

# *Welcome to our Fall Newsletter*

August 2024

St. Margaret of Cortona Region



**St. Margaret of Cortona**  
1247 - 1297

Covering the District of Columbia, all of Maryland,  
Southern Pennsylvania, all of Virginia,  
one fraternity in Delaware, one fraternity in West Virginia,

“Let us begin again, for up to now we have done  
nothing” ~ St. Francis of Assisi

2024 ~ Issue 3



## Regional Minister's Message

Greetings to my sisters and brothers in Francis and Clare. May the Lord grant you, His Peace.

As I open the August 2024 newsletter, there are a few things to share involving three events; one that happened this last quarter and two that will occur in September 2024. Additionally, we have two important Franciscan Feast Days coming up in August 2024.

First, the Regional Formation Directors' Retreat was held at the Washington Retreat House the weekend of June 28-30, 2024. It was well attended, planned, and executed by the Regional Formation Director, Rita Colleran, and her formation team. I extend my gratitude to them for a job well done. We were blessed to have Father Charlie Miller, OFM as the main presenter/facilitator, and he exceeded expectations as usual. You will hear more about this event later in the newsletter from our sister Rita as it pertains to animating and guiding.

The theme this year was Servant Leadership which is a type or style of leadership that promotes the value of placing service before self-interest and unselfishly committing to something greater than yourself. It involves the characteristics of love and humility and requires a transformation of your heart (see Article 7 of our Rule). These values are not foreign to us as Franciscans since they were first modeled by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and by our brother St. Francis. All Franciscans are servant leaders.

As you know, Jesus continually modeled these values in his words and actions (miracles). There are four scripture passages that are usually associated with Jesus' Servant Leadership, two of which involve the same incident where James and John asked (or in Matthew's Gospel their mother asked) to sit on Jesus right and left and Jesus replied by saying that the Son of Man came to serve not to be served, whoever would be first among you shall be like your slave, and that Jesus would give his life as ransom for many (Mark 10:35-45 and Matthew 20:20-28).

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

## 2024 – 2027 Regional Council

### Regional Minister:

Gary Burton, OFS

### Vice Minister:

Michael Oliver, OFS

### Secretary:

Maria Martinez, OFS

### Treasurer:

Randy Bender, OFS

### Formation Director:

Rita Colleran, OFS

### Area Councilor (N. MD/S. PA):

Michael Huether, OFS

### Area Councilor (MD/DE):

Tobias Harkleroad, OFS

### Area Councilor (Metro-DC):

Mary Tchida Badjo, OFS

### Area Councilors (VA):

Sita Chakrawarti, OFS

### Area Councilors (VA):

Jamie Elia, OFS

### Regional Interfaith/Ecumenical Chair - Mike Huether, OFS

### Regional Spiritual Assistants:

Fr. Russel Murray, OFM

Br. Michael Meza, OFM Cap

Anne Mulqueen, OFS

(OFM Conv. delegated)

### Appointed Council Positions

Regional JPIC Chair: Vacant

Regional Multicultural Chair:

Vacant

Regional Youth and Young

Adult Commission Chair:

Vacant

### Appointed Non-Council Positions

Regional Archivist:

Bob Longo, OFS

Regional Newsletter Editor:

Bob Longo, OFS

Vocations

Bob Longo, OFS

## In this Issue...

To go to an article, just click on the title below

<a href="#">Regional Ministers Message.....</a>	1-2
<a href="#">Around the Region.....</a>	3-6
<a href="#">What is a Chapter of Mats.....</a>	7
<a href="#">Chapter of Mats.....</a>	8-9
<a href="#">Pope Francis Quotes Buddha in Mongolia.....</a>	10-11
<a href="#">Ready, Set.....Go??.....</a>	12
<a href="#">Formation.....</a>	13-16



## 2024 Chapter of Mats



September 6 – 8, 2024

The third is from Luke where the disciples are arguing amongst themselves about who will be the greatest, and Jesus replies, let the greatest be like the youngest and the leader as the servant (Luke 22:24-29). The fourth is the most famous with the washing of the Disciples' feet at the Last Supper in the Gospel of John where the disciples are told they must wash each other's feet (serving in a sacrificial way) (John 13:1-20).

Second is our Regional Chapter of Mats which will be held on September 6-8, 2024, and the final preparations are underway to make this a successful event. Large and small group discussions will take place around the theme of where we've been, where we are, and where we are going as an Order. We still encourage those that want to attend to please register as soon as possible.

Third, on September 17-22, 2024, I will be attending the National Minister's Chapter that is being held in Phoenix, Arizona, and I will provide you a short summary of the event in the next newsletter.

Finally, and as a reminder for your calendars, we have two important Franciscan saint feast days coming up. On August 11<sup>th</sup>, our sister, St. Clare of Assisi and St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

That's all for now. Enjoy the newsletter.

Pax,  
Gary J. Burton, OFS

## *Around the Region*

### *Congratulations Newly Elected Local Fraternity Council Members*

#### **Mary Our Queen Fraternity**



**L-R Minister: Mary Stepke, OFS,  
Vice Minister: Bill Lotz, OFS,  
Secretary: Jeanette Doleschal, (not in photo),  
Treasurer: Barbara Countryman, OFS  
Formation Director: Anne Mulqueen, OFS**





## *New Inquirers*

**Our  
Lady  
Of  
The  
Rosary**



**Theresia  
Ngunde  
Muli**

## **Companions of Francis and Clare**



**L- R Kris Krulikias,  
Joanne Hawley  
Marianne Ast,  
Diane Koropchak,  
Frank Otto,  
Zachary Conger was absent**



**Lorraine  
Colletta**



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## *New Candidate*

**St. Bonaventure**

**Myung-Sook Belina Yi, OFS**



# Newly Professed



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Yeongin  
Anna Lee, OFS

**Back**  
Tae  
Neum  
Agnes Pak, OFS



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**L-R Fraternity Minister, Peggy Gregory, OFS  
Newly Professed, Thomas H. Sayre, OFS  
Celebrant - Father Jerome Wolbart, OFM  
Newly Professed Robert Joseph Graham, OFS**



## *Losses in the Secular Franciscan Family*

**Our sister, Hilda Brush, OFS, a member of Sacred Heart Fraternity in Virginia Beach, Virginia, passed into eternal life on April 20, 2024. Hilda was professed on October 18, 1990.**

**Our brother, Plater Campbell, OFS, a member of St. Francis DC Fraternity passed into eternal life on May 21, 2024. Plater was professed on January 1, 1958.**



**Our sister, Mary Lou Gennaula, OFS, a member of St. Conrad Fraternity of Hanover, Pennsylvania, passed away on June 2, 2024. Mary Lou was professed on November 2, 1993.**



**Our brother, John Dina, OFS, a member of St. John the Beloved Fraternity passed into eternal life on July 23, 2024. John was professed on June 21, 1982.**

### Prayer for the Deceased

Remember, Lord,  
those who have died and  
have gone before us marked  
with the sign of faith,  
especially those for whom  
we now pray. May these  
and all who sleep in Christ  
find in Your presence light,  
happiness and peace.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

[www.ShareCatholic.com](http://www.ShareCatholic.com)

## 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.



# Commuter Option Now Available!

details at  
[saintmargaretofcortona.org/upcoming-events](http://saintmargaretofcortona.org/upcoming-events)



## St. Margaret of Cortona 2024 OFS Chapter of Mats

A reminder that our Chapter of Mats will be held from September 6-8, at the beautiful [Claggett Center](#) in Adamstown, Maryland.

Our theme for the Chapter of Mats

**"The Next 800 Years"**

Where we have been,  
Where we are now, and  
Where we are going.

**How are we as Secular Franciscans poised to bring Christ to our world?  
What unique gifts do we have to offer?**

To enhance the participation of all our brothers and sisters, **disability and dietary accommodations**, and **language interpretation/translation** will be available throughout the Chapter of Mats.

**Payment Options:** Final Payment at the registration desk can be made via check or credit card (subject to 3.5% fee) you will receive an invoice from Randy Bender.

- If paying by check please make payable to [St. Margaret of Cortona Region](#).

# Last Chance to Register!

**ABSOLUTE REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS AUGUST 11**

[Chapter of Mats Registration Form](#)

*Financial assistance is still available for anyone who needs it!*

[Financial Assistance Fund Request 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.





## Ecumenical/Interfaith

### Pope Francis Quotes Buddha in Mongolia

Khamba Nomun Khan, head of the Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaater, Mongolia, accompanied Pope Francis as he entered an interreligious dialogue event at the Hun Theater in Mongolia last September. At this meeting with Mongolian Buddhists, Shamans, Shintoists, and other religious representatives, Pope Francis said that interreligious dialogue is “not antithetical to proclamation” but helps religious traditions to understand one another. “With humility and in the spirit of service...the Church offers the treasure she has received to every person and culture, in a spirit of openness and in respectful consideration of what the other religious have to offer,” Pope Francis said in a speech at Ulaanbaater’s Hun Theater. “Religious traditions, for all their distinctiveness and diversity, have impressive potential for the benefit of society as a whole,” he added.

Pope Francis met with 12 religious leaders and representatives in the performing arts center on the Bogd Khan Uu Mountain overlooking Mongolia’s capital city. The theater is built in the circular shape of a traditional Mongolian nomadic yurt dwelling called a “ger.” The rector of the only Orthodox church in Mongolia. Father Antony Gusev represented the Russian Orthodox Church at the meeting.

In his speech, Pope Francis twice cited the “Dhammapada,” the most widely read Buddhist text that is a collection of sayings of Buddha. Quoting the “Dhammapada,” he said, “The fragrance of flowers spreads only in the direction of the wind. The fragrance of those who live according to virtue spreads in all directions. The Buddhist monks who were in attendance of the interreligious dialogue event expressed that Pope Francis’s visit meant a great deal to their community.

Nearly 90% of Mongolians who identify as religious are Buddhists. The religious landscape of Mongolia---once a heartland of Tibetan Buddhism---was dramatically changed by Communist rule. In 2000, there were an estimated 110,000 Buddhist monks and 700 monasteries in Mongolia. A French Catholic missionary who visited what is today Mongolia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the succession of Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia and noted that the vast country would also be well-suited for a Catholic contemplative monastery, a dream shared by Cardinal Giorgio Marengo, the apostolic prefect of Mongolia. Under the Mongolian People’s Republic’s one party rule, many monasteries were destroyed and closed and around 17,000 Buddhist monks were killed, while many others renounced religious life.

In recent years, Mongolia has had a modest religious revival and a movement to rebuild the destroyed Buddhist monasteries after the fall of the Soviet Union. Today, roughly 40% of the population of Mongolia remains atheist or without any religions.

At the interreligious meeting, Pope Francis said, “May the memory of past sufferings—here I think especially of the Buddhist communities—bestow the strength needed to transform dark wounds into sources of light, senseless violence into the wisdom of life, devastating evil into constructive goodness.”

Gustev, who represented the Russian Orthodox Church at the event, also recalled the persecution Christians experienced in Mongolia during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in particular, the torture and murder of Orthodox Father Feodor Parnyakov by Russian General Baron Ungern von Stenberg in 1921.

In his speech, Pope Francis quote another line attributed to Buddha: “The wise man rejoices in giving and by that alone does he become happy. The Pope also cited writings of Mahatma Gandhi on



having “purity of heart” and Lutheran existentialist philosopher Soren Kierkegaard on hope.

Besides Buddhism, Islam, and Shamanism make up about 5% of the Mongolian population, and addressed a religious identity in the 2020 census. In Mongolian shamanism, shamans enter trances to communicate and are sometimes possessed by spiritual beings. Animal sacrifice, particularly of horses, is still sometimes a part of shamanistic rituals, as well as music, dance, and chanting. D. Jargalsaikha, the president of the United Union of Shamans of Mongolia, explained that Mongolian Shamans “worship the idols of the Eternal Heaven, Emperor Ghengis Khan, ancestors, and parents. Shamanistic practices are also incorporated by many Buddhists in the country. The majority of Mongolian Buddhists today are Mahayana Buddhists.

In the Pope’s first speech to the Mongolian government officials, he said that “the holistic vision of the Mongolian shamanic tradition, combined with the respect for all living beings inherited from Buddhist philosophy, can contribute significantly to the urgent and no longer deferrable efforts to protect and preserve the planet.”

Christians are as small minority in Mongolia representing 2.2% of people who hold religious beliefs in the country. Mongolia’s approximately 1,450 Catholics make up far less than 1% of Mongolia’s 3.3 million people, but the Church has been growing with over 35 baptisms in the last 35 years.

Other religious representatives at this interreligious meeting included Adiyakhuu Octyabri of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, a Morman, and a representative of the Mongolian Ba’hai community. Pope Francis told all the religious leaders, “I would like to reassure you that the Catholic Church desires to follow this path, firmly convinced of the importance of ecumenical, interreligious, and cultural dialogue. Her faith is grounded in the eternal dialogue between God and humanity that took flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.”

Following this interreligious event, Pope Francis returned to Ulaabaatar’s apostolic prefecture for kunch, then presided over an afternoon Sunday Mass at Mongolia’s Steppe Arena.

This article is a slightly modified report written by Courtney Mares, a Rome Correspondent for the Catholic News Agency., A Harvard University graduate, she has reported for news bureaus on three continents.

Peace and all Good,  
Mike Huether, OFS



*Muslim  
Jewish  
Christian  
Prayer for Peace.*

*O God, you are the source of life and peace.  
Praised be your name forever.  
We know it is you who turn  
our minds to thoughts of peace.  
Hear our prayer in this time of crisis.*

## Reflection

Ready, Set.....Go??

The young couple, anxious to move so as to provide for the needs of their growing family, approaches the realtor - bright-eyed, hopeful, anticipating their old house is in a reasonable condition so that selling will be a breeze. They approach, their heads full of dreams, plans of a bigger, grander space, more attractive, in a safe location, more suited to the employment, social, and educational needs of their family, and certainly more conducive to ever changing possibilities for a "better life."

The realtor takes the home tour. "Well," he says, "there are some good selling points about your home. But some adjustments/improvements will have to be completed before putting the house on the market - like destroying the disintegrating outdoor shed, landscaping, repairing broken fixtures and trim, replacing the roof...." The list seems endless to the prospective new home owners...Their faces crestfallen, their minds wracking up the cost, time, effort required to complete such a task. Will this take weeks, months, more?? Do I have the energy? They are thinking, "I guess I didn't even notice that the house needed repair. Living with these imperfections doesn't bother me. Maybe a new owner won't be bothered either. But if they matter to the sale, should we put off all the fixing and keep our own future plans on hold for a while? Do we really need to do all this now?"

Well, we could follow this same scenario in our Franciscan home, that spiritual calling to which we have committed and professed, that life within each of us. So consider, is our own house ready for our most important, eternal home? Do we live Gospel to life? Do we follow the Rule of the order? Or have we put our commitment to the Order, and all that entails, on a "back burner," locked within the confines of a mind beset by the concerns of modern living? Do we shine on our world as St. Francis did, as he would have us do as his followers?

Look at your house - inside and out. Don't be afraid to face the imperfections you see, and deal with them. Fix them, perhaps one at a time. Fix them, remembering all the ways you have been enlightened to fix them. Fix them, remembering Tom Bello's 5 point plan for Franciscans: "Love the Lord with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mk 12:30)," Love your neighbor as yourself, hate anything within you that might separate you from God, receive the Eucharist, and do anything that moves you closer to God and away from sin. Fix them, as you would as one of the people of penance. Fix them, using the Rule, the constitution, statutes, and documents as your guide. And fix them, letting your Order and fraternity shine a light on that path, and using the rich history of St. Francis and Clare to provide motivations each day.

Don't put off what you have decided to do, what you have committed your life to do, especially since it is the most important work of your life. Fix your house so that it is always ready to be shared with others and so that it prepares you and others for our eternal home. You have made a commitment to do this by your profession. Our Lord, and our founder St. Francis, are counting on you.

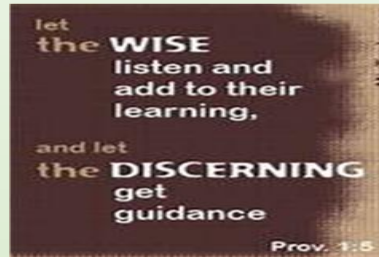
Joan Kane, OFS  
Vice Minister  
Little Flower Fraternity



## DISCERNMENT AMONGST US

Rita Colleran OFS, Regional Formation Director

As OFS members we are often encouraged to use discernment. Even the theme of our National Chapter is "Listen, Discern, Go Forth." This is meant to be applied to all areas of our lives as we strive to conform to the will of our Lord.



Franciscan discernment is a process that begins with a desire to do God's will over one's own and to follow the heart as led by the Spirit. It can be used for oneself, sharing with others, or in workplace and family decisions. It involves recognizing God's voice in life, and judging whether or not God is the source of thoughts and opportunities that arise. It views life as a practice that involves all experiences, and a healthy discernment can help focus on gifts and remove what is not necessary.

This article comes from my presentation at our Servant Leadership Formation retreat last month. A part of it was about discernment within the fraternity as is necessary by a fraternity council when dealing with issues that may arise in fraternal life among members, the direction of the fraternity, as well as with those who are in initial formation as they progress towards profession, but can also be applied to fraternal life and each of us in our everyday lives.

For some of us being asked to make decisions about/with others can be difficult as it can seem like judging someone, kind of like King Soloman. Rather it aimed at pleasing our Lord, and like St. Francis listening with empathy and focusing on how you are being led in by the Holy Spirit to do God's will.

God's ways are mysterious and different from the world. In praying and reaching for discernment it is usual to find unique solutions that involve kindness and love, yet adherence to the commands of our Lord and the Church. At times the going forward the decisions made through discernment will lead to happy outcomes, other times people will be upset. That may be because God is doing a work in them by which the decision of the council is only a small part of helping this be accomplished.

We do not try to be a judge or confessor about anyone's life, but only to encourage and guide toward living the Gospel and following our Rule. When dealing with issues with the fraternity or individual members, it can often be rooted in one of the following:

A. Depth of understanding about belonging to our Order including: St. Francis' vision for the Secular Order, the solemnity of their profession to the Order, honoring the Order by living their vocation, and/or understanding and embracing the Rule.

OR

B. Conversion/Metanoia – the true meaning of dying to self to conform to our Lord.

**Understanding this can be helpful with discernment to simplify issues and to lovingly counsel and encourage others. Then Council or Formation Director can learn and serve the person to become knowledgeable about who we are as Franciscans and what we believe and do; or encourage the person to look within themselves to recognize efforts for conversion.**



**To help you and encourage us, our Lord has given us much to equip us in this type of matter. He has commanded us to love others as we love ourselves – requiring us to care enough that we would do the same as what we would need if we were in the same position. He has given us the Church, Gospel, and Holy Spirit to guide us. Best of all, He has given the opportunity of relationship with Him to confide in and call upon.**

**He has asked us to trust Him boldly and called us to be Priest, Prophet, and King in Him, with Him and through Him. Specifically, we are:**

**Priest: the link between God and human beings; harmony; peacemaking; prayer and sacramental life; relationship with Christ; bring this to the larger community through example.**

**Prophet: speaks the truth about God in words, actions, and personal example; and speaks of the signs of the times—through a Catholic (and in our case Franciscan lens); We are responsible for our own ongoing formation as Catholics and Franciscans; Scripture, the writings of Francis, Clare, and Bonaventure; the writings of the great Catholic theologians; we also have the opportunity to learn within our fraternities.**

**King: sees the talents of the community and directs those talents toward God; is willing to be a servant leader; understands that we are all called and encourages those in his or her care to fulfill their vocation.**

**All this being said, it still can be difficult and daunting. It isn't easy serving others including in servant leadership. At the retreat we took a little time to discuss what an ideal fraternity looks like, and what issues fraternities deal with. As you can guess, there was quite a difference. Earth is not heaven and we have to fight the battles the come before us. The Communion of Saints reminds us that there are three dwelling places for the saints (those who believe and love our Lord Jesus):**

**Church Triumphant – those in heaven with God**

**Church Penitent/Suffering – those in purgatory**

**Church Militant – those on earth fighting the evil one and everyday battles.**

**So – we are Church Militant and must daily “gird up our lions”, remembering we are His and with faith, face the battles. “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.” Romans 8:31-33**



To accompany my article about discernment, I offer you this Formation lesson – Rita Colleran

## **Our call as Priest, Prophet, and King and our Rule**

### **An OFS Formation Lesson**

At the time of our Baptism, we are called to be Priest, Prophet, and King along with our Lord Jesus Christ. This applies to every Catholic. We find the following in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

*Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ. ... "to be a holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5). By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people ..." (1 Peter 2:9). Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers (CCC, 1267, 1268).*

*Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom, priests for his God and Father" (Revelation 1:6, see 5:9–10; 1 Peter 2:5,9). ... **The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king (CCC, 1546).***

**"Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order reinforces our Baptismal promises. Our call to the Franciscan way of life points out the path for us to follow.** This baptismal source of unity reaches beyond the boundaries of states, languages, cultures, and social classes. We are one in Christ. We are called to spread the Gospel and influence the world and the Church with the Gospel of Jesus flavored by our Franciscan spirit." (Franciscan Journey p.48)

How is our call to be Priest, Prophet, and King made clear by our Rule?

1. **Priest:** the link between God and human beings; harmony; peacemaking; prayer and sacramental life; relationship with Christ; bring this to the larger community through example.  
We find this in numerous places of our Rule and Constitutions--Rule: Article 5; Article 8; Article 10; Article 11; Article 12; Article 19; Constitutions: Article 2.1; Article 3.2, 3.3; Article 8; Article 10; Article 11; Article 12.3; Article 13; Article 14
2. **Prophet:** speaks the truth about God in words, actions, and personal example; and speaks of the signs of the times—through a Catholic (and in our case Franciscan lens); We are responsible for our own ongoing formation as Catholics and Franciscans; Scripture, the writings of Francis, Clare, and Bonaventure; the writings of the great Catholic theologians; we also have the opportunity to learn within our fraternities.  
Rule and Constitutions—Rule: Article 4; Article 6; Article 13; Constitutions: Article 8.2; Article 9.2; Article 12; Article 15
3. **King:** sees the talents of the community and directs those talents toward God; is willing to be a servant leader; understands that we are all called and encourages those in his or her care to fulfill their vocation.  
Rule and Constitutions—Rule: Article 15; Article 16; Article 17; Article 18; Article 21; Article 24; Constitutions: Article 15; Articles 17-27

As you can see, **our Rule and Constitutions reaffirm and strengthen our call to fulfill the role of Priest, Prophet, and King in our daily lives as Secular Franciscans.** Please read the articles mentioned above (you may be able to find even more that apply.) After reading the articles (available here in English: <https://ciofs.info/library/official-documents/>), answer the following in your journal or with a prayer partner:

- a. How do you live out the call to be "*Priest, Prophet, and King?*"
- b. In what ways does our Rule help us to move in the right direction?
- c. Which parts of this call are most comfortable for you?
- d. Which do you find most challenging?



## Every Professed Secular Franciscan should know:

The Secular Franciscan Order is an Order – canonically established more than 800 years ago by St. Francis of Assisi with the purpose of ministry within the church and amongst all populations in secular lives.

Profession is a lifelong ecclesiastical promise freely made before God in the fraternity's presence through the Catholic Church. By the grace of God, we choose our profession, renew our baptismal promises, and consecrate ourselves to living the gospel. It is freely chosen by each member to add this to our responsibility and obligation to live a Christian life – there is a mark on our souls because of these promises.

Profession is a solemn act and commitment. Our failings in our profession are to be included in our Sacrament of Reconciliation to our priest. Fr. Stephen King, OFM Conv. instructed us to include this in our confession being sure to let the priest know that we are a professed member of a canonically established Order.

We promise to live in this Order by following the Rule in our way of life and are governed by our General Constitution and other essential documents. This requires self-sacrifice and conversion. As an Order, members live by following the footsteps of St. Francis, Franciscan spirituality and charism.

The smallest unit in the Order is the fraternity – not the individual. Because of Franciscan spirituality and charism, all members work towards living in fraternity with each other through the Franciscan way of life. Fraternal life is a major component of our profession.

Members do serve in their parishes and communities individually; however, it is when serving together that they accomplish fraternal works of service. This may include two or more members or all members of the fraternity.

Key values of Franciscan life:

- Faith, Service, Unity, Fraternity, Humility, Conversion, to name a few.
- Honor to our Catholic Church and Franciscan Order above all else.
- Service to the poor and marginalized, affirmation of the unique worth of each person, appreciation for beauty, reverence for all creation, and faith in a personal and provident God—these are the values and vision of St. Francis of Assisi

We follow St. Francis of Assisi, though there are other good charisms and saints in the church – we are Franciscan and it is in his footsteps that we find our way to Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We stand at the forefront of social injustice. However, we are non-political – there is no room for politics in the fraternity; we look to the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel to meet the needs of our time.

