



THE JOY OF FRANCIS

Secular Franciscan Order | St. Francis Region #52 | Southern California



St. Francis Chapter, January 15-17th, 2016, Best Western Plus Inns, Ontario, CA.

RE: Newsletter

Planned publication dates for *The Joy of Francis* are Feb 15th, May 15th, Aug 15th, and Nov. 15th.

Submission Deadlines for information to be included must be received by Feb 1st, May 1st, Aug 1st, and Nov 1st. Local Ministers, as well as District and Language Group Liaisons, are encouraged to submit information about their fraternity's activities. Information should be sent to Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS, 1933 Tudor Drive, San Jacinto, CA 92583 or as a Word document to cylmaljan@earthlink.net.

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister

Pruning Time

Do you have fruit trees in your garden: apricots, peaches, plums, pomegranates? If your answer is yes; it is pruning time. One week ago I was privileged to attend a free workshop on tree pruning. The purpose of tree pruning at the end of winter, as explained by the Master Gardener, is to open up the tree. The branches that grow inward are removed along with some old and new branches from other parts of the tree. Those branches if left on the tree would sap energy from the tree without producing good fruit.

Before beginning to remove branches from a tree we needed to step back, examine the tree for a couple minutes, then step forward and make the cuts. The results of our handiwork, assured the

Master Gardener, will be delicious, healthy fruit in late spring and early summer.

Maybe, this Lenten season we could liken ourselves to fruit trees. With a little pruning we too could improve the quality of fruit we produce. Step back. Examine our lives. Which old ideas do we need to let go? Which new or not so new ministries or groups, though good of themselves, are sapping our energies and leaving us less able to live our Rule effectively?

Like the tree pruning process, we need to open ourselves, make room for the changes that need to occur. We need to let the sun enter to illuminate the way to those changes that we need to make in our lives in order to give birth to new ways to grow spiritually because:

“Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that.

You cannot hold onto the old, all the while declaring that you want something new.

The old will defy the new;

The old will deny the new;

The old will decry the new.

There is only one way to bring in the new.

You must make room for it.”

Neale Donale Walsh in Eager to Love by Richard Rohr.

So my dear brothers and sisters, happy pruning this Lenten season as you look forward to the ways Christ will be working in you.

Your Sister in Christ
Judith

FORMATION:

Jan DeSpain OFS, Regional Formation Director

Because of the extraordinary gift given to us by Papa Francis we have an opportunity to consider making 2016 an image of an “Ocean of Mercy” for Franciscans. Wow...that’s a lot. Since we are in the season of Lent perhaps the first place to start with is ourselves.

A priest at my church recently commented that often it is easier to forgive and be merciful to others than ourselves. His statement stayed with me. I believe it is true for most of us. If we are not kind and compassionate to ourselves, how can we minister similarly to others? Well, I guess it is good that we are in Lent and can wade into that fathomless ocean of mercy to receive healing in the self-forgetfulness of conversion.

A major topic of discussion at Chapter this year was relationship. That is what is key in our fraternities, families, friends, employment.... Focusing on mercy will enable any relationship to thrive. All this flows from the prime relationship with our Creator. Ministers met in chapter fraternities and district meetings to brainstorm ways of encouraging creative formation and relationship building.

Because I will travel to Poland’s World Youth Day this July with my grandson and daughter, a particular DVD caught my attention so I purchased it. I think it could be of interest to you as there is a Franciscan connection. In brief the DVD, “Ocean of Mercy” (Ignatius Press) chronicles the lives of three saints; St. Maximillian Kolbe, St. John Paul II and St. Faustina. These three voices of mercy emerged from Poland and their lives intersected in amazing ways although they never met one

another. It is filmed in more than 20 cities in Poland and includes interviews with friends, biographers, and family. All three lives heralded the message of Divine Mercy to all mankind.

I hope you will consider in this Year of Mercy to incorporate this theme in creative ways. This DVD might be one way. I will be talking to my parish about presenting it as a parish event. It might be too long for a regular fraternity meeting as it is 65 minutes in length. Many fraternities meet for additional gatherings, so it would be perfect for that.

In my own fraternity we have purchased *The Holy Year of Mercy, A Faith-Sharing Guide*. It contains 8 sessions that contain a Gospel passage followed by a homily on that passage by Pope Francis. It is followed by discussion and reflection questions. It is published by The Word Among Us Press and the ISBN # is 978-1-59325-282-3. This could also be a resource for you.

What we need to remember in the Year of Mercy is: how does it connect to our vocation and rule? In our day and culture the world is looking for role models of mercy. It is part of the reason we were called. Are you ready and willing?

REGIONAL WORKSHOP

This is one of a series of Continuing Education workshops geared towards alumni of the Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class and is open to all local fraternity members.

There are members of the Secular Franciscan Order in St. Francis Region whose first language is or is not English, who were born in the USA or a different country. (On the Sunday morning of Chapter last January there were people from five

countries who spoke at least four different languages in attendance). This provides our region with a rich, diverse culture.

To help us better understand and appreciate how our individual cultures shape and influence our interactions, Patricia A. de Fretas Ph. D. professor of Ethic and Women's Studies at Cal Poly, Pomona, will lead a workshop on Multiculturalism on Saturday 16, April 2016 at St. Gregory the Great Church, Whittier. Please save the date. An agenda for the workshop will be available in March.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

We'd like to invite everyone to attend the Regional Retreat at Serra Retreat Center in Malibu in May, 27th through 29th. Our retreat master this year will be Fr. Michael Higgins, T.O.R., and his theme is "Franciscan Servant Leadership." Fr. Michael is the vice-president of the Franciscan School of Theology, which is now located at Mission San Luis Rey. He is a past Minister General of the T.O.R.s and a great supporter of the Secular Franciscans.

For those of you who may not know (because we don't have any T.O.R. friaries in our Region), the Third Order Regular came originally from the Third Order of St. Francis – us. Not too long after we were established, a group of men and women in the Third Order decided they would like to become vowed religious and live in community instead of just gathering from time to time, and they were approved as an additional order of friars and sisters. The majority of orders of Franciscan sisters – except for the Poor Clares – follow the Third Order Regular Rule. That Rule is much more similar to ours than is the Rule of the

three First Orders. Fr. Michael is a marvelous speaker and his topic is one that we can all learn more about. So get your reservations in early!

Have you thought lately about the meaning of your Profession as a Secular Franciscan? Perhaps these 40 days of Lent are a good time to think about that. Fr. Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap., in an address to the General Chapter of the OFS in Hungary in 2008, said this: “. . . [P]rofession is the act by which a person places him/herself into the hands of God, enabling God to take hold of him, with the result that from the precise moment of profession, the person no longer belongs to him/herself, but is considered as totally ‘expropriated’ and at God’s entire disposal. By virtue of profession, the person becomes God’s property, and therefore ‘sacred.’” What does this mean in *your* life, *today*, in the 21st century? Fr. Felice’s presentation was the source of the article in the F.U.N. Manual written by Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM. You might want to consider this as a worthy subject of ongoing formation for your fraternity during this Lenten season.

Sylvia Paoli, OFS
Regional Spiritual Assistant

JPIC NEWS

Elle Lesperance, OFS
NAFRA-JPIC Commission Member

On January 26, 2016, The NAFRA/JPIC Commission met for our monthly teleconference. I am one of the 11 members of the Commission. The following are the highlights of our discussion:

Commission membership - How many members should we have in the Commission? The consensus was that who shows up regularly for the monthly calls shows the level of commitment.

National JPIC Commission Guideline - The Commission will rework the present and outdated guidelines (2001-2006) of the National JPIC Commission. Once a draft has been put together, it will be presented to the National Executive Council for review and approval by the 2016 Chapter in late October.

JPIC Award – This has been an on-going discussion on our meetings. The consensus is that the current award process needs to be reviewed and revised. The Commission thought that a change should be made in the voting structure and that the award be called in every other year, instead of every year. Also, the Commission will work on some criteria or requirements for nominating candidates.

Regional JPIC Animators Job Description – This is the number one issue that is always being asked by a newly appointed Regional JPIC animator. This will also be a project to be included in the JPIC Animators Handbook, to be submitted for the 2016 Chapter.

International JPIC Commission – This Commission would like to hear from the U.S. National Commission significant JPIC dates that the country or a State observes or memorializes that are relevant to Justice and Peace work. Carolyn Townes has asked the National Commission to submit relevant dates by Feb. 20, 2016. The dates have to be submitted to Attilio Galimberti, OFS, for the CIOFS Presidency Meeting in April.

Here are the Criteria for Memory-Making Dates:

- A significant anniversary (example: National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, National Child Abuse Awareness Month, etc.);
- An event or situation which positively or are negatively JPIC-focused (example: Armenian Genocide);

- It does not necessarily have to be associated with the Church;
- Should not be an event already celebrated by others unless there is a connection to our Franciscan Spirituality.

If you know of any dates in our State of California or in the country as a whole, please submit them to me as soon as possible.

Franciscan Collaboration Efforts – As some of the Commission members are also members of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN), it makes sense to be more collaborative and not to re-invent the wheel on certain issues and projects.

The Commission plans to meet at the Quinquennial gathering in July. Carolyn Townes will be one of the Q speakers.

To close, I want to share with you this:

Vessels of Mercy Prayer

God of Mercy,

As you have forgiven us

So you send us forth

To bear your message of mercy to all.

Give us willing feet and gentle hands

Bless us with listening ears and searching eyes.

Endow us with understanding minds

Ordain us with compassionate hearts.

In our actions and in our words

Make us vessels of your mercy

To reach out to the broken

On behalf of the Father who wipes away our debts

As lovingly as he wipes away our tears

And calls his children home.

Help us lift your people in body and in spirit.

And so we make every year a year of mercy.

Amen.

DISTRICT NEWS:

San Diego County:

On December 6, 2015 The district had a Pre-Christmas gathering. This year Immaculate Conception (English), St. Anthony of Padua (Vietnamese), Nostro Signore de Los Angeles (Spanish), Saint Diego (Korean) Fraternities attended but San Luis Rey fraternity did not attend due to a schedule conflict. In 2016 they will move the gathering to around Thanksgiving time so that every member from the five Fraternities can come to pray, sing, talk and eat together so they can have a good sense of belonging.



On January 1, 2016, after their regular meeting, St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity had mass to celebrate the New Year. They thanked the Lord for their graces and protection from the Almighty for the year 2015. After the mass they ate, sang songs and had a good time together.



On January 15 to 17, 2016, all the San Diego District Fraternities attended the 2016 Regional Chapter. During that time we prayed, learned, shared, enjoyed food together and planned for the new coming year's formation and activities.

The Joy of Francis

Early Spring 2016

In the year of 2016 the San Diego District will have three main events:

1. A Transitus on October 3rd at San Luis Rey Mission.
2. A Picnic in August at a park -Time and place will be announced later.
3. A Thanksgiving gathering will be on November 13th at St Patrick Church in San Diego where the Immaculate Conception holds their monthly meetings.

They will have brief formation sessions at the gatherings in August and November given by Sister Madeline Fitzgerald, OSC, Spiritual Assistant of the San Luis Rey Fraternity and Carol Yandell, OFS, Minister from the Immaculate Conception Fraternity.

On January 29th, Mike Pollack, a member of the San Luis Rey Fraternity passed away. In celebration of his life, a Vigil in his honor was held on Sunday February 7th in the St Clare chapel immediately following 10:00 AM Mass at the Serra Center. This was held in place of their regularly scheduled Liturgy of the Hours time of community prayer. This was an informal gathering. Please pray for Mike's soul and for his family.

On February 1st, 2016, Midge LeClair, a member of the Immaculate Conception Fraternity, had hip surgery to help her walking. The surgery went well and she is having physical therapy right now to help with her recovery. God is always good.

Anthony Tuan Cao, OFS
Regional Councilor/San Diego District Liaison

San Bernardino/Riverside District

Representatives from St. Padre Pio, St. Francis & St. Clare, Immaculata, and Holy Spirit Fraternities met during the Regional Chapter in January to plan for

2016. St. Padre Pio, Holy Spirit and St. Francis & St. Clare Fraternities will host meetings of their ministers, vice ministers and formation directors on April 9th, August 14th and November 12th respectively. On June 5th the District will visit the Holy Door at Mission San Gabriel, coordinated by Immaculata Fraternity. A district Picnic will be held on August 14th, hosted by Holy Spirit Fraternity.

Padre Pio and Holy Spirit Fraternities had annual Epiphany Parties in January. At the Holy Spirit party guests included the families of the two winners of the essay contest the fraternity sponsored, as well as several Felician Franciscan Sisters.



On February 28th, Armando will conduct a Pastoral Visit of St. Francis & St. Clare Fraternity.

William R Mussatto, OFM
District Formator/Liaison



For names of and contact information of Regional Council members, appointed Chairs and District Groups go to: <http://www.stfrancisregion.org/About-St-Francis-Region/Executive-Council>

REGIONAL CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2016

- 20th Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class, St. Gregory's, Whittier.
- 26-28th Religious Education Congress, Anaheim Convention Center, 800 West Katella Ave., Anaheim, CA 92802, [Secular Franciscan Booth #590.](#)
- 28th Pastoral Visit: St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity, Hemet.

MARCH 2016

- 05th Fraternal Visit: St. Louis the King, Santa Barbara.
- 11-13th REC Annual Retreat.

APRIL 2016

- 02nd Regional Executive Council Meeting, Claremont.
- 03rd Fraternal Visit: St. Francis (Korean Language), Los Angeles.
- 16th **SAVE THE DATE:** Continuing Education Workshop on Multiculturalism with Dr. Patricia DeFretas. St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, 13935 Telegraph Road, Whittier, CA 90604.
- 17th Elections: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Santa Ana.
- 24th Elections: Blessed Luchesius and Bounadonna, Los Angeles.
- 30th Meeting: Regional and Local Spiritual Assistants. St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Whittier.

MAY 2016

- 01st Elections: Nuestra Senora De Los Angeles, San Diego.
- 07th Pastoral Visit: St. Anthony of Padua, San Diego.
- 15th Fraternal Visit: Immaculate Conception, San Diego.
- 27-29th Serra Retreat on Servant Leadership with Fr. Michael Higgins, TOR. For Flyer and Registration Form go to stfrancisregion.org. On the lower left side of the Home Page click on [2016 Serra Retreat.](#)

JUNE 2016

- 04th Regional Executive Council Meeting, Claremont.
- 05th Fraternal Visit: St. Clare, Santa Ana.
- 12th Pastoral Visit: St. Padre Pio, Moreno Valley.
- 18-19th Retreat: Koran Language Fraternities.
- 25th Pastoral Visit: Immaculata, Riverside.
- 30-July 3rd Quinquennial Gathering, St. Louis, MO.