

# Up to Now

Newsletter of the St. Margaret of Cortona Region of the Secular Franciscan Order

Covering the District of Columbia, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia,  
and portions of West Virginia and Pennsylvania



Fr. Philippus Philippus, OFMCap

Volume 13, Issue 1

*Let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing.*

August 2009

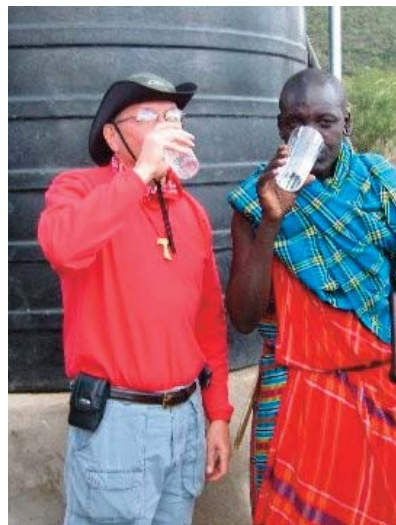
## NAFRA Secular Franciscan Peace Award 2009

**N**AFRA's 2009 Secular Franciscan Peace Award has been presented to Don Ryder, sfo, for his work with the Water Project in Kenya, Africa. Don is a member of the St James Fraternity in Wausau, Wisc.

Don has helped coordinate efforts to raise money to drill wells and assemble piping for the pumps so tribes of the Maasai in Kenya Africa can have clean water. This has allowed the people to be stationary in a safer community.

The women of the villages have been saved from the rape and murder some of them fell to while traveling by foot to a stream or water hole that held dirty water, water that not only was contaminated with wild animal droppings but threatened by the dangerous animals themselves.

It took the women a full day to travel to and from their water source, carrying the containers over their backs. The lack of potable water caused the villagers to wander from



Don Ryder enjoys potable water with a Maasai tribesman

place to place, never having stability. Their quality of community life was poor. Their main source of food was their cattle, which were not the fatted cattle we see in the United States.

The well and pump have allowed the villagers to be able to stay in one place, planting vegetable gardens to feed their families, with ample water for their livestock. This well has

See "Peace Award," page 2

## Editor's Note

A few weeks ago, I got an email asking that I add several names to my mailing list for the newsletter. I had to explain that it isn't possible for me to send an email to each person in the region to distribute the regional newsletter (and carrier pigeon isn't going to work either).

I send each issue to all the members on the Yahoo Regional Group list, and I ask that those recipients take a few moments to make sure that all the members of their fraternity



get a copy. Please save our carrier pigeons and forward *Up to Now* to the members of your fraternity.

Peace and all good,  
Mary Lou Coffman

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## Minister's Message



Hello Dear Brothers and Sisters in St. Francis,

How is your summer going? The weather was awesome here in Baltimore for most of July. I hope the same was true for you.

From input that I have received from several of our regional counselors and a little of my own experience, it seems that accepting to serve in a leadership role for a fraternity is not what a SFO believes that he or she can do or should do. Please read further and be encouraged to reconsider accepting the call to leadership when this is needed.

Here are some thoughts about the call to Servant Leadership that I find inspiring from *The Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership prepared by the National Formation Commission*. "As Francis' actions were always preceded by a significant period of prayer, so also we, as instruments, must seek to nourish ourselves in this way so that we might live the Gospel. There will be times when living the Gospel will mean leading, and other times it may mean following. If we are rooted in prayer, it will not matter which we do, but only that we are doing the will of our God." Once again we will be gathering as a Regional Fraternity on October 9-11 for our annual retreat in Priestfield, definitely a time for prayer and again in November 14 at our annual meeting in Baltimore, a combination of regional business and prayer. On each of these occasions, we will be interceding to the Holy Spirit to guide each one of us to do His Holy Will.

Continue to enjoy a restful summer. I am hoping to see some of you in September as you gather in your local fraternities and again in October for retreat and in November for the annual meeting.

May the Lord give you His Peace,

*Mary Thuman, sfo*  
Regional Minister

"Peace Award," continued from page

brought major improvements to their lives, cutting the infant mortality rate and reducing waterborne illnesses. Don is also encouraging them to plant trees, because they can now keep them watered, in an effort to reclaim some of the arid land in the Great Rift Valley. As the water is piped out beyond the well site, it is creating greater community among the people.

Work is already underway at another well site, where a windmill will be used. Near this second site is a small dispensary that Don visited on his last trip. There are plans are to pipe water to the dispensary with the hope that it can then be upgraded to a hospital where, the Maasai can come for treatment. The Diocese of Ngong, under the direction of Bishop Cornelius Schilder, recently received funds from the Vatican City to build a Catholic Church here. Water will also be piped to the school. All of this has been possible because of the efforts taken to see the needs of people and act on them.

Don has promoted the work among the SFO community throughout the LaVerna1

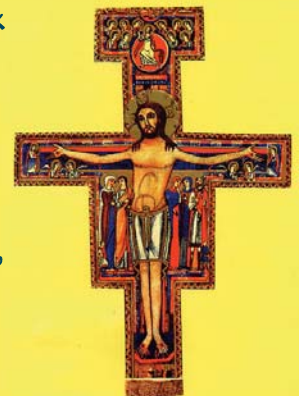
Region as well as in the neighboring city and towns of Wisconsin, and quite literally from coast to coast and border to border. The Fraternity published a cookbook, and the full profits from sales went to the water project. Rummage sales, bake sales, etc., all helped this funding.

## Prayer of St. Francis Before This Crucifix

Most high, glorious God,  
cast your light into the  
darkness of my heart.

Give me, Lord, right faith,  
firm hope,  
perfect charity  
and profound humility,  
with wisdom and perception,  
so that I may carry out  
what is truly your holy will.

Amen



## Formation Director's Message

I wish to thank all my enthusiastic formation team for covering for me and providing information from our first team meeting of May 17 and introducing all of us to you as your new regional formation team.

We have been spending the summer contacting the various fraternities of the region by phone, email or visits to gatherings, professions or special liturgies. I am happy to say that we all gave the team a good head start on getting out there to the fraternities to let them meet and talk to us about the good things (mainly) and/or needs that are happening with their formation programs. I have personally visited the following fraternities:

- † St. Conrad (Severna Park, Md.) on July 18
- † Mary Our Queen (Rosedale, Md.) on July 19
- † St Bonaventure (at their retreat and profession at the Seton Shrine in Emmitsburg, Md.) on July 25
- † Little Flower (Baltimore, Md.) on July 26
- † Padre Pio (Forest Hill, Md.)
- † St. Joseph Cupertino (Ellicott City, Md.) on August 11

I want to thank all of these fraternities for their hospitality and the welcoming Franciscan spirit they have shown me on my visits. I plan to continue visits to fraternities as time both progresses and permits me to do so. Feel free to call or email me and let me know when and where your fraternity meets so I can make arrangements to visit you. I have St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (Thurmont, Md.) scheduled for September 20 and St. Michael the Archangel (Baltimore, Md.) scheduled for September 23.

Other members of the formation team have been making contacts with ministers and formation directors as well. When they contact your fraternity, I ask that you be recep-

tive if they offer to visit you at your gatherings or other special affairs. The team's main purpose in their contacts and visits is to increase their visibility and effectiveness as servant leaders for all of you. Please do not hesitate to approach any of us about matters of either initial or ongoing formation: Feel free to do this even before we get around to contacting or visiting you. All of our email addresses were included in the formation article of the May issue of Up To Now.

If you have not yet received a copy of the Regional Formation Manual compiled by our team member and my predecessor, Sue Burke, Please contact one of us to make arrangements to do so. The team will continue to distribute this very useful manual until all fraternities of the region have a copy. The intent is for all fraternity formation directors to be the holders of these manuals for all of their fraternities.

Upcoming dates and events of the formation team include our next meeting of August 29 at the home of our team advisor, Ann Corro, Metro DC Councilor. The team will also meet informally in conjunction with the regional retreat of October 9–11 and/or the regional meeting of November 14 at Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore. The team will then meet in February of 2010. The team plans to meet roughly on a quarterly basis. Fraternity formation directors are welcome to attend any of the team's meetings. Just let me know if you wish to attend at +1410.488.9375 or [mhuether1@cavtel.net](mailto:mhuether1@cavtel.net).

Peace and all good to all of you and thank you for all that you do for the SFO.

*Mike Huether, sfo*

Regional Formation Director



### **Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA**

The Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Council in the Detroit area participated in the H<sub>2</sub>O Project during Lent. The young people fasted from beverages other than water and donated the money they saved to provide clean water to groups of people in the United States who do not have access to clean water.

They presented their contributions to the Canticle Café, a hospitality ministry of St. Aloysius Parish in Detroit and they spent a week in service to the people served by the Canticle Café.

For more information about the H<sub>2</sub>O Project, please go to <http://www.theh2oproject.org/>. For more information about the Canticle Café, go to <http://www.canticlecafe.org/>. For more information about the FY/YA Commission and its participation in the H<sub>2</sub>O Project, go to <http://www.franciscanyouthusa.com/>.



Refresh  
Restore  
Renew

Join your brothers and sisters at the annual St. Margaret of Cortona retreat at the beautiful Priestfield Pastoral Center.

You will be refreshed by the serenity of the peaceful mountain setting.

You will be restored by the spirit-stretching presentations and discussions.

You will renew your friendships in fellowship with your brothers and sisters.

*Go to the registration form on page 5.*





### Regional Retreat Registration Information

(This form can be filled in using your Adobe Acrobat software and then printed to send to Carolyn Protin.)

Where : Priestfield Pastoral Center, 4030 Middleway Pike, Kearneysville, WV 25430-3742

When: October 9-11, 2009

Who: All Secular Franciscans. Including candidates, inquirers and spiritual assistants

#### REGISTRATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Submit form no later than August 31, 2009.
2. Please type or print all information clearly.
3. Only one participant per registration form.
4. NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of \$50.00 must accompany this form.
5. Make your check out to St. Margaret of Cortona Region and mail this form with payment to:

Carolyn Protin, sfo  
 115 Starland Way  
 Milford, DE 19963-5378  
 Phone # 302 424-2441  
 e-mail: ceprotin@att.net

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Fraternity \_\_\_\_\_

Please check room requirement (please consider a roommate):

Rooms are designed for double occupancy for maximum attendees.

- A) Single occupancy room: \$176.00  **Waiting List Only**
- B) Double occupancy room: \$154.00  **Waiting List Only**
- C) Single occupancy cabin: \$210.00  **Waiting List Only**
- D) Double occupancy cabin: \$166.00  **Waiting List Only**
- E) Dormitory: \$132.00

Name of preferred roommate \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed with this form \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Retreat Day to Be Facilitated by Father Ron Pecci, OFM

The St. Margaret of Cortona's Regional Retreat at the Priestfield Pastoral Center in will be facilitated by Father Ron Pecci, OFM.

Fr. Pecci, the second of six children, was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. and raised there and in Cresskill, N.J. He completed undergraduate studies at St. Bonaventure University in biology, and did graduate work in biology at William Paterson University and the University of Southern California. He entered the Holy Name Province of the Order of Friars Minor in 1977 and made his profession in 1979. He pursued theological studies at the Washington Theological Union and was ordained to the priesthood in 1983.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar at St. Joseph Church, West Milford, N.J. and was then named Vocation Director for Holy Name Province. He was subsequently named pastor of SS. Rita and Patrick parish in Buffalo, N.Y., where he worked extensively with youth and young

adults and helped create low income housing in the parish.

He was next assigned as pastor of St. Anne parish in Fair Lawn, N.J., where, among other things, he supervised a \$2 million capital campaign for parish repairs and improvements.

Fr. Ron returned to St. Bonaventure University for a sabbatical and studied at the Franciscan Institute, after which he was named Director of Postulants for Holy Name Province. Since 2008 he has been director of Novices for Holy Name Province. In his work as a formation director, he has worked to collaborate in the formation process with other branches of the Franciscan family, helping develop and arrange inter-Franciscan retreats and workshops.

Fr. Ron has served on numerous provincial committees and local boards in the communities in which he has lived.

## Franciscan Pilgrimage



Courtyard, Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, Washington, D.C.

The Franciscan Friars from St. Joseph Friary in Chicago came and went from Roanoke, Va., on June 20 and the Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, D.C. by July 31. They had requested housing from fra-

ternity members as a backup in case they were unable to find accommodations on a day-by-day basis. Fortunately, people all along their route were amazingly hospitable and generous, and no backup housing was needed.

*The Washington Post* ran a comprehensive and very interesting story about their pilgrimage, which can be found at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/28/AR2009072803220.html>.



## Environmental Tips

When working around the house, use reusable rags and wipes instead of disposable products. Reuse old milk jugs, coffee cans, or other plastic containers to hold paint, cleaners, or other supplies. Be sure to label and date these containers properly, and store them safely away from children and pets.



Quando esté trabajando en su casa, use trapos y toallas reusables en vez de productos desechables. Reuse las botellas de leche, las latas de café, u otros contenedores plásticos viejos para llevar pintura, limpiadores, u otros abastecimientos. Asegúrese de marcar y otros contenedores plásticos viejos para llevar pintura, limpiadores, u otros abastecimientos. Asegúrese de marcar y fechar estos contenedores apropiadamente, y almacénelos de forma segura fuera del alcance de los niños y animales.

*Newsletter of the St. Thomas More Fraternity  
Harrisburg, Penn.*



**Day of Reflection**  
**May 30, 2009**  
**Profession and Sense of Belonging in the SFO**  
**Fr. Richard Trezza**

**T**he Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware Area Ministers sponsored a Day of Reflection at St. Clement's Church in Rosedale, Md., co-coordinated by Mary Simmons, sfo, Regional Councilor, and Mary Thuman, sfo, Regional Minister. The guest speaker was Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, who spoke on Profession and the Sense of Belonging in the Secular Franciscan Order, Themes from the General Chapter, Hungary, 2008.

Approximately 80 people participated in the day. Fraternities represented were Padre Pio, Little Flower, St. Conrad Annapolis, Mary Our Queen, St. Joseph Cupertino, St. Casimir, St. Thomas More Harrisburg, Mount St. Sepulcher, Holy Family, St. Mary of the Angels and St. Michaels. Special guests were Jaime and Sonia Bernardo and Anne Mulqueen, sfo, International Councilor, who introduced Fr. Trezza.

Fr. Trezza based his talk on the outline given by Fr. Felice Cangioli, OFM Cap., at the General Chapter of the SFO in Hungary, 2009, on the theme of Transformation.

During the first session, the importance of profession and its power to transform the individual were discussed by Fr. Trezza. Profession take one out of Chronos (our time) and allows us to enter Kairos (God's time).

He stressed the care with which the fraternity, the council and the individual must prepare for profession.

In the second session, Fr. Trezza spoke of the search for holiness in profession. Profession becomes Pentecost. . . Transformation. . . Sanctification. When the Profession is commingled with the Eucharist, the candidate prays to draw closer to the Lord in intimacy. This prayer can take on different forms:

A Cross  
 Death  
 Sickness

I want to be so close to you intimately; so that whatever is dealt to me in life, I will deal with it differently than someone else in life. There is always a DYING/SUFFERING and DYING/RISING. I will to stay intimately close with You so that I can enter the other "Way" with you.

Bread and wine signify us. We are the drops of wine. We shall become "Body and Blood of Our Lord." It is offered up, sacrificed and eaten. What is happening? Offer your-

self as an oblation on the altar. You will recognize yourself on the altar. The Priest witnesses this self-giving. God the Father made you to be yourself, and to "Become One with Him," to be "Owned by God."

The priest confirms this at the altar. Candidates make themselves entirely available to God. They hand themselves over entirely. As the storms of life arise, the Secular Franciscan handles each trial as coming from the hand of God and as a Member of the Order of Penitents.

How can we live a life of penance if we cannot sacrifice something? God wants hearts willing to serve God. It is a lifelong task....professed for life. The Brothers and Sisters are asked to offer themselves consistently to God in all circumstances of life—this is the supreme proof of Fidelity to Christ.

Hope is to wait expectantly for what we know is TRUE to happen.

Consecration-to dedicate or reserve something. To destine a person for God, set aside for His exclusive services only.

The professed person becomes "God's Property." Professed is "transformed from within."

The SFO is a True and Proper Profession. It is valid and true.

1. Obligation before God. God asks and we do it.
2. "Rule"
3. Incorporation in Order.

Secular profession is not inferior to religious profession. We are equal.

When professing, one is promising to live the Gospel by following example of St. Francis.

Secularity – Living in the World, For the World, Born a Secular.

Theological Condition

Special way to give witness to Salvation

SFO – In the World

To wish anything else is a betrayal of our profession

Excerpted from a report by  
 Mary Simmons, sfo  
 Md./Pa./Del Regional Councilor



## ***Our Lady of Perpetual Help Haiti Program***

As reported in the last issue of *Up to Now*, Dr. Tom Fame, sfo, Companions of Francis and Clare Fraternity, Rocky Mount, Va., gave a presentation at the Regional Election Meeting on the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Haiti Project, with which he has been involved since 1996. With moving testimony and beautiful slides, he described the education projects on which he has focused. These include building three schools, setting up a lunch program and paying teachers. He is now turning to public health issues — a health clinic, clean water project, and solar panels for the schools and church. He has written a book on his experiences in Haiti called *The Lambi's Call*, the proceeds of which go to the OLPH Haiti Project. He will come to speak about his project to groups, and he seeks funds for ongoing projects there. Tom has provided us with some of the pictures of his activities, which we are pleased to include in this issue.



*Haitian boy traveling on river.*



*One of the classes made possible by the OLPH Haiti Project.*



*Traveling on horseback in Haiti.*



*Dr. Tom meets with a Haitian family.*



*Faces of the children.*

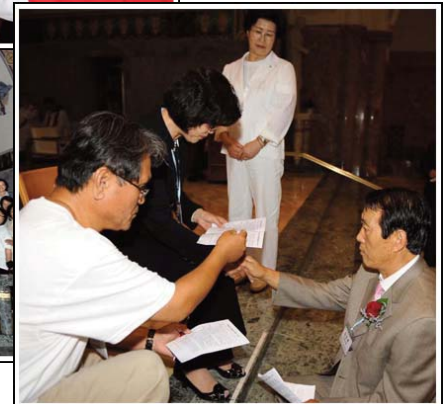
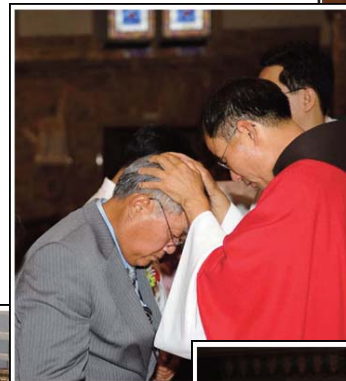
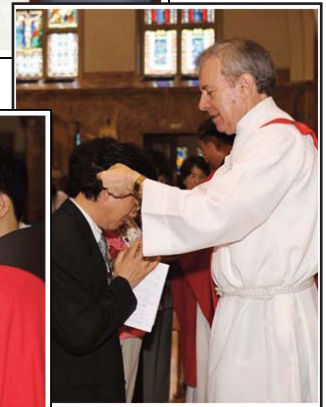


## Seven Korean Fraternities Gather for Retreat

In July, seven Korean Fraternities from around the country, including our own Emerging Fraternity of St. Bonaventure in Fairfax, Va., gathered at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md., to hold a retreat. In addition of the St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, there were Fraternities from New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, Maryland and two from Chicago.

On July 25, a high point of the retreat was the profession or reception as candidates of nine members of the St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, as well as the profession of one member of the Fraternity from New Jersey.

The St. Margaret of Cortona Region was represented at the profession and reception ceremony by Deacon Tom Bello, sfo, Regional Spiritual Assistant, and Michael Huether, sfo, Regional Formation Director.



### What Are We Reading?

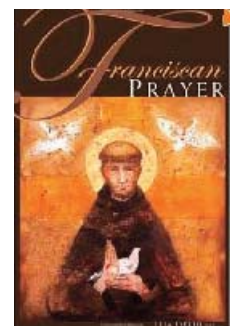
*Franciscan Prayer* by Ilia Delia, OSF (St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, Ohio, 198 pp.)

Have you wondered how Franciscan prayer differs from, say, Carmelite prayer or Benedictine prayer? Have you ever tried to explain it to an inquirer or a candidate? We know that the Franciscan charism is unique (as are all the charisms), but how does that affect the way Franciscans pray?

In a book drawing on the thoughts of Francis, Clare and Bonaventure, Sister Delia explains Franciscan attitudes, expectations of, and approaches to prayer.

Excerpt:

How do we begin this descent into our humanity, this journey to freedom and the fullness of life in God? It requires first of all solitude of place and solitude of heart. Solitude is not the same as loneliness. Whereas silence is the deafening silence of being alone, isolated and enclosed, solitude is being alone with God. . . . Francis was a person of solitude."



## ***Around the Region***

### **ORDAINED TO THE DIACONATE**

Will Witherspoon, SFO, St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity, Ellicott City, Md., May 23, 2009

### **RECEIVED AS CANDIDATES**

Natalie Blakley, SFO, St. Clare Fraternity, Milford, Del., August 13, 2009

Bonita Cote, SFO, St. Clare Fraternity, Milford, Del., August 13, 2009

Mary Fones, SFO, St. John the Beloved Apostle Fraternity, Alexandria, Va., August 8, 2009

Anne Marie Pierce, SFO, St. John the Beloved Apostle Fraternity, Alexandria, Va., August 8, 2009

Byung-Ae Kim, SFO (Baptismal name, Monica), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Kang-Sook Jin, SFO (Lucia), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Kwan-Dong Kim, SFO (Stephan), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Kang-Mi Kim, SFO (Agnes), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Maury Robb, SFO, St. Clare Fraternity, Milford, Del., August 13, 2009

Doris Tippett, SFO, St. Clare Fraternity, Milford, Del., August 13, 2009



*Will Witherspoon (center), St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity, accompanied by wife, Lois Diane and members of the fraternity, at his ordination to the diaconate.*

### **TEMPORARY PROFESSION**

Suk-Hyun Nam, SFO (James), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Sang-Tae Park, SFO (John), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Se-Jong Park, SFO (Lucia), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

### **NEWLY PROFESSED**

Jong-Moo Kwak, SFO (Thomas Aquinas), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

Kye-Sook Lee, SFO (Gabriela), St. Bonaventure Emerging Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

## ***Congratulations to Our Newly Elected***

### **Immaculata Fraternity, Fredericksburg, Virginia**

Minister: Anne Snyder, sfo  
 Vice Minister: John F. Wagner, Jr., sfo  
 Secretary: Joseph J. Mantegna, sfo  
 Treasurer: Maryann Heimgartner, sfo  
 Formation Director : Rose M. McCeney, sfo

### **St. John the Beloved Apostle, Alexandria, Virginia**

Minister: Joanne Robertson, sfo  
 Vice Minister: Sadie Martins, sfo  
 Secretary: Ann Corro, sfo  
 Treasurer: Karen Connair, sfo  
 Formation Director: Diane Maple, sfo

### **St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity, Baltimore, Maryland**

Minister: Kate Sullivan, sfo  
 Vice Minister: Cynthia Evans, sfo  
 Secretary: Pat Dooley, sfo  
 Treasurer: Bernie Edelmann, sfo  
 Formation Director: Sandra Chabot, sfo



*Immaculata Fraternity's incoming Minister Anne Snyder, sfo, (left) receives "the gavel" from outgoing Minister Barbara McCoy.*

### **St. Clare Fraternity (Korean), Potomac, Md.**

Minister: Seung Ho Michael Ryu, sfo  
 Vice Minister: Theresa Joan Kim, sfo  
 Secretary: Jung Su Susan Kim, sfo  
 Treasurer: Sunyan Angela Schuler, sfo  
 Formation Director: Soon OK Irene Kim, sfo



## Franciscan Saints, Blesseds and Feasts

(Click on the name to go to a Web link)

### AUGUST

- 17 [St. Roch](#)
- 19 [St. Louis of Toulouse](#)
- 21 [St. Pius X](#)
- 25 [St. Louis IX](#)

### SEPTEMBER

- 1 [Bl. Beatrice of Silva](#)
- 2 [Bls. John Francis Burte, Severin Girault and Companions](#)
- 4 [St. Rose of Viterbo](#)
- 17 [Stigmata](#) of Our Holy Father Francis
- 18 [St. Joseph of Cupertino](#)
- 20 [St. Francis Mary of Camporosso](#)
- 23 Finding the Body of St. Clare
- 26 [St. Elzear of Sabran and Bl. Delphine](#)



St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata

### OCTOBER

- 4 [Our Holy Father Francis](#)
- 6 [St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds](#)
- 10 [Sts. Daniel and Companions](#)
- 20 [Bl. James of Strepar](#)
- 20 [Bl. Contardo Ferrini](#)
- 21 [Bl. Josephine Leroux](#)
- 22 [St. Peter of Alcantaras](#)
- 23 [St. John of Capistrano](#)
- 26 [Bl. Bonaventure of Potenza](#)
- 30 Anniversary of Dedication in Consecrated Franciscan Churches



St. Francis



The Charity of St. Elizabeth of Hungary by Edmund Blair Leighton (1895)

### NOVEMBER

- 4 [St. Charles Borromeo](#)
- 7 [St. Didacus of Alcala](#)
- 13 [St. Francis Xavier Cabrini](#)
- 14 [St. Nicholas Tavelic](#)
- 17 [St. Elizabeth of Hungary](#)



### Thoughts on the Occasion of Surgery

The Holy Spirit prompted me to write some of my thoughts concerning my recent surgery. It is the spiritual aspects of the experience I want to share. I'm sure many of you have dealt with more serious medical challenges. However, months before the surgery, I began dwelling on all the negative possibilities: four to six hours of surgery, possible blood transfusion, being on painkillers up to a week, etc. None of these was a reality. The surgery was a success in four hours, I didn't need a transfusion, and I only took one pain medication when I got home.

As the surgery date began to creep closer, I told Jesus how much I trusted him, but I knew I really had to believe that myself. Also, I pray daily to Padre Pio and St. Anthony. I invited both of them into the operating room. Most importantly, I reached out to my Franciscan family for prayers, and you came through with flying colors. I was at peace.

I told my daughter that becoming a Franciscan was the best thing I ever did. While our community is widespread, our spiritual link is the force that underscores our ties as a family. I rarely see others outside my fraternity, except at regional functions. But the glue is there. I would like to stress how important it is for our spiritual growth to participate in regional functions. By meeting other members of our family, we all grow stronger. We are part of something greater than our fraternities.

It is from the depths of my heart that I extend to you my gratitude for your prayers. And it is to Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, that I give the glory for my many blessings. Let us remember that as followers of Francis, our goal is to emulate Christ through our love of each other, and for all of God's creation.

Peace to you all.

*Teri Egan, sfo*

St. Francis Fraternity  
Washington, D.C.

