

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter

June 2025

ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA REGION

UP TO NOW NEWSLETTER



**Covering the District of Columbia,
Central 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 ~

2025 ~ Issue 2

St. Margaret of Cortona Regional Minister's June 2025 Message

My sisters and brothers, I extend greetings and peace to you. I pray that you enjoyed your Lent and Easter seasons.

We've had occasions for both sadness and joy since our last issue with the passing of our beloved Pope Francis on April 21, 2025, and the election of our new Pontiff, Pope Leo XIV on May 8, 2025. May the good Lord grant eternal rest and peace to Pope Francis, and may he provide strength, courage, and wisdom to Pope Leo XIV. Let us all continue to pray for them both. For those interested in keeping abreast of the Pope, here is the link for the Vatican News website:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en.html>

The items for this newsletter deal with the submission of our region's Annual Report and payment of our Fair Share to the National Fraternity, along with a description of four formation events that were held.

The Annual Report is a requirement for all 30 regions in our National Fraternity. It looks back at the calendar year that just ended (2024), and it is a collection of responses received from the local fraternities. It covers changes in our membership population, along with a number of activity areas that the local and regional fraternities are responsible for to include, Spiritual Assistance, Formation, Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), Multi-Cultural, Ecumenical/Interfaith, Youth and Young Adult, Fraternity Meetings, Newsletters, Technology, and Financial Management which is submitted separately by the region's Treasurer.

Our membership numbers as part of the Annual Report (displayed in the graph below) are used as the basis for what we pay to the National Fraternity for our Fair Share.

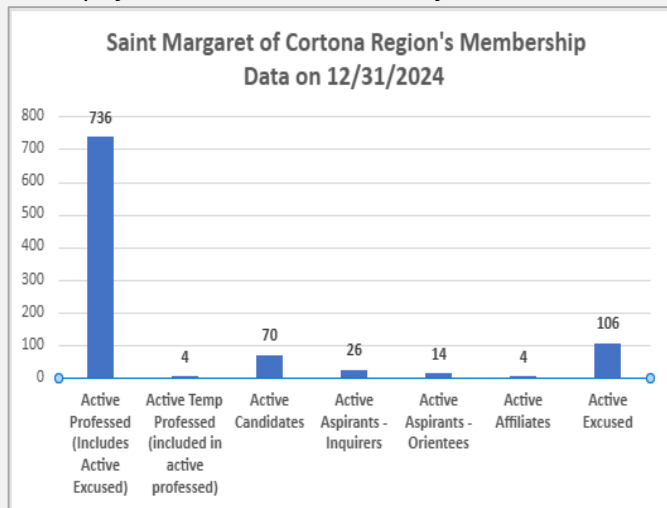


Figure 1: SMC Region's 2024 Membership Data

("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:

OFM ~ Vacant

OFM Cap ~ Br. Michael Meza

OFM Conv. ~ Vacant

Appointed Council Positions

Regional JPIC Chair:

Pat Boye, OFS

Regional Multi-Cultural Chair:

Sita Chakrawarti, OFS

Regional Youth and Young

Adult Commission Chair:

Carl Stacy, OFS

Appointed

Non-Council Positions

Regional Database Manager

Regional Newsletter Editor

Region Website Administrator

Vocations/Archivist

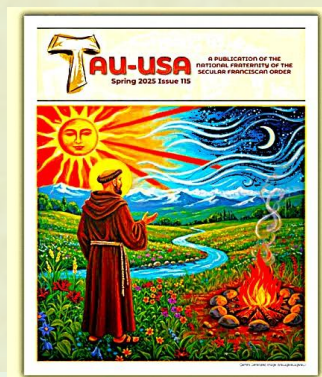
Bob Longo, OFS

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TAU-USA - Spring 2025 Issue
(Click on the picture below)



These numbers haven’t changed much since I provided this information at the Chapter of Mats in September of 2024 and at the Chapter of Ministers in November 2024. The Active Professed membership was 736 and constitutes most of the Fair Share Payment, which we made for 2024 on February 22, 2025, for \$17,732.00.

The region sponsored three formation events and co-sponsored a fourth with a local fraternity. On March 8, 2025, the region co-sponsored a Day of Reflection with St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity in Triangle, Virginia which was well attended with over 60 participants. The theme was friendship, and our presenter/facilitator was Father Russel Murray, OFM, one of our former Regional Spiritual Assistants. Both the content provided by Father Russel and the luncheon served as part of the event were well received by all.



Figure 2: Day of Reflection at St. Francis of Assisi, Triangle, VA on March 8, 2025

Additionally, on March 29, 2025, the region held its Annual Day of Reflection at the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, D.C. for all Candidates which was also open to Professed wanting to attend. Our presenter/facilitator for this event was Brother Mike Meza, Cap., who is also one of our Regional Spiritual Assistants.



Finally, we held two formation workshops for local fraternity councils, one on May 3, 2025, at the Church of the Incarnation in Charlottesville, Virginia and on May 24, 2025, at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City, Maryland. These were the same workshops entitled, Embracing Your Leadership Journey, held in separate geographic locations in our region (one in the south and the other in the north) to facilitate attendance for those closest to those locations. The workshops were given by the region’s Formation Director, Rita Colleran, Vice Minister, Michael Oliver, and me. The morning sessions were based on the concepts of servant leadership, organizational culture, and change, while the afternoon sessions were more practical application on fraternity culture, councils working together with their fraternity, animating and guiding, and shepherding. Combined, there were over 60 attendees who participated and shared their ideas and concerns with each other at these events.

All four of these one-day events were part of the region’s attempt to localize the formation experience by hosting them in different parts of the region to ease travel time and reduce costs for attendees. For those who prefer the more traditional weekend experience, the next regional event will be a formation weekend on June 27-29, 2025, at Priestfield Pastoral Center in Kearneysville, West Virginia which is open to all. Registration closes on June 15, 2025. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/JuneRetreat#/>

That’s all for now. I pray that God continues to bless and protect you and your loved ones each day.

Pax,

Gary Burton, OFS
Minister
Saint Margaret of Cortona Region

Newly Elected Councils

Little Flower Fraternity 2025 - 2028



L-R Formation Director: Phil Pucher, OFS,
Treasurer: Al Gigel, OFS,
Fr. Bart Karwacki OFM Conv. Spiritual Assistant,
Minister: Teresa Knauff, OFS,
Vice Minister: Dennis Bernardo, OFS,
Secretary: Joan Kane, OFS,
Councilors: Michael Huether, OFS, Bonnie Ng, OFS,
 and Mark Evens, OFS

St. Anthony of Nagasaki Fraternity 2025 - 2028

L-R Minister:
 Sandy Oleksy-Ojikutu, OFS
Secretary:
 Patricia George, OFS
Treasurer:
 Patrick Martin, OFS



R-L Councilor:
 Harold Zavarce, OFS
Councilor:
 Kristen Doherty, OFS
Formation Director:
 Sarah Garcia, OFS
Vice Minister:
 Anne-Marie Miller, OFS
 is not in the picture.

St. Clare Korean Fraternity 2025 - 2028

L-R Formation Director: Son In Suk, OFS
Minister: Lee Chang Ho, OFS
Vice Minister: Park Su Hyun, OFS
Secretary: Yang Hye Kyung, OFS
Treasurer: Yun Wha Ja, OFS
Councilor: Ryu Seoung Ho, OFS



St. Francis DC Fraternity 2025 - 2028

L-R Minister: Christyann Helm, OFS
Vice Minister: Christine Tantisunthorn, OFS
Secretary: Janice Benton, OFS
Formation Director: Michele Dunne, OFS
Councilor: Mary Immaculate O. Okumu, OFS
Treasurer: Joe Massi, OFS is not in the picture.

Newly Elected Councils



St. Thomas More Arlington Fraternity 2025 - 2028

L-R Minister: Sita Chakrawarti, OFS
Vice Minister: Janette Martin, OFS
Secretary: Randy Bender, OFS
Treasurer: Joseph Kennedy, OFS
Formation Director: Michael Landrigan, OFS
Councilor at Large: Ann Corro, OFS

St. Thomas More Harrisburg Fraternity 2025 - 2028

L - R
Minister:
Tom Kane, OFS,
Vice-Minister:
Janet McNally, OFS
Secretary:
Joyce Williams, OFS



R- L
Treasurer:
Alex Sonski, OFS
Formation Director:
Richard So, OFS
Councilor:
Dana Seidensticker, OFS
Councilor:
Saulius Elertas, OFS

New Inquirers


Pope St. John XXIII Fraternity

Paul Becht
Edward Muir
Kathie Sheats-Taylor
Teresa Love
Eric Love

Our New Candidates

Del Camino Fraternity
and
Floreccillas de San Francisco Emerging

L-R Jennifer Cruz, OFS ~ Leslie Gonzales, OFS
 Profesión Oscar Alejandro Lovos Guevara, OFS
 Sylvana Avalos Amaya, OFS
 Ivis Yohan Ayala, Osorto, OFS
 Roselin Henriquez, OFS ~ Humbelinda Alcalá Pitones, OFS ~ Lucinda Lovos, OFS
 Maria Asunción Barrera, OFS ~ Maria Esperanza Pinguil Chimbo, OFS, ~ Aida Alvarado, OFS
 Nelson Escalante, OFS ~ Beatriz Castellanos, OFS



Newly Professed



L-R
Dana Seidensticker OFS
Saulius Elertas OFS

St. Thomas More Harrisburg Fraternity



L-R
Jaci Curry, OFS
Donna Dellaglio, OFS

Little Flower Fraternity

Celebrations Around the Region

A Wedding

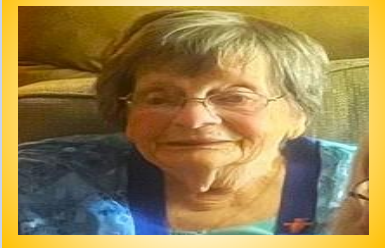
Little Flower Fraternity

100th Birthday



The newly married couple is in the center:

Rae and Al Gigel, OFS and Fraternity members.

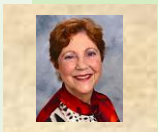


Mary Hebermehl, OFS, a member of Little Flower Fraternity just celebrated her 100th birthday. Mary professed in May 1990

Losses in the Secular Franciscan Family



Our sister, Janice McCarthy, OFS, a member of St. Clare Delaware Fraternity passed away on February 13, 2025. Janice was professed on April 15, 1984.



Our sister, Margaret Wise, OFS, passed away on February 27, 2025. Margaret professed on May 24, 2004 at St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina Fraternity.



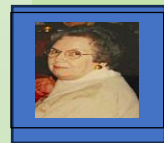
Our sister, Theresa Heath, OFS, passed away on March 22, 2025. Theresa professed on October 11, 1981, and was a member of St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity.



Our sister, Angelita (Lita) Mendoza Millan, OFS, passed away on April 4, 2025. Lita was a member of St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity. Lita was professed on January 10, 2002.



Our brother, Philip (Phil) Pascoe, OFS, passed away on April 15, 2025. Phil was a member of St. Conrad Hanover Fraternity. On May 20, 2023, Phil made his profession in the same fraternity.



Our sister, Santa Ragot, OFS, a member of St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity, passed away on May 12, 2025. Santa was professed at St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity on December 14, 1980.



Our sister, Lolita Jardeleza, OFS, a member of St. Francis D.C. Fraternity, passed away on May 30, 2025. Lolita was professed at St. Francis D.C. Fraternity on May 21, 2005.



Our sister, Denise Miente, OFA, a member of St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity, passed away on May 31, 2025. Denise was professed at St. Conrad Annapolis Fraternity on September 18, 2010.



**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.**



JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

JPIC Reflections – A Call to Interrupt Our Journey

Life is made up of encounters, and in these encounters, we emerge for what we are. We find ourselves in front of others, faced with their fragility and weakness, and we can decide what to do: to take care of them or pretend nothing is wrong.

Pope Leo XIV used these words in describing the story of the Good Samaritan in his May 28 general audience.

Reminding us that a priest and a Levite go down the same road as the Samaritan, he continues. “We can imagine that, after staying a long time in Jerusalem, that priest and that Levite are in a hurry to return home. It is indeed haste, so present in our lives, that very often prevents us from feeling compassion. Those who think that their own journey must take precedence are not willing to stop for another. But here comes someone who is actually able to stop: he is a Samaritan. . . This Samaritan simply stops because he is a man faced with another man in need of help. . . because if you want to help someone, you cannot think of keeping your distance, you have to get involved, get dirty, perhaps be contaminated; he binds the wounds after cleaning them with oil and wine; he loads him onto his horse, taking on the burden, because one who truly helps is willing to feel the weight of the other’s pain.”

Our Holy Father directs the question then to each of us: “When will we too be capable of interrupting our journey and having compassion? When we understand that the wounded man in the street represents each one of us. And then the memory of all the times that Jesus stopped to take care of us will make us more capable of compassion.”

Living as professed members of a religious order in the world, haste is a regular occurrence. Obligations of all types challenge us daily to be “too busy.” As Secular Franciscans, it seems to be a part of our vocation that we “interrupt our journey.” It is how we are called to be, how we live as professed members of a religious order in the world.

Pope Leo XIV’s observations on the Good Samaritan, in a sense his call for us to help our neighbors in need, is no surprise. As he acknowledged himself, his name was a nod to Pope Leo XIII who wrote the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Pope Leo XIII’s words from that 1891 encyclical, written about conflict, are as meaningful today as they were then:

The elements of the conflict now raging are unmistakable, in the vast expansion of industrial pursuits and the marvelous discoveries of science. . . in the enormous fortunes of some few individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses. . . also, finally, in the prevailing moral degeneracy.

Long considered an important instruction on Catholic Social Teaching, the Holy See continues to develop her great tradition. In our own lifetime, encyclicals following the themes of Catholic Social Teaching include the following:

Pope John Paul II’s encyclicals including *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work, 1981); *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern, 1987); *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life, 1995); and *Centesimus Annus* (100 year anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, 1991).

From Pope Benedict XVI, encyclicals including *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love, 2005) and *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth, 2009).

Pope Francis’s encyclicals including *Evangelii Gaudium* (Joy of the Gospel, 2013) and of course *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* (2015).

Pope John Paul II’s Centesimus Annus is a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*. Pope John Paul II writes:

Today more than ever, the Church is aware that her social message will gain credibility more immediately from the witness of actions than as a result of its internal logic and consistency. This awareness is also a source of her preferential option for the poor, which is never exclusive or discriminatory towards other groups. This option is not limited to material poverty, since it is well known that there are many other forms of poverty, especially in modern society - not only economic but cultural and spiritual poverty as well.

The Church's love for the poor, which is essential for her and a part of her constant tradition, impels her to give attention to a world in which poverty is threatening to assume massive proportions in spite of technological and economic progress. In the countries of the West, different forms of poverty are being experienced by groups which live on the margins of society, by the elderly and the sick, by the victims of consumerism, and even more immediately by so many refugees and migrants. In the developing countries, tragic crises loom on the horizon unless internationally coordinated measures are taken before it is too late.

Written 34 years ago, these words of Saint Pope John Paul II can help us immensely.

It seems like a safe bet that our new Holy Father will focus on these same ongoing themes of the poor and marginalized. And hopefully as our Order grows in its fraternities and individual members, we will be blessed to find new and creative ways to be interrupted on our journey. Towards this end, as always, it is good for us to return to our Rule:

Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialog of apostolic effectiveness and creativity. Rule 6

Like the Good Samaritan, with the grace of God may we always make the best choices. And with the intercession of our Seraphic Father Francis, our Holy Mother Clare, and Mary our Mother Queen of the Seraphic Order, may we be inspired to be faithful to the words of our new Holy Father Leo XIV:

Life is made up of encounters, and in these encounters, we emerge for what we are. We find ourselves in front of others, faced with their fragility and weakness, and we can decide what to do: to take care of them or pretend nothing is wrong. (General Audience, May 28, 2025)

JPIC NEWS AND UPDATES

LAUDATO SI’ – 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Thankful for the Holy Father’s support of the Church’s care for creation, Pope Leo XIV posted the following on his X account:

Celebrating the tenth anniversary of #LaudatoSi, Pope Francis’ encyclical calls us to renew the dialogue on how we are building our planet's future, as we unite in the pursuit of sustainable and integral development, taking care to protect the common home entrusted to us by God.

7:30 AM · May 24, 2025

CANTICLE OF CREATURES – 800 YEARS

Thanks to Mary Our Queen Fraternity for a day of reflection on Canticle of Creatures, thoughtfully led by Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM at the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, DC.

Thanks to individuals in the Region who submitted photographs for the National OFS presentation on Canticle of Creatures to commemorate its 800 year anniversary. Our Region’s support for the effort included the participation of St. Francis Fraternity (WDC), St. Thomas More Fraternity (PA), Immaculata Fraternity (VA),

Tau Fraternity, (VA) and Sacred Heart Fraternity (VA).

JPIC GATHERING – OCTOBER 2025

An all day meeting for fraternity JPIC coordinators is scheduled for Saturday, October 25. Fraternities without a JPIC coordinator should plan on sending its Minister or Vice Minister. More information will be provided as soon as the venue is confirmed.

FAN ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Please join the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) for its annual benefit program, “I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: A Century of Franciscan Solidarity with Migrants,” on Wednesday, June 11, 7:00 PM ET on Zoom. Visit the FAN website www.franciscanaction.org to register or make a donation.

JPIC SPEAKER TOPICS

Speakers and discussion facilitators are available to interested Fraternities in the St. Margaret of Cortona Region, on JPIC related topics including the following:

- Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC): History and Overview for Secular Franciscans
- Care for Creation: A Franciscan Response
- Lady Poverty and the Franciscan Charism
- Immigration: A Franciscan Response
- Racism: A Franciscan Response
- Mindful Communication
- Peacemaking: An Overview
- Conflict and Dialogue
- Servant Leadership: What and Why
- Servant Leadership: implementation Plan
- Secular Franciscans in the Community
- Secular Franciscans in the Workplace
- Secular Franciscans and Family

Let us know your specific need – a monthly Fraternity gathering presentation, a Fraternity Council meeting or formation class, or even help in presenting to a church group or in the community. We will attempt to match you with a Secular Franciscan, or in some cases another expert, who is willing to speak on and as appropriate, facilitate discussion on the topic. Contact us at jpicspeakers@secularfranciscan.org. Also, please let us know if you personally are an expert on any of these topics and are interested in being a speaker-facilitator.

JPIC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of JPIC is to assist the Professed Secular Franciscans as they reflect on their relationship with God as manifested in the fruits of conversion in their lives. This with special regard to the daily choices made in the areas of justice, peacemaking and respect for all created things and people; as brothers and sisters of penance, bringing life to the Gospel and the Gospel to Life.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact Pat Boye, OFS or a member of the JPIC team at jpilmoc@secularfranciscan.org. If you are a JPIC coordinator at your local fraternity but not on our email list, please let us hear from you.

"We are to become vessels for God's compassionate love for others." Saint Clare

Pace e bene,
Pat Boye, OFS
Regional JPIC Chair



10 Year Anniversary of Laudato Si': A Prayer

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH

(From Laudato Si')

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every
creature as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.
Amen.



Secular Franciscans: Be the Bridge you are meant to be

Fr. Charley Miller has presented much information to us over the past few years to inspire our Franciscan journey as we attended days of refection with him. One of the themes which particularly struck me was that of the term, "Secular Franciscan," a paradoxical term at best. How are we to bridge that divide between being secular and being Franciscan? How do we create a path between the realities of our world and the spiritual life of our father St. Francis?

Pete Seeger wrote a song many years ago. Most of us have probably heard it for it is played even today. It is called, "Turn! Turn! Turn!" (To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven ") I can't help but think about these words today when I consider the world around me. Some of the words are consoling, some discouraging, but always, the words seem true to every generation- "...a time to live, to die, to plant, to reap, to build up, to break down, to dance, to mourn, to gather stones, to cast away stones, to love. And in the midst of all, we see times of hate, war, peace, times to embrace, times to refrain from embracing, times to gain, times to lose, times to rend, times to sow, times for peace, and when speaking of peace he wrote those famous words-I swear it's not too late."

The song flowed from the Biblical verse in the book of Ecclesiastes, reminding us all of the fleeting nature of the world and of our lives.. So what is it that we as Franciscans are to build up, break down, cast away, gather, embrace...so as to bring the Lord to our world and bridge that abyss between the seculars and the Franciscans? What are we to inspire? What do we live out our mission of bringing the Gospel to life among the people we live among, those we meet each day, those we will never meet face to face? Do we embrace, plant, dance, gather...as we could?

Pope Francis left us with a tremendous gift when he dedicated this Jubilee year to Hope. There is so much to be hopeful for and hopeful about, even today. Our new church leader, Pope Leo XIV already inspires us with his own words about hope, peace, humility, dignity of life, and so much more.

None of us know how much time we have left to fulfill our personal commitment of spreading Christ's love to the world. No matter what we have done to this point, let us "begin again," or perhaps rededicate ourselves with Pope Leo, to fulfill the responsibilities of our vocation, to bridge the gap between what is secular and what is Franciscan in us, never losing the hope of Christ - That hope which never ends, the hope of everlasting life for each and all. For as in Mr. Seeger's words, "it is never too late" to bring Christ to the world.

Joan Kane, OFS
Little Flower Fraternity

Interfaith Dialogue in the Contemporary World

Hello to all my Franciscan sisters and brothers!


This is an article based on a blog from the Dialogue Institute and Journal of Ecumenical Studies and authored by 2023 alumni Danyar M. Ali, entitled, “The Significance of Interfaith Dialogue in the Contemporary World.” It elaborates on the most important means of communication in our societies of the world today.

It is rapidly imperative in today’s world that amidst the religious and cultural diversity characterizing our society, interfaith dialogue should be more and more appreciated. This dialogue will not only help people understand each other, but it can also be a very important tool in building bridges and peaceful coexistence among our communities. Interfaith dialogue can play a fundamental role in reducing conflicts and tensions, countering extremism and opening up tolerance in our societies. Another significant result of interfaith dialogue is that it can lead to the complete elimination of biases and misunderstandings among the adherents of various standards. These come from a lack of knowledge and gaps in personal contact with other people. Very often, this disunity can be resolved by representatives of the various standards sitting down together to discuss the problems between them honestly and openly. This usually diminishes suspicion and fear of one another, building even more trust among the different religious groups.

Interfaith dialogue leads to increased tolerance and respect for society. As people learn to listen and understand the different perspectives, they will know to contribute toward the development of respect for differences and to a more open and diverse society. Such dialogue also makes one introspect his belief system but yet be open to the thoughts of another. This eventually leads to a society that is resourceful and vibrant where the differences become a form of blessing rather than a source of intimidation.

Interfaith dialogue can also serve as a significant factor in settling social and political issues. Often, religious beliefs are involved with problems of global complexity. Interreligious dialogue will form a channel for religious leaders and their followers to find peaceful solutions through their collaborative cooperation. This cooperation can also lead to specific areas such as the fight against poverty, climate change, and inequality. To this effect, when different religions engage in a common cause as a service to a community, this serves a dual purpose: solving a common problem and reinforcing their relationships.

Mike Huether
Ecumenical/Interfaith Chair



*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 conflict.

Your power changes hearts. Muslims, Christians, and Jews remember, and profoundly affirm, that they are followers of the one God, children of Abraham, brothers and sisters; enemies begin to speak to one another; those who were estranged join hands in friendship; nations seek the way of peace together.

Strengthen our resolve to give witness to these truths by the way we live.

Give to us:

UNDERSTANDING that puts an end to strife;
MERCY that quenches hatred; and
FORGIVENESS that overcomes vengeance.

Empower all people to live in your law of love. Amen.



What is our Way of Life?

Rita Colleran, OFS – Regional Formation Director

Today I share with you a formation study from our National OFS about “The Way of Life.” This is about our Franciscan way of living. At recent regional events and through various communications, it has been clear that there are many ideas amongst us about what our way of Franciscan living should be. In 2023, the National Executive Committee chose the theme of “Listen, Discern, Go Forth”. This is about how we live each and every day. It comes from our Rule. Below is the study that emphasizes our national theme and our way of life. Please take the time to read it and, if you will, give it to your fraternity Formation Director as a suggestion for a monthly fraternity formation time. It is clear guidance and a good refresher about who we are. Blessings to all!

Chapter 2: The Way of Life

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/OFS-Rule-Chapter-2-Study-Guide502.pdf>

This is an invitation to reflect on Chapter 2 – THE WAY OF LIFE of Rule for the Secular Franciscan Order. This is an exercise that is divided into four parts:

Part One – Articles 4-7

Part Two Articles 8-11

Part Three Articles 12-15

Part Four Articles 16-19

This is not a re-invention of the Rule, Chapter Two. It is a way to facilitate the study and discussion of the Rule’s Way of Life as given to us by St. Francis and approved by Pope Paul VI. As Franciscans, a re-visit and re-read of the Rule can only benefit our understanding of our call and vocation as Secular Franciscans.

This can be used for ongoing formation in your local fraternities or as a home study guide. Below are some ideas to consider as you develop your own exercise to fit your individual Fraternity.

- Make a special prayer space with candles where you will have little to no distractions.
- Handouts can be made for the section/sections you will be studying. Extra blank sheets for notes are helpful.
- Small groups can do this exercise in a circle or at a table. Larger groups can be divided into separate circles or tables.
- Center yourself and your group and invoke the Holy Spirit with a special prayer.
- The leader or volunteer should read each Article slowly and prayerfully.
- Pause for reflection.
- Emphasizing the 2022-2023 National Secular Franciscan Fraternity Theme of “Listen, Discern and Go Forth”, ask members to think about listening, discerning and going forth as it relates to the Article. This is an appropriate time for discussion either in one group or smaller groups. Leader or volunteer may prompt members to write down either one word or a short phrase that comes to them for each Article in the box provided or on a separate sheet of paper.
- Remember to take your time. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT: TAKE THE TIME TO PROCESS THOUGHTS AND ALLOW DETAILED DISCUSSION EVEN IF YOU ONLY COMPLETE ONE ARTICLE. You know your Fraternity best, so tailor this exercise for the benefit of all sisters and brothers.

PART ONE - ARTICLES 4 – 7

4.

The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people. Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly. Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.
5.

Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of Saint Francis, who often said, "I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood", should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.
6.

They have been made living members of the Church by being buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession. Therefore, they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words. Called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church and inspired by his example, let them devote themselves energetically to living in full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity.
7.

United by their vocation as "brothers and sisters of penance", and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls "conversion". Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily. On this road to renewal the sacrament of Reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.

- Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

.....

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

- *****

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

-

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

PART TWO - ARTICLES 8 - 11

8.

As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.

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Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

9.
The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.
10.
Uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will into the Father’s hands, let them faithfully fulfil the duties proper to their various circumstances of life. Let them also follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to him even in difficulties and persecutions.
11.
Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life, even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel, they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God’s children. Thus, in the spirit of “the Beatitudes” and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

PART THREE ARTICLES 12 - 15

12.
Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.
13.
As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.
14.
Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone “who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself”, let them exercise their responsibilities competently in Christian spirit of service.

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

15. Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting Justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

PART FOUR - ARTICLES 16 - 19

16. Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.

17. In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

18. Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High", and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.

19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

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Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

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Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

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Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)

.....

Listen (Hear/Read)

Discern (Think/Contemplate)

Go Forth (Act/Witness)



Announcement

Caring for Each Other

See the Flyer on the next page



St. Margaret of Cortona OFS Region
2025 Regional Formation Retreat

Caring for Each Other The Health and Heartbeat of Your Fraternity



Living in fraternal life to fulfill the Franciscan vision and mission?



All OFS members are heartily welcomed!
In addition each fraternity is required to send at least one council member (usually Formation Director & Minister)

When: June 27-29, 2025

**Where: Priest Field Pastoral Center, 4030 Middleway Pike,
Kearneysville, WV 25430 <https://priestfield.org/>**

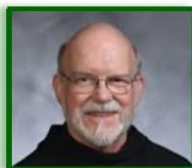
Time: Beginning at 3:00pm Friday and ending Sunday 11:00am

**Cost: Shared room \$270.00 Private Room \$300.00
(all board and meals included)**

a freewill offering will be collected for our two Religious Brothers



Join us for three days and two night's of inspiration to encourage you in becoming more of the loving, caring Franciscan you aspire to be. Enjoy the calmness of the West Virginia countryside with walking paths and areas for quiet reflection, as well as time with your Franciscan brothers and sisters to build encouraging loving relationships.



Fr. Bernie Tickerhoff TOR and **Fr. Jude Winkler OFM Conventual** who will teach about the Franciscan spiritual aspects of caring for each other. An afternoon workshop will be given by OFS members for discussion and workable ways to help us to put into practice within fraternal life ways to care for each other as we each face difficulties in life, as well as we celebrate special times.



Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharistic Adoration will be offered on Saturday, and *Mass* on Sunday morning. The retreat begins at 3:00pm on Friday, June 27 and will end Sunday, June 29 11:30am. Meals include dinner on Friday evening; Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner on Saturday, Only Breakfast on Sunday.

A free will offering will be collected for our Friars services.

REGISTER at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/JuneRetreat#/>

Deadline: June 15, 2025

- Only Shared Room (\$270.00) are available with two full size beds and private bath in each room
- You can choose to pay the full amount online or to pay later.
- Once registered, if you have not paid, you will be contacted for the \$100. nonrefundable deposit

If writing a check, please make it payable to:

St. Margaret of Cortona OFS Region

Mail to: Rita Colleran OFS, 12534 Chippenham Court, Bristow VA 20136

If you'd like to attend the retreat only part time -- please contact Rita Colleran for details.