

JOY OF FRANCIS

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

Fall Edition 2019

Let Us Give Thanks....Always



“



Minister's Message

Our Rule

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) is our Rule in Action

Where in our Rule can we find this call to action that we, Secular Franciscans, make visible in our daily lives? The following are paraphrases of some of those articles of our Rule.

Article XI. We reduce our material needs, by curbing a thirst for possessions and the domineering power that comes from ownership, and by using all God's gifts in a spirit of generosity, justice and moderation. We are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of all God's children.

Article XIII. We recognize that we are part of a community and therefore, accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

Article XIV. We extend ourselves by using our special talents, competences, and responsibilities.

Article XV. We show justice and motivate justice in others, not just in our private lives but also in the public forum of politics, business, and economics.

Article XVI. With a positive attitude towards work, we reshape our own and other peoples' values and actions regarding labor, management, business, economics, a living wage, welfare, proper use of our talents and the resources of others.

Article XVIII. We recognize the sacred value of all creation as symbols of the union between God and his people and express a profound respect for all creation. We enable nature and technology and build a community conscience towards using natural resources.

Article XIX. We put aside all thought of violence and embrace a largeness of heart. We are peace makers. Peace grows out of our search for personal integrity and harmony with others and the discovery of God's presence everywhere.

Article IV. We carefully read the gospel and apply what we read to our daily lives.

As we enter the liturgical new year, may we, this Advent, take the time to meditate on and act on what it means to work for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in our time. Can we curb our thirst for possessions? How do we continue or begin to work for justice in private and public life? How can we better care for creation?

Source: *From Gospel to Life. The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order with Commentary*. National Spiritual Assistants, Benet A. Funk. O.F.M. Coordinator. Hidden Power III. Franciscan Herald Press, 1979.

Peace and All Good,

Judith Mussatto, OFS



Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

LIVING IN FRATERNITY

Article 22 of our Rule says that the local fraternity “becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love.” Let’s think a bit about how our fraternity is a “visible sign of the Church” and how it is a “community of love.”

The first question we’ll probably have to ask ourselves is just what *is* the visible sign of the Church. Is it what we observe as we attend Mass each Sunday? Do we see people hurrying in and hurrying out, with hardly a word to anyone, nor a smile on their face? Do we observe more “road rage” in the parking lot than love? Or do we observe a unified group of disciples coming together to give praise to Our Lord and thanksgiving for His many blessings? By our profession, we promise to “live the gospel”, “in the manner of St. Francis.” (Rule, *art. 2*) Isn’t that what all Christians are supposed to do - - live the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and thereby become Church.

We could conclude that the “visible sign of the Church”, then, is a fraternity in which all of the teachings of Jesus are taken to heart and totally followed by each and every member. Thus, we should be filled with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and peace. (Col. 4:12-14) And as we have been told, the greatest thing is love, and that is what we are called to be, a “community of love.” Love is patient, kind, not jealous, not pompous, not inflated, not rude, doesn’t seek its own interests, is not quick-tempered, doesn’t brood over injury, rejoices in truth, bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

Can you imagine a fraternity in which each one of us practiced all of these gospel qualities? We would truly reflect the Church, and the Gospel which we are called to live. Perhaps you might meditate on these things, particularly in relationship to each member of your fraternity, and consider how you could improve your own relationships in that fraternity. If each person did that, our fraternities would have few problems.

Sylvia Paoli, OFS

President-in-turn, Conference of
Regional Spiritual Assistants



FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION LUCY IBARRA

Come Lord Jesus! Merry Christmas my Brothers and Sisters!

“While the weight of the mystery rests on the part of the divine, it rests equally on the human nature that God has humbly bent down to lift up us as his own. The figure of the stigmatized Francis reminds each of us of our Christian vocation: to be another incarnation of the Word in all its mystery. Through the burning compassionate love of the Crucified, we are called to reenact the mystery of the Crucified in our own life. Until we enter that mystery and express that mystery through compassionate “burning” love, for our neighbor and for creation, the world remains incomplete. From *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ* by Ilia Delio, OSF

I just love this meditation on our Christian vocation: to be another incarnation of the World. Please take time to ponder on this during our Advent season.

As we move forward with our Formation workshops, I am so pleased to share that our workshop on October 19th was amazing. We were small in numbers, but our group sharing was given from the heart of what it means to offer our Brothers and Sisters the understanding of what it is to be a Secular Franciscan in this world of ours. I did not have a formal teaching to offer, I had a wonderful meditation and the HOLY SPIRIT did the rest, my agenda went out the window (LOL). Those who were there shared from the heart and left inspired. I know I left there wanted to learn more and most of all wanting to give more of myself. After the next workshop I will send out a follow-up on these sessions.

Please save the following date, for all Formation Directors and teams. The format will again be a round table session. Let's share our thoughts on how you plan Formation for our new Brothers and Sisters and Ongoing Formation. I will be sharing some of our thoughts that Region would like to see each Fraternity doing. Please send me any questions you want me to research and discuss.

February 1st – San Diego (I will email time and place)

Also, a big shout out thanking Patricia Elizabeth Grace, OFS for her outstanding formation on “The Immigration Crisis: A Franciscan Perspective” I will be requesting her to do this again soon.

Peace and all good,



FROM OUR NATIONAL MINISTER Jan Parker, OFS

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Peace and joy to you in Christ Jesus!

I thought you, each member of our Order, as I pondered these readings from Franciscan Morning and Evening Praise for the **Feast of All the Saints of the Franciscan Order (Nov. 29)**:

Reading: Ephesians 1:15-18, 2:10,22 (with comments)

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you, as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you (all of us!) a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you (we!) come to know ...what is the hope (the great hope!) to which God has called you (to which God has called us!), what are the riches of God's glorious inheritance among saints...(Think of it! This is our inheritance!) For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.... and you also (all of us!) are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

Reading: Bonaventure, The Evening Sermon on Saint Francis (emphasis added)

"The heavens encompass everything, they contain all things, yet they are contained by nothing... There is no star however small whose immensity would not fill the earth and give it light. Though the lights and rays of each star coalesce in the atmosphere, they are found to be distinct when we look up at the stars themselves. It is something similar with devout souls whom the Holy Spirit enlightens with divine radiance. These are the posterity of the Holy Spirit and this posterity is as the stars of heaven, for the Holy Spirit brings forth devout souls in an altogether wondrous way." (FAED II, 729)

In my prayer this morning I asked God to continue to guide each professed member of our Order, to grant each of you the wisdom and strength and perseverance that you need. I am honored to be your minister. You are the devout souls spoken of in this passage above; and I do not cease to give thanks for you, as I remember you in my prayers. Thank you, my sister and brother devout souls! Thank you for being such shining stars, as we are being built up into a dwelling place of God. This truly is wondrous!

May God's grace help us as we do what is ours to do, as we have been called. And, "let us not take our minds off of God, but rather with a pure heart and mind, and in whatever way we are best able, let us serve, love, honor and adore the Lord God, for that is what God wants above all else." (Cf. Earlier Rule 22:25-26)

With love, prayers, and a grateful heart,
Jan Parker, OFS
National Minister

P.S. Happy New Year! Let us look back in gratitude, and look forward in hope, as we journey together in love and compassion.

Journey Together in Love and Compassion
2019-2020 OFS-USA Theme

NATIONAL CHAPTER OCTOBER 2019

Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister, Caroline Yandel, OFS, as an Observer and William Mus-satto, OFS, Chair of the National Database Committee, attended the National Chapter, which was held at Corpus Christi Texas, October 15 – 19, 2019. Before the National Chapter a call went out to all the regions in the United States, from the hosting regions for donations of socks, toiletries and other items that would be put together in drawstring- bags. Here is a photograph of all those present at Chapter just before we began the two hour job of preparing the 1000 bags that were delivered to Catholic Charities at three locations in Texas. The bags were for individuals who were released from detention centers and were on the way to unite with family.



Terry Barbar, OFS, Regional Minister, Troubadours of Peace Region, William Mussatto, OFS, Chair National Database Committee, and Emma Lozowsks, OFS, Regional Minister, Franciscans of the Prairie, prepare bags of toiletries.

NATIONAL CHAPTER OCTOBER 2019



Judith Mussatto, OFS, Regional Minister, St. Francis Region, Carolyn Townes, OFS, National JPIC Animator, Jane DeRose Bamman, OFS, National Secretary and Violeta Manibusan, OFS, Leader of the Guam Emerging Community.



Observer Caroline Yendell, OFS, Regional Secretary, St. Francis Region.

Regional Gathering : The Heart of Francis, September 21st, 2019

Laura Chun, OFS

Minister San Luis Rey Fraternity



Franciscans are blessed with a special understanding of the concept '[God is Love](#)'. That love is so very present in our relationships with each other. Our Regional gathering which began at [St. Matthew's Church](#) Corona was an unabashed celebration of those loving relationships! The air seemed to crackle with anticipation; although the day began in the warm embrace of a familiar church and our beloved Faith, it was not to end there. Like Francis on his journey to visit the [Sultan Malek al-Kamil](#) 800 years ago this month, we were all anticipating our own pilgrimage to visit a mosque, the [Islamic Center](#) in Corona.

As Caroline Yardell of the [Immaculate Conception Fraternity](#) introduced and welcomed Fraternities from across southern California to the [Regional gathering](#), there was delight, expressed in English, Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese – in the recognition that together, we are all a part of the Body of Christ.

[Margaret McCahill, MD, MTS, OFS](#) spoke on the Franciscan heart – presenting first the physical heart and its importance, the spiritual heart, the emotional heart, and the Franciscan heart. She presented the 'heart' as referenced over and over in Scripture, the heart as the center of who we are. In my experience of Margaret as a fellow student at the Franciscan School of Theology, she exudes such warmth and love - and truly an open heart. This came across so eloquently in her talk.

A few months ago, [Judith Mussatto](#), our Regional Minister, visited the [Islamic Center of Corona-Norco](#) and developed a personal relationship with Zinath Khan, responsible for Interfaith outreach at the Islamic Center. Seeing them together, you can see that their relationship sparkles with joy. It's months later, and Judith is back at the Islamic Center, this time with several hundred of her fellow Secular Franciscans in tow.

The drive from St. Matthew's over to the Islamic Center was a short one, but bridged such a tremendous distance. There was a nervous energy in the air, a joyful anticipation, perhaps even a little trepidation around our visit to the mosque. It was a time for open minds and open hearts.



As we filed into the conference room, we were greeted so very warmly by the Iman, Jameel Besada, and Zinath Khan, responsible for Women's Affairs at the Mosque and Interfaith Outreach. Iman Besada emphasized the great many similarities between our Faiths. He presented on the tenants of the Islam faith as well as the shared experience of Muslim people. Hands in the audience flew up with questions, even the 'juicy' ones Iman Besada joyfully encouraged.

We were then invited to witness (and photograph) the [Islamic Call to Prayer](#) in the sanctuary. As the men were gathering in our space (the women in another room for privacy and respect given the prayer postures), one elder gentleman began quiet, personal prayer. His focus, presence, and peace were palpable.

Just as within our Catholic tradition, Islamic [prayer postures](#) are immensely relevant. While prostrate, the prayer '*Glory be to God, the Most High*' is repeated 3 times. Iman Jameel shared that the head touching the floor is a sign of humility before God.

*Regional Gathering : The Heart of Francis, September 21st, 2019
By Laura Chun, OFS
(Continued)*



After witnessing prayer in the mosque, we were treated to a very gracious lunch followed by a robust round of questions and answers about the prayer we had just witnessed. The entire day was a beautiful experience in building relationships based on mutual appreciation of our Muslim brothers and sisters - and a greater appreciation of what 'God is Love' really means.



Sr. Madeline and Patricia Grace



Sam DeSantis and Eileen Costa



Joe Cannon and Laura Chun



Judith Mussatto, Zinath Khan, Laura Chun, Iman Jameel, Bill Mussatto, Sr. Madeline Fitzgerald, Martin & Francisca Contreras

SAN DIEGO DISTRICT Tuan Cao, OFS, District Liaison

The San Diego District was invited to celebrate Thanksgiving with the Immaculate Conception Fraternity on November 10. We gathered at Our Lady of Confidence Church in San Diego. Saint Anthony of Padua joined the Immaculate Conception Fraternity in this celebration.

We started with prayers, reading the Gospel of the day, and joining together to sing **“Sacred the Land, Sacred the Water”** written by our own Franciscan Brother Ruffino.



Our ongoing formation focused on Chapter 2 Article 16 of the rule – the value of work in the Franciscan tradition, work as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption and service of the human community. Caroline Yandell led us in a reflection on Creation: God’s Perfect Work. While we watched beautiful pictures of creation projected on the screen, we reflected upon the story of Creation in Genesis. Readers read in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

We then gathered around the altar and pray for the departed souls either in our Fraternities or in our Families. Everybody said out loud the name of the one they wanted to pray for. It was a touching moments for all of us. After social time, we made cards for hospitalized veterans.



We went home with a lot of joy and memories. Thanks to the Immaculate Fraternity who hosts the event yearly and thanks to everybody who participated to made a wonderful event in our San Diego District. We hope next year we will have more members from other fraternities join this special event with us.

Riverside/San Bernardino William Mussatto, OFS, District Liaison



At 5pm on August 11th, the three Fraternities gathered for their Annual District Picnic in Claremont hosted by Holy Spirit Fraternity. The fellowship was so good this year that we never got around to the Bingo or other games. Families joined the members for a fun afternoon. Before the picnic, representatives from the three councils met and discussed ways improve Initial and Ongoing Formation and animate fraternities.

A second district meeting was held on October 12th, hosted by Immaculata Fraternity where we discussed preliminary plans joint activities in the next year as well as ideas for ongoing formation topics.

Members of Immaculata Fraternity and members from the Mosque in Corona visit a local nursing home together.



Holy Spirit Fraternity elected a new council at their September meeting, from left to right: Maria Rodriguez, OFS (Minister), Myrna Kildare, OFS (Vice Minister), Diana Cerda, OFS (Councilor), Amelia Sandoval, OFS (Treasurer), Mary Macleod, OFS (Secretary) and Bill Mussatto, OFS (Formation Director).



JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Patricia Grace, OFS

Minister Immaculate Conception Fraternity

**In the history of the world, this is a very Franciscan moment.
Let us live it to the fullest.**

During the long weekend that marked the end of August and the beginning of September, I was honored to represent our region at the National Franciscan Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Conference. I traveled with Margaret McCahill who is featured in this edition of the Joy of Francis, for her wonderful presentation at our regional gathering. She also serves the Immaculate Conception Fraternity in San Diego as our JPIC animator.

Over the course of an evening, two full days, and a final half day 38 lay Franciscans from many parts of the United States met at a retreat center in Eureka, Missouri. We prayed, talked, listened to presentations, met in large and small groups, participated in leader led and participant led discussions. We worshiped, ate, shared stories, and celebrated Franciscan joy. We discerned.

Our conference leaders emphasized that it is important for all of us to understand that the concepts of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation are deeply rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. The key teachings in our Catholic tradition call us to protect and advocate for:

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- Solidarity with All Who Suffer
- Care for God's Creation

Although many of our sisters and brothers in fraternities may view JPIC as “something over there,” “something someone else does,” “reserved for a few activities,” I want to echo the words of our Regional Minister when she calls us to see that our Rule is a living document, and JPIC is so very much part of that life of our Rule. We can reflect together upon how we are to open ourselves always to the creative power of our Lord to form us, to create families, to establish communities both locally and globally, that embody the intention of our Lord to create His Kingdom on earth, a kingdom that is just, peaceful, and respectful of all of His creation.

The Spirit of God that incarnated at Christmas to be with us out of love and was raised from the dead at Easter to be with us, is, in fact, alive within us. Let us know that and live from that Spirit of love, dedication, and hope.

**The Office for Life, Peace,
Justice and Creation Care
Ministry
Diocese of San Diego
Celebrating St. Francis Day on
October 5**



From Immaculate Conception Fraternity: Nicolas Peters, Patricia Grace, Peggy Botte, Genevive Fabian, Teresa Perez, Caroline Yandell, Father Emmet Farrell, Janet Prescott, Margo Raynes, Karen Esmonde (Mission San Luis Rey Fraternity) and Becky Taylor. The singing troubadours sang again!

Secular Franciscan Order - St. Francis Region #52

**A Prayer
Attributed to St. Francis**

*Almighty, eternal, just,
and merciful God,
Grant us in our misery
the grace
to do for You alone
What we know You want
us to do
and always
to desire what pleases You.
Amen*



Important Announcements

Last Will and Testament

Each of us can play an important role in preserving and extending our Secular Franciscan way of life, in our own fraternity, and at the regional level. This can be accomplished in many ways, including a bequest in our will.

Suggested beneficiaries:

Your FRATERNITY
Your REGION

Suggested wording for your bequests:

1. A BEQUEST FOR GENERAL PURPOSES:
"I give and bequeath the sum of \$ _____
(or _____% of my disposable estate) to:
(name and address of fraternity, or region).
2. A RESIDUARY BEQUEST OF INDEFINITE AMOUNT:
"After payment of expenses, debts and specific bequests, I direct that the residue of my estate be given to: (name and address) or
"I bequeath to (name and address) any part of my estate that other beneficiaries are unable to receive because of death or other reasons."

THE ADDRESS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION IS:
276 E. Green St.
Claremont, CA 91711



CALENDAR

December to February

Month	Event
December 7	Regional Executive Council Meets at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Claremont, @ 9:00 a.m.
8	Elections St. Clare Fraternity. Roland Heights
January	
17 - 19	Regional Chapter: Fraternal and Pastoral Visit.
February	
7-9	Regional Executive Council Annual Retreat.
21-23	Religious Education Congress @ Anaheim



*PEACE AND ALL GOOD
FROM
YOUR REGIONAL COUNCIL*

*Judith Mussatto, OFS
Minister
St. Francis Region*