

# Padre Pio Fraternity

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
Secular Franciscan Order of  
Central  
North Carolina

## *the little flowers of Padre Pio Fraternity*

Volume 18 Issue 13

January 2024



### **Minister's Memo**

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS, *Minister*

I'd like to start 2024 with gratitude. Each of you enriches my life as a brother and sister in God's glorious family. Your generosity of time, treasure and talent helps bring joy and peace to our world.

You may not know it, but each of you has touched me in your own special way. I smile at every meeting at the St. Francis and Padre Pio banners in the front of the room, knowing that Henry Simms has quietly been at work. I close emails with "Peace" because Ben Whitehouse once said that we need to spread the message of peace every chance we get. I marvel at how Maureen McFadden and Alma Hammer organize snacks for us at each month's meetings and how I have to argue with Richard Hammer about who gets to take out the trash at the end of meetings.

Sometimes I wonder what the world would be like if everyone acted with the service and love of Franciscans. While I don't have the answer to that question, the world is a better place because of all of you. You treat each other with love and respect, providing food, prayers, phone calls, cards and other signs of love whenever you get the chance as well as feeding our brothers and sisters at Oak City Cares.

Each week you receive an email called Formation Friday from our National Executive Council that Mercedes Cooley forwards to you. They are short, thoughtful reflections on what it means to be a Secular Franciscan. If you didn't get a chance to read the last one in its entirety, go back and take a look.

Here is a brief review of some of the suggestions:

- Turn toward the Holy Spirit at work within us.
- Prayerfully participate in electing and supporting your local council.
- Read, pray and meditate on the Rule.
- Actively listen to your brothers and sisters.
- Reach out to members who have missed a meeting by phone, email or a card.
- Pray for our deceased members and those on our fraternity prayer list.
- Remember that everything Francis wrote or said was based on Scripture.

Review your actions and relationship with God each day.

As we begin our new year, recall the good you have done and how important you are to our fraternity and to God's family. Let us go forth and resolve to continue to proclaim our love of our divine Father and deepen our relationship with Him and each other.

Peace, Sharon Winzeler

## **Fraternity Council**

Spiritual Assistant: Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM

Minister: Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Vice Minister: Dave Shick, OFS

Formation Director: Charlotte Witosky, OFS

Treasurer: Zubair Simonson, OFS

Secretary: Michael Hancock, OFS

Councilors:

Joan Monti, OFS

Jeanne Casciere, OFS

Chris Peffley, OFS

BSSF Region Minister: Ellen Ferrone, OFS

Area 3 Councilors:

Lee Cunningham, OFS &

Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, OFS

Our website: [ofscentralnc.org](http://ofscentralnc.org)

Facebook: Padre Pio Fraternity Secular Franciscan  
Order of Central North Carolina

## **Apostolates**

JPIC & Newsletter: Rachel Bongiorno , OFS

Oak City Cares:

MaryLou Holloway, OFS & Mary Cockrill, OFS

On-going Formation Team:

Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

Prayer Requests:

Deacon Phil Rzewnicki, OFS

CPO & Fraternity Library: Maureen Copan, OFS

Website:

Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Hospitality:

Maureen McFadden, OFS & Alma Hammer, OFS

Sunshine: Frank Peluso, OFS & Laurie Wilburn

## **Meditations by Padre Pio**

Source: EWTN.com

The integrity of the upright guides them.  
-Proverbs 11:3

But--I ask you--is it better to be resigned to a life without ideals...or rather, ...to seek the truth, goodness, justice, working for a world that reflects the beauty of God, even at the cost of facing the trials it may involve.

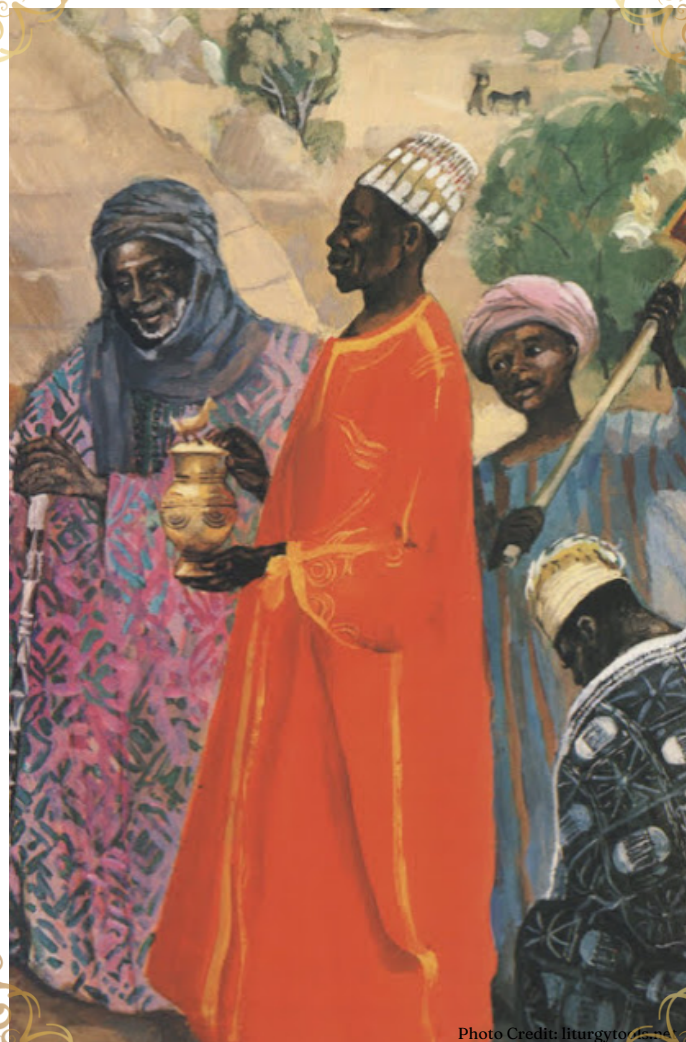


Photo Credit: liturgyto

We welcome those who would like to learn more about the Secular Franciscans. Join us for our monthly gatherings on the fourth Sunday of each month, beginning at 2:30 p.m. Location: Founders Room at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, North Carolina.



# Happy Birthday

Source: Canva images

3 John Halada, OFS  
11 Dianne Greet, OFS  
14 Debra Marusak  
18 Maureen McFadden, OFS  
19 Marylou Holloway, OFS

## January Franciscan Calendar *Month of the Holy Name of Jesus and His Holy Childhood*

1. Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord—Holy Day of Obligation
2. Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
3. Servant of God John (Giovanni) Parenti
4. Bl. Angela of Foligno
5. Bl. Ortolana de Offreduccio
6. Feast of the Epiphany—Holy Day of Obligation
7. St. Charles of Sezze
8. Bl. Roger de Toddi
9. Bl. Gilles de Lorenzana
10. Bl. Gregory X, Pope
11. St. Thomas of Cori
12. St. Bernard of Corleone
13. Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ
14. Bl. Oderic de Pordenone
15. Bl. James of Pieve
16. Sts. Berard and Companions
17. St. Matthew of Girgenti
18. Bl. Catharine
19. Bl. Vico Necchi, Confessor
20. Bl. Jean-Baptiste Triquerie
21. Bl. John de Padilla
22. St. Vincent Pallotti
23. Feast of the Marriage of the Blessed Virgin Mary
24. Bl. Paula Gambarà
25. Venerable Thomas of Olera
26. Venerable Robert
27. St. Angela Merici
28. Bl. Bienvenu de Recanati
29. St. Francis de Sales
30. St. Hyacintha de Mariscotti
31. St. John Bosco



*Padre Pio Fraternity Retreat  
12.02.2023*

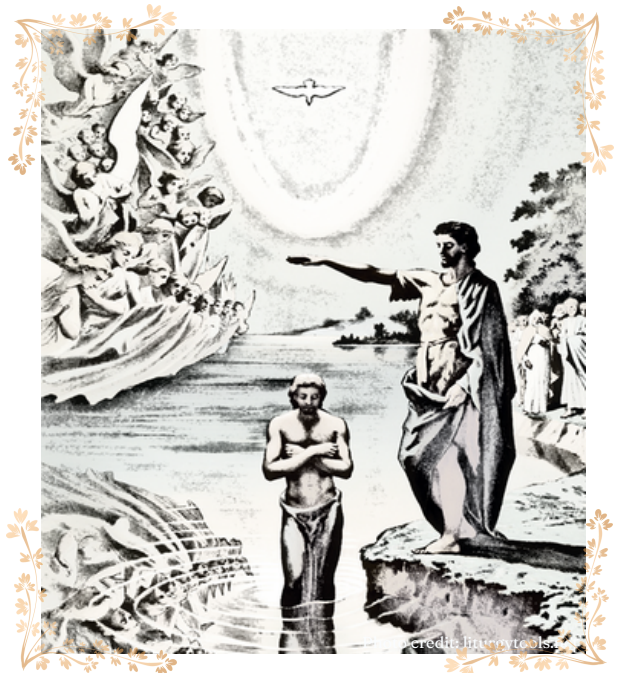
## The Pope's Prayer Intentions for January

### *For The Gift Of Diversity In The Church*

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit helps us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

Most High, glorious God  
enlighten the darkness of my heart.  
Give me true faith, certain hope and perfect charity,  
sense and knowledge that I may carry out Your Holy  
and true command.

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi to discern God's will





# Padre Pio Fraternity Retreat

December 2, 2023



Photo Credits: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

## Creche of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish



## Latin American Creche of Saint Raphael Parish



Photo Credit: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

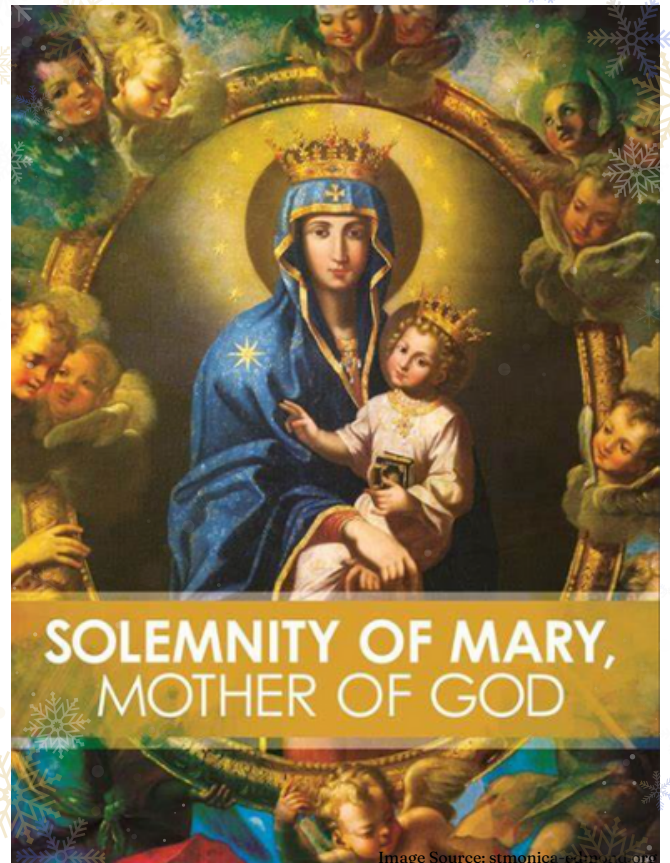


Image Source: stmonica.com



# BSSF Multicultural & Diversity Commission

*Diversity: Diversity refers to the differences that exist among individuals, such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and ethnicity.*

*Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism is when multiple cultural traditions are not only accepted in the society but also promoted.*

Multiculturalism is the key to achieving a high degree of cultural diversity. Diversity occurs when people of different races, nationalities, religions, ethnicities, and philosophies come together to form a community. A truly diverse society is one that recognizes and values the cultural differences in its people.

Both diversity and multiculturalism have great relevance to our lives today. Diversity is a fact, a growing reality, in the United States and in our Order. Social media, immigration, and an increasingly global economy are bringing together people with different languages, races, and cultures. This encounter of diversity brings us challenges, but also great opportunities. The Secular Franciscan Order is being blessed with diverse multicultural fraternities and members. This means we need to overcome our fears, anxiety, and insecurities when dealing with those who are different from ourselves. Not only do we need to be the bridge, but we also need to break down the barriers that create walls.

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.

Francis faced some of these same issues head on. Two Franciscan stories that resonate with me are the encounters of Francis and the Sultan and Francis and the Leper. Both were encounters with “the other.” Both experiences resulted in conversion of heart, due to Francis’ trust in the Lord. As Franciscans, we are called to be the face of God to others as Francis was.

Within our fraternities we have done a lot, but there is still much more to be done. Recently, as I was preparing to conduct a workshop for our Spanish speaking fraternities, I decided to check their entries in the database for any updates or changes. I was disappointed to find many discrepancies, which indicated to me that these fraternities are not being supported enough by their Regions. I have heard from several ministers of Spanish-speaking fraternities that they feel abandoned and isolated. My dear brothers and sisters, this should not be. I encourage each Region, if you have not done so already, to appoint a Multicultural and Diversity Commission Team so that any issues with these fraternities are brought to the attention of the Regional Council. The Council can then contact the fraternity to ensure that their needs are being met. As Secular Franciscans we have committed ourselves to accompany and take care of one another on our journey to the Father.

–Excerpt written by Willie Guadalupe, OFS for the Spring/Summer Issue of the TAU-USA #103

**WHY IS DIVERSITY IMPORTANT?** We live at a time when the encounter of languages, races, and cultures is more intense than ever. Mass media, especially the Internet, travel, immigration, and an increasingly globalized economy are bringing people together more and more. The experience of diversity is therefore more characteristic of our times and brings with it serious challenges and great opportunities. Diversity is a fact, a growing reality, in the United States and in virtually all areas of the globe. Jesus Christ commanded his followers “to teach all nations.” The Catholic Church, precisely because it is “catholic”—that is, “universal”—has always taken this command seriously. So, the Church’s mission to evangelize, or proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to advance the Kingdom of God is centered on the encounter of faith with cultures and on the promotion of justice. This is a process of conversion characterized by dialogue. In this process the Church both gives from its treasure of faith and receives from the distinctive humanity of each and every culture. As Church history indicates, the Church cannot be focused on its mission to evangelize without being more and more an expert in diversity (see Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation On Evangelization in the Modern World [Evangelii Nuntiandi]). -Excerpt from USCCB.org

*The Church of the twenty-first century will be, as it has always been, a Church of many cultures, languages, and traditions, yet simultaneously one, as God is one—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—unity in diversity.*



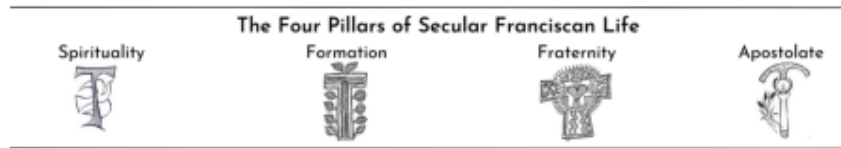


# Did you know?

By Frank Peluso, OFS

Did you know we have celebrated New Year's Day in many different ways? Well at least I have. My first recollection was when Uncle Gene and Aunt Mary would drive to our house. We would celebrate his birthday: he always celebrated it on New Year's Day because he never knew when his birthday really was. Of course, there was always a mass on New Year's Day. In 1950 it was a midnight mass at our church to begin the Marion year. That mass holds a special memory since I attended it with my best friend in high school. Like most of my friends, he has passed on. There were many families New Year's dinners with such a great variety of food, and we had no traditional food. When I was in the Navy, we had roast pork and cabbage. However, when I was married, we had a neighborhood celebration, and each family would bring their traditional food. There was pork and sauerkraut This tradition hails from Germany and Eastern Europe. However, our Polish friends had kielbasa instead of just pork. Black eyed peas were there as a tradition of my wife's family since they were from the southern U.S. The peas were served with color green, which symbolizes money and prosperity. Lentils are a legume that is often served in Italian households, and their legend is rooted in prosperity: The round legumes look like coin However, our Italian neighbors also brought spaghetti and meatballs, The McCrea's brought corned beef and cabbage. Can you guess where they were from? And of course, there was alcohol and sweets.

However, my best food ever is the Holy Eucharist and the finest way to start the new year. I would pray that Jesus would be with me throughout the New Year and go with me wherever I go. I hope that He is your favorite New Year's meal and that he will go with you wherever you go. I also pray that the saint of our "extraction" will be an example to help along the way also.



## The Christ Child Within

I think that we have hardly thought through the immense implications of the mystery of the incarnation. Where is God? God is where we are weak, vulnerable, small, and dependent. God is where the poor are, the hungry, the handicapped, the mentally ill, the elderly, the powerless. How can we come to know God when our focus is elsewhere, on success, influence, and power? I increasingly believe that our faithfulness will depend on our willingness to go where there is brokenness, loneliness, and human need. . . . Each one of us is very seriously searching to live and grow in this belief, and by friendship we can support each other. I realize that the only way for us to stay well in the midst of the many "worlds" is to stay close to the small, vulnerable child that lives in our hearts and in every other human being. Often we do not know that the Christ child is within us. When we discover him we can truly rejoice.







## TO THE MEMBERS OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with joy in my heart that I wish to send you my best wishes on such an important occasion for the entire Franciscan Family, whose prayerful presence and filial closeness I have felt since the beginning of the Petrine Ministry. The eighth centenary of the confirmation of the Rule of the Friars Minor by Pope Honorius III which took place at the Lateran on November 29, 1223, is an auspicious occasion not only because it commemorates an historical event, but above all because it revives in you the same spirit that inspired Francis of Assisi to strip himself of everything, and give rise to a unique and fascinating form of life since it is rooted in the Gospel and lived *sine glossa*. May this jubilee be for each of you a time of inner rebirth, of a renewed missionary mandate for the Church which calls you to go out to meet the world where many brothers and sisters are waiting to be consoled, loved and cared for. Therefore, moved by these sentiments, I am here to deliver you some exhortations that arise precisely from the words of the Poverello of Assisi, who advises his friars to “[...] observe poverty and humility and the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ [...]” (Regola bollata XII:4).

### *Observing the Holy Gospel*

The Regola bollata in fact begins and ends with an explicit reference to the Gospel. The opening expression is an illuminating synthesis of the entire Rule: “The Rule and life of the friars minor is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of one’s own and in chastity” (Regola bollata I:1). For St. Francis, the Gospel was at the center of his existence; and the Church has approved its purpose, returning it to him and to all of you Franciscans as a text that no longer expresses only the spiritual intuition of a Founder, but a form of life. It is a message of joy that I have often wished to point out because it “fills the heart and the entire life of those who encounter Jesus.” (Evangelii gaudium, No. 1). It is therefore urgent to return to the foundation of a Christian and baptismal commitment, capable of being inspired, in every choice, by the Word of the Lord: Christ is the focal point of your spirituality! Men and women who truly learn “rule and life” in His school!

### *Obedience to the Church*

Beloved, to live the teachings of the Master it is necessary to remain in the Church. Francis manifests this in a decisive manner because to the introductory sentence which describes the desire to follow the evangelical counsels, he immediately adds suggestive words, singular in content and language: “Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to our Lord Pope Honorius and his successors canonically elected and to the Roman Church. Let the other brothers be bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors. (Regola bollata I:2-3) In that bond of “obedience and reverence” to the Pope and to the Church of Rome, he acknowledges an essential element for faithfulness to the call and for receiving Christ in the Eucharist; This is why he declares without hesitation his indispensable belonging to the Church. So then, live the spirit of the Rule by listening to and dialoging with one another, as the synodal path suggests doing. Support the Church with a firm hold, repair it by your example and by your testimony, even when it seems to cost more!

### *Going Out into the World*

Finally, I want to take up an insight always found in the Regola bollata about going out into the world. Speaking in first person, the Seraphic Father articulates thusly: “I counsel, admonish and exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ not to quarrel or dispute or judge others when they go about in the world; but let them be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle and humble, speaking courteously to everyone, as is becoming. [...] Into whatever house they enter, let them first say: Peace be to this house [...]” (Regola bollata III:10-13) Going around the world for you Franciscan friars and sisters really means realizing your itinerant vocation in the manner of fraternity and a peaceful life, without quarrels or disputes either between you or with others, giving proof of “minority”, with meekness and docility, announcing the peace of the Lord and entrusting yourselves to providence: it is a special plan for evangelization, possible for everyone. From this perspective, it is good to rediscover the beauty of the characteristic Franciscan evangelization which is borne from a fraternity to promote fraternity; in fact, it is a life that speaks, love given in service is the greatest vehicle for proclamation. Find strength, therefore, in that peculiar vocation, proper to “minors” and “the poor,” such as you are by your desire and your sense of belonging. It is given to you [cont...]



by Francis in his Rule and I am convinced that it is in tune with the invitation I address to the Christian Community to be a “Church that goes out”: “In fidelity to the example of the Master, it is vitally important for the Church today to go forth and preach the Gospel to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear. The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded.” (Evangelii gaudium, No. 23). And therefore, I say to you: do not hesitate to go about the world in “fraternity” and in “minority” sharing the blessedness of poverty, becoming an eloquent sign of evangelism and showing to our age – marked so unfortunately by wars and conflict, by all kinds of egoism and rationale for exploitation of the environment and of the poor – that the Gospel is indeed the good news for man to find the best direction for constructing a new humanity together with the courage to set out towards Jesus, who “though he was rich, became poor for us, so that we might become rich through his poverty” (Cf. 2 Cor 8:9)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I entrust to you the mission of recognizing the right paths you must follow in order to correspond boldly and faithfully to the charism you have received. As you prepare to recall the fundamental stages in the history of this vast Franciscan Family, I invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary and Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi and I willingly send my Blessing, asking that you please continue to pray for me.

Rome, from St. John Lateran. November 9, 2023.  
Anniversary of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica Cathedral of Rome

Francis



“He would never or rarely reveal his great secret to anyone. He feared that his special friends would reveal it to show their intimacy with him, as friends often do, and he would then lose some of the grace given to him. He always carried in his heart and often had on his lips the saying of the prophet: “I have hidden your words in my heart to avoid any sin against You.”



## Oak City Cares Saturday December 23, 2023





# Living Stations of the Creche

December 15th | 6:30pm



If you asked me for one word to describe the Stations of the Creche at St. Francis, it would be *magical*. The joy was palpable. The story, the birth of Our Lord, the children actors and their choir, pure joy on their faces... It was like we were all there at the birth of our Lord, bringing our own gifts.

-Ellen Ferrone, OFS *Regional Minister*

Padre Pio fraternity partnered with St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church to create a walking reminder of the nativity in honor of the 800th anniversary at Greccio. An estimated 700 people attended the event that was held indoors and outdoors, celebrating the birth of Jesus with music, prayer and silent enactment of holy scenes.

Attendees began the pilgrimage in the labyrinth at St. Francis and concluded in church. Afterward they viewed 50 nativity scenes from the collection of Fr. Jim Sabak, OFM. Secular Franciscans served hot chocolate, coffee and cookies to the crowd and answered questions about the nativity.

Planning for the event began last summer under the leadership of Jim Wahl, director of liturgy and music at St. Francis, and our very own Ellen Ferrone, OFS. Jim created the liturgy portion of the program, gathered the musicians and singers while Ellen rallied the Secular Franciscans to help serve refreshments as well as assemble the nativity scenes..

In addition, some took part in the pilgrimage, including Ben and Gladys Whitehouse, OFS, who portrayed Joachim and Anna, parents of Mary.

The event was so successful that Jim said it is worth considering as an annual event.

-Sharon Winzeler, OFS *Minister*