



**MINISTER**

Continued from page 1

Reverend Thomas Paprocki, the Bishop of Springfield. Congratulations, Deacon Neil! Deacon Neil's ordination brings the number of actively serving Secular Franciscan permanent deacons in our Region to nine, three of whom also serve their local fraternities as Spiritual Assistants.

I am very grateful that many members of our Regional family made it a priority to participate in the June 30 - July 4, 2016 Quinquennial Congress sponsored by NAFRA and held at the Renaissance Hotel in St. Louis. The next Quinquennial, our Centenary, will be held in 2021.

Our third Annual Regional Formation Day was held at the Chiara Center on July 30, 2016; most fraternities were represented at this event which was expanded this year to include two tracks: a day of reflection for those in initial formation and a separate workshop for the local fraternity Formation team members. Thank you, **Thérèse**, our Regional Formation Director, for your vision and leadership in bringing us all together!

Our annual Regional Retreat at the Chiara Center held the weekend of September 9-11, 2016 was directed by our dear friend **Sister Renita Brummer, O.S.F.** who led us to a much deeper and richer appreciation of our Franciscan commitment to the integrity of creation through a focused set of activities and reflections on Franciscan authors and Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

All these events were reasons for joyful celebration of the gift of Franciscan life and vocation the Lord has given to us. But the year 2016 also brought us the gift of human sadness that comes with the

need to say goodbye to those physically separated from us by Sister Death's embrace. From our local fraternities we commended 16 of our sisters and brothers into the loving and merciful arms of the Lord this year.

Then on Monday, November 7, 2016 God called from this life our beloved Regional Spiritual Assistant, **Father John Sullivan, O.F.M.**, following a rather brief but intense terminal illness.

A number of us gathered with family and friars from Sacred Heart Province for his Mass of Christian Burial on Friday, November 11, 2016; please see our sister Emma Lozowski, O.F.S.'s reflections on this event published elsewhere in this edition of our Regional newsletter.



I share with you what I wrote in my October 12,

2016 letter to Father Bill Spencer, O.F.M., the Minister Provincial of Sacred Heart O.F.M. Province:

*Father John has always been ultra-conscientious in fulfilling his responsibilities to the Seculars as detailed in the accompanying Schedule of Elections, Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations in our Region; the next round of triennial Pastoral Visits to our local fraternities is not due until 2018. His Visitation Reports are always prompt and insightful. The formation materials he has developed over the years are widely utilized by fraternities*

see **MINISTER** page 3

*Next  
issue:  
Apr 15*

**Deadline:** Article and photo submissions are due on January 1st, April 1st, July 1st and October 1st.

**Deacon Neil Suermann, OFS**  
Editor  
[neil.suermann@gmail.com](mailto:neil.suermann@gmail.com)

**The Portiuncula  
MISSION STATEMENT**

The Portiuncula publishes the newsletter to inform, serve and inspire the Secular Franciscans of the Franciscans of the Prairie regional fraternity.

**MINISTER**

Continued from page 2

throughout the United States. He knows the governing documents of the OFS better than most Secular Franciscans! It is any wonder that our past National Minister, the late Deacon Tom Bello, O.F.S., referred to Father John as "a true National Treasure" at the April 2015 Visitation of our Regional Fraternity?

In some way or other, Father John meaningfully touched the lives of each of us in Franciscans of the Prairie Region - as well as so many other Franciscans and people of good will far and wide. I want us to dedicate all of our Regional efforts and endeavors in 2017 to Father John's memory. May his life of Franciscan love and service continue to inspire our own vocations to the Franciscan life and may he now intercede for us!

As of December 31, 2016 our Region numbered 8 active local fraternities with 206 active and active/excused Professed members, 26 Candidates (twice the number we had at this time a year ago!), 4 Inquirers, 4 Aspirants and 1 Affiliate.

Looking ahead to the year we have just begun, the first major event impacting the life of our Regional Fraternity will occur the weekend of March 11-12, 2017 when our Regional Fraternity Council (i.e., the local Fraternity Ministers plus the current Regional Executive Council) will gather at the Chiara Center for our Spring meeting. The major item on the agenda for discussion and votation is a major revision of our *Regional Guidelines*.

In addition to four local fraternity Elective Chapters and two Fraternal Visitations of local fraternities, other major Regional events currently on the calendar for 2017 include our annual Regional Picnic hosted by St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity, Bloomington on Saturday, June 24, 2017, the Annual Formation Day for all those in initial formation and local fraternity Formation Team members on Saturday, July 29, 2017 at the Chiara Center and our annual Regional Retreat directed by **Father Paul Joseph Langevin, O.F.M. Conv.** the weekend of September 29-October 1, 2017, also at the Chiara Center. **Please mark all of these events on your personal calendars NOW so that you can participate either in person or by your prayers!**

In closing, please let me and the members of the Regional Executive Council know how we may be of service to you, and please let us always hold one another close in prayer!

Wishing a joyful and grace-filled year to one and all, I remain

Your brother and servant - with fraternal love in Saints Francis and Clare,

*Deacon Dave, O.F.S.,*

Regional Minister

**T** *In Persona Christi Servi*

***"O Breath of God, unite us in action!"***  
***(NAFRA theme for 2017)***

**ONGOING FORMATION**

My dear brothers and sisters,

The Lord give you peace!

WOW! It is so hard to believe that we are again starting a new year. This is such a great time for all

of us to reflect upon the previous year and begin anew with our commitment of "going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel" (*The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order*, article #4).

A great example of someone living the Gospel was St. Angela of Foligno whose Feast Day was January 7. She was a Secular Franciscan who was beatified in 1693 and canonized in 2013.

I am suggesting that we ponder some advice from Angela: "If we but paused for a moment to consider attentively what takes place in this Sacrament of the Eucharist, I am sure that the thought of Christ's love for us would transform the coldness of our hearts into a fire of love and gratitude." This counsel from her became very meaningful for me as I was watching with David

see **FORMATION** page 4

**FORMATION**

Continued from page 3

the many different renditions of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. It dawned on me that all of us have something in our lives that needs to be transformed so that our relationship with the Trinity can grow and deepen. It took me a little while to become comfortable with the phrase "coldness of our hearts" until I realized that it was referring to my humanness of not always making the right choice to turn toward God, the one who loves me unconditionally. The love of God can indeed transform me into a more loving, caring Franciscan who is ready to live out the promises of my Baptism and my Franciscan Profession.

I invite you to accompany me through this New Year by daily reflecting on Angela's advice: "If we but paused for a moment to consider attentively what takes place in this Sacrament of the Eucharist, I am sure that the thought of Christ's love for us would transform the coldness of our hearts into a fire of love and gratitude."

I am going to try to let at least one person per day know (hug, words, kind act, etc.) that I am blessed because that person is a part of my life. I must always strive to put into action that unconditional love I receive from God and let others know that they are also valued, respected and loved! Please feel free to join me in this endeavor. May we always remember that God came among us through the Incarnation because he LOVES us S-O-O-O Much!

Wishing all of you a most joyous and peace-filled New Year,

***Thérèse, O.F.S.***

Regional Formation Director



**Reflections on Father John Sullivan,  
O.F.M.'s Mass of Christian Burial**

*by Emma Lozowski, O.F.S., Regional Councilor*

On Friday, November 11, 2016, friends and Franciscan sisters and brothers of Father John Sullivan, O.F.M. gathered at St. Anthony of Padua Church in St. Louis to commend his Franciscan soul to the Lord. If there is such a thing as a "good funeral," Fr. John's was one. It was the conclusion of a life well lived. We who attended could all image Fr. John being welcomed with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant" when he went to be with the Lord. His sister Audrey told the story of his peaceful passing. She was there with him, and they were watching the Mass being broadcast from the church at Chiara Center. Father John passed away right at the end of the Mass.

I don't know if Fr. John chose the songs for his Mass of Christian Burial himself, but they were not the standard "sad funeral" songs, but rather ones we frequently hear at Sunday Mass. *The Summons* was so appropriate, as Fr. John did say "Yes" with his whole life to Jesus' call, "Come and follow me." As we sang the *Prayer of St. Francis*, it was ever so helpful to be reminded "not so much to be consoled, as to console." The communion hymn was *You are Mine*. This song also encouraged all of us to understand that at the end of our lives the Lord brings us home. "Don't be afraid! I love you and you are mine!" echoed the refrain.

Fr. Bill Spencer, O.F.M., Minister Provincial of Sacred Heart Province was the main celebrant. Fr. Robert Karris, O.F.M. gave the homily, and he remembered a trip he took with Fr. John to Italy shortly after the events of September 11, 2001. Together they went to Assisi and were there for the Feast of St. Francis. They visited the Portiuncula, where it was unusually quiet and the lack of crowds made the ambiance meditative. They were able to say Mass there. Fr. John selflessly offered for Fr. Robert to be the main celebrant. Fr. Robert refused because he knew that this was Fr. John's first trip outside of the United States, and he insisted to try to make it special.

see **REFLECTION** page 5

## REFLECTION

Continued from page 4



But it was God who made the trip special to both of them. They said vespers with the Poor Clares and then in a small restaurant had a dinner that they both remembered as a great feast, even though it was just for the two of them. It was a foretaste of the “Messianic Banquet.” Even back then, Fr. John bore the cross of illness and pain in his life. Fr. Robert remembered that Fr. John did not talk much about his illness, but the phrase “Jesus is Victor” carried him through much suffering. Fr. John’s favorite prayer was “God’s will be done!” Thinking of this made praying the “Our Father” at this Mass especially meaningful.

As the Mass was concluding, the Friars sang the traditional *Ultima* hymn in beautiful harmony for the final commendation and farewell, and we sang *All Creatures of Our God and King* for the recessional hymn. I saw many people leaving Mass if not with smiles, but a certain degree of lightness. Our hearts were comforted as we departed from the beautiful liturgy. We knew that Fr. John was not lost to us, but he now accompanies us in a different way. Our National Minister, Jan Parker, O.F.S. said that Fr. John was kind, gentle, and wise. He loved his Secular Franciscans and knew our Rule and General Constitutions better than most of us. May he remain our inspiration, our guide and our intercessor in following Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis!

## REGIONAL RETREAT

**The Retreat: “Praise Be: The Communion of Creation.”**

Our facilitator was the talented **Sr. Renita Brummer, O.F.S.** She holds a Masters Degree in Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure University. Her message inspired us to reflect upon our personal kinship with creation. *“The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order”* (article 18) states: **Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High,” and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.**

**Franciscan Respect for All Creatures and Universal Kinship with Creation**

Sr. Renita began the retreat discussing Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter, “*Laudato Si’*: On Care of our Common Home.” Its initial words are, “**LAUDATO SI’, mi’ Signore**” - **“Praise be to you, my Lord.”** These words are similar to the words of St. Francis’ “Canticle of the Sun.” His Canticle gives praise to God for Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Stars, Brother Wind, Air, Clouds, Weather, Creatures, Sister Water, Brother Fire, Mother Earth, Fruits, Flowers, Grass and Sister Death. Sister Renita noted in the Pope’s Encyclical, “This sister (Mother Earth)...now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use of goods which God has endowed on her” (Paragraph #2).

see **RETREAT** page 6

## RETREAT

Continued from page 5

**“As I Get Older, This is What I Have Learned”: Nature’s Co-Existence & Our Humility**

Sr. Renita highlighted the contradiction between the Franciscan call to form a personal kinship with creation and our Pope’s statement that society has abused our Mother Earth. Reflecting upon her personal kinship with creation, she shared two personal learnings: the first, **that diverse creatures can co-exist and humans cannot control their co-existence**. She related that she erected a humming bird feeder, but to her disappointment it attracted not only humming birds but several other types of creatures. As she reflected upon this experience, she concluded that different creatures do co-exist and her disappointment was attributed to the human inability to control nature. She encouraged us to reflect upon the question, **“How can I accept diversity in all aspects of creation?”**

Sr. Renita’s second learning focused upon the meaning of **humility**. Its origin is Latin “humus” which means good earth that makes things grow. She believes humility is based upon the fact that our body’s final composition is ashes and dust. St. Faustina stated, “My heart is reduced to dust and ashes, and even if all people were to trample me under their feet, I would still consider that a favor” (Diary, 1559). Her belief is also contained in Scripture, “Thou (The Lord) turned man back to the dust, and sayest, turn back, O children of men!” (Ps 90:3). We are placed in creation to humbly serve God, keeping in mind that our body’s final earthly worth is that of ashes and dust. As God’s sons and daughters, we must live and act with the attitude that we are mere specks of dust co-existing in creation for a very short time.

**“Lord God, to You Belong PRAISE, Glory, Honor, and All Blessing!” (Canticle of the Sun)**

Scripture also contains several passages praising God for aspects of Creation. Examples are: **“Praise for God’s Universal Glory”** (Ps 148) and **“The Song of the Three Young Men”** (Dan

3:27-68). These passages feature additional aspects of creation: rain, dew, cold, mountains, all things that grow, birds, beasts, all people, armies of the Lord, saints and priests. An essential aspect of our personal kinship with creation is praise to God the Creator. Sr. Renita urged us to possess an “attitude of gratitude.” She directed us to the website, “Attitude Through Gratitude” ([www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org)). Check it out!

**Sister’s Campaign: Get St. Francis Out of the Birdbath!**

Sr. Renita related that St. Francis is frequently associated with the love of animals and appears with them in many pictures and yard ornaments. **This attitude does not even “scratch the surface” of our Seraphic Father’s Charism!** Pope Francis’ Encyclical characterizes St. Francis as an attractive and compelling figure, an inspiration to him (the Pope) and reason for taking his name, a patron saint of ecologists and a person deeply concerned for God’s creation and the poor and outcasts. The Pope states, “He (St. Francis) shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace” (paragraph #10). Sister encouraged us to join her campaign to enhance St. Francis’ narrow image by promoting and living his life-changing charism.

**St. Francis and the Questions He Discerned for a Life-Time**

Sr. Renita stated that St. Francis pondered two questions often and at great length. She feels his answers can be found in his “Canticle.” The first question, **Who am I?** and the second, **Who are You (God)?** His answer to the first question is that he was only one creature in God’s Creation, and must live in harmony with all other aspects of creation. His answer to the second question is that God is the Creator and He controls all of Creation and he (St. Francis) does not.

see RETREAT page 7

## RETREAT

Continued from page 6

**She encouraged us to personally reflect upon these two questions frequently and in great depth.** She added that as we progress in our faith, our answers to these questions will change as our faith journey progresses.

### Resources to Determine Our Personal Kinship with Creation

Sr. Renita provided several resources to aid us in determining our personal kinship with creation. She encouraged us to read Pope Francis' encyclical. Another resource is Fr. Dan Horan, O.F.M.'s works on the Pope's encyclical found on the website "YouTube" ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)), search for Fr. Dan Horan and several video clips will appear under "*Laudato Si.*" He discusses the evolution of the Church's beliefs regarding kinship with creation.

Other resources are organizations that provide information and activities that restore creation. These organizations are: The **Franciscan Action Network** ([www.franciscanaction.org](http://www.franciscanaction.org)), where information is available concerning issues of Climate Justice and Franciscan Spirituality; **Catholic Climate Covenant** ([www.catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org)). This resource includes information regarding Catholic Teachings and Programs including "Take the St Francis Pledge, and the **Sisters of St. Francis**, Clinton, Iowa ([www.clintonfranciscans.com](http://www.clintonfranciscans.com)), search for Advocacy and then Earth. The sisters provide information and activities regarding alternative energy, climate change, food and water.

### Let Us Give Praise

Sr. Renita provided a "hands on" exercise designed to embrace creation. On a beautiful, sun drenched, fall afternoon, we roamed a breath-taking garden. Walking silently my sense of sight was illuminated with colorful trees, bushes, plants and flowers and their captivating aroma burst into my sense of smell. The sweet songs of birds and the fluttering of butterflies and other winged creatures resounded in my ears. As a result of Sister's inspiring words, I felt like a humble part of this blessed eco-system. However, I also felt the

overwhelming challenge of determining my personal kinship with creation. As a result of Sister's thought provoking presentations, there was one thing that had become very clear to me. Several times a day I must, "**Praise our God, all you his servants**" (Rev 19:5). Later that day in the St. Francis of Assisi Church, we as brothers and sisters recited together the "Renewal of Commitment to Franciscan Life," how appropriately it begins, "All **PRAISE** be yours Lord for all creation gives you glory. All **PRAISE** be yours O Lord, for all good comes from you."

*Submitted by Pat DeLuca, O.F.S.  
Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity, Rock Island, IL*

### HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

My wife, Kay, and I have been planning a trip to the Holy Land for over 5 years, and had originally targeted 2014 as "the year." However, a tornado destroyed our house in Washington, IL, in November 2013, so our Holy Land plans were delayed for a couple of years as we rebuilt our home and health with things such as insurance and interim housing. This delay, however, turned out to be a blessing, as we were able to better identify some key criteria for our trip. These criteria included items such as: a) Franciscan-led pilgrimage (not a 'tour'); b) small group size (less than 25); c) a full 9-10 days on-site in the Holy Land; and d) a good time of the year (not too hot, not too cold, not too busy).

During the Quinquennial in St. Louis this past July I was fortunate to meet Sr. Linda Tan, O.S.F., of Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs ([franciscanpilgrimages.com](http://franciscanpilgrimages.com)). They had an upcoming pilgrimage that fully met our criteria...and then some. The "extras" were that we would be led by a Commissariate of the Holy Land (Fr. Anthony Chircop. O.F.M.) and we would be staying at Franciscan guesthouses in Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. We didn't realize at the time how blessed we were!

We departed from Chicago O'Hare on Sunday, Oct. 23 and we met up with Fr. Anthony and eleven other pilgrims in Tel Aviv on Monday, Oct. 24.

see **PILGRIMAGE** page 8

**PILGRIMAGE**

Continued from page 7

Our twelfth fellow pilgrim (Kay and I made fourteen total) joined us the next day due to her travel arrangements. Our group of 14 pilgrims came from various places: California, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Mumbai, India. Most of us didn't know each other beforehand, but we all melded well together.

Fr. Anthony has studied in Jerusalem, and has been a Commissariate of the Holy Land for nearly 15 years. During those years he has been leading groups of pilgrims many times each year...mostly groups from his native Malta or from the United States. It's hard for me to envision a better leader for our group. First and foremost he lives and breathes the Franciscan mission in the Holy Land mission to make "the grace of the Holy Places" gush forth. "The sons of Francis of Assisi - in the words of John Paul II - have been able to interpret." "in a genuinely evangelical way that legitimate desire to look after the places of our Christian roots." ([www.custodia.org](http://www.custodia.org)). Fr. Anthony's knowledge of the land, the history, the archaeology, the culture, and our faith made him an exceptional leader of our pilgrimage. He truly helped us live the Gospel pages in the same holy places where they occurred.



We stayed our first four nights at the Franciscan guesthouse (Casa Nova) in Nazareth, which is located about a half block from the Church of the Annunciation. With this as our base in the

northern part of Israel, we visited the biblical sites of Mount Carmel, Mount Tabor, Cana, Tabgha, Capernaum, and the Sea of Galilee. A partial list of highlights include being at the site of the Transfiguration, renewing our wedding vows at Cana, being where Jesus multiplied the loaves and the fishes, praying at the site of the Annunciation,

seeing Peter's house, visiting the remains of the synagogue where Jesus gave the bread of life discourse (Jn 6), and being at the site where Jesus asked the Apostles "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Mt 16), and crossing the Sea of Galilee on a boat. Not only did we visit these sites (and more), but also each day Fr. Anthony celebrated a private Mass with just our pilgrim group.

On a sad note, the day we visited Mount Tabor, the Church of the Transfiguration was robbed and vandalized; multiple chalices were stolen, icons damaged and a donation box was robbed. It made me even more cognizant of the special places we visited.



On the way down from Galilee towards Bethlehem, we went through a checkpoint from Israel into the West Bank. We stopped in Nablus and drew water from the authentic Jacob's Well, and then went on to Jericho. Near Jericho we renewed our baptismal vows in the River Jordan (just amazing) and viewed the Mount of Temptation.

Our next three nights had us staying at the Franciscan guesthouse in Bethlehem, which is located adjacent to the Church of the Nativity and a half block from Manger Square. On our first morning we had 5:45a Mass in the Nativity Grotto, followed by a visit to the Milk Grotto. According to tradition, while Mary and Joseph were fleeing Herod's soldiers on their way to Egypt, they stopped in this cave while Mary nursed the baby Jesus. A drop of Mary's milk fell upon the stone and it turned white. We also visited sites including the home area of Elizabeth & Zechariah and John the Baptist, visited Shepherd's Field where the first announcement of Christ's birth was made to the shepherds, and had Mass at the Shrine of Lazarus in Bethany.

see **PILGRIMAGE** page 9

**PILGRIMAGE**

Continued from page 8

After a week staying in Nazareth and then Bethlehem, we spent our last three nights at the Franciscan guesthouse in Jerusalem (which is less than 10 miles “as the crow flies,” but considerably longer driving, including security checkpoints). Visiting in and around Jerusalem is an incredible experience. Among the places we visited were: the Shrine of the Ascension, the Church of the Pater Noster (the traditional site of Christ’s teaching of the Lord’s Prayer), the Basilica and the Garden of Gethsemane, the Tomb of Mary, the Pool of Bethesda (site of the healing of the lame man), St. Anne’s Church (the birthplace of Mary, and the only Crusader Church still remaining), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (site of Calvary and the tomb of Jesus), Chapel of the Cenacolino (the room of the Last Supper), the Via Dolorosa (the path that Jesus walked on the way to his crucifixion), the Western Wall (sometimes referred to, erroneously, as the “Wailing Wall”), and the Church at Emmaus.

Throughout our trip there were many, many tour buses full of pilgrims and tourists throughout Israel and the West Bank. The one notable exception, however, was when we went to Emmaus el-Qubeibeh on our last full day. This church was in a portion of the West Bank that has had considerable trouble; we saw zero buses that day. Part of our journey was through Ramallah, which is currently serves as the *de facto* administrative capital of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Fr. Anthony likes to take his pilgrims there on the last day as a “wrap up” of the pilgrimage, since this was a post-resurrection. We could feel the tension as we traveled the streets in Ramallah, and could see how the locals were looking at us since we were clearly “out of the ordinary” visitors.

A double highlight began on the evening of October 31st, where we visited the Basilica of Agony in Gethsemane (on the Mount of Olives). Our visit was held long after the tourists were gone and it was quiet and dark. Fr. Anthony had arranged for our group (along with several other small groups) to attend Eucharistic Adoration. It was incredible to be at the site of the Agony in the Garden and to reflect while being in the sanctuary

immediately below a magnificent mosaic depicting a prayerful and sorrowful Jesus, with Peter, James



and John asleep off to the side...”So you could not keep watch with Me for one hour?” Immediately afterward was a candle lit Eucharistic procession out of the church and through the Garden of Gethsemane

filled with age-old olive trees.

Early the next morning, November 1st, we walked the several blocks from our guesthouse to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we celebrated Mass at 6:00a inside the actual Tomb of Christ. Our fourteen pilgrims and Fr. Anthony squeezed into the outer chamber of the tomb (where the body

was prepared for final burial) to celebrate the Mass. Due to time constraints, the homily was necessarily short but immensely memorable as Fr. Anthony focused on the one word “Alleluia!”



Immediately afterwards we went 3-by-3 into the smaller inner chamber to venerate the location where the body of Christ was laid. As I laid my head and arms on the stone slab, I experienced a feeling of immenseness of God’s creation and of his love for us.

see **PILGRIMAGE** page 10

**PILGRIMAGE**

Continued from page 9

I reflected that not only was this the Tomb of Christ’s burial, but it is also the Tomb of the Resurrection. Jesus, I love You. Jesus, I trust in You. Alleluia!

One interesting sidelight to our staying at the Franciscan guesthouse in Jerusalem is that we ate our meals in the same dining hall that has hosted meals to our last three popes...St. John Paul II, Benedict, and Francis. On the walls of the dining room were framed pictures of them in front of a distinctive 3D mural/sculpture on the wall. So of course we had our picture taken in the same place!



While the focus of our pilgrimage was on biblical sites during the time of Christ, we also visited a number of major historical sites including the city of Acco (the port on the Mediterranean that most likely was where St. Francis arrived in the Holy Land), Caesarea Maritime (the site of an ancient hippodrome and amphitheater on the banks of the Mediterranean), the Dead Sea (yes, I swam in the incredibly buoyant waters), Qumran (site of the Dead Sea Scrolls), and Masada (a massive fortress built on a mesa near the Dead Sea with an incredible history).

When we started this pilgrimage we had high expectations. The actual pilgrimage exceeded our expectations in ways we never imagined. We experienced what was basically a condensed graduate level course in Holy Land history,

spirituality, archaeology, and culture. And along the way were exposed to the current situation in the Holy Land that includes the separation of Israel and the Palestinian-controlled West Bank with borders characterized by walls, razor wire, checkpoints and armed military. We also came to appreciate the challenging and critically important role of the Franciscans as Custodians of the Holy Land sites for the “Latin” (i.e., Roman Catholic) Church as they co-exist with other Christian churches (most notably the Greek Orthodox). And we were abundantly blessed to get to know our fellow pilgrims and to share in our spiritual journey in life.

I was asked after we returned if I was now “more holy”. I responded that I didn’t know that I was “more holy” or not, but I was certainly changed... and in many ways. So many bible passages have become more “alive” as I read the Bible and hear the Word of God during the readings at Mass. This type of trip is sometimes referred to as “a trip of a lifetime.” However, I prefer to refer to it as “my first trip to the Holy Land.”

- Submitted by John Grillot, O.F.S.  
Regional Treasurer and member of St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity, Bloomington

**MY FRANCISCAN LIFE**



November 17th is a special day for Secular Franciscans as we celebrate the Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, patron saint of the Secular Franciscan Order. This date is also very special for me because this year I celebrated my first anniversary within the

Sacred Heart Fraternity in Peoria, Illinois. As I reflected on the past year, I could not help feeling blessed and grateful for being part of the Franciscan way of life. I remembered Initial Formation and “*The Franciscan Journey*” by Fr. Lester Bach, O.F.M. Cap.

see **LIFE** page 11

**LIFE**

Continued from page 10

In chapter fourteen, A Rebuilding Task, I highlighted four key points during my candidacy in the O.F.S. which I would like to share through my reflections as a first-year Secular Franciscan:

1. Secular Franciscans proclaim Christ by their life and words.
2. The preparation of the brothers and sisters... should be promoted in the fraternities.
3. Make the love of Francis for the Word of God their own, as well as their faith.
4. Sanctification which the church exercises through the liturgy, prayer, and works of penance and charity.

**Secular Franciscans proclaim Christ by their life and words.**

We all have a story about ourselves and my story begins in the summer of 2012 when I was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer which has progressed to Stage IV. I do not share this to evoke your sympathy for this has been a true blessing. Before, as I was fighting the 'good fight,' I was a wandering sheep with no clear definition and purpose in life. Then, I was introduced to St. Francis and his way of life. It has been a life changing event! Franciscan life has taught me how to recognize the value of H.O.P.E. (Humility, Obedience, Poverty, Eternity). But more important, it has helped me to be honest with myself, enhance my relationship with the Holy Spirit, and recognize the value in loving my family and friends with love and compassion.

**The preparation of the brothers and sisters... should be promoted in the fraternities.**

The members of the Sacred Heart Fraternity have been overly supportive with prayers and actions. I'm sure the same can be said for members in your fraternity. No person is an island and the Secular Franciscan community is family to me. Initial Formation was so important in my life because it taught me how to write and live goals and expectations from a Franciscan viewpoint; to live the Gospel and if you must, use words. Ongoing

Formation is simply an extension and is also promoted in our annual retreat day.

**Make the love of St. Francis for the Word of God their own, as well as their faith.**

St. Francis has taught me a new way of 'taking up the cross.' We all know the trials and tribulations throughout his life and suffering was simply a way of life. What better way to enhance one's faith than to accept God's plan for each of us? I try to emulate his life, especially his attitude towards life; live the life of Pax et Bonum. Isn't that a great way to see the 'big picture' of life?

**Sanctification which the church exercises through the liturgy, prayer, and works of penance and charity.**

Someone asked Michael Jordan (NBA Hall of Famer) how they could become a basketball player like him? His reply, "practice, practice, practice!" Whenever I ask myself how I can become a better Secular Franciscan, I simply think, "pray, pray, pray." And, per Fr. Lester Bach, there's nothing more important than praying to enhance one's relationship with the Holy Spirit and meaning in life. We're so blessed to have the spiritual freedom to participate in the Holy Eucharist and the other sacraments especially Penance, and the opportunity for each of us to demonstrate acts of charity.

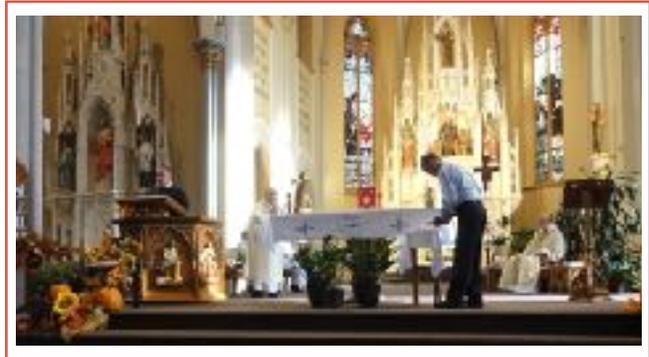
So, in conclusion, I'm so blessed and grateful to be a Secular Franciscan because this way of life has made it so simple for me; be honest with myself, live God's Will not my will via the life of St. Francis, and be part of the church community. St. Francis taught me how to pray; not for miracles, cures, etc., for the simply understanding of God's Plan. I can't wait to see what my second year has in store as a Secular Franciscan...Life is Good!

- Submitted by Stan Budzinski, O.F.S.  
Sacred Heart Fraternity, Peoria, Illinois

**NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION**

**St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity,  
Quincy  
Rite of Admission**

Becky Goodwin and Robie Orf became Candidates in the Secular Franciscan Order through the Rite of Admission during the Fraternity’s monthly Gathering on December 11, 2016. The Celebrant



Pictured (l-r): Becky Goodwin, O.F.S., Rosanne Roy, O.F.S., Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., Robie Orf, O.F.S., and Deacon Dave Ream, O.F.S.

for the service was the Fraternity’s Spiritual Assistant Deacon Dave and the Rite began with a Liturgy of the Word. Becky and Robie’s request to be admitted into Candidacy was accepted by Fraternity Minister Rosanne. Robie and Becky each received a copy of The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order and a Tau cross which is the official “habit” of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. In addition, to wearing the Tau cross, both Becky and Robie have chosen to begin using the initials O.F.S. after their names as a public witness to their membership in the Secular Franciscan Order.

**St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity,  
Quincy  
Annual Memorial Mass**

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity members gathered together at the 11:00a Mass on Sunday, November 20th at St. Francis Solanus Church, Quincy with Fr. Don Blaeser, O.F.M. as Celebrant. The occasion was the annual remembrance of the beloved deceased members of the Fraternity whom

God called home to Himself during the past year. Fraternity Vice-Minister Dwayne Goodwin, O.F.S. read aloud the names of each member while Fraternity Treasurer Stan Bartley, O.F.S. lit a votive candle in memory of each person. This year, in addition to remembering deceased Fraternity members, we also gave special tribute to Fr. John Sullivan, O.F.M., our late Regional Spiritual Assistant and to Dirk Bonebrake, the late son of Roseann Bonebrake Gosnell, O.F.S. of our Fraternity. “Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them! May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen!”

**Franciscans of the Tau, Calhoun  
County**

**Social Concerns and Events**

Our Fraternity is getting the names of the recently married couples in the last two months. Councilor Tom Droste, O.F.S. ordered New American Bibles to give to the couples. The Bibles are to be sent out as soon as possible.

**Contact with prisoners to send them prayer cards**

At our October Meeting, our Formation Director Roger Hagen, O.F.S. has sent a personal prayer from the fraternity, and a pamphlet of prayers to the proper authorities to be distributed to people in prison.

**Election of Officers**

The Franciscans of the Tau held their Election of Officers on Sunday, October 23rd with Regional Minister Deacon David Ream, O.F.S. presiding at

see **NEWS** page 13

## NEWS

Continued from page 12

the meeting and the election. His wife, the Regional Formation Director, Thérèse Ream, O.F.S. also attended the meeting as did Regional Councilor Emma Lozowski, O.F.S. The elected Officers are for the next three years, for a third term, Minister Marian Hagen, O.F.S., Vice Minister John Baltisberger, O.F.S., Secretary Michelle Hagen, O.F.S., Treasurer Mary Ann Bailey, O.F.S., Formation Director Roger Hagen, O.F.S., and Councilors Marcy Klockenkemper, O.F.S. and Tom Droste, O.F.S.

**Fr. John Sullivan**

Fr. John Sullivan, O.F.M., as we all know, started the Franciscans of the Tau Fraternity. He was our Spiritual Assistant for many years. He had been a past parish priest in Calhoun County. Fr. Sullivan had a yearly retreat in Meppen, Illinois for the O.F.S. of our area, and anyone who wanted to attend. All of us remember Fr. John in many settings and times in our life. We now have an opportunity to pray for his assistance from Heaven above in our petitions to God.

**Wayne Wallendorf, O.F.S.**

Wayne Wallendorf, O.F.S. passed away November 30th. His funeral was at St. Joseph Church in Meppen, Illinois on December 3rd. He took his Franciscan training several years ago. Wayne, Deacon Michael Hagen, O.F.S., and John Baltisberger, O.F.S. received their formation in Granite City. They became Secular Franciscans, and with the assistance of Fr. John Sullivan, O.F.M., started the Franciscans of the Tau. Wayne's wife Catherine is also a member of the fraternity. She resides at the Fountains Nursing Home facility in Godfrey, Illinois. Our condolences and best wishes to Catherine and their family. Wayne was our first Minister, and did many things to set up the fraternity in the beginning, and as long as he could. One of the things he did was to acquire fruits and vegetables from local growers, and bread from bread companies for the poor, for the Poor Clare Monastery, our O.F.S. sisters and brothers, and other groups. Wayne is just a thought and a prayer away and is with us always.

## Calendar

**March 11-12, 2017**

Regional Fraternity Council meeting and Regional Executive Council, Chiara Center, Springfield

**June 24, 2017**

Regional Picnic hosted by Bloomington

**July 29, 2017**

Regional Day of Reflection for those in Initial Formation and Workshop for Formation Directors & Team Members.

**August 12, 2017**

Elective Chapter, Sacred Heart Fraternity, Peoria

**August 27, 2017**

Elective Chapter, St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity, Bloomington

**September 17, 2017**

Fraternal Visitation, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Quincy

**September 26 - October 1, 2017**

National Fraternity Council Meeting, Mt. St. Francis, IN

**September 29 - October 1, 2017**

Regional Retreat, followed by a Regional Fraternity Council meeting and Regional Executive Council meeting, Chiara Center, Springfield

**Pope St. John XXIII, Rock Island  
Open House at Islamic Center of the Quad Cities**



Pictured (l-r): Formation Director Deacon Frank Agnoli, O.F.S., Secretary Lori Ferris, O.F.S., Minister Kent Ferris, O.F.S., Mahwish Fatimah (member of the Islamic Center of the Quad Cities and Augustana College student), Roxanne and Patrick Miner. The education team of the Islamic Center of the Quad Cities held an Open House on December 10th.

## Franciscans of the Prairie Region

### REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**Minister**

Deacon David Ream, OFS  
660-627-5626  
[umbria2@earthlink.net](mailto:umbria2@earthlink.net)

**Treasurer**

John Grillot, OFS  
309-696-4846  
[grilljw@gmail.com](mailto:grilljw@gmail.com)

**Councilor (Vocations)**

Kent Ferris, OFS  
563-299-6107  
[ferris@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:ferris@davenportdiocese.org)

**Vice-Minister**

Mary Farrell-Diekemper, OFS  
[mpf1258@yahoo.com](mailto:mpf1258@yahoo.com)

**Formation Director**

Thérèse Ream, OFS  
660-627-5626  
[umbria2@earthlink.net](mailto:umbria2@earthlink.net)

**Councilor (Data Base)**

Emma Lozowski, OFS  
618-656-1941  
[e\\_lozowski@yahoo.com](mailto:e_lozowski@yahoo.com)

**Secretary**

Kathy Adams, OFS  
618-483-5381  
[oremus7@gmail.com](mailto:oremus7@gmail.com)

**Spiritual Assistant**

### REGIONAL APPOINTEES

**Newsletter Editor**

Deacon Neil Suermann, OFS  
618-792-4060  
[neil.suermann@gmail.com](mailto:neil.suermann@gmail.com)

**JPIC Animator**

Bill Ducett, OFS  
[wrducet@ilstu.edu](mailto:wrducet@ilstu.edu)

**Webservant**

Jason Deavers, OFS  
[got-2-dive@hotmail.com](mailto:got-2-dive@hotmail.com)

Franciscans of the Prairie  
19514 Orrick Trail  
Kirksville, MO 63501-7126

