY SPOTLIGHT

Photo credit: Little Portion Fraternity, Mt. Vernon, NY



by TONI MACONI, OFS
Little Portion Fraternity
Mt. Vernon, NY



LITTLE PORTION FRATERNITY

FOUNDED: OCTOBER 4, 1984

**THE FRATERNITY IS LOCATED
IN MT. VERNON, NY.**

**FRATERNITY MEETINGS
ARE HELD ON**

1ST SATURDAYS OF THE MONTH
9:00 A.M. — NOON.

LOCATION

ST. MARY'S CHURCH
23 SOUTH HIGH STREET
MT.VERNON, NY 10550

MINISTER

PAT SPANA, OFS

CONTACT EMAIL

littleportionofs@hotmail.com

CREDO

***"We cannot all do great things, but we
can do small things with great love."***
— Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Members of the Little Portion Secular Franciscan Fraternity live by Blessed Mother Teresa's quote. Everything they do, no matter how small, is done with great love.

T

he group was founded in 1982, rising up out of the effort to renovate an abandoned building in the South Bronx. Through the care and hard work of many people, that building became known as the Little Portion Retreat House. It served the poor for more than 10 years. Some of those who helped at the retreat house eventually came together to form the Little Portion Secular Franciscan Fraternity. Though the retreat house is now closed, the fraternity has endured. The fraternity's apostolate has changed, but their hearts have not. They are committed to serving the poor, following in the footsteps of St. Francis and Clare. They see their role as peacemakers in a struggling world. No effort, no matter how small, is in vain. They believe their actions as Seculars resonate in their families, community, and ultimately, the world.

Today, the fraternity finds a home in St. Mary's parish in Mount Vernon. Although not a traditional church ministry, the Secular Franciscans have a strong presence in the parish, hosting an annual *Day of Reflection* during Lent, and the *Transitus of St. Francis* in October. The Day of Reflection is their way of thanking St. Mary's parish for providing space for fraternity gatherings. They have also held fundraisers for the parish. They have no specific apostolate as they did with the retreat house, but rather they step in when they see a need in the parish and community.

Many of the gatherings begin with the prayer from Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta: *small things, great love*. Currently, there are 27 members in the fraternity; with one person in formation. They have an active and vibrant Council and Formation Team. They also have a Prayer Team, which works in conjunction with formation. Each gathering has substantial prayer time, a teaching, discussion and fellowship. Time is also dedicated to upcoming fraternity ministry and events. The group also has a library, many of the books donated by members and their spiritual assistant, Fr. André Cirino, OFM. Time is set aside at each gathering for members to peruse titles, borrow books and articles. One member serves as librarian; she also works at the recently opened Immaculate Conception Province Franciscan library in New York City.

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FRATERNITY SPOTLIGHT

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Many of the members are involved in different ministries – some help out at the food pantry at the parish, others visit the homebound. Several serve as lectors and greeters during Mass at St. Mary's. Two members are active in the *Midnight Run*— giving out food and clothing to the homeless once a month in New York City. Another is a deacon and leads the CCD program in the parish. He is often called on to preach at Sunday Mass. Their Council treasurer also serves on the Our Lady of the Angels Regional Council. The group also has a certified Holy Yoga instructor who leads regular and chair yoga classes that include scripture and Franciscan meditations.

But there is group ministry, which they feel is important in building fraternal life. They adopted soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq, spending one of their gatherings packing 24 large boxes with snacks and toiletries. They then held a prayer service, blessing those boxes and their recipients. In the fall of 2014 they invited a member of the *Blue Star Mothers* to speak at a gathering and followed up by writing dozens of letters to military members around the world.

At each gathering, members donate food or toiletries and sometimes clothing for the *Dorothy Day Hospitality House* in Danbury. One member, who lives in Connecticut, delivers the items. It is an ongoing ministry, one that everyone is proud of. Each member may bring one or two items, but it is greatly appreciated by those at Dorothy Day. Again, small things, great love.

The fraternity has also hosted several pancake breakfast fundraisers, raising \$5,000 for a young parish member who was paralyzed in an accident, to help the family defray medical costs, and \$4,000 for another ill parishioner. Each Christmas, the fraternity adopts a family and supplies them with Christmas gifts, food and letters. These are personally delivered by members of the Council.

In 2013, three members of the fraternity traveled to Italy on the *Beyond Assisi Pilgrimage*, with the *Franciscan Pilgrimage programs*. Four of their fellow pilgrims hailed from China. The three Little Portion members learned about the difficulties their China counterparts endure while doing formation work. The religious climate in China is tenuous at best; those Seculars take great risks to bring members into the Secular Franciscan Order. They often hold meetings in secret, for fear they will be arrested. Yet their determination is strong and so many people want to become Secular Franciscans that they continue to do formation at great risk. The Little Portion members vowed to help them. When they returned from their trip to Italy, they enlisted the help of their regional Council to send formation materials overseas. Then they embarked on a fundraising effort, eventually raising \$3,000 for their formation work.



Fr. André Cirino, OFM in Hong Kong with Julia Lai, OFS, (standing) and Magdalena Lee, OFS (kneeling).

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FRATERNITY SPOTLIGHT

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Other events sponsored by the fraternity include a *Day of Solitude* for members, a celebration of the Feast of St. Anthony with renowned Franciscan author Murray Bodo attending, and an annual window-washing at Siena Friary in Mount Vernon. The window washing is a way of thanking the friars for allowing them the occasional use of the friary for special events. In August, members were hosted by the Poor Clare sisters in Wappingers Falls for the Feast of St. Clare. The Seculars brought a potluck supper for the sisters and also had the privilege of reading aloud the *Transitus* in their chapel. Fr. André then shared his insights on St. Clare and her impact on the world and the history of that branch of the order.

The Little Portion Fraternity has sown the seeds of two other fraternities, the first being the

SERVANTS OF GOD, a group begun by former members and the Friars of the Renewal in Yonkers, New York. The Little Portion fraternity sponsored them and walked with them on the road to becoming a fraternity. Another former member, who lives in Arizona, was instrumental in founding an emerging fraternity in Flagstaff. Their patron is Blessed Franz Jägerstätter, OFS, the Austrian conscientious objector who was killed during World War II.

The Little Portion Fraternity is more than 30 years old, yet it has managed to continue to be viable, through prayer and work. Currently, efforts are underway to launch a fraternity website, so others may read about their ministries and also the Secular Franciscan Rule.



Photo credit: Toni Maconi, OFS

Fraternity members gather to celebrate Mass on the Feast of St. Anthony at Siena Friary on June 13, 2015.

SISTER



DEATH



CONNIE CHRISTOPHER, OFS
Called home to the Lord
†August, 2015.

Please pray for Connie who has entered her eternal reward after a long illness.

Connie was a member of St. John's Fraternity in Manhattan; and a parishioner of Holy Name Church on 97th Street.

Her funeral was held on Thursday, September 10th at Holy Name Church.

I

INTO YOUR HANDS, O LORD,
we humbly entrust our sister,
CONNIE CHRISTOPHER, OFS

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

FRATERNAL TIDINGS

congratulations

ELECTIONS & PROFESSIONS

**Election results of September 19, 2015
St. Peter Fraternity, Somerset, NJ**

Council as pictured in photo: L-to-R:

Penny Gleeson, OFS, Formation Director
Joseph McKenna, OFS, Secretary
Dcn. Sal Bonfiglio, OFS, Treasurer
Marty Gleeson, OFS, Councilor
Evelyn Lehr, OFS, Vice Minister
Mary-Frances Reavey, OFS, Minister
Ron Pihokker, OFS, ALTAR Presider

Absent:

Sr. Valenta Akalski, CSSF, Spiritual Ass't.



Simple Prayer for Vocations to the Secular Franciscan Order

by
DIANE MENDITTO, OFS
Regional Minister
OLTAR Region

GOD OUR FATHER,
each day lay Catholics and diocesan clergy
pray to be inspired in their love of You.
They wonder if there might be a way to deepen that love.
With open hearts, we come to you and ask that
You will inspire these faith-filled people
to seek to follow You in the footsteps of
St. Francis of Assisi as Secular Franciscans.
With Your help, we promise to set a good example
and to nurture their vocations
if they choose to come to our fraternities.
We ask all this in Jesus' name.
Amen.



Photos credit: Mary-Frances Reavey, OFS

by
MARY-FRANCES REAVEY, OFS
St. Peter Fraternity
Somerset, NJ



ONE SECULAR FRANCISCAN'S A P O S T O L A T E

I'M one of those lucky people. I get to work at what I love. I make quilts. In 1989, while being a stay-at-home mom to 5 kids (and babysitting for 3 others), I took a class at a quilt shop and made 2 Christmas stockings. Two months later I made a beautiful queen size quilt...just for me! And that's when a passion for quilting was born.

I've taken many other classes, expanded my skills to include hand and machine techniques, and in the past 26 years, I've made 28 queen size quilts (25 were gifts), I've made 5 Christmas wall hangings...AND those original 2 Christmas stockings have increased to 27 with the last one made last Christmas for my newest grandson!

In 1998, a small group of friends who are also quilters went to Cape Cod for a Quilter's Retreat. Over the past 10 years, we have expanded to 11 really good friends who go away for 4-day weekends twice a year. We bring our own projects (many of those gift quilts were started on these weekends.) and have lovingly been told we look like a sweat shop as we set up 9-10 sewing machines!

But we do more than our own quilts for our families and friends; we make placemats for *Meals on Wheels* of Hunterdon County to distribute with meals. We've made over 30 pillowcases to donate to the *Million Pillowcase Challenge*; they are given to sick children or children affected by a tragedy. And most recently we've made quilts to send to *Quilts of Valor* where quilts are given to wounded service men and women in military hospitals around the country.



continued on next page



We also minister to each other – we’ve gotten through breast cancer, (three times), kids with problems, and numerous marriages and divorces. Seven and a half years ago, my house burned down – well not to the ground, but the inside was gutted. We were very lucky (I still say God was watching over us – big time – that day) no one was hurt and 3 of us should have been home and we only lost ‘stuff’ (but as my brother-in-law said – it was nice stuff). We didn’t lose anything of real sentimental value as the photos were saved by being in the garage, put there when we cleaned up for Christmas. But I did lose 2 quilts; my first hand-stitched quilt, and the quilt I made for my husband for our 25th wedding anniversary. I also lost my sewing supplies, fabric, sewing machine, all gone. The insurance company paid for a new sewing machine and gave me money toward fabric, but how do you start over – collecting 20 years worth of tools? On the very next quilters’ weekend away, my friends threw me a Quilting Shower! They replaced all the things I lost and then some. One of them reached out to a quilter’s blog she belongs to and I got gifts from all over the country. We are church to one another. And our love and our troubles are unconsciously sewn into each and every quilt.



When I create a quilt, I plan that quilt around the person who will receive it. While doing this more than a little piece of me goes with it. Whether I used the Marine Corps colors for the nephew who served in Dessert Storm, or added pine trees to the log cabin quilt for the nephew who loves to hike, I feel I am doing what God wants of me – I use my talents to give joy to others; for all of us quilters, this becomes a way of expressing our love. This reminds me of a passage from Colossians, “Whatever you do, do from the heart” (3:23) I am particularly proud to be able to say that my quilts are all over the country AND, three years ago my first quilts went International. I gave 3 quilts to a close friend and 2 family members in Ireland.

I have been asked if making a quilt is a lot of work. I’m reluctant to say yes because I love it so much. But YES - it is work - work that demands a lot of concentrated effort - from the first steps of planning a pattern and picking the fabric to the last stitch that goes into sewing the label on, takes me approximately 6 months. It takes a lot of math, a lot of color theory, a lot of elbow grease and can be a little back-breaking, but the look on someone’s face when they receive a handmade quilt is like nothing else I’ve ever experienced. It is a labor of love.

The St. Francis quilt that seems to be going viral, was actually a project for an appliqué class I took about 5 years ago. We were told to play with color and simple forms. Sounds like St. Francis to me! I’ve used a photo of this quilt for the cover of my fraternity’s *Transitus* booklet for many years. Last year, our regional minister, Diane Menditto, OFS, saw a photo of it on my Facebook page and asked me to bring it to a Region Executive Council Meeting. I’ve given the council permission to use the photo anytime they want, and Ron Pihokker asked if they could display the actual quilt at the 2015 NAFRA meeting in October. So it is on loan for the NAFRA meeting and resides at my house for the use of the St Peter Fraternity in Somerset, NJ. Francis was an itinerant preacher, going where the Holy Spirit sent him and so my quilt will go – wherever the Spirit sends it.



As we hear in First Corinthians, “whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” (10:31) And it’s the best work I’ve ever done.

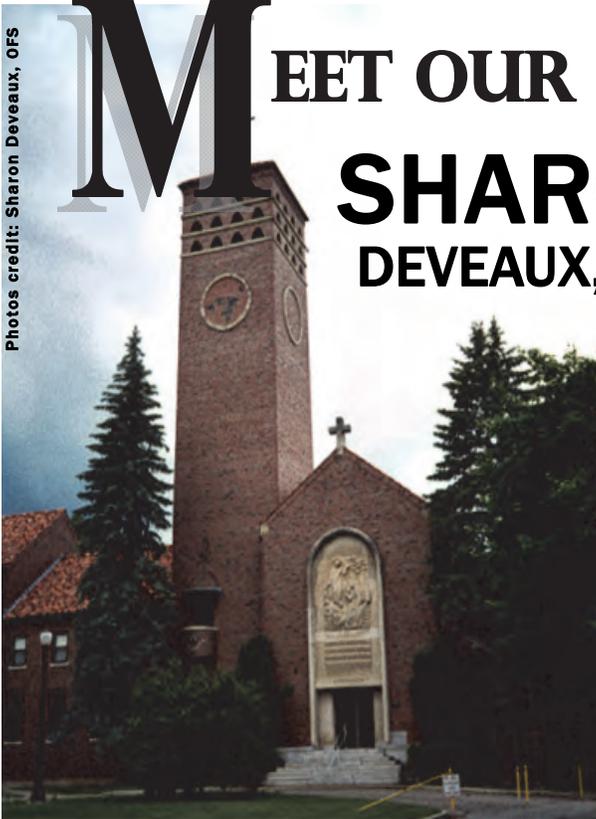


Photos credit: Sharon Deveaux, OFS

MEET OUR NATIONAL ARCHIVIST

SHARON DEVEAUX, OFS

by SHARON DEVEAUX, OFS



The main purpose of the archives is to ensure that all current and past records are located and sent to SBU as soon as possible for preservation and safe keeping.

I usually go there for one week during the summer. (I don't do snow.) It is a wonderful change of pace and atmosphere from California. About 2-3 weeks before I go, I contact everyone at the National level via the "List" and they send whatever materials they have from the previous year. When I arrive, the boxes are there and I can start going through them to see what is there and begin organizing them.

We currently have records from three OFM Provinces, the Regionalization work, records from the National Council members, Commissions and Committees. There are also back issues of the national newsletter *Tau-USA*, Establishment records, "Q" Congress information, photographs and books. All the records are stored in archival quality boxes and are on very sturdy shelves.

(Photo below)

We currently house 243 boxes as well as many books. It is always exciting to find records that complete a particular subject. For instance, the early records of the Quinquennial Congress were missing, but eventually turned up and now we have a complete record of all the Congresses.

I am a member of the San Juan Capistrano fraternity and have been professed since 2003. I hold a Master's Degree in Museum Studies with an emphasis in preserving historical photographs.

If anyone has questions about preserving and organizing fraternity archives, Sharon may be contacted at:

s.deveaux@att.net



I became the Archivist for the National Fraternity in 2004. I had been recently professed in Southern California when the "call" went out for individuals interested in getting a permanent Archives together.

By then, the National Fraternity (USA) had a long history; years of accumulated records were spread throughout the country in private homes, garages, bedrooms, basements, etc.

It was also known that records had already been lost due to flooding and other circumstances.

So an agreement was reached with St. Bonaventure University (SBU) in New York to have storage space for our archival material in Francis Hall.

(Photo above)

The significance of this arrangement is that the Archives are now stored in a long-term, neutral and secure location.



NAFRA — JPIC
NATIONAL JPIC ANIMATOR - CAROLYN TOWNES
<http://animatepeace.blog.com>

GREETINGS OF PEACE, DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

I pray this finds you well and filled with the peace of our Lord!

• I am pleased to announce **SISTER CARITAS BARAJINGITWA, LSOSF** as the recipient of the **2015 JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION AWARD**. I have been informed that Sr. Caritas will be with us at the National Chapter to receive her award.

• **12 WEEKS OF FRANCISCAN PEACE — PRAYERS FOR 3 OCTOBER — 25 DECEMBER**

Prayers may be found on our OLTAR region website at

<http://www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org/JPIC.html> 

Wishing you blessings of peace and all good,

Carolyn Townes, OFS

UPCOMING EVENTS



As a member of the Franciscan Family in the New York City area, *Franciscans International (FI)* is pleased to invite you to an upcoming gathering.

We would like to share our mission at the UN, to learn about the commitment of the Franciscans in the area, and to reflect on ways to collaborate.

We are delighted to Welcome
CAROLYN TOWNES, OFS
National JPIC Animator
of the
Secular Franciscan Order, USA.

Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Time: 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Location: San Damiano Hall

Church of Saint Francis of Assisi
135 West 31st Street
New York, NY 10001

Please RSVP by email or phone
if you wish to attend.

Sr. Odile Coirier, OFS

Franciscans International

Email: o.coirier@fiop.org 

Phone: 917-270-8922

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH
17 POMPTON AVENUE
POMPTON LAKES, NJ 07442

ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION
FRATERNITY MINISTER:
PATRICK HANLEY, OFS

**'FRANCIS
 WEEK'
 KEYNOTE
 TALKS:**



TUESDAY OCTOBER 6 —
7:30 P.M.
**"FRANCIS OF ASSISI
 AND FRANCIS OF
 ROME"**

Presenter:
 Fr. Dan Horan, OFM
 Carnevale Center

A reflection on why Pope Francis chose the name of St. Francis and how he has quickly changed the face of Catholicism at a moment when no one really expected it.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 13 —
7:30 P.M.
**"THE SAN DAMIANO
 CROSS — AN
 EXPLANATION"**

Presenter:
 Fr. Frank Sevola, OFM
 Carnevale Center

A presentation about the rich symbols of the Cross that spoke to Francis of Assisi and how they speak to us.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 20 —
7:30 P.M.
**"FRANCISCAN
 SPIRITUALITY"**

Presenters:
 First Order:
 Fr. Greg Gebbia, OFM;
 Second Order:
 Sr. Etta Patton, SC;
 Third Order Secular:
 Fr. Sam Monaco, OFS
 Carnevale Center.

The Three Orders founded by St. Francis of Assisi: who are they, what makes them different and what makes them all Gospel-centered.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27—
7:30 P.M.
**"A PILGRIM'S
 JOURNEY"**

Presenter:
 Ian Morgan Cron
 Carnevale Center

The author of "Chasing Francis" is a Minister who wrote a charming story about his discovery of the richness of the heritage of St. Francis.

"CHASING FRANCIS"

Do you consider yourself a Franciscan? Do you sometimes wonder what it means to be "Franciscan?"

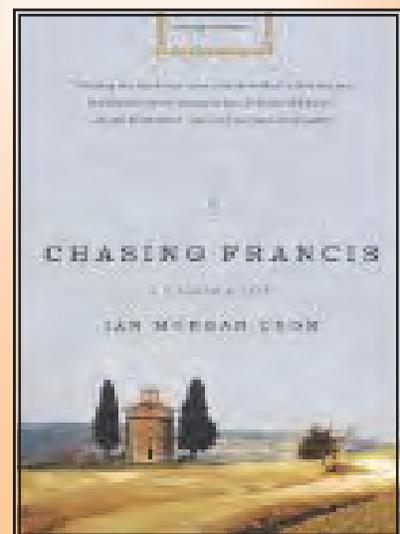
A Discussion Group based on the book "Chasing Francis" by Ian Cron will be held on 3 Fridays in October:
October 9, October 16, October 23.

Gatherings will take place in the library of the Youth Center at 8:15 A.M., 3:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M.

Copies of the book are available at the Parish Office or from www.amazon.com



The book contains an easy discussion guide for each chapter and these conversations will be a great preparation for the **October 27th** presentation by the author.



U P C O M I N G

ICP FRANCISCAN LIBRARY PRESENTATION

Provincial Minister Primo Piscitello, OFM, has extended a special invitation to attend the dedication and blessing of the Immaculate Conception Province Franciscan Library on **Saturday, November 7, 2015**, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

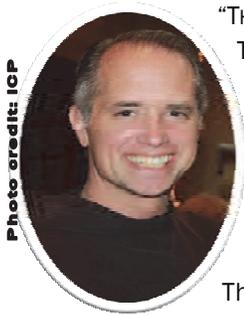
The library is the result of the Province attempts to safeguard and preserve various collections of *Francescana* around the Province and make them more widely accessible for research and education. To date, all of the *Francescana* of the Province has been brought to the new library space in the Provincial Curia.

SIOBHAN O'DWYER, OFS, FROM LITTLE PORTION FRATERNITY, MT. VERNON, NY, works with Fr. Paul Rotondi, OFM, in the organization and classification of the library collection.

The ICP Franciscan Library also sponsors special events, the first of which was a poetry reading presented by Fr. Murray Bodo, OFM, on June 14, 2015, which was very well attended.

This upcoming November dedication and blessing will also include a featured speaker afterwards.

FR. MICHAEL DELLA PENNA, OFM, will speak about St. Francis of Assisi from his new book,



“THE CRUCIFIED KNIGHT: THE SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI ACCORDING TO HENRY OF AVRANCHES.”

Those interested in attending the dedication and/or presentation by Fr. Michael should RSVP to: smdfranciscanlibrary@hotmail.com



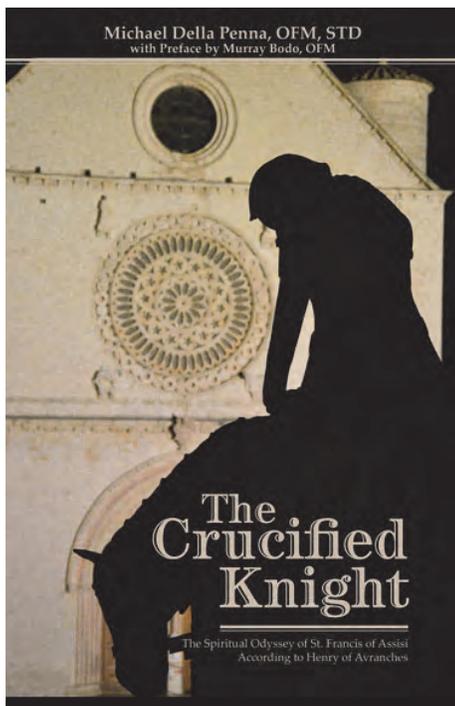
FR. MICHAEL DELLA PENNA, OFM

Born in Boston, Fr. Michael completed bachelor degrees in psychology and philosophy and a master of divinity degree from Weston Jesuit School of Theology before being ordained a priest in 1999 as a Franciscan Friar of the Immaculate Province. He studied at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto and later completed licentiate and doctorate degrees in Franciscan spirituality from the Pontifical University Antonianum in Rome.

He has served as associate pastor, retreat director, formation director and definitor for his province.

He is currently the director of Valley of the Angels Orphanage in Guatemala, the director of ongoing formation for his province and leads pilgrimages to Assisi for Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs.

Fr. Michael finds joy in leading others to come to a greater knowledge and love of Christ through retreats and pilgrimages.



THE CRUCIFIED KNIGHT. A knight crucified from within. Such was Francis of Assisi whose whole life was that of a spiritual knight fighting his own demons, overcoming whatever would keep him from being a spiritual advocate and protector of those rejected or neglected by society, whatever would keep him from calling everything in creation his brother and sister. Such is the St. Francis who emerges in the pages of the second oldest hagiographical text about St. Francis, the so-called Versified Life of St. Francis by Henry of Avranches.

For further information or to purchase this 300-page perfect bound edition go to: <http://taupublishing.org>



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POPE FRANCIS ANNOUNCES JUBILEE INDULGENCES



THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY BEGINS ON DECEMBER 8, AND IN A SEPTEMBER 1 LETTER TO ARCHBISHOP RINO FISICHELLA, PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION, POPE FRANCIS SAID IT WAS HIS “WISH THAT THE JUBILEE BE A LIVING EXPERIENCE OF THE CLOSENESS OF THE FATHER, WHOSE TENDERNESS IS ALMOST TANGIBLE, SO THAT THE FAITH OF EVERY BELIEVER MAY BE STRENGTHENED AND THUS TESTIMONY TO IT BE EVER MORE EFFECTIVE.” AS WITH OTHER JUBILEE YEARS, THE HOLY FATHER HAS INSTRUCTED THAT SPECIAL INDULGENCES BE AVAILABLE FOR THE FAITHFUL THROUGH THE DURATION OF THE YEAR. HERE’S HOW TO GET ONE.

FOR ABLE-BODIED CATHOLICS:

- Take a pilgrimage. Make a journey to your local Holy Door (a physical portal in your local cathedral, shrine or other designated Church) or to one of the Holy Doors in the four papal basilicas in Rome. Crossing through a Holy Door is a spiritual journey that signals, as the Holy Father said, “the deep desire for true conversion.”
- Go to confession.
- Receive the Holy Eucharist “with a reflection of mercy.”
- Make a profession of faith.
- Pray for the pope and for his intentions.

FOR THE ELDERLY, CONFINED AND THE ILL:

- Pope Francis said that they may obtain the indulgence by “living with faith & joyful hope this moment of trial.”
- Receiving the Eucharist.
- Or by attending Mass and community prayer, “even through the various means of communication.”

FOR THOSE IN PRISON:

- The incarcerated may obtain the indulgence in their prison chapels.
- Said Pope Francis: “May the gesture of directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell signify for them their passage through the Holy Door, because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom.”

FOR THE DECEASED:

- Through the prayers of the faithful, indulgences may be obtained for the dead.

FOR ALL CATHOLICS:

- Perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy. Pope Francis said that an indulgence may be obtained when a member of the “faithful personally performs” one of these merciful acts. “The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us,” he said.

OTHER ACTS:

Pope Francis also decided to “concede to all priests” for the Year of Mercy, the “discretion to absolve the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it.” He also announced that the faithful who go to confession with priests from the fraternity of St. Pius X, which broke from the Church in 1988, “shall validly and licitly receive the absolution of their sins.”

Some canonical questions remain regarding these points, which experts hope the Vatican will soon address. But both decisions indicate Pope Francis’ strong pastoral desire to usher in greater opportunities for mercy in the upcoming year.

RECENT EVENTS

BLESSED BLOOMERS

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

Founded in 2002, *Mychal's Message* is a non-profit organization created to honor the life of Father Mychal F. Judge, OFM, who was killed in the attack on the World Trade Center the previous year. During his life, Father Mychal shared his message of love with the rich and the poor, the healthy and the sick, firefighters, police officers, and friars. His message was simple, inter-denominational, and touched many lives.

It is the mission of *Mychal's Message* to continue sharing that message with others. It is a grace to walk in his footsteps and encounter the homeless and poor, meeting basic needs while restoring dignity with love.



For the past 13 years, in remembrance of September 11, 2001, representatives of *Mychal's Message* have distributed "Blessed Bloomers" to those coming to the breadline at the friary on 31st street in New York City. This year, 2 members of the **Most Holy Name Fraternity** in Little Falls, New Jersey; **AGNES CZAPLINSKI, OFS, (LEFT)** AND **JODY PIHOKKER, OFS, (RIGHT)** were fortunate enough to be able to join the volunteers.

In the months before 9/11, underwear and socks are collected each year and are placed in bags with toiletries and other personal items.

This year, the packages, along with 100 pounds of bananas and lots of fresh, hot coffee, were given out early in the morning of September 7th to the hundreds of people on the line.

Donations to *Mychal's Message* and its various ministries are always welcome. Contributions may be sent online at

www.mychalsmessage.org



or by surface mail to:

MYCHAL'S MESSAGE

P.O. Box 6404

Lancaster, PA 17607

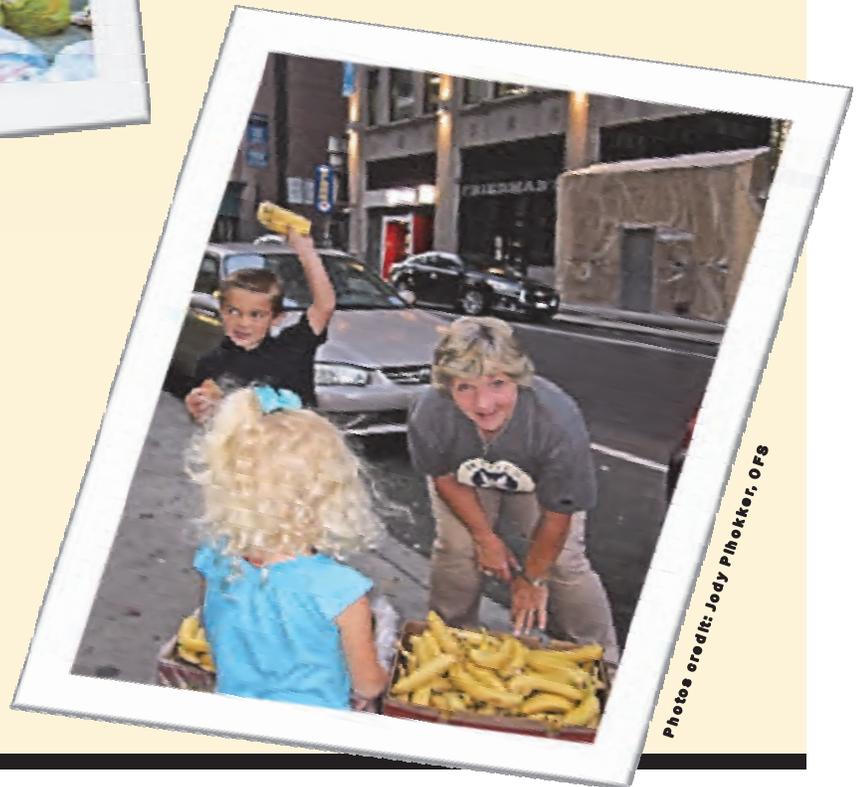


Photo credit: Jody Pihokker, OFS

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FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS is a leading publisher of books and journals on medieval Franciscan history, sources, spirituality, philosophy and theology as well as contemporary issues on Franciscan life and ministry.

Known for many years for its critical editions of leading medieval Franciscan philosophers and theologians, *Franciscan Institute Publications* has more recently endeavored to make available to a wider reading public the very best of modern scholarship on the history, spirituality and intellectual tradition of the Franciscan movement.

“Franciscan Women: Medieval & Beyond” Women and the Franciscan Tradition Conference The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University July 12-15, 2016

From July 12-15, 2016, the Franciscan Institute at Saint Bonaventure University will host a major conference dedicated to women and the Franciscan Tradition, ranging from the Middle Ages to the contemporary world. The organizers seek to bring together women and men who are living the Franciscan tradition in various ways — as members or associates of the three Franciscan orders, co-workers in Franciscan institutions, etc. with academic scholars who want to bring their research into a mutually enriching conversation with a broader audience.

Individual papers, panels, and workshop proposals are sought that engage academic, pastoral, and socio-political aspects of this topic. Possible areas of focus include, but are not limited to the following:

- ◆ Franciscan women and leadership.
- ◆ Female Franciscanism during the Middle Ages.
- ◆ Female Franciscanism and the Early Modern World.
- ◆ Franciscan women in the "New World".
- ◆ Franciscan women and ministry.
- ◆ Scholarly trends and the study of religious women.
- ◆ Women and the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition through the ages.
- ◆ Franciscan Women and the Contemporary Church.

Proposals are due by **November 20, 2015**.
Notifications of acceptance, rejection or need for alterations
will be sent to authors by **January 11, 2016**.

Send a paper proposal/draft of your text no later than November 20, 2015,
directly to:

Women & the Franciscan Tradition Conference
Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University
Murphy Building – Room 100
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

dcouturi@sbu.edu



ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

Lezlie Knox (Marquette University)
David Couturier OFM Cap. (St. Bonaventure University)
Timothy Johnson (Flagler College)
Diane V. Tomkinson OSF (Neumann University)

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGION SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER



Francis go and repair
my house.



OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGION COMMUNICATIONS

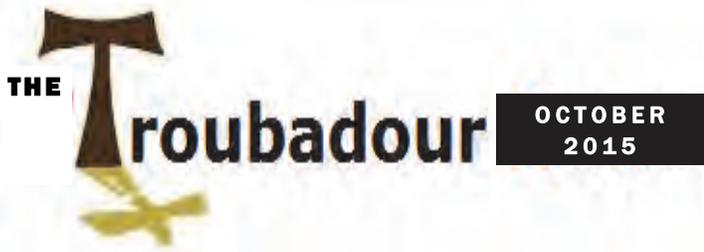
REGION WEBSITE: www.ourladyoftheangelsregion.org

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

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



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OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS REGIONAL NEWSLETTER
Secular Franciscan Order
Anna Geraci, 161-B Cross Slope Ct.
Manalapan, NJ 07726-2424

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OLTAR
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2015
Annual Chapter



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FOR
DETAILS**