



The Porter

St. Conrad Fraternity, Annapolis, MD
 Secular Franciscan Order – December 2025
<http://stconradannapolis.sfousa.org/>

The Porter deadline for January is the 7th. Please send news, prayer requests, poems, or interesting items that you think other members may enjoy to: Joan Faltot, 8217 Grainfield Rd, Severn, MD 21144, or send by email to jd6bouv@verizon.net.

 Fraternity Meeting	<p>Saturday, December 20, 2025 <u>Mass at 8:30 AM</u> at Our Lady of the Fields <i>Note change of Mass time</i> 1070 Cecil Avenue South, Millersville Followed by Fraternity Gathering & Party in Room 203/204</p>
Refreshments 	<p>It's Party Time 🍩🍩🍩 Everyone is encouraged to bring their favorite; however to insure that we do not end up with 12 dozen doughnuts, please bring healthy items as well, and <i>please remember to bring your coffee cup.</i></p>
Special Outreach	<p>At our December gathering, we will be collecting money for the Little Portion Farm at the Shrine of St. Anthony (see additional information on page 5)</p>
Liturgy	<p>Everyone should bring their ritual book. The Little Office of the Passion, Christmas. Handouts will be provided.</p>
Prayer Requests 	<p>For physical and spiritual healing of: Toby Harkleroad, Bob Ranke, Tessie Chitty, Al McGee (Ruth's brother-in-law), Ed Shea (Ruth's son), Teresa Booher (Ruth's daughter), Dennis Mallon (broken hip), Emily McGeady, Jerry Miante, Dr. Alex Demyan, Jude Dodge's niece, Catherine Gonzalez's mother, Monica's daughter, Jude Dodge, Margaret Jackson, Audrey Donnelly, Audrey Bushée, Bill Chitty, Kathleen Sievers, Harry Thompson, Jackie Chaplin (sister of Kathleen Sievers), Ed Sievers (Kathleen's husband), Kellie Eye (granddaughter of Susan Greif), Jimmy Wilbourne, Gerard Malka (brother of Genny Wilbourne), Carolyn Malka (sister-in-law of Genny Wilbourne). <i>Please help keep this list current. Additions and changes should be sent to Joan at jd6bouv@verizon.net</i></p>
Birthdays	<p>Marie Shelton – 12/26 George Ryan – 01/07 Nancy Poniatowski -- 01/12 Tessie Chitty – 1/21</p>
Profession Anniversaries	<p>Harry Thompson – 1/10/1991</p>
Council Meeting	<p>In-person meeting: Saturday 1/3/26, 11:00am at Wegmans in Gambrills.</p>

Upcoming Events	Saturday, February 7, 2026. 9:30am- 4:00pm Day of Reflection for Inquirers and Candidates to the Secular Franciscan Order. <i>Embracing the Gospel Life: Conversion, Commitment, Faith, Service.</i> (See flyer on page 7 for additional information.)
	June 5-7, 2026. St. Margaret of Corona Regional Retreat. Priestfield Center. Celebrate the Region’s 2026 “Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation” theme with a Spiritual Retreat focused on making JPIC-driven choices in our daily lives.
	28 July – 02 August, 2026. 21st Quinquennial Congress - <i>The Easter of Francis: Rekindle the Flame.</i> (Early Bird discounts end December 31, 2025) Location: Marriott Griffin Gate Golf Resort & Spa, 1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY. https://ofs-usa.regfox.com/21st-congress-secular-franciscan-order-usa



Minister’s Minute

My dear Franciscan Sisters and Brothers,

It seems appropriate to start this role as your minister, during this season of Advent. With your help, we will work together to continue the strong legacy of love and mutual support that has been the backbone of our fraternity.

As we begin the season of Advent and look ahead to the joys of Christmas, we are invited to pause, reflect, and open our hearts in anticipation. In the spirit of St. Francis, let us embrace this sacred time with simplicity, hope, and compassion.

Advent calls us, as a secular fraternity, to be bearers of that light. Whether in our homes, churches, neighborhoods, we can share hope by listening, supporting, and reaching out to those in need. Every act of generosity, every moment of understanding, every expression of peace brings Christ closer to our world.

Let us use this season to build bridges and foster unity within our fraternity and beyond. The Franciscan call to peace begins in our hearts and extends to all creation.

With a joyful heart, Ruth Shea OFS, Minister

NEWS FLASH: We are approved and booked to have our monthly meeting at Our Lady of the Fields from Jan-June 2026 in rooms 203/204. This space has a smart tv and projector, which should help in offering variety at our monthly meetings.

NOTE: new Mass time 8:30 AM

Congratulations to Our New Council

In case you were not able to attend the council election at our last meeting, below is our new council which will serve until our next election in November 2028.

Minister	Ruth Shea	Formation Director	Linda Haney
Vice Minister	Jean Gaes	Councilor	Mary Anne Novak
Treasurer	Joe McHugh	Councilor	Dave Weir
Secretary	Joan Faltot	Spiritual Director	Br. Connor Bannon, OFM Cap

A Meditation from Br. Connor Bannon, OFM Cap

I was asked to speak about silence in Advent—always a difficult thing to do.

Advent, of course, is that strange season when we, as a Church, hurry up and wait.

While the whole world bursts into celebration—Santa Claus, Christmas lights, and a full month of Mariah Carey—the Church invites us to something different: to wait, to listen, to prepare our hearts for the King who is to come.

If you've ever stood in a long line, you already know this truth: waiting is hard.

And waiting without distractions is even harder.

Most of us, when we're forced to wait, instinctively reach for something—our phones, our headphones, our tablets, our televisions. We're not doing anything wrong; these things have their place. But if we're honest, they can dull our spiritual senses. They weaken our *waiting muscles*—the very muscles Advent is meant to strengthen.

In Advent, the Church invites us to wake those muscles back up:

to wait with patience

and to sit in silence.

So here is the challenge—for you and for me:

Embrace the wait.

Turn off the music.

Put the phone away.

Close the book.

And simply be with God—

as you wait for Light,

for Peace,

for Joy,

or maybe just for the next available register.

As we close, I invite you to do that right now:

to close your eyes, take a deep breath,

and to wait—

in silence—

for our Lord.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Thank you for your continuing generosity !!!

October Balance		\$3,913.45
FFA Stipend	(\$100)	\$3,813.45
SA Stipend	(\$100)	\$3,713.45
OLF Stipend	(\$100)	\$3,613.45
November Deposit/Balance	\$440	\$4,053.45

Fraternity contributions can be mailed to:

*Joe McHugh
1740 Tedbury St
Crofton, MD 21114*

Room is still available so register today:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Zw0T-ASHRfacAJDlvLhigQ>

U.S. Bishops Speak Out on Immigration

In November, U.S. Catholic Bishops issued a Special Message addressing their concern for the evolving situation impacting immigrants in the United States. It marked the first time in twelve years the USCCB invoked this particularly urgent way of speaking as a body of bishops.



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Join Secular Franciscans in the St. Margaret of Cortona Region on a ZOOM CALL to discuss this Special Message on immigration, our Catholic Social Teaching, and follow-on actions.

Monday, December 15

7:30 to 8:45 pm ET

Moderated by Janice Benton, OFS, St. Francis Fraternity and Pat Boye, OFS, Regional JPIC Chair

Opening Prayer and thoughts by Joe Makley, OFS, National JPIC Animator

Please register in advance at the following link to receive login information for the zoom call.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Zw0T-ASHRfacAJDlvLhigQ>

Register ASAP as attendance is limited.

Closed caption and ASL interpreting will be available for Deaf and Hard of Hearing participants. If you need the ASL interpreter, please be sure to write "Yes" in the request box on the registration form.



OUTREACH DONATIONS

The council is discussing ways to simplify our apostolates. Our previous method involved allowing members to write a single check and distribute their donation to one or several apostolates as specified in the memo field of their check. This has been cumbersome for the treasurer to track. So going forward (and until we change our minds to something else) all checks should be made simply to the fraternity for the common fund. We will continue to fund our India family (Franciscan Family Apostolate) via the common fund each month.

In addition, the council may target an additional charity outreach for the month. As currently done, the treasurer will provide a monthly report to the council and the council will determine the amount of common fund that can be sent to the designated charity outreach for that month. The amount donated will be based extra money received that month, fraternity budget and anticipated upcoming expenditures.

This month the designated charity is the ***Little Portion Farm*** at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City.

DECEMBER OUTREACH: LITTLE PORTION FARM - <https://www.littleportionfarm.org/>

As you travel up the driveway to the Shrine of St. Anthony, you can't miss seeing all the gardens and growing tunnels on the right side of the road. Little Portion Farm is a ministry of the Franciscan Friars Conventual and volunteers focused on providing fresh food to those in need while using sustainable farming methods to restore the health of our land.

The 3-acre farm functions as an "agro-ecosystem," with a diversity of plants and habitats to support the life of this "little portion" of creation. In addition to common annual vegetable crops, sections of the farm are dedicated to native flowering plants, in an effort to provide habitat for pollinators and other beneficial insects to reduce pest pressures. The farm also includes a perennial section where we have planted asparagus, strawberries, Jerusalem artichokes, berry bushes and fruit trees.

Initially the food harvested was donated to the Franciscan Center in Baltimore. This outreach has now grown to include Bon Secours Community Works, Columbia Community Care, and SALT Ministries. The overarching mission of this ministry is, using the words of Pope Francis, to "hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

The farm is also meant to serve as a place of gathering, service, reflection, and education for the local community, cultivating a deeper appreciation of the beauty of the natural world and its interconnectedness, and realizing the Catholic call to serve the most vulnerable and protect creation. We welcome groups or individuals to come serve, learn, and reflect on the farm!

To continue doing this work, their year-end campaign has set a goal of raising \$20,000 by January 1. These funds will be put towards infrastructure projects and personnel – both which will be vital to their continued success on the farm – including:

- Installation of a more powerful well pump and storage tank to support increased irrigation efficiency and reliable pressure for hand-watering.
- Exhaust and circulation fans for our new high tunnels, which will reduce stress on plants in the heat of summer and reduce risk of disease throughout the year.
- Competitive stipends for up to four college-aged summer interns.

THE FRANCISCAN COOK

Do you have a special recipe you would like to share in the Porter? Contact Jean or Ruth for more details.

Lentil Soup - adapted from Cookie and Kate, Submitted by Ruth

Ingredients

1/4c olive oil	2 cans diced tomatoes (15 oz can)
1 med. Onion	1 c. lentils rinsed and picked over
4 cloves of garlic	Salt and pepper to taste, can add red pepper flakes
2 carrots chopped	1-2 tbs lemon juice
2 tsp cumin	¼ cup quinoa (rinsed)
1tsp curry powder	
½ tsp thyme	

Directions

- Heat olive oil, add onions and cook until translucent, add garlic and herbs, cook for a minute, add broth, water, tomatoes, lentils.
- Bring to a boil, partially cover, turn down to simmer about 20 minutes, with immersion blender or regular blender, pureed a few cups, then return to soup pot and add quinoa. Cook another 10 minutes, then add 1 c. of finely cut greens. Cook another 5 minutes, add lemon juice , taste for salt and pepper.
- Serve this with a salad, fresh bread or crackers.

EVENTS OF INTEREST AROUND TOWN [please submit interesting events at your parish]

Franciscan Monastery

- **Free Concert – Music at the Monastery** - December 14 @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Join us as we bring in the holidays with favorites of the Advent & Christmas seasons Sunday, 14 December at 4:00 PM This Month's Artist is Adam Scott Graham Performing arrangements by Paul Fey (b. 1998), Noel Rawsthorne (1929-2019), Dale Wood (1934-2003), Eric Thiman (1900-1975), and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). Join us for light refreshments after the concert. Free

St. Anthony's Shrine

- **Greccio** - Saturday, December 13, 2025, 7:00 PM

Continuing the tradition started by St. Francis of Assisi in Greccio more than 800 years ago, the Shrine hosts an outdoor Nativity prayer service by the big red barn on Little Portion Farm. This year's Greccio will include an opportunity to see and venerate the cord of St. Francis.

- **An Advent Journey with Mary** [Registration required]

Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

A spiritual reflection on how Mary shows us how to wait. This Advent we learn from Mary's gentle wisdom and patient trust how to wait with joyful hope for the coming of Christ. Our Mother not only teaches us and shows us how to wait, but she also waits with us.

- **Historical Tour of the Shrine**: Sunday, January 4, 2026, 1:00 PM

Tours begin in the courtyard following the noon Mass.



Especially designed for Candidates and inquirers! OFS professed members are also invited



Br. Michael Meza, OFM-Cap is our presenter for the day. The presentation will give much food for thought about how your life will change after profession to the Secular Franciscan Order. This event is also good for current professed members to refresh their commitment to our OFS life.

Saturday, February 7, 2026

Location: Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land

Time: 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

1400 Quincy St. NE

Cost: \$50, Lunch included

Washington, DC

ALL ARE WELCOME !

The Day of Reflection is especially for inquirers and candidates to learn more about our Franciscan spirituality and way of life, and to seek deeper discernment about their decision to accept and profess into the vocation of the Secular Franciscan Order.

- ❖ **Fraternity Formation Directors are especially encouraged to attend** with their candidates and inquirers, as there will be time for discussion amongst your group.
- ❖ **All OFS members are welcome** to attend as this event can refresh and renew your commitment to profession



REGISTRATION – Deadline January 30, 2026

To register, click on this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/2025DayofReflectionCandidatesInquirers#/>

Please note that payment can be made electronically on this page or a check can be written and mailed in. A registration is not confirmed until payment is received. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Riga Collieran at ricollieran10@gmail.com or 703-310-9958.