

Joy of Francis

*Secular Franciscan Order — St. Francis Region #52 — Southern California
Summer Edition — 2020*

**FROM OUR REGIONAL MINISTER
JUDITH MUSSATTO, OFS**

That Feeling Has A Name.

*“They said a mask and gloves were enough to go to the grocery store.
They lied: Everybody else had clothes on.” Fr. Warren, OFM.*

When the order that non-essential staff work from home was given, I was not affected. I have been working from home for over ten years. I could continue my volunteer work.



Face masks. Photograph by J. Mussatto, ofs.

Farms and food pantries are categorized as essential services. When my local parish put out the call for sewers to make cloth masks I gathered up fabric, elastic and binding from my collections, set up a worktable in my living room and began producing masks in three sizes, men’s, women’s and children’s.

My life has not changed much since the declaration of a worldwide pandemic and yet since the lockdown, I sometimes felt like someone who walked out the door wearing only a mask and gloves. There were figuratively speaking, many missing pieces of *clothing*.

I needed to name that feeling of nakedness. I started reading *Living with Death and Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. Kubler-Ross found that her terminally ill patients, children, went through five stages. Over the last fifty years those stages have come to be called: The Five Stages of Grief. David Kessler who together with Kubler-Ross, wrote many books on grief and grieving, in a March 23, 2020, interview, published in the Harvard Business Review, used those five stages to help us make sense of our emotional

journey during this coronavirus pandemic. Here are the five stages and how they relate to the coronavirus pandemic:

1. Denial: *We have the flu every year. This is just one of those annual flus.*
2. Anger: *You are making me stay home.*
3. Bargaining: *I will socially distance for two weeks then everything will be better. Right?*
4. Depression: *I do not know when this will end and ...* . This depressive state is not a sign of mental illness. It is the appropriate response to a great loss.
5. Acceptance: *This is happening. I have to figure out how to proceed.*
Accept that life *as we know it*, will not return.

Kessler further stated during his interview, that we are feeling many different griefs. We feel the world has changed and it has. We know this is temporary, but it does not feel that way and we realize things will be different and have no idea what that “different” will be. The entire world, whether we recognize and can name it or not, is experiencing grief, the emotion that arises out of unwanted change, all at the same time.

I know of only one of my relatives who has applied for unemployment assistance. I know no one who has been diagnosed with coronavirus. I know no one who has died, because of the coronavirus pandemic. I have not in any way been directly affected by the pandemic; however, I now recognize that feeling of nakedness as grief and I sit with that feeling and allow it to move through me so that I can make room for the pleasantries that are available to us even in these challenging times. These feelings (stages), are not sequential and we do not experience them all at the same time.

As Secular Franciscans we are called to be leaven in the world. That was a challenge before the pandemic and will be an even greater challenge as we begin to emerge from the lockdown and learn to live in a different world. More than ever our fraternities will need to be privileged places that give us sustenance as we venture into the unknown and *strive to bring joy and hope to others.*



Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

LIVING IN COMMUNITY

Article 22 of our Rule tells us that the fraternity is “a visible sign of the Church, the community of love” and “should be the privileged place . . .for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.” Article 24 notes that the council “should encourage everyone to a life of fraternity.”

In this time of pandemic, social distancing, and quarantines, with gatherings forbidden, how do we do this? Many fraternities – and other organizations – are holding their gatherings online, via Zoom or other apps. I know of several fraternities and their councils that are doing this and have also participated with other organizations to which I belong. I’ve been conducting my weekly Bible study online, also. So, I can assure you that even computer-dummies like me can make it work!

If you have no idea how to go about it, we have several members who are very computer-literate and would be glad to help you. If you don’t know any, give me a call and I’ll give you some names and numbers. Even people without computers can participate if they have a smart phone.

I would strongly encourage you to avail yourselves of this technology. If you have people in initial formation, it is not fair to them, nor to the fraternity, to, in effect, cut them off from the fraternity for weeks (months?) on end until we can once again meet in person. Many fraternities have found the online meetings to be very satisfactory and allow us to be community in the only way available to us at this time.

Additionally, the enforced isolation many are enduring can be a time of spiritual growth. There are numerous spiritual aids available to you if you have a computer and are on the Internet or can access the internet from your cell phone. If you cannot, there is always spiritual reading, beginning with Holy Scripture. We can look at this as a long retreat, with probably more time for prayer, meditation, and reflection than we’ve had in a long time. Let’s not waste the opportunity!

Pax et bonum!

Sylvia Paoli, OFS

President-in-turn of Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION LUCY IBARRA

Hello, my Brothers and Sisters,

During this time of quarantine do you find yourself in fear or do you find yourself feeling the presence of God even more than ever? As a Secular Franciscan we are a Gospel people living the words of God "Be not afraid" What do these words mean to you?

I have been working from home the last 9 weeks and taking care of my Mom. We have shared daily Mass and have prayed the rosary together every day, it has been a true blessing.

I have missed my Fraternity meetings, but we have had Zoom meetings which have been a complete joy. It has brought us all together to share our thoughts and fears.

In our General Constitutions, Article 28.1 it states, the fraternity of the OFS finds its origin in the inspiration of Saint Francis of Assisi to whom the Most High revealed the essential gospel quality of life in fraternal communion. Do you miss not meeting together as a fraternity? We can all come up with different ways of being fraternity at this time. Call each other, send an email, or write a letter and mail a card. I pray that during this time of quarantine we are all safe and healthy. And that we are not living in fear but turning to our God in faith and hope.

May your Pentecost be a time of joy, Article 11 of our Constitutions state: ***"Mindful that the Holy Spirit is the source of their vocation and the animator of fraternal life and mission, Secular Franciscans should seek to imitate the faithfulness of Francis to His inspiration. They should listen to the exhortation of the Saint to desire above all things "the Spirit of God at work within them."***

Be blessed, Lucy Ibarra, OFS

Sharing a picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity Council having a zoom meeting.



JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

WE ARE ONE

What the Pandemic Can Teach Us About JPIC and our Franciscans Lives

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I committed myself to social isolation on March 13, 2020. This date was late for some and early for others. On March 12 we had a family meeting, however, and decided that it was time for Granmama, as my grandchildren call me, to go to her apartment, close the door, and stay there. I usually spend a few days a week with my grandchildren, so this was going to be hard. But I agreed. Catholic Charities, where I spend the other two and half days a week, closed its offices soon thereafter and asked us to continue to work remotely. Then my parish, then my Franciscan gatherings, then just about everything. I am sure you all walked this same path as one by one all that was familiar was closed.

I committed to social isolation until April 1, then May 1, then June 1. I will most likely still be isolating when this edition of our Joy of Francis is published. However, we are isolating in the age of the internet, and Go to Meeting, and Zoom, and a myriad of other programs that allow us to connect, to study, to work, and to pray. We had a National JPIC meeting scheduled for the first week in May in Chicago. We met, instead, by Zoom. Almost thirty representatives from around the country discussed, prayed, and envisioned. During the times together we found ourselves raising the topic of the pandemic and the effect it was having on our lives and the lives of people around the world. During the final session, one of our Franciscan sisters, Juliet Spohn Twomey, OFS, from Junipero Serra Fraternity, Monterey County, so eloquently called us to consider that we are at a critical time in our history. There is so much to learn from this pandemic. This article was inspired by her comment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that we are one world, and one global family. What happened to people in Asia, soon was felt in almost every country in the world. We found ourselves tracking numbers of cases in countries some of us had never heard of and looking to medical researchers throughout the world for their suggested solutions. It also raised for me a sense of profound vulnerability. As San Diego shut its doors, my only view of this magnificent city by the sea was from a video created by a drone, documenting the silence on the beaches, in the hills surrounding us, through Balboa Park, and the harbor. Even the airport looked closed.

I realize now that when I first heard of the virus, I felt fairly secure that we in the U.S. had it covered. How surprised I was to see over the next weeks that we didn't. The pandemic was unanticipated, and we were not prepared. Never have I questioned the ability to get health care in this fine and advanced country of ours. It is always there, available, and excellent, or at least for those of us with health insurance. Now even an insurance card did not ensure that one could get the medical care needed to combat the virus, despite the untiring efforts of all our doctors, nurses, and health care providers on the front lines. I grieve to think of those without insurance, or easy access to medical facilities, or who live in fear of going to a hospital because of all the identity questions that can be asked.

Food was no problem for me. My daughter and other young friends shopped for me. But, once again, I could afford to “stock up.” What about the mothers with four children who live paycheck to paycheck and now did not even have work? Or the fathers caring for their children or elderly parents not knowing when he was going to get laid off? The nursing home where I serve as a Eucharistic Minister closed its doors to all visitors. I took Easter cards with well wishes and information about accessing Mass on radio and television, handing it to the nice man at the door, both of us looking as if we were prepared for a space mission. Now we hear of outbreaks in nursing care facilities around the country.

The pandemic has taught us how any environmental or public health crisis falls most heavily on the poor. We can see why *Laudato Si'*, whose fifth anniversary we recently celebrated, teaches that Care for Our Common Home includes attention to social inequity as well as environmental degradation and calls upon us to consider all of these factors as we strive to create global economic, political, and social systems that honor the dignity of every one of God’s created beings.

The pandemic can teach us that those who are the least protected are the most vulnerable. Outbreaks in prisons, detention facilities, as well as nursing homes are recorded daily. Those of us near our southern border cannot imagine how the men, women, and children, who came to the U.S. border seeking asylum and are currently housed in makeshift camps in Mexico, are surviving. Many have been there for months. The courts have been closed for weeks and will open soon with an even larger backlog of cases.

Then we look up and see plant life that had been killed by pollution coming back to life. The air is cleaning and clearer. We can hear birds, not airplanes, see across canyons that had only harbored smog. The earth is breathing more easily again.

Can we accept what the pandemic is teaching? Can we see more that we are one human family? Can we embrace the universal kinship of all of creation that our Beloved Saint called us to embrace, respecting all creatures, animate and inanimate, which bear the imprint of the Most High? (Chapter Two, Article 18) Can we begin to see how we can strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ for all who live? (Chapter Two, Article 13) What can the pandemic teach us about how to exercise our responsibilities as Secular Franciscans to build a more fraternal and evangelical world with a spirit of service motivating our actions? (Chapter Two, Article 14).

The pandemic can be the event that helps us see more clearly the interconnectedness of all that lives. Through it we see more profoundly the wounding effects of our modern lifestyle upon the natural world. The pandemic shines its light on the vulnerability of all of us and the double vulnerability of the poor, the elderly, and the marginalized.

I am certain we will get to the other side of this. My certainty rests in God. My prayer is that we get to the other side with a new vision, a deeper understanding, more compassion, and a fervent commitment to do all that we can individually, fraternally, and through our Order to care for the world and all within it. As our Franciscan sister said, this is a critical moment in history. God is calling us to open our eyes and ears and heart and do His Holy Will. Our Beloved Saint Francis is praying for us. Let us honor the trust given to us.

Peace and All Good,

J.P.I.C. Animator for the Saint Francis Region

Patricia Grace, OFS

Laudato si' Anniversary Year 2020-2021

A year of celebrations of the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis on the care of our Common Home

The fifth anniversary of the encyclical comes in the midst of another watershed moment - a global pandemic - and *Laudato Si's* message is just as prophetic today as it was in 2015. The encyclical can indeed provide the moral and spiritual compass for the journey to create a more caring, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world. We have, in fact, a unique opportunity to transform the present groaning and travail into the birth pangs of a new way of living together, bonded together in love, compassion and solidarity, and a more harmonious relationship with the natural world, our common home. Truly, COVID-19 has made clear how deeply we are all interconnected and interdependent. As we begin to envision a post-COVID world, we need above all an integral approach as “everything is closely interrelated and today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis” (LS, 137).

The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is happy to announce a **Special Laudato Si' Anniversary Year** from 24th May 2020 – 24th May 2021. We hope that the anniversary year and the ensuing decade will indeed be a time of grace, a true *Kairos* experience and “Jubilee” time for the Earth, and for humanity, and for all God’s creatures. The anniversary year will open with [Laudato Si' Week 2020](#), and will proceed with several initiatives, realized in partnership and with a clear emphasis on “ecological conversion” in “action”. We invite everyone to join us. The urgency of the situation calls for immediate, holistic, and unified responses at all levels - local, regional, national and international. We need, above all, “a peoples’ movement” from below, an alliance of all people of good will. As Pope Francis reminds us, “All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.” (LS, 14)

Also, did you catch **immediate, holistic, and unified responses at all levels - local, regional, national, and international**. Sounds like they are speaking directly to us Secular Franciscans!

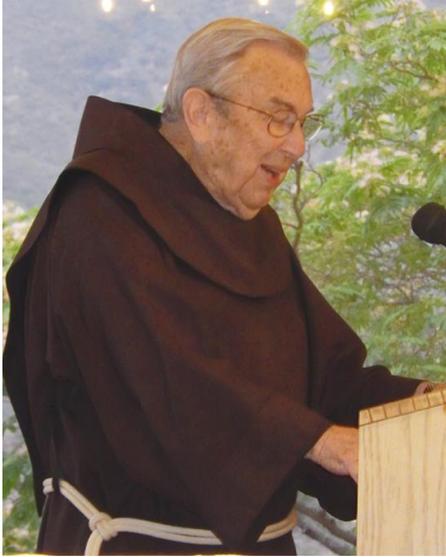
For more information, please visit [Laudato Si' Week 2020](#) or laudatosiweek.org/



LAUDATO SI' WEEK 2020

In Memorial

We received news of Fr. Warren's death in late April and at the beginning of May, I and



Fr. Warren making his pitch for the Padre Serra Club at one of our annual Memorial Day Weekend Retreats.

the many other members of the Padre Serra Club received a copy of his May – June 2020 newsletter. In addressing us members he said: “In these dark times we need some smiles. So, this by-monthly letter is just for you.”

Here are a few of the witticisms contained in his newsletter:

- Worrying won't stop the bad stuff from happening, it just stops you from enjoying the good.
- A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything.
- A friend: Someone who says nice things about you when you aren't around.
- Faith is holding tight when the going gets windy.
- All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt.
- Some days the supply of curse words is insufficient to meet my demands.
- Everyone was thinking it, I just said it.
- The best thing about the good old days was that I wasn't good, and I wasn't old.
- My body is a Temple, ancient and crumbling, probably cursed or haunted.
- At my funeral, take the bouquet of my coffin and throw it into the crowd to see who is next.
- I think I'll just be happy today.
- The smile on my face doesn't mean my life is perfect. It means I appreciate what I have and what I have been blessed with. I choose to be happy.

Fr. Warren Joseph Rouse, OFM was 89 years old and a Franciscan Friar for 69 years.

Photographs by Anthony Tuan Cao, OFS.



Fr. Warren with Marie and his dog Bud.

In Other Words...

Thank you, Lord.

*Thank you, Lord.
For life's buzzing beauty.
For each kindness I can do,
For rest – that comforts and restores.*

*Thank you, Lord.
For shelter in this house,
The warmth of true friends, human and no,
All familiar places we hold dear.*

*Thank you, Lord.
For my eyes and ears, their tuning;
For my senses - how I see and feel.
For smell, taste, touch – hot and cold, smooth and rough,
The furry and the fluid.*

*Thank you, Lord.
For the plans you have for me,
In this wonder of grass and flowers, birds and bugs,
Fascinating in shape, shade, and design*

*Thank you, Lord.
For making Earth -
Each bud and flower, blade of grass:
Each stalk, each curve and bloom.
Bounding out of seed and soil
And surging forth to dance in sunshine.*

*Thank you, Lord.
For each and every way
Your love is alive in every being.*

Karon Esmonde OFS
May 17, 2020

Do You Remember...



At Chapter 2018 on January 15th, 2018 at Azure hotel in Ontario



During Religious Education Congress on March 21, 2019, Anaheim Convention Center



Regional Executive Council Retreat on March 2, 2019 at the Pro Sanctity Retreat Center in Fullerton



At our Regional Gathering on September 8, 2018 at St Gregory Church in San Diego

Do you remember how St Francis Region celebrated 40 years of our rule?

Photographs by Anthony Tuan Cao, OFS.

Riverside/San Bernardino William Mussatto, OFS, District Liaison

The district leaders had their quarterly meeting via teleconference on April 25th. All three Fraternities were represented, and we discussed how to maintain community during the time of social distancing.



Padre Pio Fraternity is using video conference for both Council and Fraternity meetings. They continue to have in-person Initial Formation, with proper social distancing, at two locations. Although they did not have their regular May Crowning, they still left flowers at the statue of Mary outside their normal meeting room. Ongoing formation focused on Our Rule. Members of the Fraternity continue to volunteer at a local food pantry.

Holy Spirit Fraternity mourns Jackie Follie who has gone home to the Lord. She served the Fraternity as Vice Minister, Minister and Councilor. The normal Franciscan Wake service has been delayed until we can meet in person and invite her family.



The Fraternity is conducting initial formation, post profession formation, council meetings as well as fraternity meetings using video conferencing. This has also allowed us to reach out to members who are physically distant.



The Fraternity has also begun short informal video gatherings, focused on visitors who started attending before the lock down. We are also using these meetings to increase the sense of community with all our members.



The May meeting began with praying the Franciscan Crown. We also formally welcomed our 1st Affiliate, Jenny Tsui, who has completed her formation. She will start her training (COVID 19 permitting) in Washington, D.C., this fall, in preparation for a two-year commitment with Franciscan Mission Service. Fraternity Ongoing Formation focused on Our Rule including how we live our call in the world.

Immaculata Fraternity has paused meetings and gatherings until in person meetings can resume, even with social distancing, on parish grounds.

Calendar

As was said in the announcement that was sent out at the beginning of May, all Fraternal and Pastoral Visits scheduled for the remainder of 2020 have been moved to 2021.

The Elections now on the calendar are the following:

August	Fraternities
1 st	# 122 Immaculata, Riverside. (E).
1 st	# 101 St. Anthony of Padua, San Diego. (V).
9 th	# 102 St. Padre Pio, (E) Moreno Valley. (E).
September	
13 th	# 137 St. Diego, San Diego. (K).
20 th	# 115 St. Francis at Anaheim (K).
27 th	# 140 St. Maximillian Mary Kolby, Torrance. (K).
October	
11 th	# 119 St. Francis of Assisi, Los Angeles. (E).
25 th	# 120 St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Los Angeles. (E).
November	
8 th	# 128 Our Lady of Guadalupe, Hacienda Heights (E).

Please proceed with the Nominations process for your fraternities.

Social distancing may still be in place and some fraternities may have to find spaces for their gatherings that fulfill the requirements set forth by the Departments of Health in the respective counties.

The Regional Gathering

Date: September 19, 2020. Location: Zoom. Topic: Catholic Social Teaching.
More details will be sent via e-mail.

Next year's Religious Education Congress is scheduled for February 19 – 21, 2021.

Hope to see you there!



Important Announcements

Scully Fund Requirements

The Scully Fund has been set up to encourage fraternities in the St. Francis Region to participate in charitable activities. When members of a fraternity take an active role in an apostolic activity and use fraternity funds to purchase materials or supplies for the activity, the fraternity may request to be reimbursed by the Scully Fund for half of those expenses by supplying the following:

- A letter detailing the activity, the date it occurred, the number of fraternity members involved, and the amount of expenses incurred.
- Receipts for the purchases or a copy of the check(s) used to pay for the items.
- A request for reimbursement of half of the expenses.

Send the above information to either the Minister or Treasurer of the region.

Last Will and Testament

Each of us can play an important role in preserving and extending our Secular Franciscan way of life, in our own fraternity, and at the regional level. This can be accomplished in many ways, including a bequest in our will.

Suggested beneficiaries:

Your FRATERNITY

Your REGION

Suggested wording for your bequests:

1. A BEQUEST FOR GENERAL PURPOSES:

"I give and bequeath the sum of \$ _____
(or _____% of my disposable estate) to: (name and address of fraternity, or region).

2. A RESIDUARY BEQUEST OF INDEFINITE AMOUNT:

"After payment of expenses, debts and specific bequests, I direct that the residue of my estate be given to: (name and address) or

"I bequeath to (name and address) any part of my estate that other beneficiaries are unable to receive because of death or other reasons."

THE ADDRESS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION IS:

276 E. Green St.
Claremont, CA 91711

She's Back...

Greetings! Many of you will remember me from when my husband Bob Herbelin and I lived in St. Francis Region. Shortly after Bob and I got married in 2013 and I moved from Pittsburgh, PA to San Jacinto, CA, I was blessed to serve as Editor of *Joy of Francis*, your Regional Newsletter. We moved to Sequim, WA in late August 2016 so I resigned as Editor.

Unfortunately, there is no fraternity close to us here in Washington, so we never transferred from St. Francis Region. We are members of Holy Spirit fraternity.

I have missed the opportunity to serve my region, so I was incredibly grateful to have the REC appoint me as Editor again when Patricia stepped down to become the Regional JPIC Animator.

I look forward to serving each of you through this ministry. I hope that you will feel welcome to offer suggestions for articles or contribute one yourself to future issues.

Peace & joy, Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS

cylmaljan@earthlink.net



Remember us?

Joy of Francis

c/o Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS
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