

Communio

That All May Be One

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

Summer 2019

In Profession We Consecrate Ourselves

“The *Ritual* uses the verb to consecrate, giving it the meaning of to devote, in other words to dedicate, reserve and destine a thing or a person for God and his exclusive service. It goes without saying that in the specific context of the *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order* it is persons who are involved; consequently, they are the ones who must offer themselves to God with full freedom and awareness.

“From this point of view Profession is the act by which a person places him/herself into the hands of God, enabling God to take hold of him, with the result that from the precise moment of Profession, the person no longer belongs to him/herself, but is considered as totally ‘expropriated’ and at God’s entire disposal.

“By virtue of Profession, the person becomes God’s property, and therefore ‘sacred.’ In reality however, the verb consecrate and its corresponding noun consecration, properly indicate the act by which God takes possession of the person (who is enabled to give him/herself totally by the gift of the Spirit who draws him/her), placing his seal upon the person and making him/her his own exclusive property.”

Br. Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap., Part 10,
“Profession in the SFO: Gift and Commitment”



Francis gives up everything, placing himself entirely in God’s hands to do what God asks of him. Sculpture, “Spogliazione di Francesco” (“Stripping of St. Francis”) by Fiorenzo Bacci.

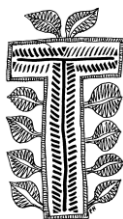
(Photo by Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS, when sculpture was in front of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, adjacent to the bishop’s residence in Assisi.)

The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate





Editor's Journal

I'd wanted to visit the chapel of St. Bonaventure on Mount La Verna ever since I'd read something that Father Murray Bodo, OFM, had written about that holy place:

"I am sitting the small cave-like chapel of St. Bonaventure located below the main chapel that marks the spot where St. Francis received the five wounds of Christ, the sacred stigmata so often celebrated in art. ... I've come here to pray because of my affinity with and devotion to St. Bonaventure.

"St. Bonaventure was a theologian, a Doctor of the Church, and Minister General of the Franciscan Order, who even in the midst of his administrative and fraternal duties as Minister General of the friars and later as a Cardinal, still found time (or made time) to write. I've come here to ask him to help me find words for what happened on this mountain in September of 1224, and these are the words that flow from my pen:

"Here is where Love was loved, here is where Francis was betrothed to Christ in a profound mystical marriage of souls. Francis becomes outwardly what he has been inwardly most of his adult life: an ecstatic lover of the crucified Christ" (*The Place We Call Home: Spiritual Pilgrimage as a Path to God*, p. 74).

There's more but you'll have to get the book to read it.

St. Bonaventure became minister general in 1257. He had a cell built for himself on Mount La Verna in 1259, (the chapel is 16th century). Going there to find peace, he spent much time and contemplation in that cell and wrote, or at least conceived, his classic work, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (*Journey of the Soul into God*).

Bonaventure was, among other things, a writer. Father Murray is a writer and so am I. Though I'm not comparing myself to either of them, I did spend time in contemplation in that tiny chapel. Writing is a joy, but it can also be hard. I think the grace I received that day has helped me to keep writing.

Just as spending time in solitude and contemplation helps me as a writer, it helps me to balance my life and, even more important, to deepen my relationship with God. I don't have to go to Mount La Verna to have that.

I suggest that the same can be true for all of us, in whatever are our responsibilities and interests in life. When we pray, we talk to God; when we listen in silence, God speaks to me.

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.

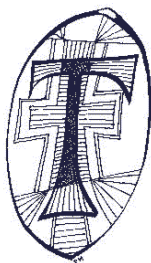
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Communio

**is published quarterly for the
Brothers and Sisters of
St. Francis Region of the
Secular Franciscan Order in the
United States.**

Minister's Message



Dear Brothers and Sisters,
May the Lord give you peace!

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way." This quote from John C. Maxwell was on my daily tear-away calendar for July 17.

I'd never heard of this gentleman and the quote intrigued me (especially since many of us are servant leaders and there is a Regional Chapter of Elections soon).

At any rate, I searched online and found out that John C. Maxwell is an American author, speaker, personal coach, and pastor, who has written many books, primarily focusing on leadership. His books have sold millions of copies, with some on *The New York Times* best-seller list. Titles include *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader: Becoming the Person Others Will Want to Follow*, and *Developing the Leader Within You*. Wow! Impressive!

Then, I thought, "Who is *our* leader?"

As members of the Secular Franciscan Order, we are called to follow Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. Our Rule shows leadership in each article, I feel; but in a way that calls us to seek the other first, by being a servant on our collective way to holiness, together, in fraternity. Learning and applying the articles of our Rule over time, we are converted daily along our Franciscan journey into the person that God has created us to be, before he calls us home.

We celebrated the feast of St. Bonaventure on July 15. In St. Bonaventure's 15 years as minister general, he continually visited the brothers as he walked from Assisi to Padua, Madrid, Paris, and to all the friaries of Europe. He always reminded the friars that following Christ was the center of St. Francis's vision.

St. Bonaventure also quoted these words of St. Francis to his brothers during his days of leadership: "Up to now we have done nothing. Let us again set out to do that which we have been given."

Our Chapter of Elections takes place just a few weeks from now at our Annual Regional Gathering. As of this writing, there are positions on the Regional Executive Council with either only one or no accepted nominations. I pray that you will be open to God's grace and the promptings of the Holy Spirit to share and develop your servant leadership role in your commitment to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. Jesus will not fail you; after all, he is our leader.

May we all bring the Gospel into our everyday experiences through our lives and compassionate service to all we encounter each day! Amen!

Peace and all good,
DorothyAnn

As an aside, I will not be present with you, dearest Sisters and Brothers, at the ARG this year. I'm having hip replacement surgery on Aug. 5 and will, I hope, be at home recuperating. Know you are in my prayers and I will miss seeing each of you. God bless you and keep you!

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.

Congratulations, New Council

Fraternity of Brother Francis

Newton, N.C., July 13

Minister: Paula Coleman, OFS

Vice Minister: John Martin, OFS

Secretary: Xiomara Palma, OFS

Treasurer: Bernie Taft, OFS

Formation Director: Rita Borst, OFS

Councilor: Doug Miller, OFS

Councilor: Ginnie Stewart, OFS

Councilor: Roger Stewart, OFS

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation: The Gubbio Process: Mindfully Handling Conflict

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

Of all our Franciscan tradition and sources, one of the most known and loved is the story of how St. Francis ended the conflict between the citizens of Gubbio and the wolf that was killing their livestock and some of the citizens, as well.

It is a wonderful tale of compassion, peace, and nonviolent action — the attributes needed when conflict arises.

One of the fundamental things to remember is that conflicts are inevitable; they are normal and will happen. As long as there are people, there will be conflicts.

But what is *not* inevitable is the violence that tends to accompany those conflicts. We, as good Catholics, good Christians, and, even better, as Franciscans think it is not Franciscan to be in conflict. We think we are supposed to be above the disagreements. Newsflash: Not true! As good Franciscans, however, we need to know how to continue to be in fraternal relationships even in the midst of conflicts.

Conflicts are typically thought of as violent struggles or wars. The truth of the matter is that they usually escalate into those wars because they have not been properly handled in a timely and mindful manner. If a small disagreement is left to fester and is not dealt with, it will eventually grow into something greater. This is where the violence can seep in. ***A conflict usually begins because a need is not being met.*** Violence is the fear and anger that arise as a result of those unmet needs — whether internal or external, whether physical or emotional.

The story of Francis and the wolf beautifully tells of Francis's way of being an instrument of peace by reconciling two warring parties. Each of those parties had a need — the townspeople needed safety and the wolf needed food. Francis found a way to satisfy both parties who were at war, who were in conflict. Peacemaking and reconciliation with all beings is a fundamental dimension of our Franciscan and fraternal life. To be brother or sister to all is to make peace with whoever is the “other.”

What I call the “Gubbio Process” is one way to handle conflicts and disagreements, be it in the fraternity, in your family, in your workplace, in your faith community. Never allow small disagreements to escalate into full-blown violence. I will briefly point out three of the steps:

1. **Always begin with prayer.** When things begin to get too heavy and loud, take a Franciscan pause: Make the sign of the cross, fall silent for five minutes, and call upon the Holy Spirit to be in your midst. Francis began by arming himself with the sign of the cross and calling upon the name of Jesus.
2. **Address and regard the other as a “person” and not as an “object.”** When a conflict begins to escalate, we tend to see the person we are in disagreement with as enemy. Enemies stop being people and become objects — things we think we can manipulate and control. Francis addressed the wolf as “brother.” Remember that the other person is also a creation of the Most High God.
3. **Sharing our stories with mutual invitation.** We invite the other parties involved to share their stories. And when they are sharing their stories, we are actively listening. Not listening



Sculpture of Francis and the Wolf at the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe at Marytown in Libertyville, Ill. (Photo by Carolyn D. Townes, OFS.)

for the opening so we can insert our counterargument but listening to understand. Remember the Peace Prayer: We seek *first* to understand, *then* to be understood. Francis heard and acknowledged both parties, including the most destructive, Brother Wolf. Each party shared their truth, and Francis allowed the space for mutual respect.

What do these three steps have in common? They are all done intentionally and mindfully. These are all acts of doing the truth in love — and where there is love, violence cannot exist. Peacemaking begins with oneself and one's attitude in dealing with violence. How we deal with ourselves leads to the outward expression when dealing with the public sphere.

May the Lord continue to give you peace.

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, a member of the St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Aiken, S.C., is the national and regional animator for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

Day of Recollection: A Virtual Pilgrimage to Assisi, Using FUN Resources

Story and Photo by Larry Lynch, OFS

The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity, St. Simons Island, Ga., held an in-house self-directed day of recollection on Feb. 14.

I used a PowerPoint CD, found in our National Formation Commission's *For Up to Now: Foundational Topics for Initial Formation* (FUN manual) to facilitate the day.

The pilgrimage consisted of 41 slides of pictures, text, and questions, produced by Secular Franciscans who were enrolled in seminars at St. Francis University in Loretto, Pa.

I adapted the CD PowerPoint format to correlate with the retreat's purposes:

1. Reflect on our spirituality and our relationship with God;
2. Make a virtual pilgrimage to Assisi, walk in the 13th century footsteps of Sts. Francis and Clare, and to adapt those steps into our 21st century lives;
3. Reflect on the Franciscan way of life — our Rule — particularly on our charism of living the gospel life and to be spiritually changed by the experience (metanoia).

The morning started at St. William Catholic Church on St. Simons Island, with Msgr. John Kenneally, the pastor, celebrating Mass. Afterward, we drove to my home, where coffee and muffins were served.



The Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi, Italy.

muffins were served.

After praying to the Holy Spirit for guidance during our pilgrimage, we watched an inspiring four-minute video of a choir singing "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name."

We watched the choir and the PowerPoint presentation on a large-screen television. I handed out a map of Assisi, from the FUN CD, as well as prayers and questions.

The retreat was to be interactive and discussion was encouraged. I selected each slide and spoke about its spiritual and historic relevance to St. Francis and St. Clare.

Questions in the text and slides of pilgrimage sites promoted active discussions.

Prayers were said before the "virtual entry" to many of the pilgrimage sites.

"While I was saying those prayers," said fraternity member Georgia Ann Markley, OFS, "I

felt spiritually uplifted and was immersed in each location.”

A number of years ago, Georgia Ann and her family visited Umbria, but she was unable to climb the difficult terrain. Unfortunately, she had to stay in her lodging while her family visited Assisi. After experiencing the virtual retreat, she told, that she “felt complete,” and that this had helped her to take that trip to Assisi that she was unable to do when she was in Italy.

When entering the Basilica of St. Clare, where the St. Damiano Crucifix is displayed in the Chapel of the Crucifix, we said the Prayer of St. Clare, “I look up and I behold the Lord ...” and meditated on Christ’s sacrifice for all mankind and his spoken words to St. Francis to “rebuild my Church.”

Members also saw St. Clare’s crypt in the basilica. Seven years after her death, her incorrupt body was taken to the Basilica of St. Clare in Assisi. By the 19th century when a new crypt was built for the saint’s remains, it was discovered that Clare’s body was no longer officially incorrupt, yet her skeleton was in perfect condition.

So, “a mask was constructed to cover her remains, which were soon reduced to bones. The mask can be seen by the public today, while her actual relics can be seen only by the sisters who have access to the rear of the crypt,” (Bret Thoman, OFS, “The Finding of the Body of St. Clare,” stfrancispilgrimages.com/blog/the-finding-of-the-body-of-st-clare-of-assisi. A photograph shows St. Clare’s bones.)

Text on the PowerPoint asked us to meditate about the active evangelical life of St. Francis and the cloistered contemplative life of St. Clare and to discern how we might live out these two dimensions of Franciscan charism of “from gospel to life and life to the gospel.”

A slide of the Portiuncula and accompanying text prompted us to reflect upon that humble site, the birthplace of the Franciscan movement that was to become the greatest catalyst for change in the history of the church.

The Portiuncula was saved from deterioration and destruction by being enclosed in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. Construction on the basilica began in 1569 and was completed in 1679. (See *Discover Assisi: The Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels in Portiuncula*, Edizioni Porziuncola, p. 5).

The virtual tour ended with the slide of the Basilica of St. Francis. The basilica’s Upper Church contains 28 extraordinary frescoes of the life of St. Francis. The Lower Church also contains quite a number of frescoes. In the Lower Church is a stairway leading down to the crypt, where the tomb of St. Francis is located.

After St. Francis’s death, in 1226, his body was placed in the Chapel of St. George (which is now incorporated into the Basilica of St. Clare). On May 25, 1230, his body was taken in

How to use the FUN resource CD

Place the FUN Manual CD only into a COMPUTER, as it is a data based CD.

1. Open folder OOOO revised FUN CD
2. Open folder “Assisi Pilgrimage-retreat.ppt”. A PowerPoint of 41 slides will appear on the screen. Click on each slide to have it expand to the size on a TV screen

For choir singing “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”:

1. Open YouTube.com
2. Type in Search bar: “Ordination of Bishop Liam Cary + Holy God We Praise Thy Name”.

The following sources were used preparing for this retreat:

Murray Bodo and Susan Saint Sing, *A Retreat with Francis and Clare of Assisi, Following Our Pilgrim Hearts* (Ohio: St Anthony Messenger Press, 1996).

The picture of the body of St. Clare can be found by typing in Google “Picture of the body of St. Clare of Assisi”. The picture can be saved as a document and placed on one’s computer screen which will allow it to be brought up for showing.

procession to the crypt under the high altar of what is now the Lower Church the Basilica of St. Francis. Perugians tried to steal the body, so the tunnel leading to it was sealed. In 1818, the sarcophagus of St. Francis was found during excavation. The remains are now in the original stone coffin that is located in the crypt that is below the Lower Church.

Our members brought their own experiences to the presentation. The pilgrimage gave the fraternity new insights into walking in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare. Prayer and meditation time throughout the day gave numerous opportunities for us to grow in our faith and to journey inward to find God.

Mary Jane Marsh, OFS, a candidate, said that during the retreat she “felt a profound sense of fellowship with the OFS members ... a sense of being one in and of the spirit of St. Francis. It was a confirmation that we are in the world but *not* of the world in our relationship with God.” She noted “how silence, meditation and adoration assist us in our mission of love, charity, and peace.”

The pilgrimage was also a reminder of the inspirational lives that St. Francis and St. Clare led and the example of Christ’s love that they gave to the world. We hope that their lives will be a catalyst for each of us to respond to Jesus’s call to St. Francis to “rebuild my church.”

A luncheon was served after the meeting at Larry’s home, where lively discussions about the Day of Recollection and other earthly concerns took place.

Larry Lynch, OFS, is minister of The Five Georgia Martyrs Fraternity, St. Simons Island, Ga.

Congratulations!
Newly Professed
St. Michael the
Archangel Fraternity
 Spartanburg, S.C., July 13
 Paula Duncan, OFS

BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION CALENDAR
SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS (V) AND ELECTIONS (E)
May through December 2019

* confirmed V+ follow-up visit (observers in parentheses)

Date	Fraternity/Group & Location	V Fraternal/Pastoral Visitors
		E President/Ecclesial Witness

Aug. 9–11: Annual Regional Gathering, Ridgecrest, NC,
Regional Executive Council Election

Sept. 14	Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg, Blairsville, GA	E /Joanita Nellenbach
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Sept. 21	Spirit of Francis and Clare, Conyers, GA	E
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Oct. 15–20: NAFRA Chapter, Corpus Christi, Texas

Oct. 26–27*	Padre Pio, Raleigh, NC	V
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Nov. 1–2	St. John Vianney, EC, Lithia Springs, GA	V
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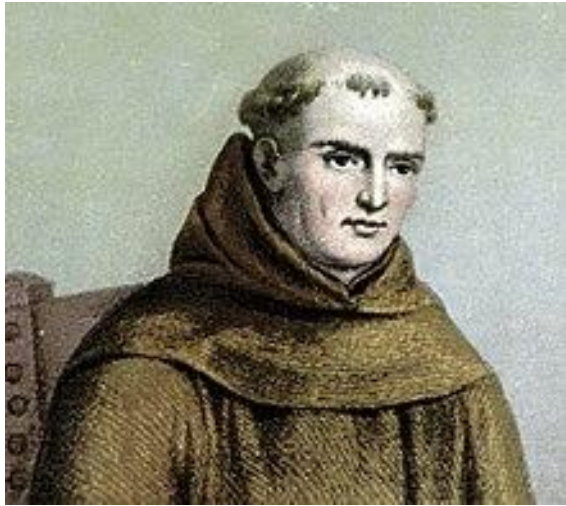
Nov. 8–9	Crucified Christ, N. Charleston, SC	V
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Nov. 22–23	St. Francis of the Hills, Hendersonville, NC	V
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Dec. 6–7	Mother Cabrini, EC, Anderson, SC	V
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St. Junipero Serra's Missionary Life in California

Deacon Gaspar DeGaetano



St. Junipero Serra, whose memorial we celebrated on July 1, was the great missionary who established nine California missions and baptized more than 6,000 native people.

St. Junipero's life well reflects that day's Gospel reading, Mt 8:18–22, in which a scribe tells Jesus, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replies, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head."

Indeed, St. Junipero left Europe to become a missionary in the New World.

He was born on the beautiful Spanish Mediterranean island of Mallorca in 1713.

At age 16 he became a Franciscan novice.

After studying philosophy and theology, he was ordained to the priesthood. He served as a professor of theology at the University of Padua for 12 years, until he left to become a missionary.

After landing in Vera Cruz, Mexico, St. Junipero and a companion decided to walk the 250 miles from Vera Cruz to Mexico City. During that trip, an insect bit St. Junipero on his left leg. The infected bite became a lifetime cross for him to bear.

What a penitential journey to start his work as a missionary!

After 18 years in Mexico, during which he became president of the missions, he traveled north. Serra described in the diary he kept during the journey how, especially in its upper reaches, he suffered greatly from an infirmity in his legs and feet and had to be carried on a stretcher.

He devoted the next 15 years of his life to evangelical work in Upper California.

Entering California on 1 July 1767, he proceeded to found missions along the California coast from San Diego to San Francisco:

- San Diego, July 16, 1769;
- San Carlos, Monterey-Carmel, June 3, 1770;
- San Antonio, July 14, 1771;
- San Gabriel, Sept. 8, 1771;
- San Luis Obispo, Sept. 1, 1772,
- San Francisco, Oct. 9, 1776;
- San Juan Capistrano, Nov. 1, 1776;
- Santa Clara, Jan. 12, 1777;
- San Buenaventura, March 31, 1782.

He was present at the founding of Presidio Santa Barbara, April 12, 1782. During Serra's mission presidency, Gov. Felipe de Neve founded the civilian pueblos of San Jose on Nov. 29, 1777, and Los Angeles on Sept. 4, 1781. Their spiritual administration and that of the four presidios of San Diego, Monterey, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara, however, was subject to

**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:
Deacon Tom Shaver, OFS**

Area Councilors

Area 1

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.

Serra and his missionaries.

The close union of church and state in the Spanish colonial regime, the role of evangelization in the imperial process, the distance of California from the home bases in Mexico, and the complexities of intercultural relations caused many problems for Serra throughout his administration. His numerous letters and reports are replete with the difficulties encountered in these early years.

He and his missionaries were in charge of spiritualities and temporalities. Domestic animals were introduced into the land, agriculture was started, trades were taught. Six totally different languages prevailed in the mission territory.

Serra died at Mission San Carlos, Aug. 28, 1784, at the age of 70.

If you have the opportunity to visit the California missions, I think the one that will impress you the most will be San Luis Rey in Oceanside. In that mission, there is a museum containing many beautiful Spanish works of religious art that the native people hid during a religious persecution by the Mexican government while California was still part of Mexico. After California became part of the United States, these religious objects were returned to the mission so that many people could view them there again.

Deacon Gaspar DeGaetano serves at the Basilica of Sts. Peter & Paul in Chattanooga. This article was based on his homily of July 1, the Memorial of St. Junipero Serra.



St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity and members of St. Clare Fraternity, share a retreat day at Sacred Heart Church in Brevard, N.C. (Photo by Randy Hair, OFS)

Retreat Takes Fraternities into Relationship with Natural World

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

“St. Francis and Nature — From the Bird’s Point of View” was this year’s retreat theme for St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity, Hendersonville, N.C.

Members of St. Clare Fraternity from Asheville, N.C., joined us on June 29 to spend the day contemplating our connection to the natural world.

We were at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Brevard, N.C., which has a garden and lots of additional space with trees and flowers where we could wander, then sit and talk.

Father Praveen Kumer Turaka, OFM Cap., had given us the retreat theme, with these questions to consider in the morning:

1. With what animal, tree, plant, or any object in nature can you compare yourself, your character, or your nature, and why?
2. Observe a flower, plant, tree, animal, a bug, a fly, or whatever is available, living in nature. What do they tell you? How are they speaking to you?
3. What can “You” do on “Your” part to love nature, to protect it, and to protect our “Common Home”?

As Father Praveen would tell us in his talk that afternoon, St. Francis didn’t use the word “nature”; he spoke of “relation.”

In pairs for an “Emmaus Walk” that morning, we strolled about the lush grounds in silence as we looked at God’s created beauty, then sat with our retreat partners to discuss what we had

discovered in our contemplation on our relationship to creation.

In thinking about that first question, I compared myself to a butterfly, which is a symbol of resurrection, of becoming to a new being. Changes in the direction in which my writing is going are, to me, like a resurrection.

For that second question, I looked at the flowers and remembered Rumer Godden's story, "Fireworks for Elspeth," about a 19-year-old English girl who's joining a religious order. For the going-away luncheon, her mother insists that the table be set with flowers of a particular color that will compliment the dessert.

Elspeth thinks of the convent: "She saw the colors of the flowers underneath the statue of the Virgin; the flowers in the convent garden came in their seasons for Her; they did not have to match the pudding." (*Great Short Stories of the World*, p. 509, Reader's Digest Books).

All the flowers and trees around the church praise God just by blooming and growing. Am I doing the same? Being who I've been created to be is one way to praise God.

After Father Praveen celebrated Mass, we shared conversation during a potluck lunch. Then Father gave his retreat talk. Here is a summary:

Every creature speaks to us. In India, there is a bird that comes right before the monsoon. Everyone celebrates, and they start farming. If that bird does not come, it doesn't rain at all. Scientists have not been able to figure out the connection between the bird and the monsoon.

Listen to nature. There comes the beauty. Be guided by St. Francis. Have the relationship with creation. The color blend in nature cannot be created by any computer. We have to be guided by nature. If you are guided by nature, it will take you to the right place. If you follow nature, you will reach your goal.

The bird's point of view: Why do birds exist? The main reason is for balance. They eat insects. We are to remove evil. Birds pollinate plants, so they create new life. Birds, such as vultures, clean up nature. We are to clean up, externally and internally. Externally, keep your surroundings clean. Internally, keep yourself clean through confession.

Birds spread seeds; they do 70 percent of the planting of seeds. We are to spread seeds of love. Sea birds help preserve the coral reefs, when the birds dive into the water, by the ripples they make. We are to create ripples of love.

Nature is part of our life, and we have to take care of it.

After his talk, Father Praveen asked us to share what we had talked about during our Emmaus Walk. Everyone offered comments.

For that third question, about preserving our "Common Home," we spoke of such things as recycling and cutting down on waste.

We enjoyed the retreat, but for those of us in St. Francis of the Hills, it was a poignant day, as well. For we knew that on July 9, the Capuchin friars — Father Martin Schratz, OFM Cap., Father Praveen, and Father Roberto Perez, OFM. Cap., — would be leaving for other assignments in their province.

Capuchin friars had staffed Immaculate Conception parish since 1991, and several, including Father Roberto, had been our spiritual assistants over the years.

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.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION
ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING**

LifeWay Conference Center — Ridgecrest, North Carolina

Chapter of Elections

August 9–11, 2019

“Vibrant Fraternal Life”

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

3:00 P.M. Registration- Mountain Laurel Lobby (Franciscan Family of Greensboro Fraternity)

2:00: Meeting - REC + National Visitor (Johnson Spring Board Room)

4:00: Choir practice for cantors and musicians (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

5:00: Liturgy of the Hours: Evening Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

5:30–6:30: Dinner buffet (tickets required)

7:00: Welcome, Opening Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

– Recognition of New Councils, New Attendees, and Anniversaries

– Introduction of National Visitor: Josh Molidor, OFS, National Councilor

7:30: Presentation – Servant Leadership: Carole King, OFS, St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity

8:15: First Call for Nominations: Josh Molidor, OFS

8:30: Social (refreshments: Mountain Laurel — conference connector level)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

7:15–8:15: Breakfast buffet (tickets required)

8:15: Liturgy of the Hours Morning Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

8:45: Second Call for Nominations: Josh Molidor, OFS

9:00: Presentation: Deepening Our Franciscan Vocation Josh Molidor, OFS

10:00: Third Call for Nominations: Josh Molidor, OFS

10:15: Break

10:30: Celebration of the Eucharist, Procession to Eucharistic Chapel
(Stigmata of St. Francis fraternity)

Note: Offertory collection for BSSF Region

Noon–1:00: Lunch buffet (tickets required)

1:00–4:30: Regional Fraternity Council Meeting / Chapter of Elections
Johnson Spring Building - 2nd Floor, Room 5 A-D (Across from Azalea Room)

1:00–4:30: Presentations (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

1:15 – 2:15 How to present Ongoing Formation: Ken Wessling, OFS

2:20 – 3:20 Catholic Social Teaching: Carolyn Townes, OFS and team

3:25 – 4:25 OFS Rule: Lynn Oesser, OFS; Frank Pelosi, OFS

See ARG, p. 13

ARG, from p. 12

4:30: Quiet Time

5:00: Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

5:30-6:30: Dinner buffet (tickets required)

7:00: Introduction of Newly Elected Council

7:30: Memorial for Deceased Members of Region (Sacred Hearts of Jesus and
Mary Fraternity)

8:00: Social (refreshments: Mountain Laurel – conference connector level)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11 — FEAST OF ST. CLARE

7:15-8:15: Breakfast buffet (tickets required)

(Time to check out)

8:30: Liturgy of the Hours Morning Prayer (Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

9:00: Presentation: Summary of Saturday afternoon sessions

(Johnson Spring 2nd Floor, Azalea B&C)

10:00: Recognition of newly professed; Renewal of Commitment (all professed)

10:15: Celebration of the Eucharist — Mass of Installation

Offertory collection for Holy Cross Retreat Center to help refugees

11:30: Adjournment - Closing Prayer — Closing Comments

Special information tables
on those who are on the slate for Chapter of Elections
will be available in the Johnson Spring 2nd Floor corridor area.

Display tables for fraternities in rooms 3 & 4 A-D
across from Azalea meeting room.

Franciscan TAU Crosses by Betti Longinotti, OFS, for sale, rooms 3&4

FRANCISCAN BOOKS AND ARTICLES WILL BE FOR SALE

(St. Francis Springs Prayer Center)

Johnson Spring Building – 2nd Floor, Azalea Room A

*A Chapel will be open for Eucharistic Adoration Noon Sat until 10:00 AM Sun.

Please sign up to spend quiet time with our Lord

(Chapel: Mountain Laurel Building, lower level - conference room #5)

See ARG, p. 14

ARG, from p. 13

REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Chapter of Elections

Saturday, August 9, 2019

1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Johnson Spring Building - 2nd Floor, Room 3 A-D (Across from Azalea Room)

Every *elected* Fraternity Minister and REC
is a member of the Regional Fraternity Council.

Please be present or delegate this responsibility to another member.

OPENING PRAYER: *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order*

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

REPORT OF TREASURER

BUSINESS:

Approval of Budget for 2020

ARG – 2020: August 7-9, 2020 (Ridgecrest) Guest Speaker

Calendar of Visitations/Elections; Sept. 2019 – Dec. 2020

OPEN FORUM; Please discuss items with regional vice minister before meeting.

COMMENTS from Regional Vice Minister and National Visitor

CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS

ADJOURNMENT – CLOSING PRAYER

MEMBERS OF FRATERNITIES, NEWLY FORMING GROUPS, AND EMERGING
COMMUNITIES ARE INVITED TO OBSERVE THE COUNCIL MEETING.

Secular Franciscan Websites

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

www.bssfsfo.org

National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (NAFRA)

www.SecularFranciscansUSA.org

Consilium Internationale Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis (CIOFS)

International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order

www.ciofs.org

