

The Portiuncula

Franciscans of the Prairie Region

Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis

Regional Minister's Letter

It was wonderful to see many of you at our retreat and Jubilee celebration for the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Franciscans of the Prairie Region. Thank you to all who helped to make this event a success, and thank you to those who attended. A wonderful "jubilee gift" that the Regional Fraternity Council has given us is the choice of a patron for the region: Blessed Contardo Ferrini, OFS. Since our region is not named after a saint, in the past 25 years, we were without a special patron. Our new patron is a Secular Franciscan whose feast day is on the day of our establishment, October 20. I hope that we will ask together for the intercession of Blessed Contardo, OFS. May our prayers bring us closer to each other and may Blessed Contardo help to spiritually connect all the brothers and sisters in the region.

At the writing of this letter, I am getting ready to attend the National Chapter meeting of the OFS-USA in Corpus Christi, Texas. I am greatly honored that by my election you have put your trust in me to represent the region. Thinking about the tasks ahead, I asked Jesus in prayer for a bible verse to accompany me. The first thing that came to my mind was, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48). I immediately protested, "Oh, no, no! Not that one! That's just asking too much!"

I was made slightly more comfortable by the thought that this verse asks us to "be perfect" and not "do perfect things," but I continued to grapple with my "homework." I turned to an author whose work I long admired, Kathleen Norris, a Benedictine Oblate. In her book, *Amazing Grace* she considers the verse about being perfect in light of another verse of Matthew's Gospel (19:21) which says, "Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'" Kathleen explains, "Perfection in a

Christian sense means becoming mature enough to give ourselves to others. Whatever we have, no matter how little it seems, is something that can be shared with those who are poorer. This sort of perfection demands that we become fully ourselves as God would have us: mature, ripe, full, ready to for what befalls us, for whatever is to come." We just recently celebrated the Transitus of St. Francis, and it struck me that St. Francis reached this kind of perfection. Even in his poorest state, lying on the bare, cold ground, ill and dying, he radiated inner peace that was, for his younger companions and us, nourishment, encouragement, and guidance. May we walk with St. Francis and let him guide us ever closer to eternal perfection.

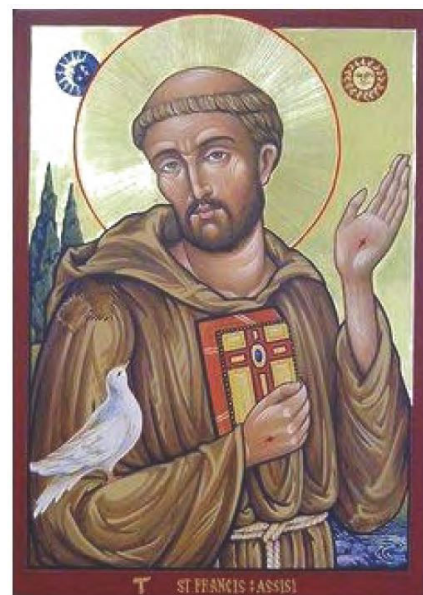
Sincerely in Christ,

Emma Lozowski, OFS
Minister, Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order

See Christ, Be Christ!

Share the Vision!

2018-2019 OFS-USA Theme



Region Adopts a Heavenly Patron!

by Deacon Dave Ream, O.F.S.

As preparations for our Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Fraternity's Silver Jubilee celebration were unfolding, it was noted that our Region did not have a particular patron or patroness from among the list of Franciscan Saints and Blesseds and, therefore, no dedicated feast day. Our Regional Minister Emma Lozowski, O.F.S. sent out a call to members of the Regional Fraternity Council inviting nominations for consideration as Regional patron or patroness.

This issue was on the agenda of the September 29, 2019 Regional Fraternity Council meeting immediately following the annual Regional retreat at the Chiara Center in Springfield. Nominees for the position of Regional Patron/Patroness included **St. Berard**, the first Franciscan martyr (feast day: January 16); **Blessed Luchesio and Buonadonna Modestini**, the first Secular Franciscans (feast day: April 28); **St. Angela Merici**, Franciscan tertiary and foundress of the Ursulines (feast day: January 27); **Blessed Contardo Ferrini**, a Secular Franciscan jurist and legal scholar (feast day: October 20); **St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina**, Capuchin priest and stigmatist (feast day: September 23); and **St. Isidore the Farmer**, patron of agriculture and rural communities (feast day; May 15).

As recorded in the Minutes of the meeting, the choice was made by vote of the Regional Fraternity Council. Of the 15 votes cast, St. Berard received 1, Blessed Luchesio and Buonadonna 3, St. Angela Merici 1, Blessed Contardo Ferrini 8, St. Padre Pio 1, and St. Isidore 1. Therefore, our new Regional Patron is **Blessed Contardo Ferrini**! And our newly established Regional Feast Day will be **October 20th** of each year beginning this year! (BTW, October 20, 1994 was the date the National Fraternity Council officially canonically established our Regional Fraternity.) What follows is the bio of Blessed Contardo as found in the October folder of our *Regional Formation Resource Kit*:



Blessed Contardo Ferrini (O.F.S.)

[April 4, 1859 – October 17, 1902]

(Feast Day: October 20)

Contardo was born on April 4, 1859 in Milan of a distinguished family. His father was a teacher. When Contardo was still a student in high school and college, he encouraged his companions to lead good lives and exercised a kind of lay apostolate among them. He was acquainted with some dozen languages and received a doctorate in law in Italy and then earned a scholarship that enabled him to study Roman-Byzantine law in Berlin. As a renowned legal expert, he taught in various schools of higher education until he joined the faculty of the University of Pavia, where he was considered an outstanding authority on Roman law.

Contardo was learned about the faith he lived and loved. "Our life," he said, "must reach out toward the Infinite, and from that source we must draw whatever we can expect of merit and dignity." As a scholar, he studied the ancient biblical languages and read the Scriptures in them. His speeches and papers show his understanding of the relationship of faith and science.

Contardo was a noted Italian jurist and legal scholar. He was also a fervent Roman Catholic, who lived a devout life of prayer and service to the poor. He attended daily Mass. In 1886, Contardo joined the Third Order of St Francis [**Secular Franciscan Order**], and for the rest of his life he faithfully observed its Rule. He also enrolled himself in the St. Vincent de Paul Society. In his speeches and writings as well as in his conduct, he made it a point to show that faith and science are not only not opposed to each other, but that faith is rather a shield to protect us from error and guide us to true heights.

In 1900, Contardo was afflicted with a heart lesion in consequence of excessive labor. In the autumn of 1902, feeling the need of rest, he repaired to his country house at Suna. There, however, he was stricken with typhus. Due to his weakened condition, he was unable to resist the malignant fever, and died on October 17, 1902, at the age of 43.

The high esteem in which the deceased was held now became evident. Letters of condolence from the professors of the university praised him as a saint. The people of Suna promptly expressed a desire to see him numbered among the saints. The demand for his beatification grew more insistent with time, and there was universal rejoicing when in 1909 Pope St. Pius X appointed Cardinal Ferrari to begin the process. Pope Pius XI conferred on Contardo Ferrini the title Venerable in 1931; and Pope Pius XII beatified him on April 13, 1947.

Blessed Contardo Ferrini, our heavenly patron, pray for us!

From our Regional Spiritual Assistant

Dear sisters and brothers in our Lord and His servant Saint Francis,

May the Lord give you His peace!

I trust that many of us are familiar with the Latin proverb *Homo proponit, sed Deus dis-ponit*, usually translated as *Man proposes, but God disposes*. If not, then at least our experience teaches us that we do our best to make our plans – and God laughs! And if God laughs, it's never because He is making fun of us or because our plans are not good ones, but rather that He always has something even better in mind for us. Such was the case with our annual Regional Retreat and Silver Jubilee celebration this past September 27-29, 2019. Without a doubt, our Conventual friars Fathers Paul Joseph Langevin and Giles Michael Gilbert would have led us in a marvelous, inspiring and vocation-affirming retreat, but were unable to do so due to circumstances entirely beyond their control. But as is always the case, the Lord provides! Our Regional Minister Emma was able to make contact with Father Johnpaul Cafiero, O.F.M. who – providentially – had a last-minute cancellation of a previous commitment and so was available to direct our retreat. In addition to presiding at our two Eucharistic celebrations and conducting a Communal Penance Service for us, he gave us a series of thought-provoking and faith-confirming conferences on the topic, "*Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace: Reflections on the Peace Prayer*" (inspired by, but not authored by, St. Francis of Assisi). May these days of prayer and reflection as well as the experience of being sisters and brothers in our Regional fraternity continue to strengthen us in our Franciscan vocation to live the Gospel of Christ by following in the footsteps of the Little Poor Man of Assisi!

We have now moved definitively into nature's season of autumn. It brings with it the many changes we have come to expect, changes in temperature, in the leaves, in the amount of daylight, in the focus of the Church's liturgical year. In particular November is

the time that we give special remembrance to those who have gone before us on this journey of faith and whose pilgrimage through this life has reached the *transitus* to eternal life. We are reminded in many ways of the final days of our Seraphic Father on this earth.



During the summer and early autumn of the year 1226, as Saint Francis knew that he was about to end his earthly pilgrimage, he composed one final verse to his *Cantico delle Creature*, his Canticle of the Creatures or Canticle of Brother Sun: "*Laudato sie, mi Signore, per sora nostra morte corporale, da la quale nullo homo vivente puo skappare* – Praised be you, my Lord, through our sister Bodily Death, from whom no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm." Article #19 of our Secular Franciscan *Rule of Life* assures us that it is precisely our immersion in the resurrection of Christ "which gives true meaning to Sister Death."

We, as faithful Catholics, believe in the Communion of Saints which we commemorate every time we come together to celebrate Liturgy and which we especially emphasize during the month of November. This is all the more true of us as Secular Franciscans. Article #27 of our *General Constitutions* exhorts us that we "should be firmly convinced that the community of those who believe in Christ and who love one another in Him will go forward into eternal life as the 'communion of saints.'"

On November 1st we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints, those who have died in God's grace, who have been perfectly purified of any vestiges of sin from their lives on earth, and who now live forever with Christ, seeing God face to face. Some of them have been formally canonized by the Church (such as our sister Marguerite Bays, O.F.S. whom Pope Francis canonized on October 13, 2019); countless others whose names are known only to God live also as saints in heaven.

Each November 29th, we Franciscans also celebrate the Feast of All Saints of the Seraphic Order, our many spiritual family members who now share the Beatific Vision, who now reside in the very heart of God who is Perfect Love.

On November 2nd we celebrate the commemoration of all the Faithful Departed, All Souls' Day. As much as we would like to think of all our deceased loved ones, friends, parishioners and fraternity members as being with God in heaven right now, the truth is that we simply cannot know with certainty the state of a person's relationship with God at the moment of his or her physical death. And so the Church has always observed the practice of offering prayers and sacrifices for its deceased members, especially during the month of November, a time of year when with the approach of winter our thoughts just naturally turn to the end of physical life on earth. Each November 24th, we Franciscans also observe the Commemoration of All the Deceased of the Seraphic Order.

It makes sense, doesn't it, that to live in the presence of Absolute Holiness and Utter Perfection that we must be holy and perfect? And what if we fail to live up to the Lord's call to holiness and perfection in this life? What about those who die having lived basically good and decent lives but not perfectly purified from small attachments to sin or from sin's effects in their lives? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has this to say about such persons: "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God."

We do well to celebrate the truth that God gives us every possible opportunity for accepting the gift of

salvation made available to us through Christ in Baptism.

If there were only Heaven and Hell, it would make no sense to pray and offer sacrifices for the dead: if they were in Hell, our prayers could not help them; if they were in Heaven, they would not need our help. Even if we don't get the business of being God's Holy People exactly right during our lifetime here on earth, we still have the opportunity for final purification after our death. The Church invites us to pray and to do penance for those in Purgatory, and to give alms to the poor and offer indulgences for the souls in Purgatory.



The Church-approved documents which give us guidance in living our Franciscan way of life also exhort us to pray for our departed sisters and brothers. In describing the characteristics of our life in fraternity, article #24 of our *Rule* reminds us that the communion of life and love which we forge within fraternity in this life "continues with deceased brothers and sisters through prayer for them." The same essential point is made in article #54 of our *General Constitutions*: "The fraternity remembers with gratitude its brothers and sisters who have passed away and continues its communion with them by prayer and in the Eucharist."

As we remember with love and affection all those sisters and brothers of ours who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, marked with the sign of the TAU, and as we commend them anew to the love and mercy of God, let us renew our own commitment to be faithful to our Christian and Franciscan vocations in the hope that we may be found among "those whom death will find in God's most holy will." Then perhaps, one day, the brothers and sisters of our Franciscans of the Prairie Region will gather at a Memorial Mass to remember us.

With a brother's love in Saints Francis and Clare,
Deacon Dave, O.F.S.,
Regional Spiritual Assistant,
Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Fraternity

Secular Franciscan Order
T In Persona Christi Servi

Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity, Edwardsville

St. Francis came to town October 3, 2019! High school students in Glen Carbon, Illinois, partnered with Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity in Edwardsville to present a brand new, original play with music and prayers entitled, **“The Life & Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi”**. This free event was open to the community. The cast and crew included four generations working side by side to commemorate this beloved Saint.

One Secular Franciscan commented,

“this group of students and teachers has surpassed all of our expectations! They took a basic idea for a five-act play and brought it to life with brilliant creative touches and exceptional acting. It was a wonderful collaborative effort and we are forever grateful that these generous students and teachers dedicated their time to this project. We hope these young students know how much we value their talent and contributions to our local community.”



One attendee from a local church said,

“What an inspiration! The Father McGivney High School students showed such talent! The student solos were amazing! The sound was very good, and I wanted to hear every word. I learned things I didn’t know about St. Francis. Music was beautiful and fun that crowd could join in...”

The play’s Director, Mrs. Margaret Dorgan said,

“...we felt very appreciated and happy to have been able to help you bring this production to life.”

The five-act play included: *the early life of St. Francis, the special friendship between St. Francis & St. Clare, the transformation of St. Francis’ life from a business merchant’s son to the founder of a religious Order, the Stigmata of St. Francis (the 5 wounds of Christ), and the passing of St. Francis of Assisi into eternal life.* The creative team for the play had the foresight to document all aspects of the play including blocking, lighting cues, etc. They even painted the sets on canvas attached to flats so the canvases can be sent to other organizations to utilize in recreating the play. Local artist, Richard Woloszyn, OFS was the Artistic Coordinator who helped guide the students in recreating the hills and streets of Assisi.



Marian Crosby, OFS, was the Music Director for the play who said,

“The collaboration between our Fraternity and the students of Father McGivney Catholic High School was a very moving experience.”

One Franciscan commented at the dress rehearsal,

“It moved me to tears when they were rehearsing. I didn’t expect it to feel so real, but the students made it feel like I was in medieval times with Francis.”

The play included amazing solos by Francis and Clare and moments of audience participation with the sign of peace, and Franciscan prayers and songs. The lyrics for, “St. Francis, Image of the Lord,” were written by the beloved Father Benet Fonck, OFM, who was actively involved in the forming of the Edwardsville fraternity. Regional Minister for Franciscans of the Prairie, Emma Lozowski, OFS, stated,

“St. Francis figured out early that to live a complete, fulfilling life, we have to work to give up our deep-seated fears. I read somewhere that being in front of an audience causes more fear in people than the thought of dying. I was impressed by the students’ beautiful courage to step onto the stage to bring to life scenes from the life of St. Francis who lived in medieval Italy. They embraced their roles with curiosity, energy, and diligence. In this way, they were like St. Francis, who had even less regard for fear than he had for pride or possessions.”



Both students and Secular Franciscans acted and sang in the play. From the Edwardsville fraternity the actors were: Father Jeff Holtman, OFS, Deacon Neil Suermann, OFS, Emma Lozowski, OFS, Larry Ashlock, OFS, and Adam Cox, OFS. Christine Nelson, OFS was the Franciscan Coordinator with the school. The Franciscans and students rehearsed separately over 5 weeks which culminated in joint rehearsals the week before the play when they added costumes, music and lighting. Father Jeff Holtman, OFS is the Spiritual Assistant for the fraternity, and he was actively involved in guiding the incorporation of a religious service within the program. Father Holtmann met with the student cast during one

of their rehearsals to talk about the lives of Saints Francis and Clare and answer questions regarding specific characters. The students were particularly interested in Father Jeff’s personal journey of becoming a Secular Franciscan in high school and later becoming a diocesan priest.

The success of the event was due to foresight and planning by the Council of Our Lady of Angels fraternity over an 18-month time period. They decided in January 2018 to try something different to get the message of St. Francis to more of the community by providing a free event open to the public. They deliberately chose to partner with the local Catholic High School to foster that relationship and future vocations in alignment with OFS Rule article #24:

“To foster communion among members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups. It should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life of fraternity...”



Most of the play was written by Secular Franciscans from the Edwardsville fraternity specifically for this event. Minister Larry Ashlock OFS, had suggested a series of small vignettes about Francis's life. Over time numerous Franciscans, students and teachers contributed as the idea grew into a full scale 5-Act original play. The group utilized sections of a play from a You Fra group in South America as well as info from the FUN manual, the Regional Formation Kit and select non-copyrighted Franciscan material. Early on the students wanted more detail about each of their characters, so a 6-page character summary was developed. A trio of student actors presented two acts of the play at the local fraternity's September meeting to give the Secular Franciscans a sneak peak of the play.

The local fraternity received great support from the Franciscans of the Prairie Region which included encouraging pre-performance emails from Kent Ferris, OFS, from Pope Saint John XXIII Fraternity in Rock Island, from John Grillot, OFS, from Sacred Heart Fraternity in Peoria, and from Kathy Adams, OFS from St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity in Teutopolis. The local fraternity and students were thrilled to have members of the Teutopolis fraternity attend their final dress rehearsal and to have members of all three branches of the Franciscan family travel to attend the play.



Make me an Instrument of Your Peace

Retreat Director:

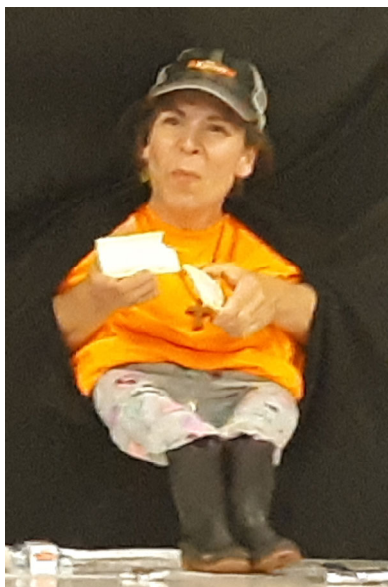
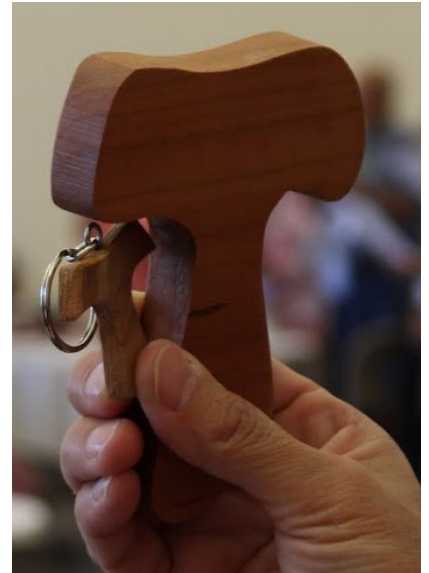
Friar Johnpaul Cafiero, OFM

**Schedule for Franciscans of the Prairie
2019 Regional Retreat**

&

Regional Silver Jubilee Celebration





Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity Rock Island, IL

On July 14th at St. John's Church in Burlington, Iowa, brothers Kent Ferris, OFS and Andrew Reif, OFS participated in the Rite of Candidacy Mass celebrated by Bishop Thomas Zinkula of the Diocese of Davenport. This is a major milestone for them in their five year Diaconate Formation Program. Kent and Andrew are pictured the first two from the left respectively.



On June 2nd our Fraternity celebrated the Rite of Profession Mass and Ceremony for Andrew Reif, OFS. He is pictured on the left during the Ceremony with Patrick Miner, Secretary and Roxanne Miner, Formation



Director. Andrew's wife Tracy, daughter Mary (pictured) mother, brothers and sister, in addition to brothers in his Diaconate Class, plus all fraternity members were present All of us celebrated this joyous occasion with a potluck dinner. We welcome Andrew as a professed member of our Fraternity and praise our Lord for rewarding us with another excellent addition to our Fraternity.



The Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Award (previously the Peace Award) was established in 1950 by the North American Federation of the Third Order of St. Francis, now the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS-USA). This year's recipient is our own Kent Ferris. He will attend the JPIC Annual National Fraternity Gathering and Meeting in Corpus Christie, Texas on October 16th, and receive this prestigious National Award. We are most proud of Kent for earning this recognition.



Franciscans of the Prairie Region Secular Franciscan Order

401 Fourth Street
Fort Madison, Iowa 52627
afranciscanview@gmail.com



ANIMATOR: Dennis R. Dowell, ofs

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

The preferential option for the poor is a principle that we read about early in the Scriptures. Right away in Genesis 18: 1—15 we read of Abraham & Sarah's hospitality to the three visitors. In the chapters & books that follow the Ten Commandments, we see a clear mandate presented:

You must not mistreat any widow or orphan. --Exodus 22: 22

He executes justice for the orphan and the widow and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. —Deuteronomy 10:18;

You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God. --Micah 6:8).

Our Bishops (USCCB) have a good listing of applicable scriptures for this topic on their [website](#).

Our own Franciscan tradition begins with our Father St. Francis spending time in the local leper colony in Assisi. Our brothers in the First Order and Third Order Regular focus much of their ministry on the poor areas of our cities, towns, and villages. Many of the Third Order religious communities are devoted to serving the poor, homeless, marginalized, hungry, and destitute.

Our Rule states:

15. Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

Our General Constitutions further clarify this responsibility:

Article 22

1. Rule 15 Secular Franciscans should "be in the forefront ... in the field of public life." They should collaborate as much as possible for the passage of just laws and ordinances.

2. The fraternities should engage themselves through courageous initiatives, consistent with their Franciscan vocation and with the directives of the Church, in the field of human development and justice. They should take clear positions whenever human dignity is attacked by any form of oppression or indifference. They should offer their fraternal service to the victims of injustice.

3. The renunciation of the use of violence, characteristic of the followers of Francis, does not mean the renunciation of action. However, the brothers and sisters should take care that their interventions are always inspired by Christian love.

Our Bishops (USCCB) in their 1986 Letter "Economic Justice for all" remind us of our responsibilities to care for the poor with clear statements on the issue:

FOPJPIC article: Preferential Option for the Poor

8. ...As a community of believers, we know that our faith is tested by the quality of justice among us, that we can best measure our life together by how the poor and the vulnerable are treated. This is not a new concern for us. It is as old as the Hebrew prophets, as compelling as the Sermon on the Mount, and as current as the powerful voice of Pope John Paul II defending the dignity of the human person. —*Economic Justice for All*; 1986

10. As bishops, in proclaiming the Gospel for these times we also manage institutions, balance budgets, and meet payrolls. In this we see the human face of our economy. We feel the hurts and hopes of our people. We feel the pain of our sisters and brothers who are poor, unemployed, homeless, living on the edge. The poor and vulnerable are on our doorsteps, in our parishes, in our service agencies, and in our shelters. We see too much hunger and injustice, too much suffering and despair, both in our own country and around the world. —*Economic Justice for All*; 1986

16. All members of society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable. From the Scriptures and church teaching we learn that the justice of a society is tested by the treatment of the poor. The justice that was the sign of God's covenant with Israel was measured by how the poor and unprotected—the widow, the orphan, and the stranger—were treated. The kingdom that Jesus proclaimed in his word and ministry excludes no one. Throughout Israel's history and in early Christianity, the poor are agents of God's transforming power. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me--therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor" (Lk 4:18). This was Jesus' first public utterance. Jesus takes the side of those most in need. In the Last Judgment, so dramatically described in St. Matthew's Gospel, we are told that we will be judged according to how we respond to the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger. As followers of Christ, we are challenged to make a fundamental "option for the poor"—to speak for the voiceless, to defend the defenseless, to assess lifestyles, policies, and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor. This "option for the poor" does not mean pitting one group against another, but rather, strengthening the whole community by assisting those who are most vulnerable. As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response. —*Economic Justice for All*; 1986

27.... No one may claim the name Christian and be comfortable in the face of the hunger, homelessness, insecurity, and injustice found in this country and the world. —*Economic Justice for All*; 1986

So, the question becomes, "How are we Secular Franciscans in Central Illinois reaching out to the poor in our communities, both individually and as fraternities?" What are we doing to help the hungry, homeless, destitute, widows, unborn, elderly, disabled and any other marginalized person in our communities? We may not have a ready-made situation like our brothers & sisters in Los Tres Compañeros Region, but most of our town, cities, and counties have folks, our brothers & sisters in Christ, who need our help. So, what are we doing?

Pace e bene

Dennis, ofc

Jim Smith was Professed into St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Quincy, on August 11, the Feast of St. Clare.

JIM SMITH PROFESSION



From Your Regional Formation Director

Ask about old Spanish missions in America, and most people will think of the adobe churches from the late eighteenth century that span the coast of California. Yet these missions, however historic and celebrated, were by no means the first of their kind in what is now the United States.

A full two centuries before St. Junipero Serra preached to the Native Americans along the West Coast, his brother Franciscan friars from Spain were spreading the Gospel in what are now the southeastern states.

Before the founding of the first permanent English colony in America or the Pilgrims came to Plymouth Rock (1620), first Jesuits and then Franciscans established missions in what are now Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. They labored with remarkable courage and devotion to evangelize native peoples of the region, and tens of thousands were baptized, catechized, and provided the sacraments.

Their mission base was a Spanish settlement on the Florida peninsula, St. Augustine – the oldest still-inhabited city in America, founded in 1565. It was here in La Florida, as the Spanish called the colony, that the Christian faith first took root in the lands that today form the United States.

The Spanish successfully established colonies and missions along the eastern coast of Florida and Georgia in the sixteenth century. Though this territory collectively called “La Florida” was not rich in gold and silver, it was a strategic location since Spanish galleons full of riches sailed back to Europe along the coast. Fearful of British attacks and unfriendly natives along the coast, the Spanish had an interest in colonizing the region.

After the successful founding of Saint Augustine in present-day Florida in 1565, the Spanish founded a string of missions along the coast,

both on the mainland and barrier islands.

By 1597 there were five missions in Coastal Georgia where Franciscan friars preached the Gospel, learned the indigenous Guale language, and lived peacefully with the native population. Most Guale natives not only embraced Christianity but also welcomed European goods such as glass beads, metal tools, various cloths and other luxury items.

The friars lived among the Guale without any military presence, giving evidence to the good relations between the Guale and the missionaries.

Friar Luis Geronimo de Oré (a Peruvian Franciscan friar) recorded in 1618 after visiting La Florida, that on September 1597, the friar assigned to the mission of Tolomato (near Eulonia, Georgia) did not allow a baptized, Guale man to take a second wife. Juanillo, who was the heir to a Guale chiefdom, opposed Friar Pedro de Corpa's fidelity to Christian teaching on marriage and killed him on September 14th, 1597. Juanillo and the men he assembled continued to the other missions to kill all the friars.

Before arriving to Saint Catherines Island, Juanillo ordered the chief of the island to execute the two friars stationed there, Friar Miguel de Añon and Friar Antonio de Badajoz. Unwilling to carry out the order, the chief begged the friars to flee south to the mission on San Pedro Island (present day Cumberland Island), but the friars refused to believe the rumors of coming murder. Once Juanillo and his men reached Saint Catherines, the two friars were brutally killed after they prayed fervently inside the mission, today marked by twelve palm trees.

The Guale men also killed Friar Blas de Rodríguez near Darien and Friar Francisco de Veráscola as he returned by canoe from Saint Augustine to his mission on present-day Saint

Simons Island.

A sixth friar, Francisco de Avila, was kidnapped and experienced horrible tortures until he was liberated months later.

There is currently a need for greater devotion to these martyrs and also more awareness about their story. These five men left everything that was familiar to them in Spain to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in distant lands. They died as witnesses to the Christian faith as they shared with others what they themselves had received.

At a time when the institution of marriage must be strengthened and upheld, the witness of Fray Pedro de Corpa and Companions fills us with great hope. The presence of Spanish missionaries in Georgia over four hundred years ago also encourages the many Latino Catholics who now call Georgia home.

May the intercession of St. Pedro de Corpa and Companion Martyrs assist us and inspire us to stand up and defend the sanctity of marriage.

Pax et bonum!

Dwayne Goodwin OFS

Regional Formation Director



Sacred Heart Fraternity

Holy Family Church
3720 N. Sterling Ave.
Peoria, IL 61615



Celebrating the Rite of Profession: Colleen Mattern and Ruth Campbell

Colleen Mattern, OFS, newly Professed Saturday, August 10, 2019 at Holy Family Church, 5:00 PM Mass. Colleen receives certificate of Profession on second photo.



LR: Mary Farrell Diekemper, OFS, Scott Diestelkamp, OFS, Colleen Mattern, OFS, Fr. Giles, OFM, Conv., Kathy Christy, OFS



Colleen Mattern, OFS, Scott Diestelkamp, OFS

Ruth Campbell, OFS, Professed August 12, 1984. Ruth receives certificate of 35 Years.



Pat Snell, OFS, Jim Stomberg, OFS, Dorthy Doan, OFS, Ruth Campbell, OFS with Certificate

OFS-USA NATIONAL CHAPTER 2019 STATEMENT

We, the members of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, gathered for our Annual Chapter at the Pax Christi Liturgical Retreat Center in Corpus Christi, Texas, October 15-20, 2019. Approximately 80 leaders and observers were present, representing over 12,000 members throughout the United States, including Guam.

The human family today is beset with violence and division. Good people fear and distrust one another. Many of us struggle to see the bright spots amid so much suffering. It is easy to fall into a sense that things aren't getting better, but we live by a story that shows they can.

In medieval Italy, there were once two idealistic young people named Francis and Clare. Their world was filled with violence, turmoil and upheaval. The city-states were at war, the nobles and the merchant class at odds, and civil and church authorities were also in conflict. Francis and Clare of Assisi were in the midst of this fire but were not burned. They chose to lead a Christ-centered life and practiced it with fidelity, providing a visible counterpoint to the values of their age, an alternative-lived experience of love and peace. People were drawn to their simple Gospel life, and society changed for the better.

As Secular Franciscans, we are committed to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis. The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order calls us to be "bearers of peace..., and to seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon." We are called to be "messengers of perfect joy and hope to others." (Art. 19)

It has been said there is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about. With those who care about justice and compassion, we commit ourselves to provide that counterpoint to the violence and division of this age. We gain momentum with the collective power of prayer, courageous initiatives for justice, and the lived experience of our community of love. Together, let us shine a new light of peace, one bright enough to be seen from the furthest and darkest corners.

Regional Newsletter Editor

In accordance with the provisions of article #23.5 of the *National Statutes*, the Regional Executive Council (REC) may appoint positions as deemed necessary; however, only those persons duly elected to office shall have voting rights within the REC; all others shall act in consultative roles. Such appointments may be provisional or valid until the Fall REC meeting following the Region's Spring elective chapter or until otherwise revoked by the REC. These appointments are made by the REC, but not from among members of the REC. One such appointment is the Regional Newsletter Editor.

Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Fraternity is proud of its Regional Newsletter, *The Portiuncula*, published quarterly primarily for the benefit of all the brothers and sisters of the Region. The Regional Newsletter Editor has the responsibility of receiving articles and pictures for publication, composing each issue of the Newsletter in an attractive, widely readable format, and publishing it electronically in a timely manner to a specified audience.

The Regional Newsletter Editor assumes the following responsibilities:

1. To maintain an up-to-date Newsletter recipient list, which should at least include all names in the current Regional Directory, the National Executive Council liaison to our Region, and the Provincial Spiritual Assistants of the friar provinces having local Fraternities bonded to them;
2. To distribute electronically the Regional Newsletter to the specified recipients in a timely manner according to the designated schedule of publication;
3. To include in every issue the dates of article submission and send one month prior to the submission date for each issue an electronic message reminding potential contributors about the submission deadline;
4. To submit at least one week in advance of the scheduled publication date a draft of the pending issue of the Newsletter to the REC for comment and review, with a deadline of two days for any such comments to be returned to the Editor;
5. To insure that all Regional events (e.g., Regional Retreat, Picnic, etc.) are properly advertised and promoted, and that each issue features an updated Regional Calendar;
6. To maintain communications with the REC personally or through a designated REC liaison;
7. To make recommendations to the REC with regard to the Newsletter and to communicate important questions/requests/comments to the REC personally or through the liaison for review by REC;
8. To get approval from the REC for expenses and receive reimbursement;
9. To work collaboratively with the REC and the RFC, and to perform such other duties as they may request;
10. To respond to questions, comments and requests from readers of the Newsletter;

11. To provide a written annual report to REC;
12. To submit, within one month of the event, a specific written report to the REC on any activity or program attended as the Regional Newsletter Editor if attendance is funded by the Region; and
13. To attend, at the Region's expense, the Spring RFC meeting and any other REC and/or RFC meetings when invited or when deemed necessary.

This job description will be reviewed periodically by the Regional Newsletter Editor and the REC to insure that the agreed upon responsibilities are being met.

+ Adopted and approved by vote of the Regional Executive Council, May 18, 2016; revised 3/27/18.

REGIONAL MISSION STATEMENT



We, the Secular Franciscans of Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Fraternity, are called by the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation to holiness. We are committed by profession to living the Gospel values of our Lord Jesus Christ in our time according to the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi for the rebuilding of the Church. With the Holy Spirit as our guide, and by following the simple example of St. Francis of Assisi, we intend to spread, like the prairie fire of old, cleansing the earth and nourishing the land with His Word. The Regional Fraternity Council will provide direction and resources to local fraternities for understanding and implementing the Rule, the General Constitutions, and the National Statutes of the Secular Franciscan Order.

2020 Regional Calendar:

- March 28 – 29 (**Regional Meetings**)
 March 28 & 29 (Saturday & Sunday) **Regional Fraternity Council Meeting**
 March 29 (Sunday) **REC Meeting** follows RFC Meeting
- August 1 (Saturday) **Regional Formation Day** of Reflection for those in Initial Formation & Workshop for Formation Directors & Formation Team Members (also Newly Professed)
- August 28 – 30 (Friday – Sunday) **Regional Retreat**, Sister Agnes Marie Regan, O.S.F. (**Sunday: Regional Fraternity Council Meeting** followed by **REC Meeting**)

*Next
issue:*

TBD

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

We are seeking a new editor for the Portiuncula. Please consider whether this might be a place you could serve the regional fraternity!

**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.

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Minister

Emma Lozowski, OFS
618-656-1941
ofs.minister.prairie@gmail.com

Treasurer

John Grillot, OFS
309-696-4846
grilljw@gmail.com

Councilor (Vocations)

Marlene Mertes, OFS
217-386-2483
marlene287@gmail.com

Vice-Minister

Kathy Adams, OFS
217-994-3144
oremus7@gmail.com

Formation Director

Dwayne Goodwin, OFS
573-406-8478
dwayneofs@aol.com

Councilor (Data Base)

Candice Chaloupka, OFS
850-345-8402
candicec11@msn.com

Secretary

Lynn Carter, OFS
660-988-9279
lynnbcarter@gmail.com

Spiritual Assistant

Deacon David Ream, OFS
660-627-5626
umbria2@earthlink.net

**Youth & Young Adult
Animator**

Bob Polizzi, OFS
pndlb5@yahoo.com

REGIONAL APPOINTEES

JPIC Animator

Dennis R. Dowell, OFS
319-372-0786
afranciscanview@gmail.com

Webservant

Jason Deavers, OFS
309-310-5114
got-2-dive@hotmail.com

Franciscans of the Prairie
6817 White Oak Court
Edwardsville, IL 62025

