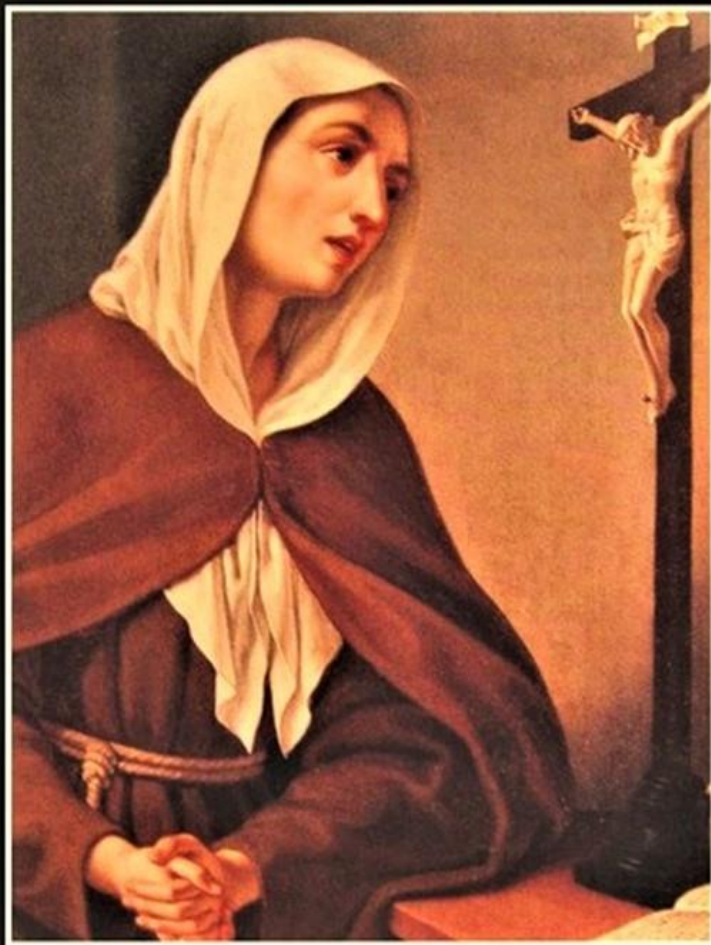


St. Margaret of Cortona Region
November 2023 - Up to Now - Newsletter



St. Margaret of Cortona
1247 - 1297

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

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

Volume 27 Issue 2

St. Francis of Assisi

November 2023

Regional Minister's Message

By Our Profession, we are called to be Servant Leaders

Sisters and Brothers in Francis and Clare,

As you have read in our last two regional newsletters, I have listed the duties for each position on the regional council to consider for our upcoming April 2024 elections. You would need to be professed for two years or more to qualify as a member of the regional council (see *International Statutes Article 8.3*).

Some of you may be thinking, I am not cut out to be a servant leader at the regional level or even the local fraternity level. I would like to offer some thoughts on what a servant leader is and possibly help you see that you may already have some of these qualities.

The qualities of a servant leader are a desire to serve, a concern for the needs of others, and the ability to listen, empathize, and heal. A commitment to building up the community and letting it grow.

* * *

Leadership: What We Learn from St. Francis

1. A leader is a servant.
2. The leader must recognize and care for the needs of the community members.
3. The leader must be present to members by visiting them.
4. Leaders should encourage and, when necessary, correct.
5. Leaders must extend forgiveness to members who are behaving badly.
6. Leaders must not become attached to their offices; offices are not perpetual.
7. Leaders must take care of the proper reception of new members.
8. Leaders must discern the right choice to make for special missions.
9. Leaders should persevere in serving others, even in great difficulties.

Koch, C. (2014) *Leading Like Francis: Building God's House*. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press.

("Regional Minister's Message" continued on page 2)

Regional Council St. Margaret of Cortona Region

Regional Minister:

Bob Longo, OFS

Vice Minister:

Michael Huether, OFS

Secretary:

Mary Rohde, OFS

Treasurer:

Peter Noyes, OFS

Formation Director:

Rita Colleran, OFS

Area Councilor (MD/PA):

Tobias Harkleroad, OFS

Area Councilors (VA):

Randy Bender, OFS

Sita Chakrawarti, OFS

Aera Councilor (MD/DE):

Mary Tchida Badjo, OFS

Area Councilor (DC/Metro):

Janice Benton, OFS

Regional Spiritual Assistants:

Fr. Russel Murray, OFM

Br. Michael Meza, OFM Cap

Anne Mulqueen, OFS

(OFM Conv delegated)

Regional Youth and Young

Adult Commission Chair:

Denis Castillo, OFS

Regional JPIC Chair:

Gil Donahue, OFS

Regional Interfaith

Ecumenical Committee

Chair: Mike Huether, OFS

Regional Multicultural

Chair: Sita Chakrawarti, OFS

Randy Bender, OFS

Regional Archivist:

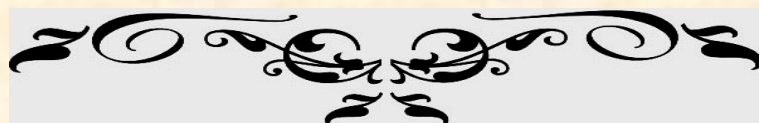
Bob Longo, OFS

Regional Newsletter

Editor: Bob Longo, OFS

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Leadership: What We Learn from St. Clare

1. Leadership flows from devotion to the Gospel, the Crucified Christ, the Eucharist, and from the example of our Father Francis.
2. A leader learns from the struggles of others and is creative in facing new and confusing situations.
3. A leader is first and foremost a servant to the members of the fraternity.

Carney, Margaret. (1993) *Clare of Assisi: The First Franciscan Woman*. Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media.

* * *

Our Minister General, Tibor Kauser, offers us some characteristics that should be common to OFS leaders:

- Help form and strengthen the fraternity – it's the OFS home.
- Encourage and maintain communication, which brings people closer.
- Encourage collaboration, with members using their charisms and talents.
- Serve the growth of everyone.
- Do not be afraid of new approaches.
- Be prayerful (be ready to be with the Holy Spirit).
- Live a sacramental and penitential life.
- Embody a spirit of service ("washing the feet of others").
- Maintain an overview; have vision.
- Be able to organize, and be ready to speak.
- Be always open to dialogue, and able to evaluate a situation.
 - What would Jesus do?
 - Listen. Consult. Discern. Decide.
 - Collective decisions are collegial when we all respect one another.
- Love your brothers and sisters. (Mutual respect is essential for servant leadership.)
- Be Franciscan.

* * *

As servant leaders, we may not possess all of the above, but even one or two will open the doors to our unknown creative skills. For most of us, we learn these skills as we grow, and to know that we have our sister and brother council members to rely on when needed.

I would like for you to discern the possibility of placing your name on the nomination slate for a position on the 2024-2027 Regional Council. If you feel the Lord calling you to be a servant leader, you can contact either Mary Rohde, Regional Secretary, r3rohde@msn.com - or Randy Bender, Regional Area Councilor, benderclan@verizon.net to request that you be placed on the nomination slate for the April 20, 2024 elections.

Our late Franciscan brother and past National Minister, Deacon Tom Bello, OFS, once said "Jesus never invites us to failure!"

The regional council wishes you and your family a blessed Thanksgiving, a holy Advent, a most joyous Christmas, and a New Year filled with many blessings.

Your Franciscan brother in Christ,

Bob

<http://saintmargaretofcortona.org/>

Around the Region

Congratulations to the Newly Elected Councils

St. Conrad Hanover

L-R Formation Director - Emory Appleby, OFS

Vice Minister – Mary Blickenstaff, OFS

Treasurer – Jeffrey Topper, OFS



Secretary – Mart Garom OFS

Minister – Philip Pascoe, OFS

Our Lady Queen of the Angels



L-R Minister - Mary Anne Fanale, OFS

Vice Minister - Maureen Fitzgerald, OFS

Secretary - Jean Reddy, OFS

Treasurer - Maureen Dressman, OFS

Formation Director - Julie Rasp, OFS

Councilor at Large – Theresa Lightner, OFS

Councilor at Large - Victoria Beers, OFS

St. Francis of Assisi Triangle

L-R Minister – Clarence Neeson, OFS

Vice Minister – Bob Eves, OFS

Secretary – Rita Colleran, OFS



Treasurer – Jim Bundy, OFS

Formation Director - Jim O'Shaughnessy, OFS

Pope St. John XXIII



L-R Minister – Ann Marie Pessagno, OFS

Vice Minister – Joe O'Dea, OFS

Secretary – Mary Rohde, OFS,

Treasurer – Judy Hool, OFS

Formation Director – Jeanne Catrow, OFS

Councilor at Large – Eugene Duke Jones, OFS

New Candidate



St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity held a Rite of Admission for Monica Ruppert on September 16, 2023. The photos show L-R Monica Ruppert, OFS, Judith Tyrrell, OFS, and Fr. Patrick Monahan OFM Cap., Fraternity Spiritual Assistant.



Newly Ordained Deacon Mike King, OFS

Congratulations to Deacon Mike King, OFS a member of the St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity. Deacon Mike was ordained on Saturday, September 30th at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore.

His first Mass as an ordained Deacon was held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ilchester, Maryland.

The St. Margaret of Cortona Region wishes Deacon Mike and his family many blessings as he begins his new ministry as a deacon.

HOW WILL YOU CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

St Mary of the Angels and Mt St Sepulchre fraternities gathered for a half day retreat at the



Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land on Sunday Sept 17. The main event was a showing of "The Letter," the film about Pope Francis' encounter with people from around the globe affected by climate change, followed by a discussion moderated by Sr. Louise Lears, a Sister of Charity of

Cincinnati who does environment work with Franciscan Action Network.

Losses in the Family



Carmen Delgado, OFS, passed away on May 10, 2023. Carmen was professed in 1986, and was a member of St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity, Severna Park, Maryland

Chon Vallatoro, OFS, passed away on August 7, 2023. Chon was professed on January 27, 2018, and was a member of Del Camino Fraternity in Washington, D.C.

Ana Hagerman, OFS, passed away on August 11, 2023. Ana was a member of Little Flower Fraternity in Rosedale, Maryland, and was professed on December 28, 1980,

Sandra Link, OFS, passed away on August 20, 2023. Sandra was professed on April 20, 2013 and was a member of Our Lady of the Rosary Fraternity in Williamsburg, Virginia

Pauline Breeden, OFS, passed away on August 24, 2023. Pauline was professed on July 8, 2007, and was a member of Portiuncula Fraternity in West Virginia.

Ed Wilbourne, OFS, passed away on September 30, 2023. Ed was professed on May 15, 1976, and was a member of St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity in Severna Park, Maryland.

Bill Richardson, OFS, passed away on October 15, 2023. Bill was professed on November 18, 2007, and was a member of Mt. St. Sepulchre Fraternity, Washington

Transitus Celebration



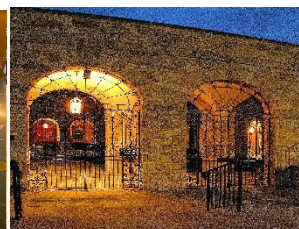
St. Clare Delaware Fraternity
members and parishioners coming forward to venerate the relic of St. Francis



St. John the Beloved Apostle Fraternity sisters and brothers attend the Transitus Celebration at the Franciscan Holy Land Monastery, Washington, D.C.



St. Joseph Cupertino and other Fraternities came together to celebrate The Transitus of our Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi.



Our Lady of the Rosary Fraternity

On October 3rd, several members of the fraternity made a pilgrimage to the Bethlehem Monastery of the Poor Clares in Barhamsville, Virginia for the Transitus service. It was a beautiful service starting with a reading about the life of St. Francis by C.S. Lewis. The remainder of the service was sung in Latin. After the service a relic of St. Francis was available for veneration.

Minister of St. Francis of Assisi Triangle Fraternity Visits Assisi

My wife, Judy and I just returned from Assisi, Italy, a wonderful trip. We enjoyed Assisi the place where St. Francis and St. Clare was born and raised. We could feel the spirit, the presence of both St. Clare and St. Francis as we walked the streets and visited the churches in Assisi. - Phil Pascoe, OFS



Secular Franciscans: Evangelizers of the Culture
(*Its origin was the Eighth Triennial Congress of the Secular Franciscan Order
Holy Name Province 1986*).

Resolution 4

Be it resolved that we commit ourselves to be signs of peace and reconciliation in the world through our apostolic outreach, both individually and fraternally, to the little ones, to the marginalized of our society: to youth, to the elderly, to people with disabilities, to homosexuals, to Homeless people, prisoners, and other outcasts of society.

Reflection

If you look through the New Testament for some particular word or action that Jesus used to heal the suffering humanity that approached him, you won't find a formula. What Jesus did show in each instance was deep compassion – truly meeting each person as they were, totally accepting them, and entering into their suffering. Compassion means to suffer with. And as we suffer with others, like Jesus, they begin to be healed.

Often, our reasons for rejecting others, either individually or as a group, boils down to the fact that they represent something we fear – the elderly are reminders of our impending death, the disabled witness to the fragility of our physical selves, street people embody the reality of poverty. We don't want to face facts and acknowledge that we are dying, fragile, and poor.

Saint Francis' turning point in his spiritual life came when he embraced the leper. In embracing the body of his disfigured brother, he acknowledged his poverty, his lowly status as a creature. Saint Francis discovered that accepting the reality of his poverty was a great liberator, and filled him with joy. He had stumbled upon a great truth – we humans or desperately poor and needy creatures, sinners needing and finding mercy and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

As we acknowledge our poverty and sinfulness, we are less willing to judge others – their suffering is our suffering – we are all poor and in need of compassion. There is compassion for the rich as well as the disenfranchised because we know the poor man is every one of us.

A powerful person with a heart atrophied by the inability to love is poorer in a fundamental way than a severely physically disabled person. Our apostolic outreach to the marginalized of our society is outreach to our poor brothers and sisters, to ourselves, because we are all one in the suffering of the compassionate body of Christ.

Let us pray, Lord God, open our hearts to your love. Saint Francis found you in his brother, the leper. Help us seek, find, and love you in the lepers of our world. Show us your image and likeness alive in them. This we ask through Christ, our Lord. - Amen

Submitted by Anne Mulqueen, OFS





Secular Franciscans: Pope Francis' Update on Laudato Si

Gil Donahue, JPIC Animator

Dear Fellow Secular Franciscans of the St. Margaret of Cortona Region,

Last week, on the Feast Day of St. Francis, Pope Francis issued his renewed call for cooperation on addressing climate issues. Please see [Laudate Deum](#) which is a continuation of the message he gave in his 2015 Encyclical Laudato Si.

Many of us attended a Transitus celebration or Mass on St. Francis' feast day. Those events gave us an opportunity to reflect again on St. Francis' Cantic of the Creatures. Following in the footsteps of St. Francis, we accept the kinship of all creation. That imposes on us a burden to safeguard creation and be good stewards to our home, Planet Earth.

The key message in Pope Francis' latest encyclical is:

69. I ask everyone to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values. At the same time, I cannot deny that it is necessary to be honest and recognize that the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international level.

71. Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family and community habits are changing is contributing to greater concern about the unfulfilled responsibilities of the political sectors and indignation at the lack of interest shown by the powerful. Let us realize, then, that even though this does not immediately produce a notable effect from the quantitative standpoint, we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.

* * *

This topic may be worthwhile for individual members of your fraternities to discuss and consider. What and where are our individual responsibilities? What steps can we take to alleviate from the planet the burdens we impose on it as a result of our lifestyles? How can we engage others in a useful dialogue on these issues?

Peace and All Good

We all Belong to Each Other – We are Family

Unity in Fraternity, Giving of Self -

Conversion: The Paradox of Respecting the Individual vs Individualism

Rita Colleran, OFS - Regional Formation Director

In a recent meeting, your Regional Formation Team considered what can we offer our members to encourage continuing growth and depth in our walk with St. Francis towards a closer relationship with our Lord Jesus. Conversion or metanoia is always at the top of the list. In the past we see it as personal conversion. But what about conversion of a fraternity – together in unity growing to walk more deeply in the footsteps of Sts. Francis and Clare?

While there are so many of us who are faithful and serve in our church and communities; for others there seems to be a disconnect when it comes to serving each other and even the fraternity as a whole. Somehow because, in most fraternities, members are from different parishes and live a distance from each other, members leave the monthly gathering and go on with their individual lives until the next gathering. What influences us to allow this month after month when taking into account our commitment to our Franciscan way of life?

As Franciscans we are most definitely different than the world of today. I have been thinking about the difference between individualism (modern world) which fosters elitism and pride, compared to our belief to respect the individual (Franciscan charism) which requires humility and compassion.

So much worldly attention is given to one's focus on self and being self-reliant. In Western societies like ours, the individual is valued more than the community. Everything is relative to the individual as one must be true to oneself regardless of its effect on others/community.

Our charism guides us in another way. We value community, unity and relationships. In our OFS Order, the fraternity is the smallest unit rather than the individual. We are to care for others while respecting the dignity of the individual including each other in our fraternities. Consider our Catholic works of charity to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, ransom the captive, bury the dead, shelter the stranger, comfort the sick, and clothe the naked.

This is evident with St. Francis' great respect for the individual: his encounter with the leper whom he embraced despite a great aversion; his meeting with the Sultan whom he did not try to convert but rather to affirm in his faith in Allah; his desire that the minister should "be eager to provide for the brothers as he would wish to be done for him where he in similar positions . . . and that the one should wash the feet of the others." (The Earlier Rule, VI)

St. Clare's showed her respect and love for others by: her desire to be called Sister rather than Abbess in order to be one with her Sisters; her admonitions to those who live austere lives never to judge others who needed more than they; her hospitality which drew persons of all ranks to seek her counsel; her wish that "the Abbess be so familiar with the Sisters that they can speak and act toward her as ladies do with their servants. For that is the way it should be, that the Abbess be the servant of all the Sisters." (Rule of St. Clare, X)

Walking in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare it is clear that we are to grow in humility to care and serve others in our church, community and, especially, in our fraternity. We are united as brothers and sisters in St. Francis and Christ Jesus. Individualism has somehow made it difficult to have this kind of involvement and robs us from the joy our Lord intended. We have our own things that we are dealing with, just too busy, its inconvenient, or too far a distance, or just don't feel like it. However, this extends to when each of us may need care, help or assistance to reach out to our fraternity family. To do so requires a change of heart and mind towards humility and commitment to become more like Jesus. Relationship, involvement, and caring are at the heart of our Franciscan charism. Changing ourselves is called *conversion*.

For some of us this is not easy as the sense of individualism permeates us into the belief of keeping things private, being embarrassment, or not wanting to be a burden. Our pride tells us that we should just deal with things ourselves. Yet to humble oneself can be a great gift. It is important to realize that as Franciscans, it is our pleasure to serve each other. In this way our relationship is further blessed by the Holy Spirit as we care for each other. With courage, reach to your fraternity brothers and sister and see what joy comes about for all.

On the other hand, members leave the monthly gatherings without considering the needs of other members and how they may be of service between meetings. It is usual that we are asked to pray for our fraternity brothers and sisters when needs arise – deeply important to do so. Again, however, the sense of individualism may keep us from asking what more we can do. Does pride tell us that we certainly don't want to pry or be nosy? By Francis we would be encouraged to ask how we can help the other, make time for them, and sometimes just do things without being asked.

It is a loving thing to consider how we can lend a hand, be of service to ease their struggle. Sometimes a visit, meeting for coffee can be of great help and result in deeper relationship. Even give a ride to appointments and offer comfort during difficult situations. God wants us to have relationship with Him and with each other that is true and giving; in this way He especially blesses us through the Holy Spirit with a deep sense of belonging.

Perhaps this kind of thing is not practiced in your fraternity. Our deep co-responsibility towards each other is not emphasized. In some fraternities, members attend the monthly gatherings and enjoy the prayer, social time and formation lesson; then go away back into their own world until the next month. Relationships among members are kind, loving and cordial; yet knowing each other personally and in a very familiar way has yet to happen. Members have never met nor know about the significant people in each other's lives (husbands, wives, children, grandchildren, close friends). Nor do they know the life experiences of each other well enough to include hardships and triumphs, careers, travel, or significant events. True friends and family know these things.

On any given day we are prompted by the Holy Spirit to consider a choice, decision or action. One asks herself what am I going to do -- something that will please our Lord and show her faithfulness or something else because she just doesn't feel like bothering with someone else? Because of St. Francis and all that has been revealed through our Order, she humbly hopes that she can do better to serve and care for others and please Jesus. She hopes for more intimate conversion towards our Lord.

Speaking with many of you, I know that we share in daily moments of conversion and spiritual growth. We are faithful in prayer and living our Catholic lives. We wear the Tau Cross as a sign of our commitment to Christ and the power of his love, his message, his grace, to transform us into the very best person we can possibly become.

In fraternity we want to accentuate our unity, our relationships and being family – true brothers and sisters in Francis. We can create a culture of belonging and put into practice ways and opportunities that will decrease the worldly notion of individualism while reinforcing loving kindness and care that respects the individual. This will require humility and compassion amongst everyone as well as the choice to do so. Developing a culture of belonging and true brother and sister relationships may not be easy but will deeply bless each of us and all that we do.

The Franciscan spirit creates family, just as Francis wanted it to. He wanted us to know that humility and compassion builds relationships and brings us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. "Truth, love, and beauty are most beautifully found at the lowest, weakest, and most concrete possible levels..." (Richard Rohr) When we humble ourselves to serve each other as well as our community, we will find truth, love, and beauty. Our presence with each other is beautiful and at times can be humbling. Yet it is here that the presence of God grows.

Humility and service to others, Franciscan spirituality boldly puts a big exclamation point. Jesus said, "The last will be first and the first will be last!". St. Paul taught us that when we are weak, we are strong! "When I am weak, I am strong!" This is the opposite of the world's message.

Let it be known that there are fraternities where members indeed know each other well and care for each other and see each other between gatherings. A certain intimacy amongst them certainly exists and it is beautiful! Together they become more deeply embraced in living the Gospel and following St. Francis. Their unity blesses any who witnesses it in their communities and churches and beyond.

Should you want to encourage a deeper commitment to belonging and care for one another in your fraternity there are resources available to you. Many Religious and Seculars have written books as well as produced videos on the subject. Closer to home, the Council Members Handbook offers guidance, there are formation materials that can assist you, and advice from your Spiritual Assistant as well. If you want to explore this more, please feel free to contact me.

May God bless you all in your Franciscan walk!
Pace e bene!

Mark your Calendars!

These Formation events are open to everyone. We promise that you will enjoy the day and come away inspired! All are welcome!

Saturday, December 16, 2023 - The Joy of Franciscan Advent and the Incarnation with Fr. Charley Miller OFM

This is a Day of Reflection hosted by Our Lady of the Rosary Fraternity

When: Saturday - December 16, 2023 - Time: 9:00 am to 3:00pm

Where: St. Clare of Assisi Retreat House, 620 Buckroe Avenue, Hampton VA 23664

Cost: \$20.00 per person.

Deadline for Registration is Saturday, December 9, 2023. Click on [Register](#) or contact Rita Colleran OFS at rlcolleran10@gmail.com

Saturday, February 3, 2024 - Christ Living in Me: Lent on LaVerna with St. Francis of Assisi - A teaching and journey with Fr. Russel Murray, OFM

When: Saturday, February 3, 2024 Time: 9:30am - 3:00pm

Where: Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, 1400 Quincy St. NE, Washinton DC

Cost: \$30.00 Lunch included

Deadline for registration is Saturday, January 27, 2024 Click on [Register](#) or contact Rita Colleran OFS at rlcolleran10@gmail.com

Day of Reflection for Inquirers and Candidates - Living a Penitential Life with Fr. Stephen King, OFM Conv.

This special day is also extended to all OFS members

When: Saturday, February 24, 2024 Time: 9:30am to 3:00pm

Where: Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, 1400 Quincy St. NE, Washington DC

Cost: \$50 lunch is included

Deadline for registration is Saturday, February, 17 2024 Click on [Register](#) or contact Rita Colleran OFS at rlcolleran10@gmail.com

Save the Date and Make Plans NOW to Attend

Please begin NOW to plan to attend our region's 2024 OFS Chapter of Mats (Mats2024). Under the theme of ***The Next 800 Years***, we will explore where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going. The Chapter will be held from **September 6-8, 2024** at the beautiful Claggett Center in Adamstown, Maryland (www.claggettcenter.org). This site has been chosen to allow for up to 125 OFS members of our St. Margaret of Cortona Region (including those in formation) to come together in the tradition of our father Francis and his brothers (with beds rather than mats!):

*It was called the Chapter of the Mats, but all the chapters ever since the one on the first Pentecost, May 29, 1219, could have been given the same name. A straw mat thrown on the ground served as a bed for the Friar Minor, who sat and rested on it as well. For men like him, inured to a hard life, sleeping out of doors on a mild spring night in Umbria hardly qualified as a mortification. **Everything about these chapters was festive.** The one held on May 26, 1219, drew brothers from all over Italy, so many, in fact, that the nickname "Chapter of the Five Thousand" seems just right. If Francis had wanted proof that his vocation came from God, that prodigious crowd gave it to him. (Excerpted from *God's Fool* by Julien Green, p. 195)*

Mats2024 will be a festive celebration of the varied cultures and ages within our region, reflected also in our times of prayer and liturgy. This is our chance to come together as brother and sister Seculars of this region to share fellowship and discuss the issues that are of concern to us. We want and need your participation to make this a joyous and meaningful gathering. We want your ideas, your conversation, and your music and spirit as well. Please consider volunteering for a role in the program – more to come on this.

Throughout Mats2024, ASL interpreters will be provided, as well as simultaneous translation in Spanish and Korean. To make Mats2024 more affordable and accessible for all members of the Region, the Region will be helping to subsidize the cost of lodging and other Chapter expenses. Housing options will include single and double hotel-like rooms with private baths in the Christiane Inn, in close proximity to the dining room and meeting rooms. Accommodations are also available a distance from the dining and meeting space in cottages with two twin beds and shared baths down the hall. The **per-person** rates in the **Christiane Inn** will be: Single room - \$265; Double room - \$225; 2nd person in a single room or 3rd or 4th person in a double room - \$150 per person. The **per-person** rate in a shared room in a **Cottage** - \$185.

Registration will open in January 2024, with the above early-bird rates offered until April 30. Beginning May 1, each option will be an additional \$50 per person. All rooms will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Watch the St. Margaret of Cortona website in January 2024 for registration procedures, and future issues of *Up to Now* for evolving details.

Help us Plan our 2024Mats

The planning committee is hard at work to prepare for Mats2024, but is counting on many others to help with the preparations. Please consider volunteering for one of the following subcommittees as your time and talents allow:

Working Subcommittees to help plan Mats2024:

- **Program** (Sita Chakrawarti and Anne Mulqueen)
- **Liturgy and Environment** (Randy Bender and Sita Chakrawarti)
- **Publicity** (Janice Benton)
- **Access** (Janice Benton)
- **Registration** (Janice Benton)
- **Social** (to be determined)

The work of the subcommittees will be accomplished through Zoom or conference calls and emails. The subcommittees will be chaired by the Planning Committee and REC members noted in parentheses above. If you have questions regarding the scope of any of the subcommittees, please contact the noted Planning Committee member(s) via email:

Randy Bender – benderclan@verizon.net - Janice Benton – jbentonsfo@gmail.com
Sita Chakrawarti – schakrawarti@hotmail.com - Anne Mulqueen – anne_mulqueen@mac.com

Thank you, in advance, for your help in making Mats2024 a fruitful, multicultural celebration of our lives of service carried out through our Franciscan vocations. - **The Mats2024 Planning Committee**

2024 Chapter of Mats—September 6 - 8, 2024



3035 Buckeystown Pike—Adamstown, MD 21710

Claggett Center Website — <https://www.claggettcenter.org/>



Scroll down for pictures at the Claggett Center

SAVE THE DATE

Join us for the St. Margaret of Cortona 2024 Chapter of Mats

The Next 800 Years

The Chapter is a gathering of Secular Franciscans
to celebrate -

where we've been, where we are now, where we are going.

September 6-8, 2024

Claggett Center, Adamstown, Maryland

Watch the *Up to Now* for more details.

****Please share with ALL members of the fraternity.****

RESERVA LA FECHA

Únanse con nosotros para el Capítulo de las Esteras de Santa
Margarita de Cortona 2024

Los Próximos 800 Años

El Capítulo es una reunión de Franciscanos Seglares
para celebrar -
donde hemos estado, donde estamos ahora, hacia donde vamos

Del 6 al 8 de Septiembre de 2024
Claggett Center, Adamstown, Maryland

Miren *Hasta Ahora* para obtener más detalles

****Por favor comparten con TODOS los miembros
de las Fraternidad****

남자를 기억 하세요

2024 년 코르토나의 성 말가리따 뜻자리 총회에 참여 하십시오

앞으로 800년

이 총회는 재속 프란치스칸의 모임입니다.

다음 사항을 기리기 위해서-

우리는 어디에 있었고, 우리는 지금 어디에 있으며, 우리는 어디로 가고 있는가.

2024년 9월 6-8일

장소 : Claggett Center, Adamstown, Maryland

자세한 내용은 지금까지의 사항을 참조 하십시오.

****형제회의 모든 회원님들께 알려 주시기를 부탁드립니다.****

Emergency Medical Form

All attendees must fill out an Emergency Medical Form to keep in their room while attending the weekend Chapter of Mats. Click on the blue 2023 [Emergency Medical Form](#), fill out the form, print a copy, and bring it with you to the Chapter of Mats.



Christmas at Greccio

Francis loved caves on the sides of mountains
In wilderness areas where there was a clear view
Of God's works in nature:
Changing weather during the day,
Moon and stars at night.
In these places, he came into direct contact
With the Divine Presence.
And the experience renewed him.



Staying in such a place, on the outskirts of Greccio,
One December, as Christmas approached,
Francis asked the townspeople to bring to him
On Christmas Eve their animals
To be a living Manger scene,
The first such assemblage in Church history.

Francis was concerned that people were taking
Jesus for granted. Or they had failed to understand
His connection to us as a fellow human being.
Francis wanted us to see for ourselves
The manner in which Christ was born into our world.
The way in which the animals paid Him obeisance.
The crude, stable environment in which He drew
His first breath.

It is said that when the townspeople were assembled
Where Francis was staying, he arranged the animals
Around an empty manger. Miraculously,
A tiny baby appeared in his arms: the Christ Child.

Whatever may have happened there,
The people were clearly moved.
From that moment on, all Italy adopted the custom
Of displaying crèche scenes at Christmas time.
They leave the manger bare until Christmas Eve,
When they devotedly place the little baby in it.

To Francis, Christmas represents God's reaching down to humanity:
The vertical shaft of the cross from Heaven to Earth.
Christ's birth represents God with Us, Immanuel:
The horizontal bar of the cross that bears our sins.
Incarnation: transcendence and immanence.

©Gilbert Donahue, May 14, 2010

Regional Elections in April 2024



Sisters and brothers in Francis and Clare,

The St. Margaret of Cortona Regional Council is preparing for our April 2024 Regional Council Elections. Our National Area Councilor, Joshua Molidor, OFS, who will conduct the elections, is on board. The elections will be held at, Our Lady of the Fields Parish, 1070 Cecil Avenue South, Millersville, MD off of MD 3 North.

It's incredible to think that 2024 will be here before we know it. Therefore, I am asking our sisters and brothers who are three years or more professed, to discern placing your name on the 2024 – 2027 nomination slate for a position on the regional council. Members of the nomination committee, Mary Rhode r3rohde@msn.com and Randy Bender benderclan@verizon.net will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Below are the duties for each council position. - *Bob Longo*

Regional Minister

Article 51 General Constitutions

While firmly upholding the co-responsibility of the council to animate and guide the fraternity, the minister, as the primary person responsible for the fraternity, is expected to make sure that the directions and the decisions of the council are put into practice and will keep the council informed about what he or she is doing.

The minister also has the following duties:

- a. to call, preside at, and direct the meetings of the regional council; to convoke, every three years, the elective chapter of the fraternity, having heard the council on the formalities of the convocation;
- b. to prepare an annual report to be sent to the national council after it has been approved by the council of the fraternity;
- c. represent the [council] in all its relations with ecclesiastical and civil authorities. When the [council] acquires a juridical personality in the civil order, the minister becomes, when possible, its legal representative;
- d. to request, with the consent of the council, the pastoral and [national] visits, at least once every three years;
- e. to put into effect those acts which the Constitutions refer to his or her competence;

The regional minister also has the following additional responsibilities:

- to read, study and implement the Rule, Constitutions, and Statutes;
- to set goals, resolve issues, and accomplish tasks for the good of the region;
- to set parameters on how the council meetings will be conducted;

- to inform the council members of their reporting responsibilities;
- to oversee that all regional council members are fulfilling their assigned duties;
- when needed, to delegate responsibilities to appropriate regional council member(s);
- along with the council, to set goals for the next three years;
- to make sure that the directions and the decisions of the regional council are put into practice;
- to keep the regional council informed concerning activities and information at the national level and inform (if needed) the local fraternities;
- to keep the regional council informed about local fraternity activities;
- to encourage area councilors to request local fraternity ministers to attend or send a local council representative to regional meetings and other regional activities;
- to ensure that communication is maintained between the region and the local fraternity;
- to ensure that TAU-USA National Newsletter and Up-to-Now Regional Newsletter are sent to local fraternities by the region's secretary or others assigned to do so;
- to make sure periodic updates are made to the region's directory of local councils;
- to convene a yearly Chapter of Ministers meeting;
- to offer a yearly regional retreat to local fraternities;
- to perform such other duties as are required by the SFO Constitutions and Statutes;
- to carry out the proper purposes of the council;
- to update and maintain the Regional Minister's Binder;
- upon leaving this position, to pass the Regional Minister's Binder to the newly elected regional minister;
- to make arrangements to hand over all regional documents to the newly elected regional minister;
- as an outgoing regional minister, to make him or herself available to help the incoming regional minister become acquainted with urgent and pending matters;
- to hold regional council meetings at least four times a year. (If the regional minister is unable to be present at a council meeting, the meeting may be held with the regional vice minister conducting the business; (see Article 52.1(c) General Constitutions.)

Regional Vice Minister

Article 52 General Constitutions

1. The regional vice-minister has the following duties:
 - a. collaborate in a fraternal spirit and support the regional minister
 - b. in carrying out his or her specific duties;
 - c. exercise the functions entrusted by the council and/or by the assembly or chapter;
 - d. take the place of the regional minister in both duties and responsibilities in case of absence or temporary impediment; (*Also, see Article 81 GC*)
 - e. assume the functions of the regional minister when the office remains vacant;

Additional Duties:

- read, study, and implement the Rule, Constitutions, and Statutes;
- perform such other duties as are required by the SFO Constitutions and Statutes;

- assist the regional minister upon request;
- exercise all functions assigned by the regional council;
- update and maintain the Regional Vice Minister's Binder;
- upon leaving this position, pass the Regional Vice Minister's Binder to the newly elected regional vice minister;
- make arrangements to hand over all regional documents to the new regional Vice Minister;
- the outgoing regional vice minister should make himself/herself available to help the incoming regional vice minister become acquainted with and brought up-to-date on pending matters.

Regional Secretary

Article 52.2 General Constitutions

2. The secretary has the following duties:
 - a. compiles the official acts of the regional fraternity and the council and assures that they are sent to their respective proper recipients;
 - b. to see to the updating and preservation of the records and the registers, noting admissions, professions, deaths, withdrawals, and transfers to and from the fraternities;
 - c. provide for the communication of the more important facts to the various levels and, if appropriate, to provide for their dissemination through the mass media;

The secretary also has the following responsibilities:

- if elected, holds voting privileges and is accountable for all decisions made by the fraternity council; if appointed, does not have voting rights on the council;
- compile the official minutes of regional council meetings. The council minutes are extremely important and must be maintained; they contain valuable and sometimes personal information. Every decision the regional council makes should be documented;

Please Note:

1. In the event one of the council members resigns, the council must vote on his or her replacement. This must be documented in the minutes as above. A council member who has been appointed in this manner does not have voting rights.
2. Many discussions and decisions made by the council are confidential and should be kept confidential. Be discreet in speech and keep this part of the meeting separate from the council meeting minutes.

Additional Guidelines

- keeps attendance records at regional council meetings, assists the regional council with general communications, assists in sending announcements of events, meetings, or other regional activities; forwards to the Regional Database Manager, documents such as newly received, newly professed, deaths, withdrawals, transfers, etc., received from the local fraternity;
- to ensure that TAU -USA and Regional Newsletters are sent to local fraternities through the region's secretary or others assigned to do so; updates and maintains the Regional Secretary's Binder;
- upon leaving this position, passes the Regional Secretary's Binder to the newly elected regional secretary;

- updates and maintains the Regional Secretary's Binder;
- upon leaving this position, passes the Regional Secretary's Binder to the newly elected regional secretary;
- makes arrangements to hand over all regional documents to the new regional secretary;
- is available to help the newly elected regional secretary to become acquainted with his or her new position on the regional council;

Regional Treasurer

Article 52.4 General Constitutions

4. the treasurer, or bursar, has the following duties:
 - a. to guard diligently the contributions received, recording each receipt in the appropriate register, with the date on which it was given, the name of the contributor, or the one from whom it was collected;
 - b. to record in the same register the items of expense, specifying the date and the purpose, in conformity with the directions of the regional council;
 - c. to render an account of his or her administration to the regional council according to the norms of the national statutes;

The treasurer also has the following additional responsibilities:

- if elected, holds voting privileges and is accountable for all decisions made by the fraternity council. if appointed, has no voting rights (see NAFRA Statutes);
- presents an annual budget for conducting the business of the regional council;
- all payments are to be made by check, recorded in an accurate ledger;
- expenditure of funds must be approved by the council in advance;
- ensures the deposit of all funds into such bank accounts in the name of the region and keeps an accurate ledger;
- maintains a yearly calendar showing monthly payouts and future activity events for which the regional council will need to provide funding. This calendar will help the newly elected regional treasurer after regional council elections have taken place;
- presents an updated financial report at each regional council meeting showing current expenses, income, and checkbook balance;
- appropriate forms for reporting the financial health of the regional council can be found at: [Guidelines, Forms & Other Resources](#)
- submits a financial report and the bank account register for approval at regular intervals as decided upon by the regional council;

- provides the regional council with a year-end report showing receipts, expenditures, and balances in the treasury for the year;
- receives from local fraternity treasurers their Fair Share assessment from the fraternity's Common Fund;
- is available to answer questions when a local fraternity is planning to have an audit of their treasurer records;
- ensures local fraternity Audits are conducted every three years;
- sends the assessed fair share to the National Treasurer once a year;
- receives by the end of the year a current report of candidates and professed from each local fraternity treasurer;
- at a national visitation provides a stipend to both the pastoral visitor and national visitor, if approved by the regional council;
- keeps a copy of, and updates, if necessary, the region's Tax ID;
- updates and maintains the Regional Treasurer's Binder;
- upon leaving this position, passes the binder to the newly elected regional treasurer;
- makes arrangements with the newly elected treasurer and new regional minister to meet at the bank holding the region's checking account to sign signature cards. At this time the past treasurer will hand over all documents pertaining to this position;
- takes the following to the bank:
 - a. IRS Determination Letter;
 - b. An up-to-date letter from National stating – "St. Margaret of Cortona Region is a 501 (c) (3) Organization";
 - c. EIN Number;
 - d. Articles of Incorporation;
 - e. Latest Elections Report; (Original)

Regional Formation Director

Article 52 General Constitutions

1. The master of formation has the following duties:
 - a. to coordinate, with the help of the other members of the council, the formative activities of the local fraternity's;

The regional formation director also has the following additional responsibilities:

- if elected, holds voting privileges and is accountable for all decisions made by the regional fraternity council;
- if appointed, does not have voting rights on the council;

- coordinates, with the help of the other regional council members, the formation program for local fraternity formation directors;
- when needed calls the local formation directors for meetings and workshops;
- works with regional spiritual assistants and the formation team in developing formation programs for local fraternities;
- ensures that local fraternity formation directors obtain documentation such as Baptism Certificate, annotated with other sacrament dates are received from the inquirers. Inquirers need two letters of recommendation, one being from the inquirer's pastor; all are to be received before the "Rite of Admission." If married, provide verification of validity, Decree of Nullity, if applicable, if ordained, provide a copy of the letter verifying faculties; (See The FUN Manual – For the Formator 3-23-2011 – Page 18 of 26)
- sees that all local fraternity formation directors have The FUN Manual. This is a great re- source for both initial and ongoing formation; make sure the members of the regional formation team become familiar with its contents. Ongoing formation materials such as Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership can be purchased at Smoky Valley Printing and found in the TAU–USA national newsletter;
- ensures that local fraternity spiritual assistants are involved in the formation process in both initial and ongoing formation instruction;
- updates and maintains the Regional Formation Director's Binder;
- upon leaving this position, passes to the newly elected the Formation Director's Binder and *The FUN Manual*;
- makes arrangements to hand over all regional documents to the new regional formation director;
- is available to help the new formation director become acquainted with his or her new position on the regional council;

Regional Area Councilors

The area councilors have the following responsibilities:

- if elected by the local fraternity ministers or delegates at the time of the regional elections, hold voting privileges;
- the regional council may appoint councilors as deemed necessary, with no voting rights;
- the area councilor is accountable for all decisions made by the regional fraternity council;
- follow through on jobs assigned;
- within a reasonable time frame, area councilors are to prepare a spreadsheet of upcoming fraternal visitations and elections and forward it to the regional minister. At the end of each year, regional area councilors will create a spreadsheet for the new year and forward it to the regional minister;
- at the request of local fraternities, regional area councilors conduct regional visitations;

- if a fraternal visitation is due and the regional council has not received a request from the local fraternity, the area councilor will contact the fraternity minister;
- if the local fraternity minister has not attempted to contact a regional spiritual assistant to conduct a regional pastoral visitation, the area councilor will take on this responsibility;
- at the time of the fraternal visitation, the area councilor must see a copy of the fraternity's canonical establishment and a copy of the latest audit report;
- if a local fraternity appears to be in trouble, the area councilor will conduct an emergency regional visitation with a request to a regional spiritual assistant to conduct a regional pastoral visitation;
- the local fraternity minister will call a chapter of elections for their fraternity every three years. The outgoing minister cannot be elected to the vice minister's position after leaving the minister's position;
- if elections are due and the council has not received a request from the local fraternity, the area councilor will contact the fraternity minister;
- if the local fraternity minister has not attempted to contact a regional spiritual assistant to witness the elections or a delegate has not been assigned, the area councilor will take on this responsibility;
- regional area councilors are responsible for sending the [Council Members Manual](#) to newly elected fraternity council members;
- collaborates with the regional council in determining areas of needs at the local fraternity level;
- accurate and organized records should be maintained of all communication regarding assigned duties in their area jurisdictions;
- notations or short summaries of important conversations or actions should be kept in a file for future reference;
- regional area councilor, once a year, calls a meeting with the local fraternity ministers in their jurisdiction. Calling a yearly meeting could save some headaches later down the road;
- maintains a Regional Councilor's Binder;
- upon leaving this position, pass the Regional Councilor's Binder to the newly elected regional area councilor for the assigned area jurisdiction;
- make arrangements to hand over all regional documents to the new area councilor;
- be available to help the new area councilor to become acquainted with his or her new area jurisdiction;



On the next page, please find the Nomination Form



ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA REGION
2024 CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS
SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024
At Our Lady of the Fields, Millersville, MD

Candidates must be professed three years or more.

Name _____

Fraternity _____

I would like to serve as:

Select:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> Area Councilor Metro DC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vice Minister | <input type="checkbox"/> Area Councilor VA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secretary | <input type="checkbox"/> Area Councilor MD/DE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer | <input type="checkbox"/> Area Councilor PA/MD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formation Director | |

Year professed: _____

How I serve my fraternity/the region: _____

_____ (Continue on the back)

Why I feel called to serve the region: _____

_____ (Continue on the back)

Signature: _____

_____ Date

Minister, Vice Minister, Treasurer, Formation Director candidates need to submit a resume that pertains to the position above, please email it to: Mary Rohde or Randy Bender below by Saturday, April 10, 2024

Mary r3rohde@msn.com
Randy benderclan@verizon.net