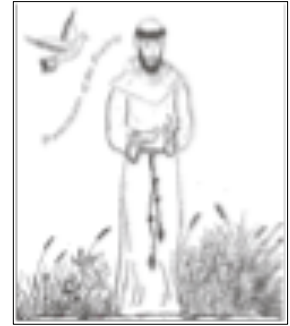


The Portiuncula

Franciscans of the Prairie Region

Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis



REGIONAL MINISTER’S LETTER

Greetings my Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you Peace! - As we continue our journey through this beautiful Easter Season, I pray that everyone had a Blessed Easter. Some of our brothers & sisters are recovering from Covid, and it prevented them from much of the Beauty of the Easter Services. Let us continue to lift up in prayer all in our Region who are ill or recovering from any illness or hardships. Remembering to share our needs across the Region.

Spring - I love this time of year – the *awakening of the Seasons* both in nature and Spiritually (the *Liturgy*). I enjoy watching how people come alive when the seasons change. The farming, gardening, flowers, camping, planning of summer events and **warmer**

weather! Have you ever also thought of your Franciscan Vocation in a similar way? The seasons it may appear to go through? As I thought about this.. – **Joy** is always a word that comes up on my radar. (*those who know me know this – even if it is perfect joy*).

Regardless of the ‘season’ – asking *how is my joy?* Like a ‘**Joy Meter**’ checking in with the Lord. Do I need a recharge? Am I sharing it or tucking it in just for me and when I may need it. Do you ever take the time to ask yourselves what your Joy meter is? “Am I bringing Joy to others, to my environment & especially am I radiating it?” As we establish our new ‘normal’ in our lives, the world needs Joy especially now (*well actually All the time*). –Joy of the Franciscans 😊, Joy of the Lord. This topic came while I was reading Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium* The Joy of the Gospel. In reading: “*When our Interior life becomes caught upon its own interests*

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and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt and the desire to do good fades." This so laid on my heart and I can see how we can get so caught up in things & situations. Also shared was a quote from Pope Paul VI- Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete in Domino, "...no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord". We are called to joy and to share it – not only as Christians but especially as Franciscans we need to share the Joy - of the Gospel, JOY of the Lord & truly let us be joyful. This just had me truly pondering personally.

So I ask you: *How is your Joy Meter looking?* Are you sharing the good news? While things may not be as we'd all wish them to be within our Fraternities or even our Parishes. Are we still bringing our smiles, our ideas (to our Council meetings and Gatherings) & not our grumblings. I realize every Fraternity has many wonderful things happening, and yet also hardships. Several combined Fraternal and Pastoral Visitations are scheduled. I, along with our RSA, Deacon Dave, look forward to being with everyone. While we have Fraternities that are struggling whether with membership or active members or lacking a Spiritual Assistant or just the process of rebuilding. These are all areas that we can pray for each other. I realize some feel the Regional Executive Council isn't moving or even moving fast enough to address certain areas. The vibrancy of a Fraternity needs active committed members & Councils. Some areas are ones that need the Holy Spirit even more. Regardless, the REC, as Servant Leaders, are striving to do what we can!

Recently while talking with a friend. She shared that a situation has stolen her Joy. I shared that I feel no situation or anyone can "steal" our joy. I feel we are the *keepers* through the grace of God for our Joy. Staying close to Him, checking in & sharing in community. There is joy in everything!

So may we be the good *Keepers of our Joy*. Remembering no one can steal it. It is ours and a true gift from our Lord as He is the one who feeds and nourishes us. Our relationship with him brings the most unending Joy, and we are called to share it.

Check your Joy Meter, and be the Joy to others (*& yourself*) – spread the good news!

Peace & Blessings,
Kathy Adams OFS
Regional Minister



Listen Discern Go Forth
OFS-USA Theme



FROM OUR REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT

Dear Franciscan sisters and brothers,

May our Risen Lord give you His peace!

A blessed and happy and holy Easter to one and all! The joy we experience as people of faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead cannot possibly be limited to one 24-hour period, this year April 9th Easter Sunday. Rather, we celebrate for 50 glorious days, beginning on Easter Sunday (actually, with the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday evening) all the way through and including the great Solemnity of Pentecost when we commemorate the gift of God’s Holy Spirit being poured out upon our Most Blessed Mother Mary and the Apostles and the infant Church.

This Easter season finds us in the midst of our Church’s observance of the National Eucharistic Revival which began on June 19, 2022, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (aka *Corpus Christi*). It has as its mission to “renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist,” as stated on the initiative’s website. Sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the revival aims to inspire people to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist. Here are a few things to know about the National Eucharistic Revival.

What is the Eucharistic Revival?



The Eucharistic Revival is a three-year initiative that aims to inspire, educate, and unite. In a world where not many people know Jesus intimately, the revival is meant to show everyone what wonders the True Presence of Jesus can do to heal the soul. Through a carefully planned timeline of events, after three years, the U.S. Catholic Bishops hope to change the lives of many Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

As the campaign organizers say on the revival’s website, those who have been “healed, converted, formed, and unified” by the Eucharist have a mission to teach others “for the life of the world.” This is what the National Eucharistic Revival envisions for the future of this movement.

Why are the U.S. bishops doing this?

The current world is hurting and straying far from God. According to **Pew Research Center**, only 31% of Catholics even believe in the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It is up to that 31% (and, hopefully, we Franciscans are surely among that



31%!) to spread the truth to all. As the revival website says, “We all need healing, yet many of us are separated from the very source of our strength. Jesus Christ invites us to return to the source and summit of our faith — his Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist.” It is a time to confront the hardships that face people in everyday life. The National Eucharistic Revival is a powerful, uplifting way to rise to this challenge.

From June of 2022 through June of 2023, each diocese was to offer events to promote and inspire understanding of the Eucharist. The training of “eucharistic missionaries” will come through online and in-person resources that teach about Christ and the Real Presence.

Spanning until July 2024 and beyond, the movement will also include a Year of Parish Revival, a National Eucharistic Congress in 2024, and the National Year of Mission. Each year will be dedicated to serving a specific purpose in the National Eucharistic Revival’s mission.

When is the National Eucharistic Congress?

This major national event will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, from July 17-21, 2024. Over 100,000 Catholics are expected to “worship our Risen Lord in his humble disguise” and allow the Holy Spirit to “enkindle a missionary fire in the heart of our nation,” according to the revival website. This “National Pilgrimage” will have both in-person and remote options, so everyone can take part in this solemn celebration.



How can we get involved?



There are many ways for individuals all over the United States to get involved in the National Eucharistic Revival. Catholics are given the option to become prayer partners, share testimonies, and call on the Holy Spirit to encourage and strengthen this movement. The revival calls upon “laypeople, families, religious orders, and priests to volunteer their time, talents, and prayers in pursuit of the grassroots renewal our world so desperately needs,” its website says. Available learning resources include Corpus Christi novenas in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), a [document](#) prepared by the USCCB entitled *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church* (which should be an excellent and timely portion of each local fraternity’s ongoing formation process over the next few years), a [question and answer](#) page about the Eucharist, and a [free course](#) by Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of the Archdiocese of Crookston on learning to embrace the gift of the Eucharist. More resources will become available throughout the movement’s timeline.

Where can one go for more information?

The best spot for more information is the National Eucharistic Revival [website](#) itself. Not only does it have an abundance of learning resources and prayer assistance, but also a list of answered [frequently asked questions](#). The USCCB [website](#) also has a wealth of resources.

We Franciscans do well to recall that we are the inheritors of an incredibly rich tradition of Eucharistic devotion. Our Seraphic Father himself exhorted us: “Let everyone be struck with fear, let the whole world tremble, and let the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the



living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest! O wonderful loftiness and stupendous dignity! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! The Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under an ordinary piece of bread! Brothers, look at the humility of God, and *pour out your hearts before Him!* Humble yourselves that you may be exalted by Him! Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He Who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally!” (from his *Letter to the Entire Order*, written in 1225 or 1226).

How extraordinarily blessed are we Franciscans of the Prairie Region that our annual Regional Retreat this year is entitled “**Jesus Shows Himself to Us: Seeing Jesus Present and Living a Eucharistic Centered Life.**” Our Retreat Director will be Father Luke Spannagel of the Peoria Diocese and the Retreat will be held at Sacre Coeur Retreat Center, Magnolia, Illinois, October 13-15, 2023. This will be our first in-person Retreat since 2019. I hope that many of us will make the commitment to experience this graced time together!

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

ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA FRATERNITY – BLOOMINGTON

At our Gathering in March, we were blessed with a guest presenter speaking on the Beatitudes. Deacon Joe Knapp from Holy Trinity Parish in Bloomington shared with us that his roots are at St. Mary’s as he grew up in the neighborhood and attended St. Mary’s school.

We were reminded by Deacon Knapp that the Beatitudes are a road map for living our lives. He also told us of his recent experiences in trying to simplify his life when he and his wife moved to a new house. Sounded very Franciscan.



April took our Minister, Carol Burroughs, ofs, and Councilor, Tony Pecora, ofs to talk about the Secular Franciscan Fraternity with Deacon Al Lundy on Catholic Spirit Radio in Normal. The radio station was conducting its annual pledge drive and met their initial goal while Carol & Tony were on the air so they could join in the celebration. One of our professed members, Lynn Johnston, ofs just celebrated the milestone of 300 shows on Spirit Radio with her husband, Bob. Quite an achievement!

Submitted by: Carol Burroughs, OFS, Minister

SACRED HEART FRATERNITY – PEORIA

Robert Righi, OFS, has a Ministry to serve the poor in Our Lady of the Sioux Nation. Robert has been working in a food pantry about fifty miles south of Pine Ridge taking food, homemade bread, homemade cinnamon rolls, homemade chocolates, and medicine to the elderly. Robert said they eat a lot of oatmeal and brown sugar each day. He also said that they have written a grant for new beds and Praise God the grant was approved. The beds came last week from Catholic Charities in Sioux Falls. Robert said to thank everyone for their Prayers, and he missed everyone.



On Friday, March 24th Sacred Heart Fraternity had a Bake Sale to help raise money for some of our favorite Charities at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Radnor Road in Peoria. Below are a couple pictures of some of our desserts.



Photo shows Megan Gilbert, OFS, Bob Polizzi, OFS, and Kathy Stomberg wife of Jim Stomberg, OFS

Scott Diestelkamp, OFS worked in the kitchen.

Great fellowship, plenty of desserts and we made \$385.00 Thank You!

Vocation Committee:

The Sacred Heart Fraternity has formed a vocations committee. The overall mission of our Vocations Committee will be to raise the awareness of the Secular Franciscan Order in our community in order to allow Catholics in the Peoria area to better understand our Order as a vocation available to continue to grow their faith. The members of our Vocations Committee will use their collective experience as Secular Franciscans to:

- Develop pamphlets that describe the Secular Franciscan Order and our Franciscan charism to newcomers.
- Draft communications that invite people to our meetings that can be included in church bulletins throughout the Peoria area.
- Draft communications for the diocesan Catholic Post.
- Use our fraternity members to establish a Secular Franciscan contact within their home parishes.
- Coordinate outreach events at local parishes, for example having an SFO information table in the vestibule after Masses.
- Possibly organizing an annual "Come and See" event at one of our gatherings, where we would invite interested persons to visit with us at one of our meetings.
- Work with our Regional Vocations Director and other fraternities in the region in the sharing of ideas and resources to increase vocations in our fraternity as well as in the other regional fraternities
- Whatever else the committee deems appropriate.

Submitted by Jim Stomberg, OFS, Secretary

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY – TEUTOPOLIS

Our Fraternity joyfully celebrated Deb Stone's Profession this past Sunday. Fr. Dennis Koopman, our new SA, was the celebrant and it was "just beautiful" as Deb said. The following article, although a bit lengthy, was submitted to be published in Catholic Times and the Effingham local newspaper. It was intended to provide more information and possibly attract people to the Order.

Debra Rose Stone, OFS , a member of Sacred Heart Church, in Effingham, IL made her Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order on Sunday, April 16, 2023, at Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Teutopolis, IL. Fr. Dennis Koopman, OFM was the celebrant who presided over Deb's perpetual commitment to live the Gospel life according to our Rule.

She has professed to follow the key themes learned during initial formation:

- Living the Gospel following Saint Francis of Assisi
- Fidelity to the Church
- Importance of the Rule
- Renewal of Baptism and Confirmation
- Mission to rebuild the Church
- Centrality of life in Fraternity
- Permanence of commitment

May this gift from the Holy Spirit continue to bless Deb in her vocation as a Secular Franciscan.

Profession in the Order is the culmination of three years of study. She promised to follow the Rule of Life in The Secular Franciscan Order and to live the gospel in the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi. Her goal as a Secular Franciscan is to live the Christian call to holiness in her individual life—in her home and in the world. A fraternity is a group of Secular Franciscans in an area who meet regularly for prayer and study and encourage one another to live their commitment. The name of the Fraternity is Saint Francis of Assisi, located in Teutopolis, IL.

Saint Francis of Assisi wrote the first Rule of the Life over 800 years ago for the married women who wanted to follow Saint Clare of Assisi into the cloistered convent and the married men of his time who wanted to follow him. Saint Francis instructed these couples that God did not want them to separate and leave one another and their families.

Today, the Secular Franciscan Order is comprised of lay women, married and single; lay men, married and single; and priests and deacons. Members live by a revised Rule of Life approved and promulgated by Pope Saint Paul VI on June 24, 1978.

For more information, please contact Lee Parker, OFS, Formation Director at leebellaaz@yahoo.com.

Submitted by Lee Parker, OFS

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS - EDWARDSVILLE

The Our Lady of the Angels fraternity is percolating along. We have one Candidate moving along toward Profession, an Inquirer who continues her discernment, and a new person who joined initial formation the last two meetings. She appears to be very interested in becoming a Secular Franciscan. Joseph Gassiraro OFS has accepted the challenge of being our fraternity's vocation coordinator. Joe is developing a recruiting poster for display at different local events. Father Gibbons, pastor at St Cecilia's Parish, continues to be very supportive of our fraternity. Now to be included in the weekly bulletin will be listings of our fraternity's events and other announcements. Carol Kleinert OFS, our Candidate and a member of St. Cecilia's parish, has been a very important liaison with Father Gibbons for scheduling meeting rooms and other coordinated activities with the parish. Kathy Ward OFS continues to be a heavy lifter serving as our fraternity's formation coordinator. We all are anxiously awaiting Emma Lozowski's return from her year-long sojourn to her native Hungary. We are hopeful that her return will be part of the progress our fraternity is making toward normalcy. Finally, Father Paul Gallagher OFM, our Spiritual Assistant, continues to be a mainstay in our following of St. Francis. Fr. Paul resides in East St. Louis, attends all of our meetings, and communicates regularly with us by email.

Submitted by Dan Tolbert, OFS

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS - DECATUR

Recently, Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity, welcomed Jan Mudd of Mt. Zion and John Wernsing of Shelbyville, to our fraternity gathering, to learn a little about what it means to be a Secular Franciscan. It's always a pleasure to welcome new faces and as a struggling fraternity it was wonderful to have two people inquire about the Secular Franciscan Order.

We're preparing for a combined Fraternal and Pastoral Visit currently scheduled for June 25th

The afternoon of April 16th. Our Fraternity members received the news. Archie Compton, husband of Agnes Compton, OFS passed from this earthly life to his eternal life. About a year ago Agnes and Archie, relocated to Florida to be closer to their daughter.

Submitted by George Menard, OFS, Minister

POPE ST. JOHN XXIII FRATERNITY – ROCK ISLAND

Our fraternity will focus on the 8th Centenary of the Approval of the Later Rule of St. Francis and the Christmas at Greccio in ongoing formation here in 2023. We are also preparing for our combined Fraternal and Pastoral Visitation on Sunday, July 2nd, the day after the regional fraternity picnic.

On a personal note, I spent time in Peru over the past months, including two visits to the Basilica and Convent of San Francisco in Lima. An earthquake in 1655 brought down the previous convent with the present basilica and convent being built in the late 1600-early 1700s. I've never been to Rome, so the history in this church structure and others in Central Lima were all pretty amazing to me. There is the church proper and then there is the areas designated as museum, even catacombs that we saw.

In one of the hallways in the museum, there was a display that referenced Father Joseph Francis of Guadalupe Mojica OFM, who was born in Saint Gabriel of Jalisco, Mexico, on September 14, 1896. He was a famous singer of opera and Hollywood film artist who left the artistic life and entered the Franciscan order at the age of 46. He died in Lima on September 20, 1974.

Here is the New York Times story noting Father's death:

<https://www.nytimes.com/1974/09/22/archives/jose-mojica-mexican-film-star-who-became-a-friar-dies-at-78.html>

Here is a recording of Jose before during his singing career:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEhZnopsyYw>



What was all so very Franciscan even amidst being in a Franciscan basilica was how the Franciscan Brother Cayetano, who actually know Father Joseph Francis gave us the special tour of his tomb. He had to move a display panel to have us gain access to the private stairs down to the tomb. Had the Franciscans wanted to draw attention to celebrity, they would have had access to the tomb prominent and accessible, but that would not be true to the life changing embrace of the Franciscan vocation father made.



Submitted by Deacon Kent Ferris, OFS, Minister

AN UPDATE FROM HUNGARY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On April 22, 2022, I attended the OFS National Day of Formation in Hungary. All regional ministers and formation directors were invited together with anyone who was interested in attending. Those who live close by, like my sisters and I from the St. John of Capistrano Fraternity, were present. Tibor remembers fondly his visit to the USA in the fall of 2022. He had a wonderful experience at the Q and marveled how a truly Franciscan event was held at the luxurious Sheraton. It was very nice to catch up with him and see in person that he is indeed doing much better. Please continue to keep him in your prayers.



Tibor was the first speaker with a very informative presentation about "The OFS and The Popes." This was appropriate in preparation for Pope Francis's upcoming visit to Hungary on April 28-30, 2023. Pope Francis visited Hungary in 2021 for the International Eucharistic Congress. This was of course an international event held in Hungary. The Catholic faithful are pleased that the Holy Father will return specifically to visit the Hungarian people. Tibor met Pope Saint John Paul II once, and Pope Francis three times in person. Pope Francis also met the participants of the General Chapter of the OFS in November of 2021. Tibor was able to share his personal impressions about meeting with the Popes as well as review the history of the order in light of the leadership of various Popes.

The second speaker was Fr. Zatyko, who spoke about our mandate to be missionaries and proclaim the Gospel everywhere we are. He talked about St. Francis' visit to the Sultan. St. Francis was accepting of differences but uncompromising when it came to proclaiming the truths of the faith. Only a fearless person can win over the world. It always seems like the time is inopportune for evangelization. Being on mission is being in the storm constantly. It is Jesus who walks towards us and calms the storm. We act, but most often we don't know the result of our witness to the faith. Don't get discouraged.



Submitted by Emma Lozowski, OFS

P.S. We are coming back home on August 2.

REGIONAL WEBMASTER – AN INTRODUCTION (PART 2 OF 3)

It's now 8 years from 2015 since St. Bonaventure Region in Mbarara, Uganda first developed a twinning relationship with your region. Our region was strongly affected by Covid situation but has regained the momentum. On Nov 26, 2022, St. Bonaventure Region had an elective chapter and now has a new council. We have 314 brothers & sisters, both OFS and professed YouFra. Our region has 10 local fraternities and one special fraternity in prison St. Padre Pio Mbarara Prison.



The national fraternity of Uganda was selected by CIOFS to host an English-speaking formation workshop from August 13-17, 2023 in Kampala. This is one of four workshops throughout Africa to be held as part of CIOFS's "Project Africa" initiative. These formation workshops are intended primarily for National Ministers, International Councillors, National Formators, National Spiritual Assistants, but also for interested persons. You are most welcome to attend!

Submitted by Gilbert Muhumuza, OFS

Editor's Note: This is the 2nd of 3 parts taken from a longer article from earlier this year.

SUMMER CONFERENCE – VIRTUAL EVENT

- Topic: 2023 Laudato Si' and the U.S. Catholic Church
** A Conference Series on Our Common Home **
- Sponsor: Creighton University
- Dates: June 14 – July 25 (a series of 90-minute sessions, presented virtually)
- Cost: The conference is free and open to the public; registration is required.
- Register: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.salsalabs.org/LSUS2023RegistrationForm/index.html>
- Note: Kent Ferris, OFS, from Pope Saint John XXIII fraternity in Rock Island will be one of the speakers at the last session on July 25

Submitted by Kent Ferris, OFS, Minister

Save The Date !

FRANCISCANS OF THE PRAIRIE REGIONAL PICNIC

Saturday, July 1, 2023

Host: Sacred Heart Fraternity, Peoria

Location: Hickory Grove Park
2403 N Hickory Grove Road
Dunlap, IL (a couple miles north of Peoria)

Time: 11am – 4pm (lunch served 12pm – 2pm)
Conclude with Mass at a local parish

Formation: Recognition of the Approval of the Latter Rule of St. Francis

Entertainment / Activities to include:

Bags, Ladder Ball, Bocce, Sing-along, and
Playground for children

Who's Invited: All Franciscans, family members, and friends

More information will be provided in the upcoming months.



SILENT RETREAT – ST. FRANCIS AND HUMILITY

Date: Saturday, Sept 2, 2023

Time: 7:30am – 5:30pm (8:45am – 4:00pm without Masses)

Location: St. Cecilia Catholic Church, 155 N. Main St., Glen Carbon, Illinois

Includes: Mass, Confession, Silent Adoration, Mediations, Office of the Passion,
Crown Rosary, Music (*Canticle of the Sun*)

Facilitator: Carol Kleinert, OFS

Cost: Free

Register: Please send email to Carol (kleinertcak@yahoo.com) so she can
prepare the appropriate number of handouts.

Submitted by Carol Kleinert, OFS



Looking Forward to this Fall
Franciscans of the Prairie -- REGIONAL RETREAT
October 13-15, 2023

Sacré-Coeur Retreat Center: 8508 County Rd 100 N, Magnolia, IL

**“Jesus shows Himself to Us:
Seeing Jesus Present and Living a
Eucharistic Centered Life”**

Retreat Director: Fr. Luke Spannagel

Registration Forms will be available this summer



UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION (2023)

- Jun 14-Jul 25 Virtual Conference (see page 12)
- July 1 Regional Picnic – Peoria (see page 13)
- Sept 2 Silent Retreat (see page 13)
- Oct 13-15 Regional Retreat (see above)
- Oct 15pm Regional Fraternity Council (RFC) & REC meetings

PORTIUNCULA DATES – SUMMER 2023 EDITION

- Aug 1 “Call for Articles” by Newsletter Editor
- Aug 16 Deadline for Article Submission
- Aug 23 Draft submitted to REC for review & feedback
- Aug 30 Publication

Newsletter questions, comments, complaints, advice, or whatever?

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

I really do love to get feedback of any kind!

On the lighter side ...

