



# THE JOY OF FRANCIS

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



St. Francis Regional Executive Council Members, District Liasons, and Appointees at Regional Retreat, March, 2015

## RE: Newsletter

Planned publication dates for *The Joy of Francis* are Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Aug 15<sup>th</sup>, and Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. **Submission Deadlines** for information to be included must be received by Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup>, Aug 1<sup>st</sup>, and Nov 1<sup>st</sup>. 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 19583 or as a Word document to [cylmaljan@earthlink.net](mailto:cylmaljan@earthlink.net).

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## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

On April 11, 2015 Pope Francis announced that he will open the Holy Door of St. Peter Basilica on December 8, 2015, the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, to inaugurate an *Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy*.

Here are a few parallels between what Pope Francis said on April 11 and the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO):

Pope Francis on April 11, 2015	Rule of the SFO June 24, 1978
<p>“In order to be capable of mercy ... we must first of all dispose ourselves to listen to the Word of God. ... In this way, it will be possible to contemplate God's mercy and adopt it as our lifestyle”. <i>Paragraph #13.</i></p>	<p>“ ... Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel”. <i>Article # 4</i></p>
<p>“... we will be asked if we have helped others to escape the doubt that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness; if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bond of poverty; if we have been close to the lonely and afflicted; ...” <i>Paragraph # 15.</i></p>	<p>“ ... Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. ” <i>Article #14.</i></p>
<p>“This Holy Year will bring to the fore the richness of Jesus' mission ... to bring a word and gesture of consolation to the poor, to proclaim liberty to those bound by new forms of slavery in modern society, to restore sight to those who can see no more because they are caught up in themselves, to restore dignity to all those from whom it has been robbed. ...” <i>Paragraph # 16.</i></p>	<p>“Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.” <i>Article # 15.</i></p>

What Pope Francis is asking of all the faithful should be very familiar to all of us Secular Franciscans. At Profession we promised to follow the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and live our lives according to our Rule. We all need to **be** more of who we promised to be and Pope Francis lays out very clearly our life's mission. Please take the time to read **Misericordiae Voltus** in its entirety. So, my brothers and sisters, let us be about the Lord's business, for as we have so often been reminded: For up till now we have done nothing.

Your Sister in Christ.  
Judith

Sources:

[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letter/documents/papa-francesco\\_bolla\\_20150411\\_misericordiae-vultus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letter/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html)

Hidden Power III: From Gospel to Life. The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order with Commentary. Franciscan Media.

**REGIONAL NEWS & UPDATES:**

**REC RETREAT:**

From Feb 28st to March 1st, 2015, the REC had their annual retreat at the Pro-Sanctity Spirituality Center in Fullerton, Orange County. The retreat also included District Liaisons and appointees in the St. Francis Region. Plans were discussed for the Region for 2015 -2016. During the retreat Sylvia Paoli, former Regional Minister, and Margarita Rodriguez,

Regional Councilor, gave a presentation based on St. Bonaventure’s book "The Soul's Journey into God." We also had a chance to celebrate Fr. Stephen Gross’ birthday on Friday night.



**TREASURER’S REPORT:**

*Robert Herbelin, OFS, Regional Treasurer*

I would like to thank all of the local fraternities and groups for submitting their Annual Report to Region in a timely manner. We were able to compile all of your information and submit it to the National Fraternity (NAFRA) by the May 1, 2015 deadline.

Our statistics for the end of 2014 are: 737 Active/Excused Professed members; 61 Candidates; and 49 Inquirers in 30 Established Fraternities and 3 Emerging Groups.

Thanks also to the many fraternities who have submitted their Fair Share. We have collected 85% of the total due.

**Serra Retreat**

Our annual Regional Retreat at Serra Retreat Center, May 23-24, is **sold out**. There is a waiting list. If you have registered for the retreat and are unable attend, please notify the center in a timely manner so that your slot can be filled by someone on the waiting list.

Please bring your favorite snacks and beverages to share at social time.

**FORMATION**

*Jan DeSpain OFS, Regional Formation Director*

Good People,

This is my first article as your newly appointed Regional Formation Director. I’m sure many of you do not know me so I will briefly introduce myself. I was professed 24 years ago as of December of this year. During that time I have served in all local council positions except secretary. Most of my service has been as Formation Director, which is my passion. In my secular life I taught elementary education for fourteen years before retiring three years ago. This year I resumed teaching again as a substitute teacher. I have also taught faith formation in our church in elementary, middle school, high school and RCIA. I am currently teaching high school faith formation. So you see, facilitating learning whether with Franciscans or in the classroom has been a large part of my life.

As I’m sure most of you are aware, formation in our Order has been designated as of key importance from CIOFS (International) for a few years. Recently they have encouraged all regions /local fraternities to focus on Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*. Your Regional Council is using it for their Ongoing Formation and encourages you to use it at your gatherings if you are not already doing so.

You can easily find it online as a downloadable document from the Vatican website. If you want a resource that has a study guide included, The Word Among Us Press has a book you can purchase online, the ISBN is 978-1-59325-262-5. This document is written for all Catholics, but is especially pertinent for us Franciscans.

One of my first tasks is to contact every local formation director to see how formation is being

conducted in their fraternity. I will be sending out a short survey to get a better picture of what is happening in initial and ongoing formation and see how we can better assist individual fraternities. I appreciate what all the formation directors/teams are doing to animate their fraternities. Good formation is vital for our future. I'm looking forward to meeting even more of you "good people" who are striving to bring the joy of the Gospel alive in your fraternities and lives.

Joyfully, Jan

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:  
CARING ABOUT THE MOTHER EARTH**

Elle Lesperance, OFS  
NAFRA-JPIC Commission Member

What does it mean to be pro-life? With all the big discussions on abortion and the death penalty, Catholic environmentalists assert that an issue is often overlooked involving human life and dignity – the environment. Environmental facts are very much associated to and related to human life issues. They are really one in the same.

The phrase environmental justice links the concept of ecology and social justice. It highlights the strong relationship that exists between the ecological questions, and the issues of justice, peace, and the defense of the rights of individuals and peoples. It calls for the fair treatment of cultures, income classes and educational levels with respect to the development and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment implies that no population should be forced to carry a disproportionate share of exposure to the negative effects of pollution or other environmental dangers due to lack of political or economic strength. The worldwide attack on the environment has become, in reality,

an assault on the poor and a form of environmental racism.

Recent Popes have drawn a clear connection between dignity of the human person and the surrounding environment. The Church has had a fundamental respect for nature since the very beginning and has brought it to the world. St. Francis, the "father of ecology" asserts on the kinship of all creation. Pope Francis is expected to weigh in with an upcoming encyclical later this year. Pope Francis often comments on the "culture of waste". The three most recent popes have focused strongly on the theme of human ecology which finds its basis in both the physical laws of nature and the moral natural law. The challenge of Catholic social teachings is to work for the human and common good while caring for God's creation.

Air, water and land are infinite natural resources. But pollution or contamination of these elements challenges our human existence. Harmful chemicals such as nitrates can affect the normal development of the young and the unborn children. They can cause health problems for the elderly, infirm and those with weakened immune systems. The lack of rain or drought such as presently suffered in California, can depress crop growth and consequently cause economic hardships for agricultural workers and farm owners. The poorest lose their lands and fields, who suffer the battle provoked by the great powers over natural resources, and whose lands are turned into dumps for the trash of the rich. The poor are forced to leave their homes and lands in many parts of the world, not only because of traditional reasons like war and violence, but increasingly because of droughts, floods, deforestation, disappearance of species, etc.

Those uprooted by such disasters are increasingly referred to as “environmental refugees” or “climate refugees”.

As Catholic Franciscans we understand that our Creator has created human beings to be in relationship with his environment, therefore, we must be good stewards of our planet. Stewardship to our Mother Earth is part of our principal goal of striving for holiness. Franciscans have an important role to advocate in local, state, national and international discussions on the potential challenges of climate change and development. Many international advocates lose track of the many issues related to climate change, such as poverty, development and care for humanity, which the Church routinely discusses. We are called to be the Catholic voice in those secular environmental groups that undermine the dignity of the human person.

By participating in the dialogue on environmental protection, Franciscans can help dispel false information and promote ideas that protect both the dignity of the human person and the environment. Seculars like us must have a strong perspective and hands-on engagement in environmentalism that the entire Christian church often lacks.

We Franciscans are called to be in the forefront of caring for God’s creation. We are called to be in solidarity with the poor, to be a Gospel presence and spirit that requires a way of life that cherishes peacemaking values on the environment, the way St. Francis understood them. Let us live “lightly” on the earth and a sister and a brother to all of creation. Franciscan presence and spirit is also about prayer, especially prayers of praise and thanksgiving to our Creator for His love, for the gift

of life, for the beauty and bounty of nature, and for the world we inhabit.

### **DISTRICT NEWS:**

#### **Orange County:**

On March 12th, 13th and 14th, 2015 the St Francis Region participated the Congress of Religious Education in the Anaheim Convention Center in Orange County. This was the 3rd consecutive year we had a Secular Franciscan booth at this event. Secular Franciscans from the region gave out flyers and answered questions about our Order. We had a sign-up sheet for the people who wanted more information about our Order.



Nam Nguyen, a member of St. Clare Fraternity, Santa Ana, died on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **San Diego County:**

On March 7, 2015, St Anthony of Padua Fraternity (Vietnamese) had a celebration for the Lunar New Year (the year of the Goat) at the Vietnamese Catholic Community Center in San Diego. After the regular meeting we had mass to say thank for all the blessings from God in 2014, praying and asking for the good year in 2015. We finished with a tradition celebration of the TET (New Year) with foods and music...The fraternity members had a good time together. It was a good start for the new 2015 year.



On March 8, 2015 the San Luis Rey Fraternity celebrated the Rite for the Profession of Dorothy Mann and Michael Pollack with Minister David York. The Mass was celebrated by Fr Franklin Fong, OFM. After the Profession the fraternity had reception with a celebration for Carol Imhoff, OFS in honor of her 50th year anniversary of her profession. Congratulations for all of you.



On April 12, 2015 the Immaculate Conception Fraternity had a Chapter of Elections. Anthony Tuan Cao, OFS was the Presider with Rock De Spain, OFS Regional Spiritual Assistant serving as church witness. The new Council members are:

- Minister: Caroline Yandell
  - Vice Minister: Patricia Dervish
  - Formation Director: Joann La Gasse
  - Secretary: Marie Nopper
  - Treasurer: Sarah Mc Timmonds
  - Councilor #1: Margo Reyes
  - Councilor #2: Margaret Welch
- Congratulations for all of you.

On May 2nd, the St Anthony of Padua (Vietnamese) in San Diego had a Fraternal Visit. This was a first time that Judith Mussatto, OFS came as the Regional Minister. She met with the council before and after the whole fraternity meeting. The fraternity and council members had a lot of questions and were satisfied with Judith's answers. She had some comments for us to improve our formation during the regular meeting. The visit finished with a wonderful social time with a lot of Vietnamese foods for Judith to try. Thank you sister Judith for your care and passion!



On June 27 the San Diego district will have a picnic at San Luis Rey Mission.

Deacon Lou Rocha, Spiritual Assistant for Immaculate Conception Fraternity in San Diego, died on May 13<sup>th</sup> after a long illness.

**Los Angeles County:**

St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity, Los Angeles, is sponsoring a one-day retreat with Fr. Robert Barbato, OFM Cap., "Becoming Gospel Merchants with St. Francis," on Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am -3 pm at St. Lawrence of Brindisi Church, 10122 Compton Ave, Los Angeles. Cost is \$10 and includes a Continental Breakfast. Brown Bag lunch (beverage provided). For more information or to make a reservation (RSVP), contact Adriana Lopez at [adriana2242@att.net](mailto:adriana2242@att.net) or a fraternity member.

**San Bernardino/Riverside District**

San Bernardino/Riverside District had a meeting of representatives from all four fraternities in our district at St. Matthews Catholic Church in Corona. Plans were discussed for a district picnic hosted by Holy Spirit Fraternity to be held on August 9<sup>th</sup> in Claremont.



Sister Death visited the district: Angelina Sagherian, a long-time member of Padre Pio Fraternity, passed away in January; Gerri Merchant, a member of St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity, died on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

A candidate from each of Padre Pio and St Francis and St Clare Fraternities are ready for profession which is scheduled for July 25th at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Hemet. Holy Spirit and Immaculata Fraternities each have one person who has just entered Candidacy.



Ted Hewitt, OFS, from Holy Spirit Fraternity, with the approval of Sister Sara, Chancellor of the Diocese of San Bernardino, in the name of Auxiliary Bishop Rutilio, represented the Diocese of San Bernardino at the 104th Inter-denominational Easter Sunrise Service on top of Mt. Rubidoux in the City of Riverside. He read the (Franciscan) Peace Prayer in both English and Spanish. He also made the "Raincross" bell which was rung to begin and end the service.



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>

To submit articles and/or photographs for **The Joy of Francis**, contact Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS at [cylmaljan@earthlink.net](mailto:cylmaljan@earthlink.net)

## REGIONAL CALENDAR

### MAY 2015

- 16<sup>th</sup> **Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class, St. Gregory's Whittier**  
 17<sup>th</sup> Fraternal Visit: St. Bonaventure Fraternity, Ventura.  
 30<sup>th</sup> Gathering of Regional and Local Spiritual Assistants, Whittier

### JUNE 2015

- 06<sup>th</sup> Regional Executive Council Meeting, Claremont  
 14<sup>th</sup> Fraternal Visit: St. Padre Pio Fraternity, Moreno Valley  
 20<sup>nd</sup> **Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class, St. Gregory's Whittier**  
 27<sup>th</sup> San Diego District Annual Picnic, Mission San Luis Rey  
 28<sup>th</sup> Fraternal Visit: Immaculata Fraternity, Riverside.

### JULY 2015

- 05<sup>th</sup> Elections: St. Clare Fraternity, Santa Ana  
 11<sup>th</sup> Elections: San Juan Capistrano Fraternity, San Juan Capistrano  
 18<sup>th</sup> **Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class, St. Gregory's Whittier**  
 25<sup>th</sup> Professions: St. Francis and St. Clare and St. Padre Pio Fraternities, Hemet  
 26<sup>th</sup> Elections: St. Joseph Fraternity, Los Angeles

### AUGUST 2015

- 01<sup>st</sup> Regional Executive Council Meeting, TBA  
 02<sup>th</sup> Pastoral Visit: San Luis Rey Fraternity, Oceanside.  
 09<sup>th</sup> Fraternal Visit: St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Los Angeles  
 09<sup>th</sup> San Bernardino/Riverside District Annual Picnic, Claremont  
 15<sup>th</sup> **Retreat with Fr. Robert Barbato OFM Cap.**, St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity,  
 Los Angeles  
 15<sup>th</sup> **Spiritual Assistant/Formator Class, St. Gregory's Whittier**  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Fraternal Visit: St. Maximilian Mary Kolby Fraternity, Torrance

### SEPTEMBER 2015

- 13<sup>th</sup> Pastoral Visit: San Lorenzo Rueiz Fraternity, Los Angeles  
 20<sup>th</sup> Elections: Santo Toribio Fraternity, Los Angeles  
 27<sup>th</sup> Fraternal Visit: St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity, Los Angeles  
 27<sup>th</sup> Pastoral Visit: St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity, Hemet