



TAU-USA

Fall 2024 Issue 113

A PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER



Jesus



St. Francis of Assisi

SERVANT LEADERSHIP



St. Elizabeth of Hungary



Pope Francis



Mission to Share the Vision

The TAU-USA, a publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of the United States, is a vital communication link between the OFS-USA leadership and all candidates and all professed Secular Franciscans throughout the United States. The articles within the publication, while sharing the Secular Franciscan charism and vision, are intended to inform, inspire, and challenge.

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To Be Served or To Serve

by Jane De-Rose Bamman, OFS
National Minister

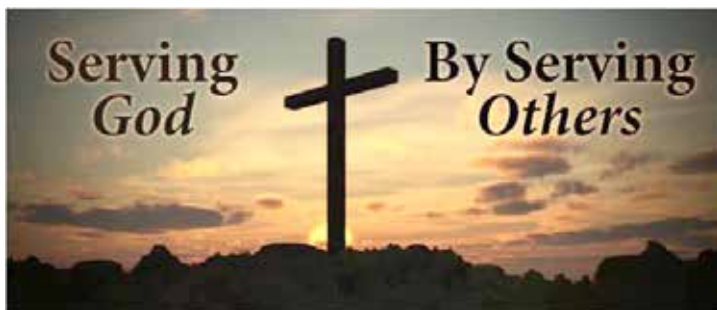
As much as I enjoy being with brothers and sisters from our Franciscan family, serving as the National Minister is quite a bit of work. Sure, I “get to” travel to fulfill my responsibilities. Often that means time building relationships with brothers and sisters, learning the blessings and challenges encountered in each area and praying together as part of daily Mass and morning/evening prayer. Following the fun part comes meetings and then time developing a report to document the findings.

Brian (our co-minister) is not thrilled with my needing to travel for this service – so I try to minimize my time away from home. By virtue of the “blessings of technology,” the National Executive Council (NEC) meets monthly for at least two hours to discuss the work of the Order as some decisions cannot wait until our next face-to-face gathering. I try to fit in my National Minister responsibilities while working 40+ hours per week for my livelihood and continuing my relationship with my husband. Not a surprise, but God provides. I suspect many other servant leaders have similar experiences.

The NEC has heard from all over the country that it is difficult to get people to serve our brothers and sisters on fraternity councils at local and regional levels. As a result, during this last year of our three-year term, the NEC is focusing on developing members for leading the Order at all levels.

Jesus taught us: ***“The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45***

Following Jesus’ lead, candidates should recognize that this type of leadership means we are serving so others benefit.



“The office of Minister or Councilor is a fraternal service, a commitment to hold oneself available and responsible in relation to each brother and sister and to the Fraternity ...” OFS General Constitutions Article 31.2

Candidates must have a disposition for service. What characteristics of a leader are most important to you? Certainly no one person has them all. Self-awareness allows us to serve with our strengths but also makes us able to allow others to lead with their strengths.

Do you have some leadership gifts and talents? Are you willing to serve?

The Holy Spirit is in charge. You won’t be elected before the Spirit’s timing allows. I’ve had several experiences when I thought I would be elected, and the Holy Spirit had other plans.

Each time I was elected, I noticed several things:

1. Getting to know my brothers and sisters enriched my vocation.
2. Everyone wants to help so the load is lighter than expected.
3. The skills I didn’t have, other council members brought.
4. The three-year term goes by quickly.

Preparation for the National Chapter of Elections in September 2025 is underway. We’ve secured a venue and have notified the OFS Presidency of the date. Now it is time to formally get people praying about who may be good candidates to serve.

The Order continues and through God’s grace and guidance will grow and thrive long after our time-of-service ends. Not everyone will be elected to serve, but one’s openness to serve is the key.

This is God’s Order, so let us be available to serve as God sees fit. If you don’t feel you are called to serve now, perhaps there are others who may be good candidates to serve on the local, regional or national level. Consider nominating them.

OFS-USA National Chapter September 17 – 21, 2024

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS



The National Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States assembled at the base of Camelback Mountain in the Sonoran Desert to pray, listen, learn and conduct fraternity business.

The Franciscan Renewal Center, informally known as “The Casa” in Scottsdale, AZ, was the site of the annual meeting where 58 participants gathered including the National Executive Council, Regional Ministers, National Spiritual Assistants and visitors.



Desert beauty at The Casa (Vickie Klick)

Amidst the serenity of cactus, bougainvillea, hummingbirds and blue quail, Secular Franciscan leaders tuned into the voice of the Holy Spirit and embarked on the work of the Order.

Formation focused on servant leadership, including emotional intelligence skills for leaders and conflict resolution. Daily Mass was celebrated by the CNSA friars who attended as well as John Dolan, bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix.

Each day before meetings, Vickie Klick, OFS, chair of the Centenary Task Force, led members in prayer with meditations on the Stigmata that St. Francis received 800 years ago. All of those materials are available for members to access on the Centenary Web Page.

During the business meetings, members of the National Fraternity Council approved national guidelines for each of the following topics:

- Virtual Participation in Meetings/Gatherings
- Fraternal Records Retention
- Determining Stipends
- Franciscan Code of Conduct
- Councils in Conflict
- Suspension or Dismissal of a Member or Removal from Office

All of the guidelines can be accessed on the [National Guidelines Web Page](#).

The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) consists of four friars - one from each friar obedience: Fr. Jerome Wolbert - Order of Friars Minor (OFM), Fr. John DeLaRiva - Capuchin (OFM Cap.), Fr. Marek Stybor - Conventual (OFM Conv.), and Fr. Christopher Panagoplos - Third Order Regular (TOR). They assist the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States and are responsible for guiding all the spiritual assistants of the OFS in the U.S. At Chapter, Fr. Marek became the President-in-Turn of the CNSA on the National Executive Council and will serve a two-year term.



Fr. Marek Stybor, OFM Conv., the newly appointed President-in-Turn of the CNSA.

In addition, Corinne Lorenzet, OFS, from Blessed Solanus Casey Region, became the new administrative assistant to the CNSA, succeeding Miriam Kennedy, OFS.



Corinne Lorenzet, OFS, newly appointed administrative assistant to the CNSA.

The following reports were made:

Chapter of Elections - In preparation for the National Executive Council elections to be held on September 13, 2025, National Minister Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, requested submission of names for the nominating committee by November 1, 2024. A slate of nominees should be prepared by July 13, 2025. Servant leadership workshops will be planned in anticipation of the election.

Ecumenical Committee - Members will meet in Colorado March 21-22, 2025, to participate in a retreat with the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity. Videos from the last retreat are on our national website, on the Ecumenical / Interfaith Committee webpage under "Resources."

Formation Commission - Chairperson Layna Maher, OFS, reported that nine chapters of the Aspirants' (formerly Inquirers) handbook called *Let Us Begin* is being piloted. The second formation book is underway and titled *For This You Were Called*. Reflections and action items are included in the chapters.

Franciscan Youth/Young Adults - Chairperson Kathleen Molaro, OFS, said fraternities are encouraged to identify "Who and where are our youth?" "What age would you prefer to work with?" and "How much time do you have to devote to this area of fraternity life?" Answers to these questions will direct the FY/YA programs in local fraternities. She emphasized that the youth have a desire to be a part of the Church in the same way as adults by growing spiritually, serving the community, enjoying fellowship, discovering their vocation and learning peaceful, Franciscan ways to relate to others.



Kathleen Molaro, OFS, FY/YA Chair

Treasurer's Report at Chapter

A 2025 General Fund budget and the budget for the upcoming 2026 Quinquennial were passed at Chapter. In addition, the financial statements for the eight months ending August 31, 2024, were reviewed and accepted.

2025 General Fund Budget

The budget for the 2025 General Fund was presented and discussed in detail. After some thoughtful dialogue, three small additions were made, and the revised budget was approved. It represents \$352,664 in total expenditures. The projected net loss of \$57,164 will be taken from savings if needed.

The budgeted fair share of \$215,000 is based on the reported membership in the 2024 Region annual reports, calculated at \$22 per member. A fair share increase of \$5 was approved at the 2023 Chapter.

Budgeted Income:

- Fair Share: \$215,000
- Formation Book Sales: \$59,500
- Interest and Miscellaneous income: \$21,000
- Total Budgeted Income: \$295,500

Budgeted Expenditures:

- CIOFS Fair Share: \$45,000
- 2025 Chapter: \$63,210
- TAU-USA: \$40,000
- NEC, 3 Commissions, 14 Committees, CNSA: \$132,454
- Formation Book Printing: \$52,000
- JPIC Award, Liability Insurance, Other: \$20,000
- Total Budgeted Expenditures: \$352,664

Budgeted Net Loss:

- Net Loss: \$(57,164)

If you have any questions or need clarification, please reach out to Claudia via email at:

ofsusatreasurer@gmail.com

The opportunity to meet Franciscans from throughout the country and learn about the efforts of the National Executive Council were among the advantages first-time attendees at Chapter were able to experience.

"I'm impressed by the leadership and all of the work that national has to do," said Wayne Armstrong, OFS, vice minister of Our Lady of the Rockies Region. Wayne appreciated the emphasis on servant leadership as well as the spirituality of the week. "It makes me want to be more involved," he said.



Wayne Armstrong, OFS



"Chapter has been very fraternal. Wherever you go, people greet you, and everyone is very welcoming," said Charlie Neuman, OFS, councilor of the La Verna Region. He was pleased with the location as well as the balance between work, spirituality and fellowship at Chapter. "We think first from our heart, and then we cross our T's," Charlie said.

"All the work that national does behind the scenes is unbelievable," Linda Monitello, OFS, secretary of the St. Maximilian Kolbe Region, said. "Everyone needs to come to a Chapter at least once. It is so comfortable here," she said. She intends to return to her region and encourage others to become involved in the national work of the Secular Franciscans. "Committees would be a good place to start," she said.



Linda Monitello, OFS



Chapter attendees prayed and remembered 300 Secular Franciscans, friars, brothers and sisters who met Sister Death in the past year. Each one was called by name by regional ministers during the Rite of Remembrance led by council member Donna Hollis, OFS.

snapshots

2024 CHAPTER

Franciscan Renewal
Center
SCOTTSDALE, AZ



Photos by Vickie Klick, Jane DeRose-Bamman,
Joy Sperry, Carmen Duron, and Diane Menditto







State of the Order OFS-USA

by Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS
National Minister

National Minister Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, updated attendees on the status of the three national priorities – Vocations, Communications and Relationships – in the annual State of the Order address delivered at Chapter on September 18th.

[\(View the address online.\)](#)

Vocations

- As of July 2024, there were 10,232 active professed members and candidates.
- Of these, 25 regions experienced a decrease in membership, with losses ranging from 1.7% to 23.8%.
- Conversely, five regions saw increases of 6.5% to 9.7%.
- Each region is comprised of candidates, aspirants, and seekers, with numbers ranging from 6 to 98. There is potential for a membership increase of 5% to 24%.
- In 2023, 13 fraternities were deactivated. Currently, there are 22 active Emerging Communities or Newly Forming Groups.
- Membership distribution across regions includes two with fewer than 100 members, six with 101 to 300, nine with 301 to 500, and 13 with over 500 members.
- The national fraternity continues to seek opportunities to promote vocations wherever possible, including at the Eucharistic Congress held in July.
- The United States is the sixth largest in membership among countries in the world following Italy, Mexico, India, Korea and Brazil.

Communications

- The Communications Committee, which includes members from various subcommittees, held three virtual meetings instead of one in-person summit. They

discussed protocols for consistent communications representing OFS-USA, established social media guidelines, confirmed translation processes, and addressed bulk email and document transfer logistics.

- The NEC planned workshops and introductions for new Regional Executive Councils.

Relationships

- This year the NEC conducted six visitations and eight elections.
- There was significant participation nationally and internationally with attendance at various chapters, involvement in the International Formation Secretariat, representation from the USA by the general vice minister, and participation in the Korean Congress.

Other updates

- **New Look:** The updated Ritual became available in August 2024 and can be ordered from the Gospel to Life Bookstore.
- **Language Translations:** Key rites and ceremonies will be translated into Spanish and possibly Korean.
- **Formation Pilot Test:** The National Formation Commission is pilot testing the first book for initial formation.
- **2026 Quinquennial Preparation:** Preparations continue for the upcoming Quinquennial event July 29 - August 2, 2026, in Lexington, KY.
- **Servant Leadership Workshops:** Additional workshops are being planned before the Chapter of Elections in September 2025.
- **Important election preparation deadlines:** Nomination Committee by **May 13, 2025**. Slate of Candidates by **July 13, 2025**. Chapter of Elections on **September 13, 2025**.

Conflict Resolution

by Fr. Marek Stybor, OFM Conv.
President-in-turn, CNSA

Conflict is deeply embedded in the human heart and the entire history of salvation. The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelations is an endless series of conflicts between God and the evil spirit, between good and evil, love and hate, and heaven and hell.

St. Paul writes that there is a fight in my heart between good and evil. In every healthy community, there are differences of opinion which can result in conflict, confrontation, and a fight for the dominance of opinions and views. The Gospel includes the never-ending conflict of Jesus with the Pharisees.



Jesus did not seek this conflict, but by preaching the Gospel, He provoked people to stand for the truth, and this always results in conflict.

It is no different in the family or the religious community. Often, we are not looking for conflict, but the conflict is looking for us. St. Francis, a symbol of peace and forgiveness, conflicted with his father, mother, the inhabitants of Assisi, and his brothers. When he radically lived the Gospel, he was in conflict.

Jesus says that he did not bring peace, but a sword. Defining oneself by the values of the Gospel automatically invites conflict. Conflict often ends

with the rejection of one of the parties. We find this example in Jesus, Francis, and thousands of saints. The holiness of life provokes, is uncomfortable, and creates conflict. The history of conflict is rich, hidden in human fear, which is the fruit of original sin.

Tools that Jesus gives us in conflict situations

1. PRAYER: Jesus prays to the Father: *“Father, make them One...”*

Prayer is the first and most important step.

2. DIALOGUE: The Lord Jesus teaches dialogue, especially in His meeting with the Samaritan woman. Only Jesus and the Samaritan woman without witnesses (Jn:4). There is a sincere conversation from heart to heart.

3. THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: This gift of the Church has a huge impact on healing tensions in the community. Focus on Jesus' Mercy.

4. TIME: Time heals wounds. There are no quick cures and sometimes it takes a whole lifetime for healing.

5. RECONCILIATION WITH ANOTHER PERSON: This is always God's greatest miracle. It requires God's intervention. On the cross, Jesus asks the Father: “Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.” Ask God like Jesus did on the cross.

6. SPIRITUALITY OF FAILURE: Jesus and Francis teach us that to win you must lose.

Defeat on the cross brings fruit of Resurrection. This is God's most beautiful logic of love. Without crucified love we will not solve any conflict, we will only deepen it. Love that knows how to lose allows itself to be crucified and will overcome the conflict. It will bring peace of heart. I wish you this peace of heart.



Let me share a story from SOCRATES, who is famous for resolving conflicts:

Two brothers had a quarrel over the property, the inheritance of their parents. So, they came to Socrates, and he awarded the share to the older brother, and after listening to the younger one, also to him.

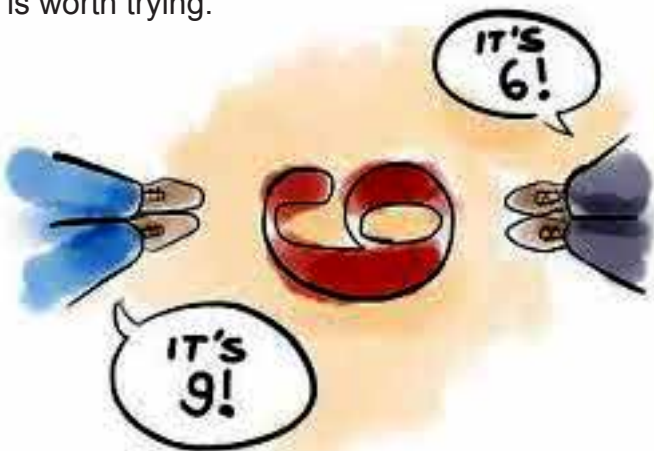
Socrates' wife reacted to this and exclaimed from the kitchen, "Socrates, you are a fool! How can both brothers be right?"

To which Socrates replied to his wife...

"You're right too."

Discovering part of the truth in each side is a wise way to resolve conflicts.

It is worth trying.



What number is it? Six or nine?
It depends on your perspective.

Another great example for conflict resolution:

Woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:1 – 11).

Jesus teaches us in this dramatic scene how to free human hands from the stones of judgments. In this scene everyone is trapped: woman, Jesus, people with stones. Jesus solves the conflict brilliantly. He invites only those who are without guilt or sin to deal out the execution.



Jesus with the woman caught in adultery.

Saint Francis repeated that he himself is the greatest sinner on earth who needs conversion, mercy and forgiveness. I believe this is the best therapy for conflict healing. St. Francis still attracts so many because he focused first on his own conversion.

Let me conclude my reflection with "Story about Grandma and Grandson."

The grandson, who is in the Church, was forced to attend Mass with his grandmother, even though he wanted to stay at home and play on the computer. He spoke... at the beginning of Holy Mass:

***"Her fault,
Her fault,
Her most grievous fault."***

We Are Called to Serve One Another

by Layna Maher, OFS
National Formation Commission Chair

Serving is a prominent characteristic of Franciscan leadership philosophy. St. Francis sees himself as a servant to God and those in his community.

When we look at the intentions and promises we make at the Rite of Admission and the Rite of Profession, two special, grace filled times, we see the word service. In the Rite of Admission we promise: **to be of service to all through my secular state of life for the glory of God and to fulfill His plan of love on behalf of all people.** In the Rite of Profession we see **renew my baptismal promises and consecrate myself to the service of His kingdom.** In both of these rites, the words clearly recognize our call to care for the needs of others.

Our founder, St. Francis, has left us the great treasure of his writings that reinforce the call for serving others. He tells us in his testament:

After the Lord gave me brothers, no one showed me what I should do; but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the Holy Gospel. FA:ED, vol. 1, 125

In the Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance (Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful) St. Francis says:

We must never desire to be above others, but, instead, we must be servants and subject to every human creature for God's sake. FA:ED, vol. 1, 48.

St. Francis was a true servant leader choosing to work for the good of others. He demonstrated how to give priority to the needs of the community and show love and compassion for others. When Francis embraced the leper, one of the poorest and most marginalized members of society, he did so with loving service. Francis wasn't simply looking for a project to complete. His loving service was leading him to the Father following in the footsteps of Christ.

St. Clare also models servant leadership for us. We can read in the Legend of St. Clare, Her Holy Humility [Chapter VIII] that:

Rarely would she give an order, instead she would do things spontaneously, preferring rather to do things herself than to order her sisters. She herself washed the commodes of the sick; she herself, with that noble spirit of hers, cleansed them not running away from their filth nor shrinking from their stench. She frequently and reverently washed the feet of the serving sisters who returned from outside and, after washing them kissed them. CA:ED 292.



We are also fortunate to have our *Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership*. This is an excellent source and guidance document for all Secular Franciscans at every level of fraternity. This wonderful document can be found online at https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Servant_Leadership_Handbook_Aug_21_2024.pdf

Highlights from the Handbook include foundational ideas, guides for leaders, and practical aids on communicating, listening, engaging in dialogue, and reconciling differences. The handbook also features tips on collaboration problem solving and an attributes inventory to help fraternity members recognize strengths and areas to grow in.

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:26–28

St. Francis, Servant Leadership, and the Stigmata

by Vickie Klick, OFS
Chair, NAFRA Centenary Task Force

As part of our celebration of the 800th anniversary of Francis receiving the stigmata, we began three of our four mornings at Chapter with reflections on Francis' experience – and sufferings - as a servant leader, and how his example can help us understand our roles today.

Francis' stigmata were the culmination of many sufferings with Christ over his lifetime. Many of those sufferings came from life with his brothers, as indeed it does for all of us. It is important for us to recognize that the problems we face today in living in fraternity are very similar to the problems that Francis and his brothers faced. Human nature has not changed!

Each reflection used a reading taken from the Early Documents. We used a group Lectio Divina format, listening to the reading three times and then sharing what particularly struck us in the reading.



St. Francis with the stigmata

The first morning, we read how Francis celebrated Chapter with the friars. Anything Francis asked the brothers to do, he would first demonstrate with his own actions, and he called them all to have peace in their hearts.



St. Francis in prayer

On the second morning, we tackled Francis' Letter to a Minister, in which he challenges a minister to accept those causing him great difficulty and all of what they are doing to him as God's grace, and to not wish that they be better Christians. Everyone was invited to think privately about those who came to mind, and to ponder how we could live up to Francis' exhortation.

Finally, we turned to a reading where Francis, discouraged by the behavior of some of the brothers, gave the order back to God. It was a reminder that our leaders are here as a sign to our brothers and sisters that God is the one who ultimately watches over us.

We closed the final session with a reading from the Second Letter to the Faithful which exhorted us to be servants to all for God's sake and promised the Spirit to those who persevere.



Vickie Klick, OFS, leading the daily reflection and sharing on readings related to the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi.

References to the readings and the discussion questions are available on the National Website: <https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/centenary-resources-the-gift-of-the-stigmata/>

**I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.**
(From a fortune cookie at Chapter.)

Homilies at Chapter

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS
Communication Committee Chair

Daily Mass in the Our Lady of the Angels Church offered attendees at the 2024 Chapter in Scottsdale, AZ, the Holy Eucharist as well as food for thought.

Masses were celebrated throughout the week by the attending CNSA friars—Fr. Marek Stybor, OFM Conv., Fr. John DeLaRiva, OFM Cap., and Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM. Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of Phoenix presided at the Friday evening Mass.



From left to right are, Fr. Marek Stybor, OFM Conv., Fr. John De La Riva, OFM Cap., and Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM.

Fr. Marek's homily at the opening Mass on the Feast of the Stigmata emphasized that true discipleship requires us to listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance. He reflected on the suffering of the stigmata or suffering as a transformative experience—"the kiss of Jesus"—that can lead to profound change if we invite God into our darkest moments. He suggested that just as Francis found joy in adversity, we too can find meaning by replacing feelings of rejection with gratitude, and woundedness with healing.

The message warned against the dangers of power and control, advocating instead for servant leadership. Ultimately, the homily encouraged spending time in prayer, reminding us that our lives

reflect the gospel to others, making us living testaments of faith. ([Listen to Fr. Marek's homily.](#))

During Thursday's Mass, Fr. Jerome talked about how Christ's sacrifice was not solely a response to sin but an expression of God's love as articulated by John Duns Scotus, who suggested that Jesus would have come to us even without the fall of Adam and Eve. "Our religion, true Christianity, says God came to dwell with us," Fr. Jerome said.

The essence of true Christianity is that God chose to dwell among humanity, despite the reality of human sin and suffering. This love calls Christians to reflect on their own willingness to extend love to others, even those who may harbor animosity towards them.

The sermon used the example of a saint who faced persecution to illustrate the metaphorical "stones" people throw, which represent the hardened hearts of others. It concluded with the idea that only by confronting uncomfortable challenges can individuals cultivate a heart open to God's love and transformation.



Stones as a metaphor for hardened hearts.

During the closing Mass, Fr. John used a personal example to reflect on 'what a gift it is to be a servant.' He conveyed the profound impact his mother's life of service had on his family as evidenced by two aprons that she wore. He said these protective garments, worn during countless moments of nurturing and care, represented not

just pieces of cloth but the essence of selfless service, attentiveness and love his mother demonstrated throughout her life. This example celebrated the beauty of serving others with love.

In this homily, Fr. John reflected on the idea that our trajectory in life is intertwined with God's presence and guidance. He encouraged listeners to "listen to Him with faith," reassuring them that amidst life's chaos, God will care for them.

While challenging moments may humble us, they should not discourage us. He invited everyone to embrace the richness and grace that come from serving others. The aprons symbolize his mother's kindness and love. He encouraged listeners to "cherish in a special way the apron—the call that is a labor of love," reminding them of the profound beauty in serving one another.

Bishop Dolan used the phrase "form follows function" in the context of our spiritual journey. He pointed out how a church building can reflect the spiritual journey of a community. He noted the openness to nature that worshippers experience in Our Lady of the Angels Church. He pointed out how its large windows bring nature to the worshipper and foster a deeper spiritual experience.



Architectural glasswork above the back of the church.

His homily also explored the idea that "form follows function" in the context of our Christian journey, where our primary function is to follow Christ by dying to ourselves and embracing love. He emphasized that this exercise can sometimes become overshadowed by daily activities, causing us to lose sight of our purpose as Christians.

In addition, Bishop Dolan reflected on the call to know the Lord, urging listeners to consider whether they are truly aligned with this desire as they prepare to receive the Eucharist. He asked congregants to listen to the words of the upcoming song which began, "Only this I want: but to know the Lord." His message encouraged introspection about what one truly wants in the spiritual life, prompting a return to the essence of faith and commitment.



Close up detail

The largest architectural glasswork ever made located opposite the entrance to the Our Lady of the Angels Church at The Casa.



Bishop John Dolan (center) from the Diocese of Phoenix celebrated Mass on the Feast of the Korean Martyrs. At left are Fr. John De La Riva, OFM Cap., and Deacon Herve Lemire. To the right are Fr. Marek Stybor, OFM Conv., and Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM.

Chapter Day Away

St. Vincent de Paul Facility of Phoenix
by Sharon Winzeler, OFS
Communications Committee Chair

“When you serve and engage, you find meaning in your life. This helps you fill a hole in your life that only God can fill,” said Susan Junker, senior development officer for the St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVdP) in Phoenix, Arizona. She led Chapter attendees on a tour of the world’s largest St. Vincent de Paul facility. The visit was part of the ‘half-day away’ tradition at Chapter to help attendees become acquainted with the area.



One of the tour groups with members from Chapter. (Cathy Roszhart)

In a concerted effort to address poverty and promote dignity, the Phoenix Diocese operates comprehensive programs that reflect the shared values that Franciscans will recognize. Under the auspices of the SVdP, 380 staff members and 16,000 volunteers run the operation that focuses on spirituality, community and service.

With 82 SVdP conferences actively engaged in food distribution, medical and dental services and housing, the initiative aims to serve the vulnerable and foster a sense of belonging. Every month, the society organizes food deliveries to local families, utilizing banana boxes for distribution. Each conference can pick up pallets of food twice monthly, with dedicated Vincentians personally delivering these essentials directly to homes so the families don’t have to wait in line. Last year local volunteers distributed 168,000 food boxes.



Some of the many boxes of food for the hungry. (Jane DeRose-Bamman)

The Last Chance Gift Store plays a vital role in providing affordable household items and furniture to those in need. With a fleet of 10 trucks collecting donations across the valley, the store offers a second chance for items that have cycled through other outlets, allowing families to purchase goods at low prices.

A bicycle repair shop on the premises repairs and maintains a fleet of bicycles to provide transportation for those in need.



Bike repair shop (Cathy Roszhart)

A significant aspect of the SVdP outreach includes free medical and dental clinics. Supported by a network of volunteers and partnerships with

medical schools, the clinics focus on preventive care, including nutrition counseling and specialized children’s dental services. Last year there were 18,700 visits to the dental and family wellness clinics. A photographic exhibit called the Hall of Smiles illustrates the improvements that dental care has made in the lives of children.



A free dental clinic at the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Phoenix records the happy results of its work in its Hall of Smiles.

Recognizing the increasing need for transitional housing, especially for the disabled and individuals aged 55 and older, the diocese operates multiple housing facilities. These spaces accommodate 231 residents and are designed to promote self-sufficiency, with an average stay of nine months. Efforts include support for individuals with mental and physical disabilities. Residents may bring their dogs, and a vet clinic is scheduled to open soon. Statistics show that 98 percent of SVdP transitional housing graduates remain housed one year later.

The food service building houses one of the Southwest’s largest commercial kitchens which is used to prepare 7,000 meals a day. Many of the meals are distributed by 30 local agencies that lack kitchen facilities.

Meals are also served on site. Community engagement is enhanced through family-style dinners served Monday through Friday, providing meals, fun, and fellowship for parents and children. SVdP is also proactive in alleviating homelessness, utilizing an app for emergency assistance requests. This personalized approach allows families in crisis to receive timely support, focusing on maintaining housing stability and fostering income opportunities.

Secular Franciscans visiting the center felt at home amidst the Vincentian spirit of service and sacrifice, especially when they arrived in one of the new housing units with the words attributed to St.

Francis of Assisi stenciled in large letters on the wall, “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.”



Secular Franciscans felt at home at the St. Vincent de Paul facility, which included a reference to St. Francis in one of its newest housing units.



Chapter attendees are on the way to tour the world’s largest St. Vincent de Paul facility, located in Phoenix. (Photo by Steve Roszhart)



A work area for “Love in a Box” (Jane DeRose-Bamman)



Plaque with a quote from St. Vincent de Paul. (Paul Gonzalez)

The day away was followed by a lively game night back at the retreat center. The trip, game night and hospitality at Chapter were graciously hosted by the St. Thomas More Region.



Amy Sperry (left) and Carmen Duron, the hostesses who made Chapter so enjoyable, greeting attendees at the welcome table.



Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Award, 2024

by Joe Makley, OFS
National JPIC Animator



Our JPIC Award recipient for 2024 is Michele Dunne, OFS. Michele is minister of the Mount Saint Sepulchre Fraternity in the Margaret of Cortona Region. Since 2021, she has served as executive director of the Franciscan Action Network. What follows is a brief interview with Michele:



Presentation of JPIC award

JM: Michele, the arc of your work reflects so many elements of our Rule, and you are currently the Minister of your OFS fraternity. Can you describe how you became aware of your Franciscan vocation?

MD: My Franciscan vocation came to me in 2013 at a time of crisis in my personal and work life. I often say that, of the many gifts the Lord has given me, this vocation was the greatest, the most surprising, and the most humbling. And it completely changed my life, gradually, over the next few years. One of those changes was leaving behind my previous work and joining the staff of the Franciscan Action Network in 2021. Article 15 of our Rule about being "individually and collectively in the forefront in promoting justice" just would not let go of me.

JM: Those of us who follow the Franciscan Action Network have noticed a significant difference since you became executive director. At the recent national Chapter, you explained your thinking and vision. Could you expand a little on that for the members who were not present?

MD: My colleagues and I at FAN have reoriented the organization since 2021. Looking at the name of the organization, we decided there was plenty of Action, but that we needed to remember the Franciscan basis of that action and to strengthen our Network. Instead of seeing FAN as a small staff in DC, we view FAN as being a network of 50 Franciscan religious communities and nearly 14,000 individuals. We, the staff, exist to serve that Network – to inform, inspire, and mobilize that Network to take loving action on JPIC issues in the United States, rooted firmly in our Gospel values and Franciscan spirituality. The other big change is

that FAN is doing a great deal of grassroots work, organizing more than 20 Franciscan Justice Circles across the country in the last few years. The Circles bring together members from all branches of the Franciscan family – friars, sisters, Seculars, Associates, students at Franciscan colleges, and many others who are simply attracted

by St. Francis.

JM: FAN is able to attract many young adults to its activities, along with OFS members of all ages. How are you doing this?

MD: We found out that young adults are eager to learn how to connect their faith with taking action on the issues they care about, for example the environment, gun violence, and peace in the world. They want to learn communication and advocacy skills that are effective while also fully aligned with their faith and values. And they like to work with older adults in this, as long as the older adults do not dominate. Through our annual Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference and Franciscan Justice Circles, FAN has been able to create settings in which young adults feel heard, supported, and in which their contributions are valued.

JM: What keeps you going?

MD: I feel blessed to be doing work every day that seems like a direct response to the call of my Franciscan vocation. And I am endlessly inspired by my fellow Franciscans! So many Seculars have given many years of direct service to our impoverished, vulnerable, and marginalized brothers and sisters, as well as to our beloved earth. And many of them engage in loving advocacy for public policies to address the underlying causes of poverty, injustice, environmental destruction, and insults to human dignity at all stages of life. To see all the love that Seculars, sisters, friars, and young Franciscan volunteers bring to the world is amazing and humbling.

Why a new Ritual? from the National Executive Council

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
We have heard the question, “Why a new Ritual?”, and it deserves an answer.

The 1985 Ritual is out of print and has been for several years. We are often asked “Where do I get a copy of the Ritual?” Used copies found online were very expensive and the online version from CIOFS is not as comprehensive as the 1985 Ritual book.

Ritual Book Update		
Description	2024 Edition	1985 Edition
Franciscan readings and prayers most recent translation.	Yes	No
Psalms most recent translation	Yes	No
Scripture current lectionary used by USCCB	Yes	No
Print easy to read for all members	Yes	No
Sturdy binding	Yes	No
Rubrics clear when Spiritual Assistants involved	Yes	No
Wording consistent with 2020 CIOFS Ritual	Yes	No
Age of work	1 year	39 years

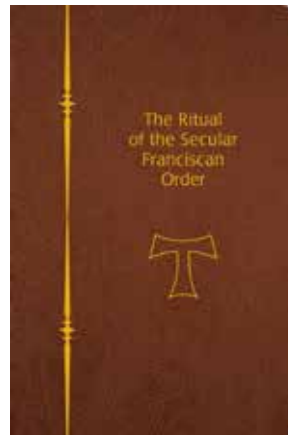
We recognize that a transition from a Ritual that has been in use since 1985 and the expense of purchasing a new Ritual may be difficult for some members. However, the first printing of 2,200

copies of the updated Ritual sold out in 60 days indicating the change was welcomed. Many fraternities have subsidized the cost of the new Ritual for those who cannot afford it.

To assist with this transition, the NEC is not mandating use of the new Ritual and is offering free, customizable downloads of key ceremonies and rites.

In summary, it was necessary to reissue the book. After nearly 40 years, changes were needed, and the cost of printing a book is significantly higher. Simply reprinting the 1985 Ritual would have come close to the cost of this new book.

You can order the new Ritual on our National Website from the link on the home page.



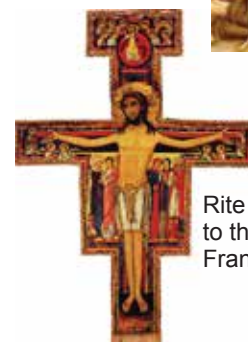
New Ritual Book available at the Gospel to Life Bookstore.



The Ceremony of Welcoming



Rite of Permanent Commitment to the Gospel Life within the Mass: Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order



Rite of Admission to the Secular Franciscan Order

Opening and Closing Prayers for Fraternity Meetings & Gatherings



Servant Leadership in YouFra

by Kathleen Molaro, OFS
National FY/YA Animator

One charism that defines the spirituality of a Secular Franciscan is that of servant leadership. Our spirituality is based on journeying together as a community of love – a fraternity. To be a leader is to guide and animate the fraternity with hope and joy; to assume responsibility and hold authority, but not power; and to have a collegial relationship with those we serve, always inviting others to share their gifts, talents, and ideas.

The CIOFS Formation Secretariat shared a document recently titled *Animation and Servant Leadership in the OFS-YouFra*. They point out examples of the servant leadership style we, as Secular Franciscans, are called to imitate.

Jesus “came into the world to serve, to give himself entirely to others.” His life, dedicated to the growth and well-being of all people, attracted others, especially due to his deep connection to our Heavenly Father. Mary led, and still leads, “through her constant presence and necessary proximity.” She trusted, shared what she witnessed, and quietly and eagerly served. Saint Francis “always accompanied the brothers with closeness, dialogue, listening, presence, encounter, and above all, by making every word he proposed a reality.” Saint Clare broke away from stereotypes, a radical move during that era. Others “saw in her the courage to leave her comfortable life and to give herself completely” to God and in service to others. Jesus, Mary, Francis, and Clare also lived what they preached. They didn’t expect of others what they weren’t willing to undertake themselves.

When we speak of servant leadership in the YouFra movement, these ideals can be readily applied. Once a YouFra is established, the young people will be their own animators, with the support of the OFS. They will provide their own servant leadership, along with the connection to the leadership of a local fraternity.

In the meantime, as we walk them toward the eventual formation of a YouFra, are we witnessing to them what it means to be a servant leader? Are

we helping them learn how to make valid, well-thought-out Christ-centered decisions? Are we in their presence with a cordial and joyful demeanor? Are we listening, promoting healthy dialogue, and committed to strengthening their sense of community? Are we prayerful? Are we committed to their well-being? If so, we are acting as good servant leaders, and able to pass on the role to our younger generation.

The Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission has spent several years helping regions, fraternities, and individuals better understand the needs of youth and young adults. We have periodically held “Core Four” Zoom sessions that cover the basics of working with young people.

Future sessions will highlight ways to plan and implement ideas for reaching out to younger Catholics. These session topics have been determined by five main desires of young people: 1. To be part of a community; 2. Prayer and spiritual growth; 3. To be of service; 4. To determine and strengthen their vocations; and 5. To learn peaceful, Franciscan-hearted conflict resolution.

We know that leadership in the involvement of youth and young adults will ensure a future of folks willing to change the world by living a gospel life. We hope and pray that more of you will join us in this life-giving, courageous journey.



OFS-USA Presence at the 10th Eucharistic Congress

by Susan Ronan, OFS
National Secretary



Jonathan Roumie

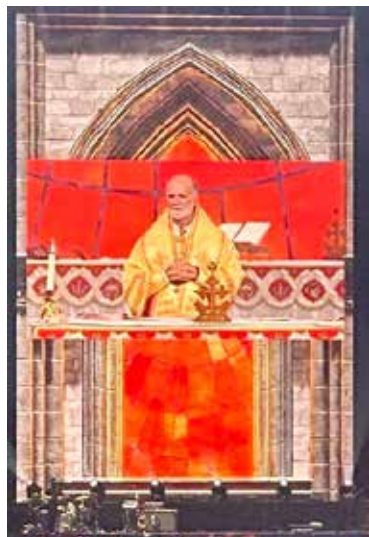
How can anyone put into words the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit? From the minute Helen Burke, OFS, People of Peace Fraternity Minister, and I stepped into the Indianapolis Convention Center to set up the OFS-USA booth, the feeling of peace, love and joy permeated the air. Throughout the five incredibly spiritual and blessed days, our 24 amazing OFS volunteers greeted literally thousands of visitors to our booth.



Bishop Barron

Our volunteers represented nine local fraternities and five regions. We were so happy to see so many of our Secular brothers and sisters, both professed and in formation, stop by to say hello and bring back to their fraternities tau magnets and profession prayer cards. Each morning we celebrated Holy Mass with 50,000 Catholic men, women, and a lot of children. . . so many young families!

Each evening outstanding clergy and lay people led us in praising and worshipping the Lord, highlighted by a Holy Hour with the Holy Eucharist in a sacred spotlight in the darkened stadium. Miracles happened in abundance as the Lord filled this little corner of the world with His great love, peace and joy.



Syro-Malabar Qurbana
Archbishop Borys Gudziak



Outside the convention center.



Adoration



OFS Booth Volunteers



Outside Crucifix

The Stigmata Narrated from the Early Legends

Assembled by Bret Thoman, OFS

Major Life, Bonaventure (1240)

He certainly wanted to conform in everything to Christ crucified, who poor and suffering and naked remained hanging on the cross.

Legend of the Three Companions (1483)

This burning love and the incessant memory of the Passion of Christ, which he hid in his heart, the Lord wished to show to the whole world by means of the stupendous prerogative of an exceptional privilege, with which he decorated him while he was still alive in the flesh.

Major Legend, Bonaventure (1223-1224)

Two years before he gave up his spirit to God, after many and varied labors, divine Providence took him aside and led him to a high mountain called Mount Verna. Here he had begun, according to his custom, to fast during Lent in honor of St. Michael the Archangel, when he began to feel himself inundated with an extraordinary sweetness in contemplation, inflamed by a more vivid flame of heavenly desires, filled with richer divine gifts.

The Little Flowers (1919)

The following day came, that is, the day of the most Holy Cross, and Saint Francis, early in the morning before daybreak, threw himself in prayer before the door of his cell, turning his face toward the east, and prayed in this way: "O my Lord Jesus Christ, I beg you to grant me two graces before I die: the first, that in my life I may feel in my soul and body, as much as possible, that pain which you, sweet Jesus, endured in the hour of your most bitter Passion; the second is that I may feel in my heart, as much as possible, that excessive love with which you, Son of God, were inflamed to willingly endure such a great Passion for us sinners."

Major Legend, Bonaventure (1228)

Thus the true love of Christ had transformed the lover into the very image of the Beloved.

First Life, Celano (484-485)

[Then,] a man appeared to him, in the form of a Seraph, with wings, hovering above him, with his

hands outstretched and his feet together, nailed to a cross. [...] While he was in this state of worry and total uncertainty, behold: on his hands and feet began to appear the same marks of the nails that he had just seen on that mysterious crucified man. Francis' hands and feet appeared to be pierced in the middle by nails, the heads of which were visible in the palms of the hands and on the backs of the feet, while the points protruded from the opposite side. Those marks were round on the inside of the hands, and elongated on the outside, and formed almost a fleshy excrescence, as if they were the points of nails bent and hammered back. Likewise on the feet were imprinted the marks of the nails protruding from the rest of the flesh. The right side was also pierced as if by a spear, with a wide scar, and often bled, wetting the tunic and the undergarments with that sacred blood.



St Francis with the Stigmata

Minor Legend, Bonaventure (1377-1378)

[Then,] the angelic man, Francis, came down from the mountain: and he carried with him the image of the Crucified, not depicted on tablets of stone or wood by the hand of an artisan, but written in the members of the flesh by the finger of the living God.

Treatise of Miracles, Celano (830-831)

We have indeed seen these things which we narrate, with the hands with which we write we have touched them, and what we testify with our lips we have seen with moved eyes, confirming for all time what we swore only once by touching the sacred objects.

Regional Roundup

In this issue, five of the 30 regions are highlighted.

La Verna Region

La Verna Region consists of most of Wisconsin and the upper portion of Michigan and includes 18 established fraternities. At the time of regionalization, the members voted and chose the name because of the connection to St. Francis, especially to his receiving the stigmata.

The region includes fraternities in areas ranging from urban to rural and is located by the two largest lakes of the five Great Lakes: Lake Superior and Lake Michigan.

Our Lady of the Angels Region

Southern Westchester, Staten Island, and the borough of Manhattan, which are all in New York, as well as Central and Northern New Jersey, are all part of Our Lady of the Angels Region. Although it is one of the smallest regions by area, it is one of the largest in membership with 670 candidates and professed members.

When it was time to determine the name for the region, fraternities were invited to suggest names, and through a selection process, Our Lady of the Angels was chosen.

Tau Cross Region

This is another region that is geographically small but includes 21 established fraternities. It covers the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island in New York. As one of the last regions to be established, its name was assigned to it.



Tau Cross

Tau Cross Region includes the Archdiocese of New York, the Diocese of Brooklyn, and the Diocese of Rockville Centre. It is currently active in implementing the processes of Fraternal Accompaniment and cell creation to sustain the shrinking fraternities.

Our Lady of Guadalupe – Empress of the Americas Region

The region covers all of New Mexico and part of Texas and includes 14 fraternities. When it was established, the council met in El Paso and chose its name. Since it shares borders with three states and Mexico, it is a diverse and bilingual region.



Our Lady of Guadalupe

Santa Maria de las Montanas Region (Saint Mary of the Mountains Region)

Unlike the two previously mentioned New York regions, the Santa Maria de las Montanas Region covers five states: Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, South Dakota, and part of Nebraska! It includes 12 established fraternities and two emerging groups.

In 1993, World Youth Day was celebrated in Denver, Colorado, and is considered to have been a spiritual revolution. Since St. Pope John Paul II's visit, the Augustine Institute, FOCUS Ministry, and two seminaries were all established in the state. The region was established on October 20, 1994.

**MEET THE
 KEYNOTES SPEAKERS**
 For our
21st Quinquennial Congress



Brother Bill Short, OFM

Director Collegium S. Bonaventurae-Frati Editori di Quaracchi Collegio S. Isidoro in Rome, Italy. Professor of Spirituality, Franciscan School of Theology.

Brother Bill was born and raised in Seattle, Washington. After graduating from the University of San Francisco, he entered the novitiate of the Franciscan Friars of St. Barbara Province, making his solemn profession of vows in 1978. After graduate studies in Berkeley and Rome, he was appointed to a teaching position at the Franciscan School of Theology, where he has subsequently served as Academic Dean and President. In addition to his academic work, he is also an amateur winemaker, a native-plant gardener, and an interpreter – translator for many international Franciscan meetings.



Darleen Pryds, PhD

Associate Professor of Spirituality and History and Academic Director, MTS-Franciscan Theology online degree, at the Franciscan School of Theology. Acquisitions Editor, Franciscan Media.

Darleen Pryds is a laywoman who has been exploring the Franciscan spiritual tradition since she was a freshman in college. Since then, she has found her academic research on the lay Franciscan tradition buoys her faith. Her focus on lay Franciscans has analyzed the tradition of lay preaching as a form of “Somatic Theology,” or theology expressed through lived experience. You can find her research in her many books and articles. Currently, her work explores Franciscan Laity as Co-Creators of the Franciscan Tradition and Caregiving at the End of Life.



Father Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv.

Friar Wayne Hellmann is professor emeritus at Saint Louis University, where he had served for forty-five years. He had earned his Doctorate in Theology from Ludwig-Maximilians- Universität in Munich, Germany in 1974. He directed doctoral dissertations on themes within the Franciscan tradition and received many awards and other recognition during his distinguished academic career at Saint Louis

University. He also served in leadership positions within his Conventual Province of Our Lady of Consolation, including that of Minister Provincial.

He served as co-editor of the three-volume series, Francis of Assisi: Early Documents (New City Press, 1999-2001) and also as co-editor for the first three volumes of Studies in Early Franciscan Sources (Franciscan Institute Press, St. Bonaventure University, 2011). These latter volumes offer scholarly essays on each of the writings of Francis and of Clare. In addition, he has written numerous articles and served as an editor for the Franciscan entries found in the new edition of the New Catholic Encyclopedia. For many summers over the last years, he taught early Franciscan sources at the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure, New York. More recently he served as adjunct visiting professor at the Franciscan School of Theology in San Diego, California. Additionally, he has often lectured or conducted retreats for Franciscans in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia.

Word Search

Secular Franciscan Blessed

P	N	M	R	M	A	N	N	A	R	O	S	A	C	W
N	H	A	Z	C	W	D	C	P	B	W	L	T	J	P
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J	O	A	N	M	A	R	Y	L	N	L	X	V	S	R

ANGELA Salawa & Angela Truszkowska

ANNA ROSA Gattorno

BUONADONNA of Segni

CONTARDO Ferrini

DELPHINE of Sabran

FRANZ Jägerstätter

HUMILIANA of Cerchi

JACOBA of Settesoli

JOAN MARY de Maille

LUCHESIO of Poggibonsi

MARY of the Passion

MARY FRANCES Schervier

MICHELINA of Pesaro

RAMON Llull

SOLANUS Casey

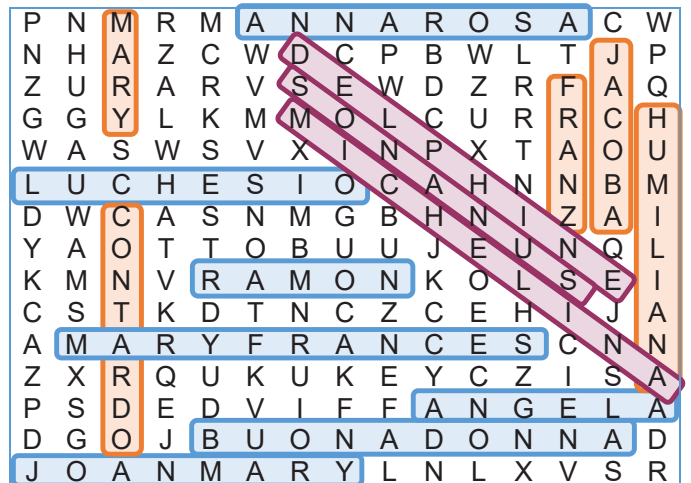
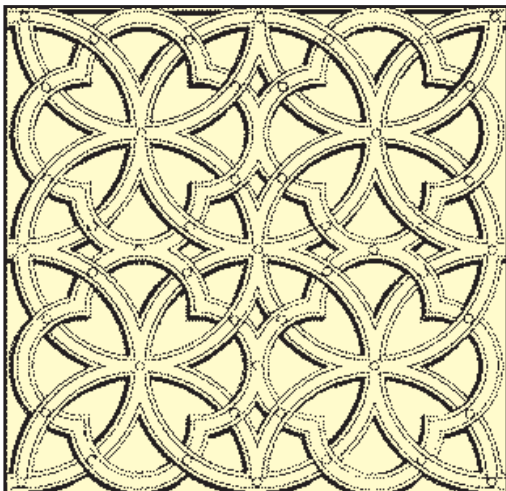
CALENDAR

MONTH	DAY	EVENT/MEETING
November	8-9	Bl. Solanus Casey Region Election
	9-10	Our Lady of the Angels Region Election
	9-17	XVII General Chapter of OFS – Rome
	22	National Fraternity Council Meeting - Zoom
December	6-7	NEC/CNSA Meeting – Zoom
January	7	2026 “Q” Core Virtual Meeting
	8	NEC Virtual Meeting
February	8	St. Thomas More Region Election
	27-	NEC/CNSA Meeting – in person – Albuquerque, NM
March	3	
April	25-26	Our Lady of the Rockies Region Visitation and Election
	26	Tau Cross Region Election

NEC – National Executive Council

CNSA – Conference of National Spiritual Assistants

Word Search





GOSPEL TO LIFE -- OFS-USA BOOKSTORE

Order these items online at the Gospel to Life Bookstore:

<https://gospel-to-life-bookstore.square.site/>

Description	Price Each
Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order	21.00
Brown Rule Book – Presentation Copy – English	7.50
Brown Rule Book – Presentation Copy – Spanish	7.50
Gospel to Life - Rule with Commentary - English	5.00
Gospel to Life- Rule with Commentary - Spanish	5.00
National Fraternity Banner Journal	10.00
Adventures in Assisi (Child’s book)	10.00
Fraternity Register – Portrait – English	40.00
Fraternity Register – Landscape – English	40.00
Fraternity Register – Landscape – Spanish	40.00
OFS - History - Vol 1 - 1917-1942	14.00
OFS - History - Vol 2 A - 1943-1978	14.00
OFS - History - Vol 2 B - 1943-1978	14.00
OFS - History - Vol III - 1979-2007	14.00
Profession Promise Card - English	1.00
Profession Promise Card - Spanish	1.00
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Postage - not included in cost of items.	
	Prices effective October 1, 2024
Questions: Email: GospelToLifeBookstore@gmail.com	

For Additional formation materials - see Smoky Valley order form.

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Smoky-Valley-update-Dec2023.pdf>

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