

# Communio

That All May Be One

Newsletter of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
Secular Franciscan Order

Fall 2017

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## Blessed proclamation this month

The beatification of Father Solanus Casey, OFM Cap., is scheduled for Nov. 18 at Ford Stadium in Detroit, Mich.

Fr. Solanus Casey Fraternity, Morehead City, N.C., has sent this novena prayer, for all of us to pray, Nov. 9–17:



### Novena for the Beatification of Father Solanus Casey

O God, I adore you. I give myself to you.  
May I be the person you want me to be,  
and may your will be done in my life today.

I thank you for the gifts you gave Father Solanus.

If it is your will, bless us  
with the canonization of Father Solanus  
so that others may imitate and  
carry on his love for all the  
poor and suffering of our world.

As he joyfully accepted your divine plans, I ask you,  
according to your will to hear my prayer (your  
intentions). Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

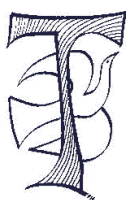
Image courtesy of The  
Solanus Casey Center,  
Detroit, Mich.

Father Solanus Casey:  
“Blessed be God in all his designs.”

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## The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





## Editor's Journal: On Being Open

"When one is open to the new, one's repertoire continues to grow," Brother Henry L. Fulmer, OFM, says in the summer 2017 issue of *The Anthonian Franciscan*, a publication of Holy Name Province.

"I have found, like St. Francis," he continues, "that if you keep your hands open, God will fill them with work that needs to be done."

Our Order has plenty for us to do. There's no one but us to do the work of the Secular Franciscan Order.

In fact, our work goes beyond what we do in our local fraternities and into the entire Order: "The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the OFS as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world" (General Constitutions, Art. 30.1).

In this issue we have plenty of ways to do that work. You'll find page 10 devoted to an extensive collection of apostolates — "JPIC-ky things," Carolyn Townes, OFS, our regional JPIC animator, calls them. While some of these can be done individually, since our Region focuses on fraternity apostolates, see which ones your fraternity might be able to embrace.

You'll see on the Calendar that we have a number of council elections coming up. Serving on the council is a terrific opportunity to be "open to the new," to use Brother Henry's words. It will make your "repertoire continue to grow," as you share your talents and learn new skills. My own local fraternity council service (2000–2009) has been invaluable to me in my service as a spiritual assistant. Service on the local council can serve us well in whatever other responsibilities we accept in the Order.

I mentioned to someone that when we make Profession we promise to serve on the council.

"When do we promise to do that?" was the response.

"Well, our Rule tells us that council service 'is marked by a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community'" (Art. 21).

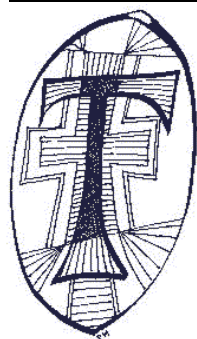
So, isn't that part of our promise to live our Rule?

I hope you'll take the opportunity to grow through service on your local council, and, if possible, on the regional and national councils.

*Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS, is Communio editor. She is a member of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity in Hendersonville, N.C., and spiritual assistant to Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.*

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## Minister's Message

Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

Article 20 of our Secular Franciscan Rule states: "The Secular Franciscan Order is divided into fraternities of various levels — local, regional, national, and international. Each one has its own moral personality in the Church. These various fraternities are coordinated and united according to the norm of this rule and of the constitutions."

At various times in the past two months, I have been present with my sisters and brothers at these levels — monthly at my local fraternity gathering; quarterly at the regional level, both at the Annual Regional Gathering and Regional Executive Council meetings.

I also attended for six days the National Chapter, which occurs annually. Perhaps you recall that the National Fraternity (NAFRA) asked for our input on the management of the Order, in which each member was requested to participate in a survey in the United States via Survey Monkey. Members from 44 other countries contributed their input as well. The survey questions sought all members' input on how an Order like the OFS should be managed at all levels.

Do you realize that as Secular Franciscans, we must remember that our commitment, through profession, is to the entire Order? That is, to all levels of fraternity: local, regional, national, international. We are one Order and our family of Secular brothers and sisters is worldwide!

And, each and every one of us contributes to building up the kingdom of God by living our Franciscan vocation, striving to uphold Gospel values, guided by the spirituality of St. Francis, and shining our Franciscan joy.

I feel that we, as brothers and sisters around the world, have the same issues and concerns in regards to fraternity. In the Order's review of the submissions from national fraternities the following priorities were identified: formation, fraternal life, building a more fraternal and evangelical world, leadership, communications, finance, spiritual assistance, and Franciscan youth.

Thanks to all who returned an evaluation form from our Annual Regional Gathering. Some items mentioned of what you enjoyed included Brother Bill Short, OFM, and his presentations, Msgr. Richard Bellow's celebrations of Mass, the memorial for our deceased members, printed Liturgy of the Hours booklets, fraternity displays, Eucharistic adoration, staying in same building for meals.

Your Regional Executive Council and I appreciate your suggestions and comments as to what is important to you, items for the future, dislikes, and formation workshop needs.

Next year, 2018, is the 40th anniversary of our Pauline Rule. NAFRA presented to us at Chapter our 2018 theme, which we all accepted: "Renewed and Confirmed: Live the Treasure!" May we all be committed to living our OFS vocation!

Peace and all good,  
DorothyAnn

*DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS, Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region's minister, is a member of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Hilton Head Island, S.C.*

"The spirit of mutuality and trust is found as a basis for the change process to take root when empowerment and a suspension of disbelief are put into action. Francis' careful and thoughtful negotiations with the wolf and the Gubbians was the concrete application of empowerment as a key to successful ministry" (101).

Ken Himes, OFM, editor, *Franciscans in Urban Ministry*

## Transitus celebrations around the Region

**Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity**, Blairsville, Ga., celebrated the Transitus the evening of Oct. 3 with readings from St. Francis and Scripture along with veneration of our St. Francis relic with a few members of the parish present as well. We followed with a social.

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**St. John Vianney, Emerging Community**, Lithia Springs, Ga., celebrated the Transitus with **Immaculate Conception Fraternity** in Jonesboro, where the OFM Conventual friars from St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church, Jonesboro; and Holy Cross Catholic Church, Atlanta, joined us.

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**Franciscan Family of Greensboro (N.C.)** celebrated the Transitus at St. Francis Springs Prayer Center Oct. 3–4, with prayer, reflections, and a candlelight procession to the outdoor chapel, led by Father Bob Menard, OFM, who serves at St. Andrew Catholic Church, Clemson, S.C., and is campus chaplain at Clemson University.

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### St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity's 2017 Transitus

By Anne Tinsdale, OFS

St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Huntersville, N.C., celebrated the 2017 observance of the Transitus of our Seraphic Father Francis, on Oct. 3, in Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church in Charlotte, N.C., with a good-sized turnout of guests, not only from our own fraternity, but from the neighboring Fraternity of Brother Francis, Newton, N.C.

We also had several of our members accompanied by guests who had previously indicated an interest in fraternity life.

As usual, the cooperative spirit was high, and everyone pitched in to help the designated volunteers in the preparation and execution of all the necessary tasks. Not surprisingly, Gloria Buchanan, OFS, did a masterful job of organizing and presenting the refreshments, while Ann Nickerson, OFS, created an artistic and authentic environment in her arrangement of the Franciscan habit and accessories at the foot of the altar.

We were honored and privileged to have our spiritual assistant, Msgr. Richard Bellow, as our



presider during the ceremony. Minister Martha Roman, OFS, with her usual efficiency, handled the duties of mistress of ceremonies, while readers Rob Buchanan, OFS, and Janet Ceraldi, OFS, guided us smoothly through the narrative and the music.

Following the ceremony, all retired to the narthex for refreshments and reflection. Comments were heard, such as, “The experience of the Transitus always makes me think how joyful Francis must have been, knowing that he was finally about to meet his heavenly Father!”

*Anne Tinsdale, OFS, is a member of St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity in Huntersville, N.C.*



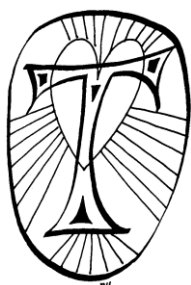
**St. Thomas More Fraternity**, Wilmington, N.C., celebrated the Transitus of St. Francis with family and friends in the chapel of St. Mark Catholic Church in Wilmington.

For the past five years, Alex Hill, St. Mark’s director of music and liturgy, has provided the accompaniment for our hymns. He created a new arrangement of “The Canticle of Brother Sun” and dedicated it to our fraternity.

After the liturgy we all went out to dinner — Italian, of course.

(Photo by Joe Hellmann, husband of Mary Hellman, OFS, St. Thomas More Fraternity formation director.)

## From the Heart of the Regional Formation Director



Greetings, Brothers and Sisters.

I write this on the eve of the feast day of Bl. Contardo Ferrini (1859–1902), a Third Order Secular, who lived out his faith in the world of scholarship and civic service. He also had a passion and mountaineering.

According to author Robert Ellsberg, Bl. Contardo is remembered for an overwhelming goodness and thirst for life. Pope Pius XII stated at his beatification that this was a man who “gave an emphatic Yes to the possibility of holiness in these days.”

This reminds me of the wonderful days I got to spend this summer with regional formation

directors from all across the country at the workshop Aug. 17–20 in St. Louis, Mo. They all had different ways they had said yes to serving their local formation directors. We were lucky enough to learn from each other.

Dividing into about 10 groups, we had three hours to put together a lesson plan for a chapter in *The Franciscan Journey* and the corresponding chapter in the *FUN* manual. By the end of the workshop we had a lesson plan and a PowerPoint presentation for each of the first 10 chapters of *The Franciscan Journey*. I have forwarded these lesson plans to our local formation directors.

Also, I included the basic tenets of initial and ongoing formation and the criteria we were given to put together a lesson plan in three hours. This was very doable, a method that formation directors can use with their formation teams. Remember, formation is not done in a vacuum. It is done with the support of the entire fraternity and the input from the formation team.

There were also presentations on how to pray Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.

Vicky Spalding, OFS, formation director of St. Margaret of Cortona Region, has obtained the copyright clearance for the supplemental readings for each chapter in *The Franciscan Journey*. I've sent these to our formation directors to give to those in orientation and initial formation so that they will be able to download and read them before the formation discussion.

I look forward to seeing you all on the ZOOM Room formation directors meetings which restarted on Oct. 24 and will continue on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. EST.

Thanks to all of you who attended or sent representatives to the formation directors' meet-and-greet on Aug. 12 during the Annual Regional Gathering. Thank you for your comments.

We are planning area formation workshops to be held in the spring. Dates should be out in a few weeks.

Peace,  
Dianne

*Dianne Ambrose, OFS, the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis regional formation director, is a member of San Damiano Fraternity in Athens, Ga., and historian for the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.*

## Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation: Notes from a JPIC Summer

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

I was honored to be one of the presenters at the summer seminar, July 6–9, at Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pa.

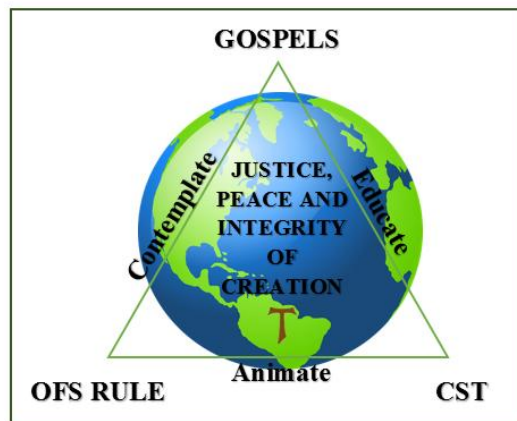
Along with our international councilor Mary Stronach, OFS, I gave a weekend presentation on “Multiculturalism and Diversity: Who Is My Neighbor?”

Though the attendance was smaller than usual, it was still a blessed and fruitful weekend.

One of my sessions was on our unconscious biases, as I shared the story of Ruth from the Bible. Ruth was not only a foreigner but also an idol worshipper and did

SPIRITUALITY

FORMATION



FRATERNITY

APOSTOLATE

not fit into the mold of the Judean people. Yet, God chose Ruth to be the great-grandmother of a great king and ancestor of our Savior.



**Mary Stronach, OFS, NAFRA international councilor (left); and Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, JPIC animator, at the summer seminar at Saint Francis University, Loretto, Pa.**

mindful communication with not only those who were outside of our immediate circle but especially those we encounter day to day — our families, fraternity members, neighbors, and church communities.

It is so easy to ignore, demean, or belittle those we tend to see almost every day and not even realize we are doing violence to those we say we love the most.

In any and every encounter with another human being, we must remember that our unconscious biases drive the bus. It is easy to ignore the person who seems shy and withdrawn or demean the one who does not speak up for herself.

In every ministry or mission we take on, the practice of being mindful when we communicate will make the journey peaceful and pleasant.

The participants were also asked what ministries they or their JPIC teams were involved with, and the list was astounding (see page 10).

Both events were truly Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. What a blessing it was for me to be ministered to as well as to be an instrument of peace in facilitation.

We may look at someone and think of them as “different” or “other,” and yet God placed them in our path for a purpose. Our unconscious biases are the automatic thoughts we have about a person or group of people. Most of the time, we don’t even know we have these biases because they are so deeply ingrained beneath the surface of our minds.

When we have a bias against someone, we operate out of that bias. We don’t even know we are doing it, as it is unconscious.

Perhaps we meet someone with tattoos and piercings, and we automatically think something negative about that person. This unconscious bias also affects the way we communicate with the person. How often do we raise our voices to someone who speaks a different language, as if speaking louder will enable the person to understand us?

I continued this conversation with the participants of the National JPIC Gathering in St. Louis, Mo., two weeks later.

At the “Animate Peace Gathering,” we shared about having



**Seminar attendees pause for a photo.**

*Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region’s JPIC animator, is a member of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Hilton Head Island, S.C.; the National JPIC Commission; the International Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation; and the Franciscan Action Network Commission.*



## Mount La Verna and the Stigmata

Story and Photos by Bret Thoman, OFS

The months of September and October are replete with Franciscan memories. In honor of the feast of the Stigmata, Sept. 17, I was recently in the hermitage of Mount La Verna with some pilgrims. I am always struck by the rugged harshness and austere beauty of the mountain.



Part of the hermitage of Mount La Verna.

According to the sources, St. Francis felt the same way.

In 1213, while Francis preached at a banquet in the town of San Leo, in the region of the Marches, Count Orlando was so enflamed by Francis's words that he was inspired to offer him part of the mountain towering over his castle of Chiusi in Tuscany as a place of prayer and contemplation. Francis visited and knew immediately that it would be the perfect place for penance and prayer.

He came to this mountain, sometimes referred to as Alverna,

six times. But it was in 1224, two years before his death, when something truly extraordinary took place there.

He was deeply devoted to the cross his entire life, beginning when the crucifix of San Damiano spoke to him telling him to "Rebuild My House":

"From that hour, therefore, his heart was wounded and it melted when remembering the Lord's passion. While he lived, he always carried the wounds of the Lord Jesus in his heart. .... From then on, he inflicted his flesh with such fasting that, whether healthy or sick, the excessively austere man hardly ever or never wanted to indulge his body. Because of this he confessed on his death bed that he had greatly sinned against 'Brother Body.' ... We have told these things about his crying and abstinence in an incidental way to show that, after that vision and the message of the image of the Crucified, he was always conformed to the passion of Christ until his death" ("Legend of the Three Companions, Chapter 5; *Francis of Assisi, Early Documents: Volume II, The Founder*, p. 76).

Thomas of Celano said that the cross that was imprinted internally on his soul at San Damiano would manifest itself externally on his body: "From that time on, compassion for the Crucified was impressed into his holy soul. And we honestly believe the wounds of the sacred Passion were impressed deep in his heart, though not yet on his flesh." ("The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul," Book I, Ch. VI, 10, *FA:ED II*, p. 249).

Indeed, it happened 20 years later on La Verna, at the end of a period of fasting and prayer between the feasts of the Assumption (Aug. 15) and St. Michael the Archangel (Sept. 29).



The sources say that St. Francis prayed for two gifts: to feel in his body the pain which Jesus felt during his Passion and to know in his heart the love which Jesus felt for all humanity. His prayer was answered:

“On a certain morning about the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, while Francis was praying on the mountainside, he saw a Seraph having six wings, fiery as well as brilliant, descend from the grandeur of heaven. And when in swift flight, it had arrived at a spot in the air near the man of God, there appeared between the wings the likeness of a man crucified, with his hands and feet extended in the form of a cross and fastened to a cross.... As the vision was disappearing, it left in his heart a marvelous fire and imprinted in his flesh a likeness of signs no less marvelous. For immediately the marks of nails began to appear in his hands and feet just as he had seen a little before in the figure of the man crucified. (Bonaventure, “The Major Legend of St. Francis,” Ch. 13, 3, *FA:ED II*, p. 632).

Francis was at once overwhelmed with joy, but doubled over with pain. The prayer that Francis made is remarkable. He had dedicated his life to the cross of Christ. The love of God that he discovered through the cross informed all he did. He loved Christ on the cross so much that he desired to be with him where he was — there on the cross. That is why he made that twofold prayer: to feel in his body the pain of the cross, but also in his heart the love that Christ had for all people. There is, indeed, a connection between sacrifice and charity. The cross is the ultimate sacrifice, the ultimate charity of God.



**On Sept. 17, the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, a relic of the saint is carried in procession at the hermitage on Mount La Verna. Participating is Bishop Riccardo Fontana, bishop of Arezzo-Cortona-Sansepolcro, which includes La Verna.**

After La Verna, Francis’s life was inextricably and mysteriously united to Christ. The Incarnation of Christ, the “masterpiece” of God’s creation, indeed, the whole purpose of creation (in the words of later theologian John Duns Scotus) culminated in the Passion and crucifixion as the highest expression of God’s love, charity, and mission: “When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit” (John 19:30).

*Bret Thoman, OFS, is a member of Immaculate Conception Fraternity in Jonesboro, Ga., and director of St. Francis Pilgrimages.*

## JPIC Animation:

### All the JPIC-ky Things Seculars Are Involved With

Newsletters	Restorative Justice
Articles	Being a “Catalyst”
Newspaper Editorials	Commission Liaisons
Prayer	Re-entry Programs for Women
Speaking Opportunities:	Prison Ministry
Fraternities	Hospital Chaplaincy
Regions	International Day of Peace
Retreats	(Sept. 21)
Churches	Making Phone Calls:
Outside Organizations	— Congressional Reps.
Donate Blood	— Infirm
Pro-Life Causes	Fraternity Members
Laudato Si Studies	Just Neighbors
Disabilities – Needs	Two Feet of Love in Action
Shelters/Housing Needs	(USCCB)
Waste-free Thanksgiving	“Begging for Jesus” —
Interfaith/Interreligious	go out and get it
Sultan and the Saint	“Ixcan Ministries”
Emailings	“Cavetime” Prayer
“JPIC Moment”	Fraternity Formation with JPIC
Soup Kitchens	Catholic Worker Houses
Food Pantries	Lenten H2O Project
Days of Recollection/Prayer	“Women’s Cooperative” —
Sponsoring Events	Crafts/Culinary
Medical Missions	St. Vincent de Paul Society
Care for Creation	Catholic Charities
Solar Panels	Pace e Bene/Campaign
Monarch Butterflies	Nonviolence
Beekeeping	Habitat for Humanity
Community Gardening	Bread for the World
Recycling	Franciscan Action Network
Sanctuary for Birds	Franciscan Mission Service
Racism/Xenophobia —	Franciscan Family Apostolate
Social Issues	Franciscans International
Nonviolent Actions	
Conflict Resolution	
Restorative Justice	
Being a “Catalyst”	
Commission Liaisons	

It’s about meeting people where they are — then stretching them.

Localization: Identify the greatest need in your area, where the least is being done, in which you can make an impact.



## CALENDAR, from page 1

<b>Date</b>	<b>Fraternity/Group &amp; Location</b>	<b>V   Fraternal/Pastoral Visitors E   Presider/Ecclesial Witness</b>
Date TBD	St. Clare, Asheville, NC	V   Sara Nell Boggs/Joanita Nellenbach
Apr. 7–8	Franciscan Family of Greensboro, Greensboro, N.C.	V   Janet Hulshof/Audrey Binet
Apr. 8	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Elizabeth City, NC	E   Carolyn Peduzzi/Joanita Nellenbach
May 12	Immaculate Conception, Jonesboro, GA	E   Carmen Madero/Joanita Nellenbach
June 3	St. Maximilian Kolbe, Huntersville, NC	E   Sara Nell Boggs/Willie Guadalupe
June 8–9	Blessed Sacrament, Burlington, NC	V   Bob Pearson/?
June 9	Crucified Christ, North Charleston, SC	E   Janet Hulshof/Audrey Binet
June 23	St. Joseph Cupertino, Bessemer, AL	V   ?/?

**Aug. 3–5: Annual Regional Gathering, Ridgecrest, NC**  
**National Visitors**

Aug. 24–25	St. Michael the Archangel, Spartanburg, SC	V   ?/?
Nov. 14	St. Anthony of Padua, Fayetteville, NC	E   ?/?
Nov. 17	St. Francis of the Hills, Hendersonville, NC	E   ?/?

*Communio*

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For members of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States of America

**Secular Franciscan Websites**

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

**[www.bssfsfo.org](http://www.bssfsfo.org)**

National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States (NAFRA)

**[www.nafra-sfo.org](http://www.nafra-sfo.org)**

Consilium Internationale Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis (CIOFS)

International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order

**[www.ciofs.org](http://www.ciofs.org)**





This fresco, “Rose Miracle of St. Francis,” is above the front doorway of the Chapel of St. Mary of the Angels, also known as the Portiuncula, in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi, Italy. Francis, kneeling at right, is asking Jesus for an indulgence for all souls. Johann Friedrich Overbeck painted this fresco in 1829. The online *Encyclopædia Britannica* notes that this is “usuallv considered his maior work.”

## Paying attention keeps us in the midst of life

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

The fresco pictured above shows us St. Francis begging for what has become known as the Portiuncula Indulgence: a plenary indulgence.

It’s a marvelous scene, with Francis beholding a vision of Jesus, Mary, and angels. *The Pardon of Assisi*, a pamphlet available in the basilica, says that Francis prayed:

“Holiest Father, even though I’m a poor sinner, I pray that all who come to this church, repented for their sins and having confessed them, may they receive a bountiful and generous pardon, with the full remission of all faults.”

“Your request is great, O Brother Francis,” the Lord answered, “but of greater things you are worthy and greater things you will receive. I therefore grant you your prayer, but only under the condition that you ask my Vicar on earth, on my behalf, this indulgence.”

Francis immediately went to Pope Honorius III, who was staying in nearby Perugia, and the pope granted the indulgence.

Behind the altar the back of the church is open to reveal a mountain landscape — and two people passing by on the left. They’ve crossed that whole space, but they don’t hear, or perhaps they ignore, the singing and the music. As they don’t look in, they never see the vision. Focused on where they’re going, they don’t stop to see something greater than their earthly destination.

When I visit the Portiuncula, I meditate on this fresco before I go into the chapel. While I don’t spend a lot of time looking at those two people, I always notice them. I’ve often wondered: Why did the artist put them there? Could it be that they’re meant to represent us? To show us what we miss when we don’t pay attention? That in itself is something to meditate upon.

St. Francis was different. He was keenly aware what was going on around him. As he walked along, or sat under a tree or in some field or on a mountain, he felt the sun (or the rain), heard the

birds sing, looked at the flowers, grass, trees, wild animals.

Even when he was going somewhere, he paid attention to the world around him.

We have only to listen to his poem, “The Canticle of the Creatures,” to know how well he could see.

Francis wrote this poem at the end of his life. It would be more accurate to say that he dictated the poem to another friar who wrote it down, because by that time Francis was almost totally blind from a painful eye disease that could not be cured. He had other physical ailments, as well.

At that time, he was also suffering mentally and emotionally. The Order he had founded was moving away from the ideals he cherished. Yet, he was not distracted from joy and from praising the Lord. The Canticle is one of the most joyful poems in literature.

He could still see, in his mind, Sir Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire, Sister Water. And he saw *into* them, he saw their qualities.

Sir Brother Sun is beautiful and radiant and bears the likeness of God. Sister Moon is clear and precious and beautiful. Sister Water is useful and humble, precious and chaste. Brother Fire is beautiful and playful, robust and strong. Francis saw the flowers and fruits that come to us from our Sister Mother Earth.

And he saw the need for forgiveness, that grace he had asked of Jesus, and that, in the Canticle, he speaks of again. And all the creatures were praising God with him.

How often do we slow down to look about us? To see what is going on around us?

Paying attention, as Francis did, requires silence and being present in the moment. It is true that Francis did not have a family to provide for or a job to go to each morning. He had the time.

We have to *make* the time. To sometimes turn off the TV or our computer, to put aside our phone or tablet. To have a face-to-face conversation with someone. To watch Sister Butterfly flit from flower to flower. To take a slow walk among some of our Brother Trees.

And most of all, as Francis was, to simply **BE** with our beloved Lord God.

*Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS, is Communio editor. She is a member of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity in Hendersonville, N.C., and spiritual assistant to Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.*

## **NAFRA Statutes — Membership**

### **Art. 18.7:**

“The Local Fraternity is responsible for contributing to the Regional Fraternity on a fair share basis from its common fund to underwrite the costs of that fraternity [cf. General Constitutions, article #30.3]. A fair share contribution is made based on the number of active and excused brothers and sisters, but not for those who are deemed lapsed.

- a. An active fraternity member is one who participates both by attending fraternity meetings and by providing financial support to the community, or whom the fraternity has excused from such obligations.
- b. Those brothers and sisters who neither attend meetings, support the community financially, nor have valid reasons due to health, family, work or distance, and who, after personal invitations to return to fraternity, consciously and deliberately reject or ignore the invitation, will be termed ‘lapsed’ and will not be carried on the fraternity membership roll nor be reported as a member to higher fraternity Councils [cf. General Constitutions, article #53.3].”

Note: Candidates, since they have been received into the Secular Franciscan Order in the Rite of Admission, are included in the fair share contribution.

## Regional Notes



**Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Fraternity,** Burlington, N.C., celebrated its 25th anniversary at its May 13 gathering.

During the anniversary Mass, Father Paul Lininger, OFM Conv., pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church, Burlington, specially recognized Mary Roach, OFS, and Alan Zanker, OFS (at left), as founding and active fraternity members. The fraternity presented them with certificates.

We would like to congratulate our Inquirers Michael Ballard, Paul Bobak, Rose Ann Bobak, Flo Echevarria, Joe Knight-McKenna. The Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming was held for these folks following the elections on Sept. 9.

### **St. John Vianney, Emerging Community,**

Lithia Springs, Ga., is a bilingual group: Hispanic and Anglo. We have struggled learning how to incorporate bilingual prayer, Mass, and formation so no one feels left out. We have come to love each other in joy and fellowship.

In August, Kate Kasmier became a candidate, and Bill Sadler was welcomed as an inquirer.

For our apostolate, we had prayer and fellowship for teens at St. John Vianney. On four Tuesday nights, we fed them, talked a little about the OFS and St. Francis, had interactive prayer with them and some fun games. We also have cooked for St. Francis Table, a food kitchen in Atlanta.



**St. Thomas More Fraternity**  
Wilmington, N.C., Oct. 15  
Evelyn Lauer, OFS

### **Newly Professed —Congratulations!**

**St. John Vianney, Emerging Community**

August

Nancy Bennett, OFS

**St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity**

Lithia Springs, Ga.     Spartanburg, S.C.

Oct. 14

Patricia McKenna, OFS

**Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis  
Regional Executive Council Roster**

**Minister:** DorothyAnn Rowland, OFS

**Vice Minister:** Carmen Madero, OFS

**Secretary:** Barbara Garrison, OFS

**Treasurer:** Ken Brooke, OFS

**Formation Director:** Dianne Ambrose, OFS

**Spiritual Assistant:**  
Search In Progress

**Area Councilors**

**Area 1**

**Lori Moran, OFS; Lannie Newman, OFS**

**AL:** Bessemer;

**GA:** Athens, Blairsville, Conyers, Duluth, Jonesboro;

**TN:** Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville

**Area 2**

**Sara Nell Boggs, OFS; Janet Hulshof, OFS**

**GA:** Augusta, St. Simons Island;

**NC:** Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Newton;

**SC:** Aiken, Charleston, Columbia, Greenville,  
Hilton Head Island, Spartanburg

**Area 3**

**Bob Pearson, OFS; Carolyn Peduzzi, OFS**

**NC:** Burlington, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Greensboro,  
Morehead City, Raleigh, Wilmington, Winston Salem;

**SC:** Garden City

**Archivist:** Sara Nell Boggs, OFS

***Communio* Editor**

**Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS**

**Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Animator**

**Carolyn D. Townes, OFS**

**Multicultural Commission Chair**

**Willie Guadalupe, OFS**

**Youth/Young Adult Fraternal Animator**

**Position Available**

**Prayer Ministry (online prayer requests)**

**Area 1: Lori Moran, OFS**

**Area 2: Dorothy Huebner, OFS**

**Area 3: Bob Pearson, OFS**

Fraternity prayer coordinators submit prayer requests.

**Congratulations  
New Councils**

**Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament  
Fraternity**

Burlington, N.C., Sept. 9

Minister: Teresa Frazier, OFS

Vice Minister: Alan Zanker, OFS

Secretary: Paula Zanker, OFS

Treasurer: Brian Ward, OFS

Formation Director:

Alice Gottschalk, OFS

Councilor: Marian Decowski, OFS

**St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity**

Aiken, S.C., Sept. 9

Minister: Karl Odenthal, OFS

Vice Minister: Karen Phillips, OFS

Secretary: Cindy Shea, OFS

Treasurer: Mary M. Welsh, OFS

Formation Director:

Patricia Hunter, OFS

Councilor: John R. Shea, OFS

**OFS**

It's our Order's abbreviation  
after our names  
or in other writing  
and refers to  
Ordo Franciscanus  
Sæcularis,  
the official — Latin — name  
of our Order.

In English, we're still the  
**Secular Franciscan Order.**