

# The Portiuncula

## Franciscans of the Prairie Region

*Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis*



### REGIONAL MINISTER’S LETTER

Greetings my Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

It’s so hard to believe that we are already into the month of November and clocks have been set back. I always wonder – does this mean I have another hour to achieve things? Or is it a chance to retire later? Regardless, I think it’s really just a matter of *perspective* is it not? As it’ll really be whatever I make it. My outlook truly helps to determine the outcome.

By now I’m hoping that everyone has heard our Theme which was voted upon at the National Chapter Meeting last month.

**“Listen, Discern, & Go Forth”**

It is such a beautiful Theme. I truly encourage everyone to take time to *listen & discern* how the Holy Spirit guides you to use this Theme in your daily lives and in your Fraternity’s.

While I was in Detroit for a week at the National Chapter I was very blessed to meet many other Regional Ministers serving all over the U.S. It was at times overwhelming and at times exhausting, yet rewarding, too. There was a lot of info to absorb. Our mornings began at 7 a.m. with Mass and ended approx. at 8 p.m. But it was so beautiful to be a part of the Chapter of Elections.

Years ago, I was able to attend the Elections in St. Louis, but this time was different as I had active voice. It was humbling to be a part of the 30 voting (Regional Ministers or their delegates) representing the Fraternities of the U.S. I thank you for

your trust in me. If you have not heard who our National Minister and all those newly elected on the NEC, please take time to go to the National Website,



<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/2022-national-fraternity-nafra-chapter/>, and look at the 2022 Chapter info. There are a lot of good presentations that are shared along with pictures. I did need to leave early so that I could head towards Quincy to preside the next day at the Chapter of Elections for St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, so you will not see my picture in the *Group* picture on the National website.

Congratulations to our newly elected Council members of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Quincy) & also Pope St. John XXIII (Rock Island), and thank you to Matt Yee, OFS, for serving as my delegate for Rock Island (both elections were on October 16<sup>th</sup>).

Serving as the Regional Minister is an honor and I know I will make so many mistakes (& I have done so already). I also know that I am already learning so much. I began at the beginning of this note - sharing it is always a manner of perspective. When saying yes to this position, I truly knew I'd need to learn a lot, and that it's ok to feel uncertain. I know there are so many that I can reach out to for advice and guidance. Therefore, at the NAFRA meeting when we voted on the theme – Listen, Discern & Go Forth – I honestly felt this was a Theme that could help guide me too. May you feel the same.

Pax,

***Kathy***

Regional Minister, Franciscans of the Prairie

One more thing ...

***Happy Belated Regional Feast Day!***

28 years ago we formed as a Region ... October 20, 1994

Our Regional Patron is Blessed Contardo Ferrini, O.F.S.

***Blessed Ferrini, Pray for us!***



## REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT'S MESSAGE

Dear Franciscan sisters and brothers,

May the Lord give you peace!

### **November: Remembering the Deceased and Celebrating the Church**

During the summer and early autumn of the year 1226, as Saint Francis knew that he was about to end his earthly pilgrimage, our Seraphic Father 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 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 truer 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.’”

Each year on November 1<sup>st</sup> we celebrate with the whole Church 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 (i.e., “added to the official list”) by the Church; countless others whose names are known only to God live also as saints in heaven.



Then on November 9<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the feast commemorating the dedication of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome. This is an observance which really celebrates us, that part of the Communion of Saints which is the visible Church on earth, the pilgrim People of God. The Lateran Basilica is the *mater et caput*, the mother and head of all churches of Rome and the world since, from the fourth century, it has served as the cathedral church of the Pope as Bishop of Rome. St. John Lateran figures prominently in our Franciscan history and the dream Pope Innocent III had about Francis supporting the basilica on his shoulders. In celebrating this feast, the Church reaffirms its identity as the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ and governed by its bishops as true successors to the Apostles in union with the Bishop of Rome, the successor of the Apostle Peter.

And so, we have those portions of the Communion of Saints which are the Church in Heaven and the Church on earth which serve as bookends for the feast celebrated each year on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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 this 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.



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 rejoice in 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.



What is an indulgence? According to Pope Saint Paul the Sixth, it is the removal of punishment due to sins already forgiven, which the Church grants to a person from the treasury of satisfaction won by Christ and the saints. This means that the process of purgatorial purification can be reduced by our gaining an indulgence and applying it to the Poor Souls. Although indulgences were abused by some churchmen in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Council of Trent and subsequent statements by the Popes have emphatically taught that the proper use of indulgences was to be continued in the Church. Many indulgenced works are available to us, especially as Franciscans: making a simple sign of the cross, praying the Franciscan Crown, spending some time during the day reading from Sacred Scripture, and making a visit to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

All we must do is to meet the required conditions: to perform the required work, to receive Eucharistic Communion, to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to offer prayer for our Holy Father the Pope and for his intentions. In addition to



helping us grow in holiness, the merits of these faith-filled actions can be applied to 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.” We Franciscans even have two additional days designated in our liturgical calendar to celebrate and remember our beloved deceased: November 24<sup>th</sup>, Commemoration of All the Deceased of the Seraphic Order, and November 29<sup>th</sup>, the Solemnity of All Saints of the Seraphic Order.

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, our Franciscan brothers and sisters will gather at a Memorial Mass or Memorial Service 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***

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## FROM THE REGIONAL FORMATION DIRECTOR

Greetings to All of You,

May the Lord give you peace!

I just want to say hello and briefly introduce myself as your new regional formation director since the elections in July of this year.

I belong to the Sacred Heart Fraternity in Peoria, and also am their local formation director. I've been in that position since June of 2021 and have been professed since March of 2018.

I live in Peoria, am married to my wife, Vera, for 40 years now, with two children, David and Anna, who both live in the Chicago area. I have two grandchildren, Judah and Joshua, who are ages 6 and 2. I work for an area agency on aging in Peoria, the Central Illinois Agency on Aging, as their planning manager.

I look forward to working with you and meeting you. I desire to be a servant-leader, trying as best as I can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to assist you in your journey to our home with Jesus, while following in the footsteps of St. Francis. As we move forward, please let me know what I can do to help you.

Our Regional Formation Team, consisting of Deacon Dave and Therese Ream, OFS, Mary Farrell-Diekemper, OFS, and myself, will be working with all of the local fraternity formation directors in planning regional formation events for everyone's benefit. We had our first meeting, on Zoom, on October 28, 2022. Please keep us in your prayers and we will keep you in ours. Peace and blessings.

In service,

*Matt Yee, O.F.S.*

Regional Formation Director



### ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY FRATERNITY QUINCY

On October 16, 2022 St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity held its elective chapter. Our new Regional Minister, Kathy Adams, OFS presided over the proceedings and Dcn. Dave Ream, OFS, as Regional Spiritual Assistant, was the ecclesial witness. The results are as follows: Deb Moffitt, OFS, Minister – 1st term; Jim Smith, OFS, Vice-Minister - 1st term; Robie Orf, OFS, Secretary - 2nd term; Vicki Kurtz, OFS, Treasurer - 2nd term; Becky Goodwin, OFS, Formation Director - 1st term; Lynn Carter, OFS, Councilor - 1st term.

The statue we are standing by is of Christ and St. Francis and was commissioned by the current pastor of St. Francis Solanus Parish, Fr. Arisman, in thanksgiving for the many years of service by the Franciscans, both the OFMs and the Seculars. It was hand-carved and painted in Italy. What a beautiful tribute.



We are also looking forward to the permanent profession of our candidate, Mary Jane Pranger. The timeline for her profession has been disrupted many times due to Covid. But we are thrilled that this is finally coming together. She will be making her profession on Sunday, Nov. 20, during the 11:00 am Mass at St. Francis Solanus Church in Quincy, Illinois.

As a sad note, Dcn. Dave Ream, has officially resigned as our local Spiritual Assistant after a very long protracted tenure. Thank you so very much for your faithful service.

*Submitted by Deb Moffitt, OFS, Minister*

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## ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA FRATERNITY - BLOOMINGTON

On the third of October, we held a Transitus service in the St. Francis of Assisi Chapel of St. Mary's Church in Bloomington. Father Greg Nelson, Pastor of St. Mary's, was able to join us and read the role of our Seraphic Father Francis in the narrative of the death of St. Francis. We began by signing "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" and ended with almond biscuits for all. This was a favorite cookie of St. Francis made by Lady Jacoba of Rome, his friend. For those who were unable to join us in person, the "Transitus Service in One's Own Home" script was provided. On October 4, Father Greg celebrated a Mass in memorial of all deceased members of the Fraternity.

At our October gathering, we had the Renewal of Franciscan Commitment with the 6 longest living professed members being mentioned by name including Rosemary Elias (1990), Charley Hardy (1990), and Dorothy Veach (1998). Robert Hogan professed in 1955 with his wife Kathie professing in 1965 and Marlene Mertes in 1966. These six have a combined 258 years of Secular Franciscan service. Bless them one and all.



*Submitted by: Carol Burroughs, OFS, Minister  
Photo by: Leo Grimes, OFS, Secretary*



### SACRED HEART FRATERNITY - PEORIA

The Sacred Heart Fraternity in Peoria, Illinois was involved with the following activities in October and November.

On Saturday, October 1, 2022, members of the Sacred Heart Fraternity prayed in front of Planned Parenthood for the end of abortions. Their prayers included the Franciscan Crown Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and they sang many songs.



Front Row

Sondra McEnroe, OFS, and Jacques Elloye, OFS,

Back Row

Sharon Knapp, OFS, Scott Diestelkamp, OFS, Pat Snell, OFS, Matt Yee, OFS, Bob Gayhart, OFS, Kathy Stomberg, a visitor, and Jim Stomberg, OFS



On Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Sacred Heart Fraternity celebrated the Transitus of our Seraphic Father St. Francis of Assisi from death to eternal life at Holy Family Church.

Left to Right

Scott Diestelkamp, OFS, Matt Yee, OFS, and Jim Stomberg, OFS

Mass was celebrated at Holy Family Church for the deceased members of the Sacred Heart Fraternity on Saturday, November 5, 2022. Fr. Bruno was celebrant.



Specific intentions were for Larry Carrigan, OFS, who passed June 2, 2022 and Debbie Weathers, Inquirer, who passed on October 14, 2022.



*Submitted by Jim Stomberg, OFS, Secretary*



### POPE ST. JOHN XXIII FRATERNITY – ROCK ISLAND

An Elective Chapter was held on Sunday, October 16, 2022, at the Chancery of the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa. The Presider was Matt Yee, OFS, Regional Formation Director (delegate of our Regional Minister). The election Secretary was John Grillot, OFS. The Ecclesial Witness was Dcn. Al Angelo, OFS, Local Spiritual Assistant (delegate of our Regional Spiritual Assistant). The newly elected Council:

- Minister – Dcn. Kent Ferris, OFS
- Vice-Minister - Pat DeLuca, OFS
- Secretary – Dcn. Andrew Reif, OFS
- Treasurer - Lori Ferris, OFS
- Formation Director – Dcn. Frank Agnoli, OFS
- Spiritual Assistant – Dcn. Al Angelo, OFS



### OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS FRATERNITY - EDWARDSVILLE



Members of OLOTA-Edwardsville have participated in a number of activities in recent months.

The picture of the 4 of us was taken in Highland, IL, just before we left church to go to Art in the Park.

**L-R:** Richard Wolsoszyn, OFS, Kathy Ward, OFS, Benny Odemerho, OFS, and Dan Tolbert, OFS.

Members celebrated the Transitus at two locations.



Carol Kleinert, OFS, and Kathy Ward, OFS, are holding the San Damiano Cross after the Transitus at St Cecilia's in Glen Carbon, IL.

Celebrating the Transitus in St Louis were Fr Paul Gallagher, OFM, (seated), Dan Tolbert, OFS (standing in back), Joseph Gassiraro, OFS, and Richard Woloszyn, OFS (far right).



*Submitted by Kathy Ward, OFS*

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## OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS FRATERNITY - DECATUR

Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity, Decatur prepared for a Come and See with full enthusiasm. A variety of cookies was provided by Mary Epping, OFS, fruit punch by George Menard, OFS, and bottles of water by Larry Burgett, OFS. These items were arranged for our expected guests following the Mass.

Displays were prepared to explain the path to profession and our Fraternity's Banner. All present wore their brown vests with the TAU cross.

As a group, the fraternity members sat in the pew in front of the ambo for the Mass. At the conclusion of Mass, Deacon O'Brien delivered a brief synopsis on our Fraternity and history of the Secular Franciscan Order. After Deacon O'Brien's comments, Fr. Stone (Pastor of Our Lady of The Holy Spirit, Mt. Zion) gave an excellent encouraging comment to the parishioners to follow-up on our invitation. Following the final Blessing, the fraternity members returned to our meeting room in anticipation of inquiries.



We had one person come to visit with us; she said she'll be in the area until November and she is not a Catholic. The good news she is interested in learning more about our Church. (She's in the first picture.) Since she's leaving the area in November there wasn't much we could do to help her. We advised her to continue attending Mass and visit with her pastor after she relocates.

*Submitted by George Menard, OFS, Minister*

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## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY - TEUTOPOLIS

We celebrated the Transitus with the 3 Franciscan priests at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Teutopolis, Illinois. Four of the Secular Franciscans took part in the readings with Fr. Frank Folino, OFM. Any of the local parishes are invited to attend. Afterwards we went to the Friary for sandwiches, drinks, and other refreshments, all furnished by the Secular Franciscans. We enjoyed visiting with the Franciscan Friars, Sisters, and parishioners of the area.

On November 20 we will celebrate our memorial service for the 7 deceased members from our fraternity from the last year. We will have a vacant chair sitting in the sanctuary for each deceased with their name, birth date, death date and number of years professed. We light a candle for each during the prayer service and will say the Franciscan Crown Rosary. The families of the deceased members are invited. Fr. Frank Folino, OFM, will invite the Seculars and family members to say a small witness about each of our deceased members. It is interesting to hear what the Franciscans meant to each person. Then we will all go to St. Clare Hall for our social time.

*Submitted by Gene Drees, OFS, Minister*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

### **2022**

- Nov. 20 Fraternal Visitation @ St. Francis of Assisi – Teutopolis

### **2023**

- Jan. 22 Fraternal Visitation @ St. Margaret of Cortona – Bloomington
- Mar. 18-19 Regional Fraternity Council Meeting (in Bloomington)

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## WINTER 2023 EDITION PORTIUNCULA DATES

- January 15 “Call for Articles” by Newsletter Editor
- February 1 Deadline for Article Submission
- February 8 Draft submitted to REC for review & feedback
- February 15 Publication

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### **Newsletter questions or comments?**

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

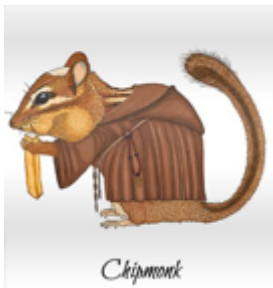
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*On the lighter side ...*



**Do Las Vegas churches accept gambling chips?**

This may come as a surprise to those of you not living in Las Vegas, but there are more Catholic churches than casinos. Not surprisingly, some worshipers at Sunday services will give casino chips rather than cash when the basket is passed.



Since they get chips from many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings. The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan monastery for sorting and then the chips are taken to the casinos of origin and cashed in.

This is done by the chip monks.