

## **What is a Chapter of Mats?**

**Our Father Francis knew it was important for his brothers to gather at intervals to listen to one another and renew their enthusiasm and commitment to spreading the gospel and rebuilding the Church. In 1221, St. Francis called his brothers to a general chapter. The number of brothers had grown so large that they had to bring mats to sleep on. Some say 5,000, and some say 3,000 friars assembled and lived in huts or tents made of these reed mats. It was a joyful reunion and an opportunity to share their experiences on the road. Francis himself called this gathering a Chapter of Mats.**

**The name has great significance for us. It was the first time St. Francis assembled all his brothers from Italy and beyond to gather as one body. And for us, it is a time to assemble all Secular Franciscans from all fraternities within St. Margaret of Cortona Region to share and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance for the path we are to take in the coming years.**

**Anne Mulqueen, ofs**

***“Return to the excitement of the  
founding story so as to be re-energized  
to address the issues of  
contemporary society at their roots.  
To do so is to willingly enter into the  
Paschal Mystery (death) so that new  
life emerges. It is less about vision  
and planning, more about entering  
into the mystery of God's plan.”***

**Sr. Brenda Hermann, M.S.B.T.**