



# THE JOY OF FRANCIS

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



2014 Annual Retreat at Serra with Pat Brandwein-Ball, OFS (to Sylvia's left in photo)

## 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 92583 or as a Word document to [cylmaljan@earthlink.net](mailto:cylmaljan@earthlink.net).

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## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

*Sylvia Paoli, OFS, Regional Minister*

### ***Hearts on Fire for the Lord!***

My dear brothers and sisters,

In this time of year when there are so many wonderful Franciscan feasts to celebrate, it might be a good time to re-examine who we are to be as Franciscan men and women. From the *Imitation of Christ* we read that we should "turn to the Lord with your whole heart and leave behind this wretched world. Then your soul shall find rest. For the kingdom of God is the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit." And again, "Until you are united intimately with Christ, you will never find your true rest... Once you have entered completely into the depths of Jesus, and have a taste of his powerful love, then you will not care about your own convenience or inconvenience." We know that all of creation, all of God's creatures, are good. But

the condition of the world is, in many respects, “wretched.” But most of us have a basically good life, certainly when compared with people in so many parts of the world. Yet, time and time again, we let our concerns for the things of this world, and our relationships with our fellow human beings, get in the way of our relationship with God. We forget that if our relationship with God is through that intimate union with His Son, our relationships with the rest of the world’s people will be as He wishes it to be – full of love and compassion, embracing all, shutting out no one.

If this, then, is the Gospel person we professed to be, why do we have disagreements within our fraternities? Between members? Between different fraternities? Is it because we lose sight of Jesus and His Gospel, or because we’ve never become intimate with Him at all? Most of the time, we get into disagreements and even arguments with others because they don’t accept *our* opinion of something. Perhaps we should all remember advice often given to couples about to be married: think before you speak harshly to your spouse; is the issue with which you disagree *really important*, or is it just a matter that my own opinion is different? If it’s not something really important, then let it go. As individuals, we are bound to have different opinions, all the time and about lots of things. But are those opinions *really important*? If not, then just let every person have his or her own opinion about things and don’t make an issue of it.

We have always operated in this country on the basis of “majority rules.” In the worst case, when there is a disagreement as to how the fraternity is to do something, the majority should rule. Far better, though, is for everyone to discuss the issue, *listening* to each other with a loving heart and mind

rather than being intent on expressing *your* opinion, and then come to a consensus – an agreement reached after the matter is discussed and everyone has been heard. And so, as our father Francis said, “peace and all good” to all, with every member of every fraternity embracing every other member fully with love and compassion and understanding.

Then, on another subject, it is the time to think once again of electing a new Regional Executive Council, which will be done at the January Chapter. A nominating committee has been appointed, chaired by **Bill Mussatto, OFS, (276 E. Green St., Claremont, CA 91711-5026)** of Holy Spirit Fraternity. I remind you that the job of the nominating committee is to *receive* nominations from individuals, get acceptance from the nominees, check the eligibility of the nominees and announce a slate for the election. At the last regional election, three years ago, two people made most of the nominations. I would hope that we could do much better this time. So please start right now praying about who the Holy Spirit will guide to take these positions for the next three years, and take an *active* part by participating in the nominating process if the Spirit leads you in that direction. You will, of course, be hearing much more about the process in the upcoming months.

For now, let our hearts all be on fire for the Lord!

Your sister and servant, Sylvia

**Link to Nomination Form:**

[http://www.stfrancisregion.org/media/Forms/public/Nomination\\_proposal.doc](http://www.stfrancisregion.org/media/Forms/public/Nomination_proposal.doc)

## **FORMATION**

*Frank Miller, OFS*  
*Regional Formation Coordinator*

### **“We Thank You Lord for Calling Us to the Secular Franciscan Order”**

These beautiful words of thanksgiving are taken from the *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order’s* “Renewal of Commitment.” They are not only a statement, but a prayer. They recall for us the yearning we each felt as we made our way through Initial Formation towards our entrance into the Order.

We all experienced a different journey, a unique transformation into the life of Fraternity and commitment to the Rule. But at the heart of each journey, the energy driving us forward, was hearing and responding to God’s call. It is God, through the action of the Spirit, who invites us to a personalized vocation, a vocation which brings every one of us into a deepening living of the Gospel life and our Baptismal promises. Without this call, vocation is one-sided; it becomes only something we want to do, or feel like we must do, because of an expectation to “make it happen.”

We may have been inspired by friends or family who are/were members of the Secular Franciscan Order. We may have admired someone within the First or Second Order. Or we may have had a fondness for the sweet Italian saint who loved the animals. In these inspirations, there is nothing wrong. Yet there must be something more. It must be the working of the Spirit, manifesting the Lord’s call in our lives, to live this amazing passion for daily conversion. Profession isn’t the end; it is the beginning. The beginning of yes to living a joy-filled life. The beginning of opening our arms to new brothers and sisters. The beginning of filling our hearts with a fire

for service, justice and witness. The beginning of integrating Peace and Good in all that we do, all that we say and all that we are.

There are many good-hearted people in the world. People who do good works. People who love the poor and want to feed & clothe the homeless. We thank God for these great people who live a mission of brotherly love, whether or not it is the name of Christ. But for us, it must be God’s call which distinguishes us and, like the Blessed Mother, our response of yes. We must trust that the Lord will lead us to where He needs us, and give us the graces we need to be fruitful in that calling.

Never take the gift of your special calling for granted. Our vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order is God’s invitation to a deeper intimacy of living as Catholic Christians. Find a quiet moment in your day to thank God once again for calling you to this very special family, and for giving you the strength and courage to say YES!

### **Being an Instrument of Peace**

Elle Lesperance, OFS  
Animator: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation  
(JPIC)  
NAFRA/JPIC Commissioner



What is this word “peace” that easily comes out of our mouth? Are we sincere when we offer a “Peace be with you” hug or sign to another? Peace is not an idea. Peace is not a political movement, not a theory or a dogma. Peace is a way of life: living mindfully in

the present moment. We must simply stop the endless wars that rage within. Imagine, if everyone stopped the war inside, there would be no seeds from which war could grow.

Jesus' peace is a universal call to give His love to all. We Franciscans have been given the charism to be peacemakers, to be channels or instrument of His peace. The 26 articles in our OFS Rule basically points out to one theme: Peace.

Peace is simply not the absence of war or conflict. It is that state in your spirit that allows you to rest in the bosom with God with inner Joy. Inner joy and inner peace are inter-related. They are both the product of LOVE: our love for God and love for our neighbor in relation to walking in the will of God.

The main work of **Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC)** is to replace the culture of violence, now rampant in our world, with a new culture of peace and compassion. The issue of Peace is very much sought upon these days. This work is an inside-out job. Peace begins on the inside. Each of us must be "creator" of a culture of peace and compassion, first within ourselves, then with our families, with love ones and friends, then extending to our community and to our entire global neighbor.

And who is my neighbor? Jesus stated to St. Catherine of Siena after she asked Him how she can really **measure the love she gives Him. Jesus said to her, "You truly love me when you truly love the least of the unlovable."** St. Francis manifested love, compassion, peace and solidarity in the way he tamed the wolves of Gubbio, how he cared for the leper, how he dined with the Sultan, and many other stories in his lifetime. As Franciscans, do we truly follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis and Clare in our examples of attaining peace? Are you your brothers/sisters' keeper?

Who are the peacemakers? **Being "peace" speaks about our call to work on promoting justice and non-violence.** The sense is not so much that peacemakers reconcile with their enemies but they help enemies to reconcile. Peacemakers are people that love peace so much that they are not afraid to compromise their own best self-interest or safety by intervening in conflicts to procure peace among those who are oppressed. A few examples of witnesses to peace – M.Gandhi, St. Francis, Dalai Lama, MLK Jr, Bishop Oscar Romero, Fr. Ellacuria, Fr. John Dear, Fr. Vittale, Rosa Park, Fr. Greg Boyle, St. John Paul II and Pope Francis.

Peacemakers, then is not synonymous to "peaceful persons" – calm, quiet, tranquil people who avoid conflict as much as possible (they are more "meek"). Those who are peacemakers **promote a peaceful resolution to conflicts or anger.** Remember St. Francis and the Wolves of Gubbio? The story portrays and expresses an act of brotherly love resulting in peace.

Jesus said, "I did come not to bring peace but division." (Luke 12:51) Matthew instead of "division" uses the word "sword". But what kind of peace is Jesus referring to? He did not intend to cause division and war; his truth brought people to make a decision to live in the world or to live with the vision of eternal life. He came to bring peace and unity to whatever is good and leads to eternal life and came to remove the false peace that only lulls the conscience to sleep and leads to sin.

Peace is a divine gift. Scripture refers to the "peace of God" (Philippians 4:7), and "the God of Peace" (Romans 15:33). **Peace is not only what God gives but also what God is.** Peace is that which reigns in God. St. Francis always gives a peace blessing to everyone he meets because Peace (God) lives in him and he wants to give God to others - God's

peace. He believes and (Ephesians 6:15) summarizes the entire content of the peace covenant and of the practice the gospel of peace (Ezekiel 38:7-26). St. Francis expressed this perfectly, “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace....” Are you an instrument of peace for others or are you a contradiction to your own peace?

Pope Paul VI stated, “If you want peace; work for social justice”. Scripture says – “Peace and justice (righteousness) shall kiss each other”. They go hand in hand. **Peace will only be attained in the world when justice has been achieved.**

As a Secular Franciscan, how do you work as a peacemaker? Peace is not invented or created. It is **transmitted by people with a compassionate heart.** We become an instrument of peace when we focus our life in the Holy Trinity and not with the many distraction of worldly things and attachments to pleasure. When you pray, do you pray for the poor and the suffering? With your daily work, do you work for the betterment of the world or of society or for the common good? Do you ask God to deliver you from your wants and needs? Do you give alms to the poor and spend your free time in the service of others and not in the company of ungodly people?

The secret to interior peace is only attained by complete abandonment to God’s will, no matter what the situation might be. Peace is deliverance from fear, remaining trustful in God, and having a complete surrender to His grace and Providence.

**As St. Theresa of Avila stated:**

Let nothing disturb you; let nothing dismay you,  
All thing pass, God never changes.  
Patience attains all that it strives for.  
He who has God finds he lacks nothing: God alone suffices.

Reflect on some words associated with the issue of peace during your time of meditation – conflict, war, balance, harmony, friendship, non-violence/violence, forgiveness, communication, relationships and much more.

The world in this present persecution of Christians in many parts of the world is praying for peace.

Many by the thousands are being persecuted and martyred for their faith: the Russians, Jews, and Christians in the Middle East, underground Catholics in China, Japan, and Indonesia and in the eastern bloc countries. They are objects of discrimination and hostility by society, especially the Jewish society at the beginning. As an American Catholic, are there times you feel persecuted by others, your family, your co-workers, neighbors, because of your religion?

Think about martyrs who died to protect the oppressed: St. Maximilian Kolbe, Bishop Oscar Romero, one who died defending her virtues: St. Maria Goretti, St. Vincent Pro of Mexico who died shouting, “Viva El Christo” before the firing squad during the Mexican Revolution, St. Franz Jaggerstater who refused to serve the Hitler regime, and many others. Our very own peace warrior Fr. Louis Vittale continues up to the present time to protest and fight the American military system of using military torture on prisoners. Faith and trust in the love of God is the basis of Christian martyrdom.

There are other **forms of injustice or persecution:** marginalization, prejudice and racism, the innocent ones who are imprisoned wrongly, women slaves to their husbands in Africa, in India and in the Middle East, women victims of domestic violence, human trafficking and exploitation. In Scriptures (Rev.13), gives two images of the beasts: the beasts

rising out of the sea, identified with political power that sets itself in place of God and makes war on the saints (Rev 13:1-10) and one rising out of the earth- condemning some to prison and some to the sword. The 2<sup>nd</sup> beast (from the earth) persecutes the “saints” (believers) in a different way: by marginalizing or ostracizing them. Its task is to “make and force the earth and its inhabitants to worship the first beasts” (Rev 13:12).

In our Western world, persecution takes the second form. It uses opinion and ideas instead of the sword. Distorted (corrupt/evil) thoughts and value systems (atheism, new age, gay marriages, etc.) and physical idolization (movie celebrities/ reality television /pornography, crystal worship, new age, etc.) promote the “spirit of the world” and speak of the power of “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). Society therefore is being seduced by the mark of the beast. This is the worst kind of persecution ~ spiritual persecution, spiritual harassment and mental/psychological torture (depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, anger problems, chemical and sexual addictions).

As a Secular Franciscan, how do you resist and fight the present society’s strong persecution of faith beliefs? Do you just “fit-in” or pray to discern against the spirit of the world? Scripture says, “Wear yourselves the armor of Christ”. If you are true to your faith, are you willing to sacrifice for your beliefs and not wear the mark of the first beast that society idolizes? Do you get uncomfortable to be criticized because of your religion? Do you wear your blessed Tau cross boldly as a religious habit or sacramental? Or do you simply wear it during Franciscan gatherings or events simply to show your Franciscan affiliation?

It’s good to note that persecution and humiliation are opportunities for grace for those who wear the

armor of Christ. Fight your persecutors with our strong love and devotion for God in the company of the Prince of Peace and Our Lady of Peace.

According to St. Bonaventure in his most acclaimed book, *Journey of the Soul into God*, peace is the ultimate goal of our spirituality. Peace allows us union with God. Fr. John Dear, a Jesuit priest who devotes himself to the work of justice and peace stated, “Peace begins with each of us. It is a process of repeatedly showing mercy to ourselves, forgiving ourselves, befriending ourselves, accepting ourselves, and loving ourselves. As we learn to appreciate ourselves and accept God’s gift of peace, we begin to radiate peace and love to others. “

To have true inner peace, one has to have practiced justice for others and towards self, otherwise it is hypocritical to say that you are person of peace but do not practice mindfulness, harmony and solidarity with your environment, self-care, charity and love for others, and care for creation.

Peace is directly related to the theology of True Self versus False Self. Finding true self is the journey to peace. It is seeing you the way God sees you - the one who God made you to be. False self is your pseudo self- a self with no peace but one that is self-laden with a mask of negative emotions (anger, anxiety, desolation, guilt, shame) that makes you thrive to simply survive your pain or wound. Thriving in your false self and not seeking healing is not peace-making at all. It is doing violence to self. Therefore, seek spiritual and psychological healing to acquire wholeness of body, mind and spirit to find true peace in God.

Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM quotes: “Pain if you do not transform it, you will transmit it”. Therefore, to live in your pseudo self is a form of injustice because

pseudo self is living with hatred for others, being judgmental, critical, self-righteous, and egocentric. It's all about the "me-syndrome" of selfishness, self-hatred, self-deception, anger, fear/anxiety, mistrust, lingering grief, unforgiveness, guilt, deceit, etc. When you are in a state of desolation, you have no peace; therefore, you are in conflict to self, to God and to others. Living a pseudo self is a life contradictory to the Joy of the Gospel which is Joy in Jesus, with others, and with yourself.

Forgiveness is a deep prayer of Peace. Without forgiveness of others who hurt or offend you, you will have no inner peace. You become the carrier of the biggest burden of your heart – Anger. Unforgiveness and anger are twin destructive forces to your journey to holiness. Unresolved anger is the number cause of clinical depression, addiction, anxiety and many psychological and spiritual sufferings, therefore, a lack of peace. One simply lives surviving in your world of pseudo self. When you are unforgiving, you live in a world of desolation lying to yourself. You allow this ugly feeling to occupy a room in your heart rent-free. On the other hand, the act of forgiveness is an act of mercy and compassion. Forgiveness means healing - healing brings peace. Forgiveness is the best PEACE PRAYER. Forgiving someone who really hurt you truly makes you an instrument of God's peace!

Therefore, let us be the peace that we want to see in the world. Be peace! Let peace begins in you. Animate peace in your heart where the Spirit of Peace dwells. Amen!

**DISTRICT NEWS:**

**San Diego County**

On July 5<sup>th</sup>, St. Anthony of Padua (Vietnamese) fraternity held a Chapter of Elections. The presider was Regional Vice Minister, Robert Herbelin, OFS.

Regional Spiritual Assistant. Rock de Spain served as church witness.

The new council members are:

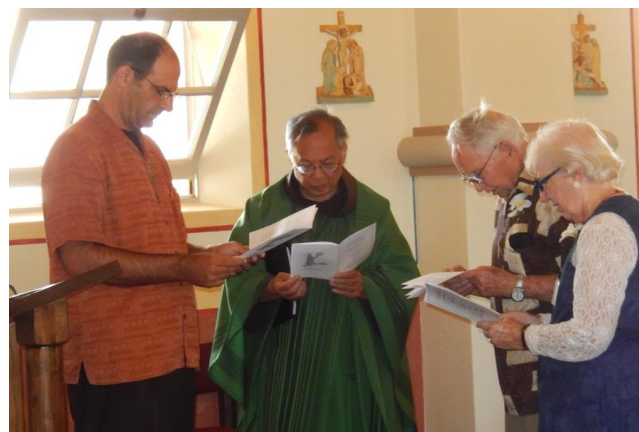
- Minister: Maria Phuc Pham
- Vice Minister: Maria Kim Truyen Le
- Formator: Marie Huynh
- Treasurer: Madeleine Ngoc Tan Le
- Secretary: Vincente Uan Nguyen
- Councilor 1: Theresa Tuyet Luu
- Councilor 2: Maria Ngoc Yen Nguyen



*New St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity Council 2014-2017*

Because of good preparation and for the work of all the fraternity members, the elections went very smoothly. Thanks to the entire fraternity for their efforts! **Congratulations** for the new council for the term of 2014-2017.

On July 13th, Mary Haynes and William Haynes (husband and wife) made their Permanent Professions during the Rite of Profession at San Luis Rey fraternity in Oceanside. David York, OFS, is the Minister of San Luis Rey fraternity. The celebrant of the mass was Fr. Franklin Fong, OFM from the Franciscan School of Theology.



*Minister David York, OFS, Fr. Fong, OFM, William Haynes and Mary Haynes*

Also present were Rock de Spain, Regional Spiritual

Assistant and Anthony Tuan Cao, Regional council member and San Diego district liaison.

Congratulations to the William and Many and the San Luis Rey Fraternity.

Peace and all good.

**San Bernardino/Riverside District**

Elections for Padre Pio Fraternity (Moreno Valley) were held on June 8, 2014. Judith Mussatto, OFS represented the REC and William Mussatto, OFS was the church witness. The new council members are:

- Minister: Janet Serros, OFS,
- Vice Minister: Denise Leslie, OFS,
- Secretary: Dixie Marshall, OFS,
- Treasurer: Julie Bash, OFS,
- Formation Director: Jane Wurzel, OFS,
- Councilors: Hermie L Quevedo, OFS and Stephanie Thieboux, OFS.

Elections for Immaculata Fraternity (Riverside) were held on June 22, 2014. Judith Mussatto, OFS represented the REC and William Mussatto, OFS was the church witness. The new council members are:

- Minister: Lorraine Cardin, OFS,
- Vice Minister: Milagros Rogers, OFS,
- Secretary: Donna Baylor, OFS,
- Treasurer: Carol Bryant, OFS,
- Formation Director: Ray Hardwick, OFS,
- Councilors: Lisa Boebinger, OFS, Kathy O'Neill, OFS, and Joice Quinsaat, OFS.



*Members of district fraternities at recent movie gathering!*

St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity (Hemet) hosted a movie night for the District on June 29<sup>th</sup> with a pot luck dinner during intermission. The movie told the story of Sts. Peter and Paul after the death of Christ. The District had a meeting of the Ministers, Vice Ministers and Formation Directors on July 26, 2014 hosted by Padre Pio Fraternity. Discussions covered how to improve fraternity life and attract new members.

The Holy Spirit Fraternity hosted a district picnic on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

**LANGUAGE GROUPS:**

**Vietnamese:**

**A New Change?**

The recent pastoral visitation on July 6<sup>th</sup> especially created a fraternal and loving atmosphere that could be seen and felt in the meeting room. I felt that too, because there was a dialog with openness, enthusiasm and friendliness. There were smiles, and understanding looks on most everyone's faces, from brother Rock DeSpain, the Regional Spiritual Assistant, to the Council members and other members of St. Clare fraternity and members of the Vietnamese Martyrs Emerging Community. After meeting with the fraternity council, and talking to the whole fraternity, Brother Rock complimented the fraternity on their formation program and other activities.



Most of those present expressed their thoughts and feelings regarding the journey of living their Franciscan vocation and living the Gospel in the



footsteps of St. Francis, etc. Brother Rock shared his feelings and positive feedbacks after hearing the sharings of our brothers and sisters. Thanks to brother Tuan Cao, who did the translations, everybody felt easy without worrying about the language barrier to speak up and shared his or her feelings to brother Rock.

The Holy Spirit was present and active through every member in going through the formation program and learning processes.

The St. Clare Fraternity was established 22 years ago, but it was not well known in the Vietnamese community. In the beginning, it was established by a number of members professed in Vietnam with some friends. That was a small number of members compared with a large number of Vietnamese Catholics in the Diocese of Orange with over 11 Vietnamese parishes.

Following are some activities of Vietnamese fraternities in promoting a Secular Franciscan vocation.

After joining the Regional council to participate the "Vocation day" on April 7 & 8, 2014 at the Christ Cathedral of Diocese of Orange, the fraternity council has decided to see a parish pastor and ask for a permission to present some information about the Secular Franciscan Order to his parishioners after mass.

The fraternity gave two presentations about a



Secular Franciscan vocation on 2 different dates: June 26, 2014 at the La Purissima church in Orange and July 27, 2014 at the Holy Spirit church in Fountain Valley.



### Preparations:

- Explain clearly to pastors about the Order so they can understand and introduce us to parishioners before our presentation.
- Use slideshows and short sentences.
- Select a presenter who also belongs to that parish.
- Get names and phone numbers of parishioners who are interested in learning more about a Secular Franciscan vocation.

### Accomplishments:

The pastor of Holy Spirit church, Mgr. Pham Quoc Tuan later suggested we give another talk about the Secular Franciscan vocation after a 6:30pm Sunday mass. The parish council invited our representatives to attend a semester meeting of the parish. They said they hoped to have an OFS fraternity with regular meetings in their parish.

The pastor of St. Bonaventure parish in Huntington Beach suggested that we can introduce the OFS in September.

After 3 times of introducing the OFS, only one member of the Callistus parish came to talk to us. However we are not discouraged. The Holy Spirit is working on vocations. We just need to let people know about the "presence of Secular Franciscans" in the Diocese of Orange. ***From invisible to visible, up until now it was invisible!!!***



For names of and contact information of Regional Council members, appointed Chairs and District/Language 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)

Volunteers to translate this and future issues into Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese are needed. Contact Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS at [cylmaljan@earthlink.net](mailto:cylmaljan@earthlink.net)