

JOY OF FRANCIS

Winter Edition 2019

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

Minister's Message

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

At the annual Chapter for St. Francis Region held January 18 – 20, 2019 we continued to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our Rule with presentations on Leadership, Commitment and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation as found in our Rule. Lucy Ibarra, our Formation Director, created a dedicated space for quiet time and reflection and moments for silence were built into the presentations.

Many of those present indicated their active participation in Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation programs and activities held in local communities. We look forward to reading stories about your activities in future publications of this newsletter.

News from the Regional Executive Council (REC) meeting.

Scully Fund. Are you feeding the hungry? The Scully fund was started with a bequest dedicated to helping those in need. Fraternities that use funds to help those in need are encouraged to apply for 50% reimbursement from the funds. Submit copies of your receipts accompanied by a letter describing your activity. The event for which you submit a request must have occurred within the quarter (time frame) of your request. Recent recipients: Our Lady Guadalupe Fraternity, St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity and Holy Spirit Fraternity. Send your request for consideration to either the Regional Minister or Regional Treasurer.

Ongoing Formation. The REC is completing study of the document *How should an Order Like the OFS be Managed at All its Levels?* by Benedetto Lino, OFS, CIOFS. This and other articles by Lino can be found on the world wide web.

Annual Report. Most fraternities submitted the annual report before the January 31 deadline. Thank you for your attention to detail while preparing your reports. It helps make my job of preparing the Region's report to the National Fraternity so much less tedious.

Regional Retreat. Mark your calendar and call **Serra Retreat Center** at (310) 456-6631 to register for our annual retreat, Memorial Day weekend May 24 – 26, with Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, who is celebrating 50 years as a friar. A native of Bradford, Pa., he is known across the globe as an expert historian who has dedicated most of his life to educating both religious and lay people. Fr. Monti is a distinguished professor of Franciscan studies at St. Bonaventure University where he first felt called to become a friar.

Religious Education Congress. The Secular Franciscan Order will again have a booth at the Religious Education Congress organized by the Archdioceses of Los Angeles. **Stop by the Booth #763.**

Regional Gathering. Save the date. Our gathering will be held on **September 21, 2019, at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Corona.**

Peace and All Good,
Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister



Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

MORE ON PRAYER - Contemplation

In the Articles on Prayer over the last year, we've covered several different types of prayer: meditation, Lectio Divina, contemplation or centering prayer, simple scriptural prayer. That is not an exhaustive list, but it gives you something to begin working on. The critical thing is that we pray – both daily individually, and as a fraternity when we gather in community. Individually we are asked to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. If you really get into that practice, you will find that the Liturgy of the Hours, or the “office,” as it is frequently referred to, is a beautiful prayer experience if you take adequate time.

First, of course, you need to learn *how* to pray it. There are many forms of the Office: a short version in a small book, a one-volume version which can be purchased as a Franciscan one-volume version and which comes with a supplement containing Franciscan saints and feast-days, and finally, the standard 4-volume version. When I first started praying it, using the Franciscan one-volume version, I told myself that when I was praying it regularly, I would get the 4-volume set. And eventually I did that. It has been most rewarding. Most people who use the Office regularly will find that while they may just “read through it” to begin with, if they really open their heart to the Lord, they will eventually really pray it, with no attention at all to the time involved. While the Office is beautiful when prayed in a group, it can be even more rewarding when prayed alone, because when a word or a phrase or a thought strikes you (the Holy Spirit is speaking!), you can stop and mediate on that word or phrase or thought before you continue. And as with all prayer, if you don't “finish” it because you got lost in meditation or contemplation, then know that you went where God wanted you to go, and don't worry about not “finishing” it.

It is a good practice to teach your fraternity together how to pray the Office, so that the individual members can use it for their personal prayer without feeling overwhelmed. It is certainly acceptable to occasionally do it together at a fraternity meeting. However, like all prayer, don't use it all the time, for it will be the same each month (unless you change your meeting day) and soon you will just be mouthing words without much inner prayer being done.

When we do pastoral visits, we will ask what your fraternity prayer practices are, how your beginning (and ending) prayer time is going, and what effect it is having on the fraternity. If you have questions about prayer, feel free to ask your spiritual assistant, if you have one, or any of us, to answer those questions. For now, I wish you joyful and productive prayer-time!

Sylvia Paoli, OFS

President in Turn,
Conference of Region
Spiritual Assistants



FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION LUCY IBARRA

As Secular Franciscans we are committed to: 1. Follow Christ; 2. Rebuild His Church; 3. To live the power of the Gospel; 4. To build a more Fraternal and Evangelical World

1. Follow Christ

Article 4 of our Rule: The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people.

Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly.

2. Rebuild His Church

Article 6 of our Rule: They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialog of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.

3. To live the power of the Gospel

Article 4 of our Rule: Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.

4. To build a more Fraternal and Evangelical World

Mark Chapter 3:31-36: A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Article 17 of our Rule: In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ.

By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for His Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

We then use our Time, Talent and Treasures.



FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION

Servant Leadership

How do we prepare servant leaders for our Order?

"Three essential characteristics when one assumes a Franciscan servant leadership role, taken from *The Handbook for Franciscan Servant Leadership* (2010).

1. that the call or commission is initiated by God;
2. that the response or commitment is wholehearted; and
3. that the leader has or is open to receiving the vision necessary to serve in a servant leadership capacity.

Four Practices shared by Dr Karen Spear and Marcy Ripberger from Marian University

Prayer

Prayer, the foundational practice for Franciscan servant leadership. Prayer is essential to self-emptying. As we engage in "deep, regular, meaningful prayer," we open ourselves to be used by God to serve God's will and not our will for others. In short, we need to decrease so that God may increase.

Dialogue

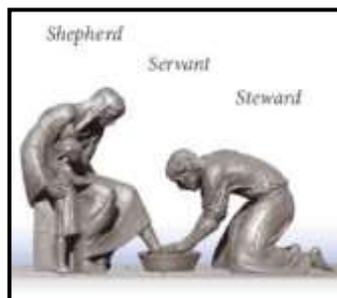
If the servant leader is to serve the other, she or he must understand the needs of those being served. The practice of dialogue with those being served is central because one cannot discern another's needs without speaking and sharing deeply with the other.

Discernment of Gifts

Having established the nature of relationships within a servant-led community, we then assess the "tools" we bring to the tasks before us. God calls us to serve; we need to discern from God what resources we bring to the task God has given us to do. We begin with prayerful discernment – seeking God to show us our strengths and our weaknesses so that in recognizing our gifts we have the courage and willingness to use them.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership begins with the recognition that all are called to servant leadership. The "leader" must understand that those whom she or he serves must likewise be cultivated as servant leaders. This awareness reshapes the essential nature of the community. Everyone in the community is expected to step up and take responsibility, especially in those areas where he or she is particularly gifted and capable leadership is shared. Servant leadership of all in the community safeguards the burnout of the single leader and provides a check on the tendency of the single leader to dominate through power and control.



CHAPTER JANUARY 2019

Some Pictures from Tuan Cao, Our Wonderful Photographer



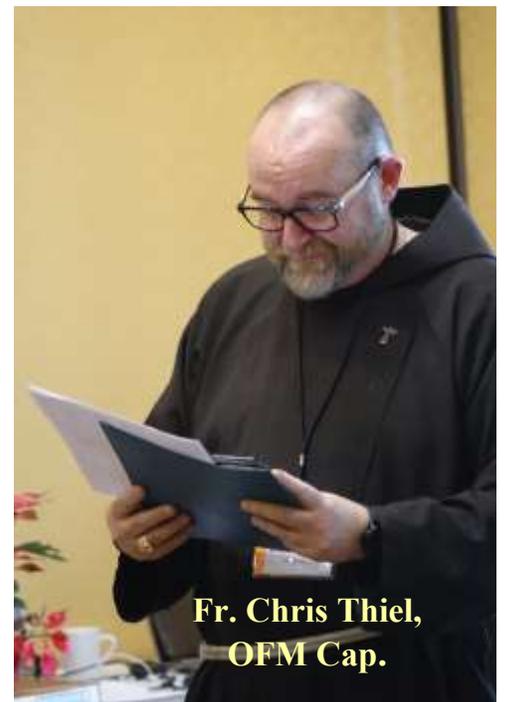
Sister Madeline
Mission San Luis Rey
Spiritual Assistant



Judith Mussatto, OFS
Regional Minister



Father Steve Gross,
OFM Conv,
And OFS Sisters



Fr. Chris Thiel,
OFM Cap.



Our Vietnamese Sisters

Dis-
trict

SAN DIEGO DISTRICT **Tuan Cao, OFS, District Liaison**



**St Anthony of Padua,
a Vietnamese
speaking fraternity,
celebrated the Lunar
New Year on
Saturday
February 2, 2019,
in San Diego.**

Riverside/San Bernadino **William Mussatto, OFS, District Liaison**

The District had two meetings of the Ministers, Vice Ministers and Formation Directors since our last report. At the first, we discussed council ongoing formation. At the second, held on the Saturday of the Region Chapter, we made plans for the next year. The next major event is a Lenten Retreat/Seminar with a guest speaker from the Franciscan School of Theology in Oceanside.

Immaculata Fraternity members are having an Inter-faith dialog with some members of the local Muslim community. They are discussing joining them in some of their charitable outreach activities. They have one Inquirer.

Padre Pio is reaching out to Seculars in the dessert as well as outreach for new members in this area. The Seculars there are finding it too difficult to travel to Marino Valley. They are planning an annual retreat for their council. They have three candidates and two inquirers. In December they had a Baby shower for Jesus with the baby items going to a shelter for single mothers. In January they had their annual Epiphany Party.

Holy Spirit Fraternity elected a new Council. Currently they have one candidate, and one Inquirer. There have also had visitors who have come to a couple of meetings. Fraternity members helped the local school celebrate a Blessings of the Animals by passing out pet medals and Franciscan Holy Cards (with information about the Fraternity meetings). They organized the annual Thanks=giving Day Meal for those without a family in the parish hall. In December, members went caroling at a local nursing home. As part of our outreach, the Annual Renewal of Profession was held at St Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Chino followed by a reception in the hall. At the December meeting food baskets were prepared for four families through the "Adopt A Family" program. The fraternity added gift cards (groceries for the families and for the children to get gifts) to each basket. Afterwardspairs of members took the baskets directly to the families. They held their annual Epiphany Party and are sending out the gifts to those members who could not attend. They continue to work to integrate remote members into life of the Fraternity.

Secular Franciscan Order - St. Francis Region #52

Important Announcements

Note from Your Editor

We are trying a new format for our Joy of Francis. The new format permits more and larger pictures, which we all enjoy. I look forward to any comments or suggestions.

In addition to the Minister's Message, the message from the Regional Spiritual Assistants, and the Formation Director, we would like reports from every district. We would also like to feature any JPIC activities, events in support of our interfaith initiative, and any special articles you think others in our regional may find enriching and interesting. As you take pictures of any events or activities, please take the best quality pictures you can.

Please send any submissions for our next edition to patriciaelizabethgrace7@gmail.com by May 1.

Peace and All Good, Patricia

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



CALENDAR

February:

17: Pastoral Visit: Immaculate Heart of Mary Fraternity, Santa Ana. Visitor: Sylvia Paoli, OFS.
24: Elections: St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, Woodland Hills. Presider: Lucy Ibarra, OFS.
Church Witness: Fr. Christopher Thiel, OFM, Cap.
24: Profession: Immaculate Conception Fraternity. Our Mother of Confidence, 3131 Governor Drive San Diego. Mass at 2:00. Reception to follow.

March:

1-3: Retreat Planning for REC. Pro Sanctity Retreat Center, Fullerton.
22-24: Religious Education Congress. Convention Center, Anaheim.

April:

7: Fraternal Visit: St. Francis Fraternity, L.A. Visitor: Frank Miller, OFS.
24: Elections: Blessed Luchesius & Buonadonna Fraternity, L.A. Presider: Frank Miller, OFS. Church Witness: Maria Rodrigues, OFS.

CALENDAR - Continued

May:

4: Fraternal Visit: St. Louis the King Fraternity, Santa Barbara. Visitor: Judith Mussatto, OFS.
5: Fraternal Visit: Immaculate Conception Fraternity. Visitor: Judith Mussatto, OFS.
24-26: Regional Retreat. Serra Retreat Center, Malibu.