



THE JOY OF FRANCIS

Secular Franciscan Order | St. Francis Region #52 | Southern California



Regional Gathering, October 31, 2015, St Matthew's Catholic Church in Corona with Br. Bill Short, OFM

RE: Newsletter

Planned publication dates for **The Joy of Francis** are Feb 15th, May 15th, Aug 15th, and Nov. 15th. **Submission Deadlines** for information to be included must be received by Feb 1st, May 1st, Aug 1st, and Nov 1st. Local Ministers, as well as District and Language Group Liaisons, are encouraged to submit information about their fraternity's activities. Information should be sent to Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS, 1933 Tudor Drive, San Jacinto, CA 19583 or as a Word document to cylmaljan@earthlink.net.

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister

All local fraternity councils have a three year term of office. This same rule applies for the Regional and National Fraternities in the United States. From October 13- 17 the National Fraternity (NAFRA) held its Chapter of Elections in Clinton N.J. In attendance at Chapter from St. Francis Region were Regional Minister Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Vice-Minister Frank Miller, OFS, who had been nominated for offices on the National Council, and Local Spiritual Assistant William Mussatto, OFS. Frank and Bill were Observers. Also attending from the region were Robert Herbelin, OFS, Regional Treasurer and National Database Manager and Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS, Chair of the Spiritual Assistance Training Development Task Force (both also serve on the National Computer Committee).



From the International Council Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS) came Presider for the elections Minister General Tibor Kauser OFS, and Church witness General Spiritual Assistant, Friar Amando Trujillo-Cano, TOR.

In his presentation Tibor spoke on the management of an International Order like the Secular Franciscan Order. He likened a leader to a construction manager (Tibor is an architect) building the Kingdom of God. Management in this case is the fraternal animation and guidance which is more spiritual than business. The profit is the salvation of the members of the Order. Management is service not power and given that the position is temporary the manager prepares for succession. Tibor reminded us that our special vocation in the Secular Franciscan Order is real. It is a call of God. God invites. The response is ours. The call is to be holy, to spread the Word in the world at the same time inserting us into the Church. Our fraternal bond is the love of God made visible. Tibor enjoined us "Let us let Christ love us. Let us let others love us."

Friar Amando said that we could encapsulate Francis' life within two movie titles: *From the Fast and Furious* to *The Passion of Christ*. We often focus on the *end result* of his amazing journey of faith; however, conversion is a long process, lifelong. Francis needed light "Enlighten the darkness of my heart." His encounter with lepers was an experience that was felt with his whole being; that of sharing Christ's compassion and mercy with those who needed them the most. "He ain't heavy, he is my brother." God gave me brothers." Friar Amando reminded us that Francis was not called to a life of solitude but rather to live the Gospel in fraternity renewing Jesus' gift "you are all brothers." Mat. 23:8

God called Clare and other ladies to live the Gospel in contemplation. The family grew with the addition of others who wanted to live the Gospel more fully, the brothers and sisters of penance. That gift of fraternity which Francis and all his followers have experienced over the centuries, Friar Amando said is a precious gift flowing from Christ's new life which is renewed in every generation to be lived and shared with others.

Each day's deliberation concluded with celebration of the Eucharist before dinner. We were privileged to hear homilists, each of which challenged us to think more seriously about the "Yes" we said when we were Professed.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy;" therefore, on Thursday afternoon we went out to 'play'. The 'playground' was Liberty Park, Newark. Some attendees were able to visit Ellis Island and locate the names of ancestors in the island's archives. Many enjoyed the boat ride which afforded a breathtaking view of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and the Manhattan Skyline. Somber notes of the afternoon were visits to the 9/11 memorial for the New Jersey victims and evidence of the power that was Brother Wind and Sister Water, in the form of Hurricane Sandy. The group attend a regularly scheduled 5:00 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Jersey City. The Celebrant of the Eucharist was Most Rev. Manuel Cruz, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark who enthusiastically gave us a history of the Cathedral Basilica and some of its beautiful art work.

These are just a few highlights of the five day National Chapter of Elections results of which are posted on the Home Page at stfrancisregion.org. I close with a quote from *Evangelii Gaudium*, *The Joy*

of the Gospel, Pope Francis' 2013 Encyclical, which Friar Amado used in his presentation.

“Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a “mystique” of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled! To go out of ourselves and to join others is healthy for us. To be self-enclosed is to taste the bitter poison of immanence, and humanity will be worse for every selfish choice we make.”(87)

Your Sister in Christ
Judith

FORMATION:

Merciful or Mediocre?

Jan DeSpain OFS, Regional Formation Director

We begin our Church's “Year of Mercy” on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, patronal feast day of the United States. Our Regional Council has recommended that our region follow the lead of Pope Francis in using this theme in our fraternities and personal lives.

In *Misericordiae Vultus*, the proclamation of the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis noted that mercy is “the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.”

How might this Year of Mercy impact us as Franciscans, especially in the area of Formation? I know as formation director of my local fraternity we are trying to discern what topics are not only of interest to our members, but challenge them to grow. What helps us to become more merciful?

As a council are we asking for the input of the rest of the fraternity? Are we encouraging all to participate in facilitating? Are we surfacing topics that move us from words to action? We need to know and embrace our charism to **BE** merciful servants in the unique opportunities we find in our lives. Our “**beingness**” calls us to be merciful. So many today are often cynical or discouraged. They need to experience mercy in us. As Franciscans perhaps we need to meditate on these questions. Am I welcoming or distant? Hopeful or judgmental? Comforting or cynical? Generous or miserly? Pope Francis states in *The Joy of the Gospel*, Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort.”

I recently shared a telling cartoon on Facebook. A man stood before a crowd of people and asked... “Who wants change?” All hands were raised enthusiastically. The second part of the cartoon shows the same man and crowd, but this time he asks, “Who wants **to** change? This time all eyes are downcast and no hands are raised. Everyone seems to want change, but no one wants to be the one to do it. Too many expect “the other” to do the changing. Change usually requires a dying to self. Sound like the daily conversion we promised in our rule?

Sameness and comfort can open us up to mediocrity. If change is needed in your life or fraternity, consider meditating on the Serenity Prayer:

God, Grant me the serenity to
Accept the things I cannot **change**,
Courage to **change** the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

We have two wonderful resources to use from our Holy Father to deepen our understanding and commitment to change. If you have not already done so, consider using **Joy of the Gospel** and **Laudato Si** as part of your ongoing formation. As formators we need to be patient with ourselves and others. Knowledge is important but, relationships are more important. Maybe as we enter the advent of this new year of mercy, we can be more “other” centered. I remember a recent image from NAFRA...a bridge made of stones and the center stone was tau shaped. Brothers and Sisters, let us make this a bridge building year of mercy that our Holy Father calls us to.

JPIC NEWS

Elle Lesperance, OFS
NAFRA-JPIC Commission Member

Annual NAFRA/JPIC Award 2015 – Sr. Caritas Barajingitwa, LSOSF

On July 15, 2015, there were nine nominees submitted by OFS members from different parts of the country for the annual NAFRA/JPIC award 2015. Members of the NAFRA/JPIC Commission, regional ministers, and officers of the National Executive Council cast their ballots. On August 25, 2015, NAFRA/JPIC Commission Chair Carolyn Townes, OFS, announced the winner as **Sr. Caritas Barajingitwa, LSOSF**. Sr. Caritas was nominated by the St. Kateri Tekakwitha Regional Council. Sr. Caritas, LSOSF, works with children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic in Uganda.



Sr. Caritas is shown hugging JPIC Commission Animator Carolyn Townes at the National Chapter awards ceremony in October.

Sr. Caritas was honored in the award ceremony during the annual Secular Franciscan Order’s National Chapter held on October 13-18 in Clinton, New Jersey.

Sr. Caritas Barajingitwa, a nun of the Little Sisters of Saint Francis (LSOSF), dreamed of providing a loving home and practical education for orphans in Africa. That dream came true when she opened Holy Family Vocational Orphanage in Southern Uganda in 2003. She began creating a future for children of AIDS victims and of victims of war.

Significant Projects During the Past Year for Sr. Caritas:

Sr. Caritas is helping to research and connect with Secular Franciscans in Uganda. St. Kateri Tekakwitha Region is seeking a contact with the “emerging” National Fraternity of Uganda, and Sr. Caritas is helping us make that connection. The goal is to form an ongoing collaboration with the Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters in Uganda in helping them become an established National Fraternity. This project came from the CIOFS idea of “twinning” or forming a partnership with another fraternity.

The Region has informed the NAFRA International Councilor and the CIOFS Presidency Councilor in South Africa about our desire to communicate and perhaps share formation materials and books with the Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters. Contacts have been made with Little Sisters of St.

Francis who travel back to Uganda from the United States. Sisters can help transport formation materials, ensuring their arrival at the proper location.

Sr. Caritas is hoping to connect with the Uganda YouFra who live nearby so the young people at the orphanage can join the YouFra on retreats. The people of Uganda have a great devotion to the young martyr St. Charles Lwanga and his companions. Perhaps the youth can join together on a pilgrimage to the shrine of the martyrs.

Sr. Caritas was a Liturgy Committee member responsible for providing the altar cloths and preparing for the overall celebration of the Mass at the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal held in Kampala, Uganda, last July. Over 2,500 people from around the world were in attendance.

Sr. Caritas is a member of the African-based Little Sisters of St. Francis. With her plans to expand and teach practical life skills, she founded an orphanage which houses 30 children and includes 26 acres for farming and a future school. The primary school project has been the focus over the past few years.

Sr. Caritas got the idea for the orphanage while pursuing a Master's Degree in Education in the late 1990s at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. In fact, the idea became her Master's thesis, she said, "Going back to Uganda, I thought it would be just a matter of putting the project into place." She recalled, "I went door to door begging, to no avail." But God opened another door, as she would put it.

The pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Binghamton, New York, wrote a letter to the mother superior of the Little Sisters of St. Francis asking her to send one of her sisters to work in his parish. The mother superior summoned Sr. Caritas and told her she was going to the United States. She arrived in June 2001. Two years later, thanks to donations by caring supporters, she was able to open Holy Family Vocational Orphanage and welcomed 30 children into its care and protection. Her fellow sisters helped run it. She then began returning to Uganda a couple of times a year. In May, 2010, Sr. Caritas returned to Uganda permanently.

A proponent of teaching practical life skills as well as academics, Sr. Caritas said the orphanage teaches the importance of education, home economics, carpentry, basket weaving, sewing and tailoring, farming, fishing, and grain milling. Sister Caritas' hope for the orphans is "knowing that they are loved is most important" because "then they will be able to love others." The orphanage motto is: "With Love and Work We Grow!"

Regional Gathering:

On Saturday October 31st, 2015 we had a 2015 Regional Gathering at St Matthew's Catholic Church in Corona hosted by San Bernardino/Riverside District. Guest Speaker was Br William Short, OFM from the Franciscan School of Theology in Oceanside with the theme "Pope Francis and St Francis of Assisi." With his vast knowledge and with a lot of photos to illustrate the similarities of the two Francis', Br Bill gave us a wonderful day. (see more under San Bernardino/Riverside District news)

After the lunch break, Rock DeSpain, OFS and Sylvia Paoli, OFS, two of our Regional Spiritual Assistants gave out *Certificates of Completion* to eight

members from the fourth SSA/Formator class who were present.



Ana Graciano, Tinh Le, Teresa Kumor, Dave Teegarden, John Bosco Chong, Olivia Sanchez, Jan DeSpain, Fr. Chris Thiel, OFM Cap

Certificates of Completion will also be awarded to Ted Hewitt, Juliana Lim, and Mary McLeod.

Not receiving certificates because they missed too many classes, due to circumstances beyond their control (their illness or that of a family member) but may come back next time and make them up, were: Rebecca “Din-Din” Aquino, Leah Dulay, Lucy Ibarra, Peter Nguyen, Rosemary Oh, and Lynn Tong.

Those coming back for some of the classes, who had completed previous classes were: Trudy Weigel, Rosa Youm, Elizabeth Kim, Julia Yoo and John Kim.

DISTRICT NEWS:

Orange County:

It’s a rarity that the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi occurs on a Sunday. It is even more unique when the Rite of Profession is celebrated precisely on the saint’s Feast Day. But yes, it really happened!

On Sunday October 4th, 2015, The Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, three candidates from the Vietnamese fraternities made their permanent profession. During a solemn liturgical celebration at the Vietnamese Catholic Center in Santa Ana, Nhan Thi Pham, Ton Hoang Nguyen and Hieu Ngoc Nguyen professed their commitment to Gospel living in the Secular Franciscan Order. The Minister of St. Clare Fraternity, Huong Huynh, received the

professions. Sylvia Paoli, OFS, is the fraternity’s Spiritual Assistant.

The Rite of Profession was celebrated in the context of the Eucharist. Fr. Hien Linh Bui, Fr. Timothy Nguyen and Fr. Nithiya Sagayam, OFM Cap, from India concelebrated in the Mass. It’s interesting to note that Fr. Nguyen came to celebrate his brother’s profession. His mother, Anh Phuc Huynh, OFS, was also in attendance. She is an active member of the Vietnamese Martyrs EC. Considering all of the participants, one can say this celebration truly was a “family affair”.

All in all, this was the most solemn profession ceremony with great number of guests in attendance. Regional Minister, Judith Mussatto, members of the Regional Executive Council, Rock DeSpain, Regional Spiritual Assistant, family and friends were among the participants. Everyone enjoyed the celebration filled with live entertainment and authentic Vietnamese cuisine. We thank God for this wonderful gift and for all his blessings. Special thanks to Br. Joseph Bach Nguyen and all who took part in making this profession a memorable celebration.



San Diego County:

On October 3rd, 2015 at 6pm, a Transitus of St Francis was held for the Franciscan community at the San Luis Rey Mission in Oceanside. More than 50 Secular Franciscans attended. All branches of the Franciscan family represented! This year the ceremony was simple but it was not lacking the solemn and fervent meaning. After the ceremony there was a reception.



On October 4th, 2015, the Feast of St Francis, the Fraternity of San Luis Rey had the Rite of Profession for Laura Chung. The ceremony happened during of the Parish Mass to introduce the Parish community to our Order. Fr Arturo Lopez, OFM was the celebrant of the Mass. David York, Fraternity Minister, received Laura's Profession. Sister Madeline Fitzgerald, OSC, is the Spiritual Assistant of the fraternity. The San Luis Rey Fraternity hosted a reception after Mass.



Anthony Tuan Cao, OFS
Regional Councilor/San Diego District Liaison

Los Angeles County:

On October 25, 2015 St. Mary of the Angels EC held their annual recollection day at St. Mel parish. Their retreat formators were Sylvia Paoli, OFS, Regional Spiritual Assistant and Fr. Chris Thiel, OFM Cap. Five members of their sponsoring fraternity, St. Francis of Assisi in L.A., also attended.



On Sunday, November 8, 2015, Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity hosted a Day of Reflection in Dolan Hall at St. John Vianney Church in Hacienda Heights. Their speaker was Bob Herbelin, Regional Treasurer and member of St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity in Hemet.



Joining Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity for the all-day session were several members of Holy Spirit Fraternity in Claremont.

The theme for Bob's presentation was Franciscan Theology. He used sixty-four slides with handouts

for everyone. With the slide presentation, discussion questions and comments, all participants were impressed with Bob’s research and delivery. His insights on the subject were amazing. It took three one-hour sessions to cover the material.

Bob compared Franciscan Theology on the Trinity with other spiritualities and the viewpoints of several theologians and saints including Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Dun Scotus and our own Father Francis. Rather than go into more detail and give away any of the insights, I leave it to those interested in learning more to contact Bob Herbelin. Everyone present agreed that the entire Region could benefit from Bob’s presentation.

San Bernardino/Riverside District

Members from all the Fraternities in the District joined other members of the Franciscan Family to celebrate Transitus at Mission St Luis Rey in Oceanside. After the ceremony, we gathered in the courtyard for fellowship with all the participants including other Seculars, Friars and Franciscan Sisters.

The District’s Fraternities hosted the Region for a Gathering featuring Br Bill Short, OFM. Br Bill talked about Pope Francis and St Francis. He brought out some of the early experiences of Pope Francis and noted that the actions which have surprised many since he became pope, didn’t surprise those who knew him earlier. He also talked about the newest Franciscan saint, St. Junipero Serra.

The Holy Spirit Fraternity had their annual renewal of profession at a weekend Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption Church with the pastor, Fr Charles presiding.



The Holy Spirit Fraternity also elected a new council on October 11th with Regional Vice Minister Frank Miller, OFS presiding and Sylvia Paoli, OFS serving as Church Witness.

- Minister: Randy Rohrer, OFS
- Vice Minister: Claudia Thompson, OFS
- Secretary: Maria Rodriguez, OFS
- Treasurer: William Mussatto, OFS
- Formation Director: Alma Jimenez, OFS
- Councilor: Myrna Kildare, OFS



William R Mussatto, OFM
District Formator/Liaison



For names of and contact information of Regional Council members, appointed Chairs and District Groups go to:
<http://www.stfrancisregion.org/About-St-Francis-Region/Executive-Council>

REGIONAL CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2015

21st Orientation for upcoming Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class
 22st Profession: 2:00p.m. St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe Fraternity, Torrance.
 26th Happy Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 2015

05th Regional Executive Council Meeting, Claremont
 19th Advent Retreat with Fr. Dan Horan, All Saints Episcopal Church,
 Pasadena.
 25th Happy and Holy Christmas

JANUARY 2016

10th Fraternal Visit: Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity, Hacienda Heights.
 15 – 17th Chapter, St. Francis Region, Ontario, CA.
 27th Pastoral Visit: St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity, Hemet

FEBRUARY 2016

06th Regional Executive Council Meeting, Claremont
 20th Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class, St. Gregory's Whittier
 26-28th Religious Education Congress, Anaheim

MARCH 2016

05th Fraternal Visit: St. Louis the King, Santa Barbara.
 11-13th REC Annual Retreat.
 13th Fraternal Visit: St. Clare Fraternity, Westminster.
 19th Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class, St. Gregory's Whittier