

# PORTIUNCULA

Regional Newsletter of the Franciscans of the Prairie

May 2020

## Collect or Opening Prayer from the Church's newly-approved Mass in Time of Pandemic

Almighty and eternal God,  
our refuge in every danger,  
to whom we turn in our distress;  
in faith we pray  
look with compassion on the afflicted,  
grant eternal rest to the dead, comfort to mourners,  
healing to the sick, peace to the dying,  
strength to healthcare workers, wisdom to our leaders  
and the courage to reach out to all in love,  
so that together we may give glory to your holy name.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever. Amen. (From Deacon Dave Ream, OFS, Regional Spiritual Assistant)

## Regional Minister's Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Easter greetings! Alleluia!

Many aspects of our lives might be on hold, and our daily routines might look different during the stay-at-home order, but our call to live out the Gospel remains the same. Across the region, fraternities have found various strategies for continuity. One fraternity's council divided up the roster, and each person called 6-7 members. Another fraternity holds meetings via Zoom (online video meeting), where even those who only have access to a landline can participate by calling in. Conference calls were also mentioned as a means to keep in touch, as well as old fashioned cards and letters. One fraternity decided to hunker down and wait until face to face meetings can be held again. They keep close to each other in prayer and personal phone calls.

This is a good time to be creative and tailor the fraternity's needs to the current times and resources that are available. Please pay special attention to the brothers and sisters in initial formation, as well as our elderly brothers and sisters.

I am happy to report that the Regional Executive Council met via Zoom. We were able to see each other on screen on 4/5/2020 and 4/13/2020 and discussed the items what would have been on our agenda for the Spring regional meeting. Our work with the rest of the Regional Fraternity Council continues by email.

St. Bonaventure tells us about St. Francis, “One night, as he lay awake thinking about God, he suddenly heard the sound of a lyre playing a melody of incredible beauty. With his spirit all intent on God, Francis felt such pleasure at the wonderful melody that he thought he had left his world and the friars who were closest to him were all aware that something had happened.”

This may seem like a contradiction, that a man whose life was lived in poverty, who refrained from all forms of indulgence and whose self-discipline was ascetic would find his senses flooded with such beauty. St. Francis was so attuned to God that he could experience in his senses a portion of God’s divine creativity and liveliness.

In our days of solitude, even if we are not given lofty spiritual experiences, we too can always strive toward closer and closer unity with our Risen Lord. And maybe waves of joy will flood us as well. Maybe we will find that the flowers in our yards will burst into vivid colors, and the candles that were lit will suddenly be blazing gold; the smiles of our loved ones and the twinkles in their eyes will be bright as stars. God has the power to transform everything. Let Him.

Sincerely in Christ,

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

*Journey Together in Love and Compassion*  
*2019-2020 OFS-USA Theme*

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

**Sacred Heart Fraternity**  
**Holy Family Church**  
**3720 N. Sterling Ave.**  
**Peoria, IL 61615**



**Christmas Caroling at Rosewood Care Center** on Saturday, December 14, 2019. Everyone enjoyed singing and the spirit of Christmas was had by all. The residents joined in singing and ringing bells.



LR: Jacques Elloye, OFS, Kathy Stomberg, wife of Jim Stomberg, Sharon Knapp, OFS, Matt Yee, OFS, Kathy Christy, OFS, Bob Polizzi, OFS, Megan Gilbert, Inquirer, Sondra McEnroe, OFS, Scott Diestelkamp, OFS, Matt Jennett, OFS, Theresa Jennett, OFS, and Jim Stomberg, OFS



Someone asks us, “What does it mean to become a Secular Franciscan?” The question should be, “What is God calling us to become in studying and absorbing the way of St. Francis?” The answer is, “A new spirit of being a child of God.”

St. Francis was graced in learning more about God’s life and graced with profound gifts of becoming Holy. St. Francis’ life and holiness should fill us with the awe and help us strive to become God’s holy people.

We need to be fully divorced from the obsessions of society’s ways. This can lead to a spiritual transformation. These obsessions can only lead us away from God’s life. To be a spiritual being means being totally committed to God’s presence. The spirit should be alive in us to show concern for the less fortunate and more concerned for humanity.

By Greg Speck, Inquirer



## What is YouFra?

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In October of last year, I became the Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Regional Fraternal Animator for the Franciscans of the Prairie Region. At the time, I did not know much about how we, as Secular Franciscans, minister to the youth.

Over the past several months, I have been researching and learning about our Franciscan Youth ministry, which is called YouFra.

YouFra is a fellowship of young people who feel called by the Holy Spirit to make, in fraternity, an experience of Christian life, in the light of the message of Francis of Assisi. YouFra belongs to the Franciscan family as an integral part of the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) and considers the Rule of the OFS as the inspirational document for the growth of its own Christian and Franciscan vocation. YouFra operates in groups called fraternities, similar to our Secular Franciscan fraternities, and are accompanied by Secular Franciscan local fraternal animators and spiritual assistants.

YouFra is designed to help young adult Catholics discern their spiritual vocation in life, under the guidance of the Secular Franciscans. Their formation process and their service work has been developed for this purpose. YouFra is a temporary stage of life and provides a good transition for young adults who have the calling to be Secular Franciscans.

Although YouFra has existed for more than 40 years, there are not many YouFra fraternities in the U.S. Over the past few years, The National Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission has been encouraging us, as Secular Franciscans, to become familiar with YouFra, to motivate our fraternities to examine our

responsibility to younger Catholics, and seek ways to step into their world in some way. The commission is in the process of developing a step-by-step process to bring YouFra to our regions. Our national YouFra strategy will focus on young adults, ages 18 to 28.

The goal in our Franciscan of the Prairie Region for 2020 is to provide a general understanding of YouFra to each local fraternity to allow them to prayerfully consider whether to expand their ministries to serve our young adult Catholics. The plan was to meet with each of our region's fraternities in 2020 and then roll out the national YouFra strategy and process in our region in 2021. This is currently on hold while we take the necessary precautions with the coronavirus.

*Bob Polizzi, OFS*

## **Celebrating 35 years as a Secular Franciscan**



**Kathy Christy**, OFS celebrated 35 years on February 10, 2020.

In picture is Scott Diestelkamp, OFS presenting Kathy with her 35 Year Certificate.

### **Why I became a Secular Franciscan.**

When my oldest son was confirmed at the age of 11 in 1981, I was his sponsor. Before his Confirmation, I prayed that the Holy Spirit would be awakened within me, to love and serve Jesus. My life certainly changed after that. I found myself longing to serve the poor.

I thought it would be rewarding to find a parish to put our faith into action. While visiting a church in Indiana in the summer of 1983, the pastor announced that they would be having a second collection for their sister parish. I talked to Father about this after Mass, and he told me about Haiti and the great need of the people there. I was so happy when St. Matthew's in Farmington decided to adopt St. Martin's parish in Dondon, Haiti. I have visited there four times and the pastors from St. Martin's have visited us several times.

In 1984, I had the opportunity to help Fr. Thua teach the young Vietnamese children at Tha Huong their prayers in English. This was a great joy!

In 1984 my friend, Jan McGuire, also brought me to my first SFO gathering. I made my profession on February 10, 1985. Being a Secular Franciscan has helped me deepen my spiritual life and introduced me to many good friends.

Belonging to the Fraternity helped to give me the courage to reach out to others. I had the privilege of helping the Missionaries of Charity at their soup kitchen from 1991 until it closed.

I am thankful for the gift of this vocation. *Kathy Christy, OFS*



On Friday, February 28th, members of the Sacred Heart Fraternity worked from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm in the Pantry. Clare from Sophies' thanked everyone for all the work accomplished.

Those who were able to attend were Dick Diekemper, husband of Mary Farrell-Diekemper, OFS, Bob Gayhart, OFS, Pat Snell, OFS, and Jim Stomberg, OFS

## St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity of Teutopolis

Gene Drees, OFS, Minister of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity of Teutopolis, accepted the Professions of Lee Parker, OFS and John Martone, OFS on March 15, 2020 at St. Francis of Assisi's 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. (This was just prior to the discontinuation public Masses). Father Joe Carlos, OFM was the Celebrant. Following Mass all were invited to celebrate with Lee and John in St Clare Hall, Teutopolis.

Lee transferred from Peace Fraternity in Arizona and lives in West Frankfort, IL and is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Marion, IL. John lives in Charleston, IL and is a member of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Charleston.

With joyful hearts we all welcome them to the Franciscans of the Prairie Region.

Pictured left to right: Formation Director, Marian 'Lee' Althoff, OFS; John Martone, OFS; Lee Parker, OFS; Minister, Gene Drees, OFS; Celebrant, Fr. Joe Carlos, OFM.



Submitted by  
Kathy Adams, OFS

### *Franciscan Prayer for Health, Wisdom, and a Sense of Humor*

O Lord, give me a good digestion as well as something to digest.

Give me health of body as well as the sense to keep it healthy.

Give me a holy soul, O Lord, which keeps its eyes on beauty and purity,  
so that it will not be afraid on seeing sin.

Give me a soul that knows nothing of boredom, groans, and sighs.

Never let me be overly concerned for this inconstant thing that I call me.

Lord, give me a sense of humor, so that I may take some happiness  
from this life, and share it with others.

Amen.

Submitted by John  
Grillot, OFS

## **Treasurer Overview Report for 2019 and early 2020**

For the calendar year 2019 our Region had an operating loss about \$5,500 lower than budgeted. Our actual loss was \$3,657 as compared to the budgeted loss of \$9,162. Key factors in the favorable results include: a) an investment gain (from Ave Maria Bond Fund) over \$2,300 higher than projected; b) nearly \$1,800 lower “other” expenses than budgeted; and c) about \$1,200 lower than expected expenses for our Jubilee celebration last fall.

Our first quarter financial results have several key items. Firstly, Fair Share payments from all local fraternities are either received or are planned. Secondly, our Region’s Fair Share to our national fraternity has been paid in full in early March. And thirdly, our investment account has sadly dropped about \$3,615 (5.7%). While the Ave Maria decrease is disappointing, it is important to recognize that as of the end of March we are still “up” over \$4,800 since we first invested and moved our savings into this fund, and that the 5.7% decrease is much lower than the 20% decrease that the overall stock market experienced.

As of April 2020, our total assets are \$68,933. These funds are maintained in a checking account (\$6,906) and our Ave Maria Bond Fund (\$62,027). Please note that the Ave Maria Bond Fund has rebounded since the end of March and has recovered over 60% of the first quarter “loss”.

One of the roles of the Regional Treasurer is to coordinate the attendance aspect of our annual retreat. Accordingly, I am providing several metrics from last fall’s retreat (and concurrent Jubilee Celebration).

- Attendees: 56 members for the retreat + 2 Friars + 19 Jubilee guests
- Scholarships: 10 scholarships awarded. (Note: 8 contributions received that offset over 70% of the cost)
- Silent Auction: Raised over \$1,400 (an all-time high) to help offset cost of the retreat.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Grillot, ofs  
20-Apr-20

### **St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity, Bloomington**

Ongoing Spiritual Formation presented by Sr. Betty Jean Haverback, OSF

Sr. Betty Jean reflected on Our Lady of Sorrows through the eyes of Sr. Joyce Rupp’s book: “Your Sorrow is My Sorrow”. She focused on the last four of Mary’s seven sorrows. [To refresh your memory, the first sorrow was The Prophecy of Simeon (LK. 2:34-35); the second sorrow was The Flight into Egypt (MT. 2:13-14); her third was the Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple (LK. 43-45).]

#4 Meeting of Jesus and Mary on the Way of the Cross (LK. 23: 27) is the fourth sorrow. It was a journey to Golgotha that she let her Son know by her presence that her love was with Him, that she would be walking every step of the way as she entered into His passion and death. Mary as Mother symbolizes the part of us that meets hurt and suffering on our own pain-filled journey. To grow, change and be spiritually transformed we are to meet and spend compassionate time and energy with one’s

own wounds. With Mary as our mentor and our symbol of courage and compassion, we can meet our cross and be transformed through it.

#5 Mary Stands Beneath the Cross of Jesus (JN. 19:25). Mary’s presence at the foot of the Cross is a vivid commentary on the resiliency of the spirit. Her long vigil speaks of faithfulness and endurance. She had to reach within and draw upon that inner strength and grace to “just be there”—for there were no words or actions that could possibly change this raw and terrifying deed. We quietly meditated upon: “When was the last time I offered/received love and support to/from others?”

#6 The sixth sorrow, Mary Received the Dead Body of Jesus (JN. 19:38). The greatest hurt of Mary’s life is artistically expressed in Michelangelo’s marble masterpiece, the Pieta. Both Mary’s strength and immense love are portrayed through the face and posture that Michelangelo gives to her. Mary receiving the dead body of her Son becomes a metaphor for any one of us, man or woman, when we open the arms of our love to receive suffering and death into our lives. Holy, sorrowing Mary, help us to be a living Pieta.

#7 Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb (Jn. 19:41-42). There was tremendous finality associated with the tomb. The death of a loved one can throw us off balance and possibly feel like we are drowning in grief. It is faith that give us reasons to hope, assure us that we can go on and let go. Mary had the patience and hope to trust in her Son’s love and life. Her faith and belief, undoubtedly, steered her greatest goodbye beyond sadness and emptiness to walking and living that compassionate presence deep within.

This Lent, let us look to Mary as our mother, sister, mentor and friend.

Sister Betty Jean Haverback, OSF

## **Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity, Edwardsville**

Meals for the Homeless  
An Act of Mercy  
in honor of Margaret Smith, OFS.  
January 2020

