

# The Angelus

St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity  
Secular Franciscan Order  
May 17, 2026



Minister: Tom McGrath  
Vice-Minister: Portia Fiesta  
Formation Director: Carmencita Fiesta  
Secretary: Ingrid Roberts  
Treasurer: Michaelle Sylla  
Counselors: John Di Benedetto, Aurea Roland and  
Delia Sylla  
Spiritual Assistant: Michael Huether  
Advisor: Michael Oliver

## May Gathering Agenda

Opening Prayers - page 35 in the Ritual book;  
page 57 in the new version

### Business

- Welcome new visitors, birthday and profession acknowledgements

### Formation

- Mary and Francis – Carmencita
- Consecration to Mary – Tom

### Food and Fellowship

### Liturgy of the Hours - Evening Prayer

- Ascension – Evening Prayer II Closing

Closing Prayers - Page 36 in the Ritual book;  
page 59 in the new version

## Minister's Message

May is dedicated to Mary, our Blessed Mother. Carmencita will talk to us about Mary and St. Francis. I will be addressing Total Consecration to Jesus Through Mary.

Let us remember what our Rule says about our relationship to Mary:

Article 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.

May we all strive earnestly to imitate her complete self-giving!

Peace!

Tom

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

## Spiritual Assistant's Message May 2026

Our series of the work, "Discovering the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition" by John V. Kluse, continues as we now look into what this tradition does for our Franciscan Family of today.

In summary, we see that the lives of Francis and Clare became the foundation of an intellectual tradition which emphasizes the following:

- God is a God of overflowing love
- The revelation of God is through the goodness of creation
- Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's love and humility who affirms humility's goodness.

But how does this Franciscan Intellectual Tradition address our numerous more-pressing worldly issues and every day concerns of today? It deals with our view and understanding of the world in a number of ways:

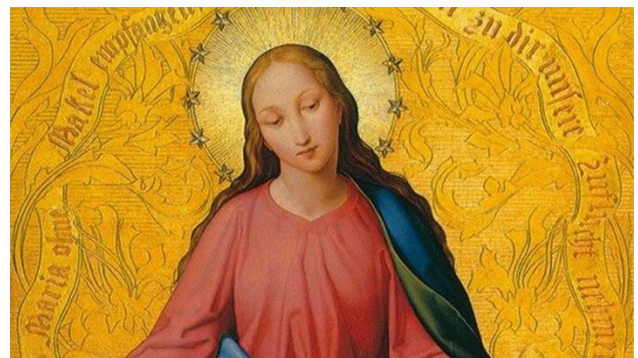
- 1) It expands our image and understanding of Jesus Christ.
- 2) It offers insights into addressing an impending environmental crisis.
- 3) It presents a positive understanding of morality based upon our response to God's generous love.
- 4) It suggests an attitude toward ownership and possession that promotes healthy relationships.
- 5) It promotes in respect for the dignity of all life, especially human life.

- 6) It provides insight into living in a world of religious diversity and into finding a genuine peace through our connectedness with one another.
- 7) It advances a disposition of gratitude and joy that contributes much to our lives today.
- 8) It offers a concept of contingency (belief in only the presence of God) that helps us to thrive in our world of great change

By this list of insights, the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition challenges us to relate them to our own lives, enhances our understanding of the complex world we live in, and offers solutions into humanity's deepest concerns.

Oftentimes, we see images of God described as a distant god to be feared or a god who waits for us to make a mistake so he can punish us. But as Franciscans, we know that Francis was moved by the humility and love of God, particularly in that of the Incarnation. Next month, we'll see how the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition expounds on this.

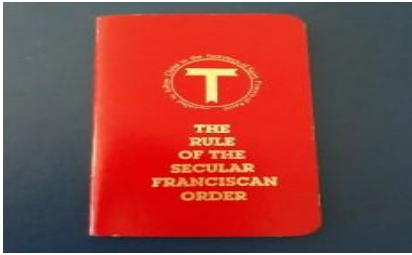
Mike



**Happy Birthday  
and Profession Anniversaries!**

**Happy Birthday!**  
Debbie Dubuque – May 18  
Michaelle Sylla – May 24

**Professions**  
None



**Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order  
Chapter Three: Life In Fraternity**

**Article 22.**

The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

***A friendly Secular Franciscan  
reminder!***

**If health or a special family obligation hinders you from attending our gathering, *please contact our Councilor, John Di Benedetto, and let him know.***

**Phone: 301-873-7883  
Email: jsd20853@aol.com**

**Daily 3 p.m. Zoom Prayer Group  
continues**

The Zoom prayer group continues to meet daily from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. The prayers include the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a meditation, the rosary and Evening Prayer.

You are welcome to join whenever you are able. The login is the same as used for the fraternity gatherings.

**Meeting ID: 828 0925 8870  
Password: 898216  
Phone number: 301-715-8592**

**Pope's May prayer intention:  
'That everyone might have food'**

The link is from the Vatican News site and features a four-minute video featuring Pope Leo who is in a chapel praying the prayer listed in the article. Let us pray with our Pope.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2026-04/pope-s-may-prayer-intention-that-everyone-might-have-food.html>

Thank you.

Pax,

Gary

Gary Burton, OFS

Minister, Saint Margaret of Cortona Region

*Apostolates Corner*



**Prayer Ministry:**

**Lead: Susan Jamison 301-525-1555  
susanjamison3@gmail.com**

Our fraternity recently began participating in an online prayer ministry which Susan established on our behalf.

In addition, your prayer needs can be shared in the daily Zoom prayer gathering at 3 p.m. Finally, feel free to submit names to the group each month for prayer support.

**Treasurer's Report  
3/01/2026 – 3/31/2026**

Bank Statement:

Beginning Balance	\$ 2,570.57
Contributions	331.57
Expenses	75.00
Service charge	8.00
Ending Balance	\$ 2,818.57
Available Balance	\$ 2,728.57

Outstanding checks:

Poor Clares	\$ 90.00
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Expenses include:

Spiritual Assistant	\$ 50.00
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## Formation Friday April 24,2026 Get to Know Our History

For all those who are new to the Order and all those who are long-time members, it's good to look back at our roots every so often. This week we provide some "Did You Knows" about the OFS in the United States. This post is made possible because of the research done by our former National Historian, William Wicks, OFS. For more, see the FUN Manual chapter on the History of the OFS and its Rules.

Did you know that...?

- Friars serving the immigrant populations that flooded into the US in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, established Third Order (now called Secular Franciscan Order) fraternities in the parishes they served. These fraternities were associated with the province of the friars who established them. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were more German-speaking fraternities than English Speaking Fraternities in the United States
- In 1921 a USA National Directive Board and a National Executive Board for the Third Order were established. Only friars served on these boards.
- Lay leadership came into the world-wide Order in 1957 with the International Constitutions.
- In the late 1980s the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants was formed with friars of the four obediences (OFM, OFM Cap, OFM Conv., and TOR) forming the conference. One member would serve

as a member of the National Executive Council (lay leadership) as the President-in-turn of the conference. (This continues today.)

- The process of REGIONALIZATION was first called for in the Constitutions of 1957 but did not begin in the United States until 1987 and was completed in 1997.
- Before regionalization, the jurisdictional structure of local fraternities was set up according to the provinces of the friars who had established them.
- The basis for regionalization was that the Secular Franciscan Order is ONE order and is not made up of four branches as are the friars.
- The regionalization process divided all local fraternities into 31 (now 30) geographic regions. (See map in the graphic and on our website.)  
<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/map-of-ofs-usa-regions/>
- Although the Secular Franciscan Order is autonomous in its structure and is self-governing, we are still "connected to the First Order through the *Altius Moderamen*, a Latin term used in Canon 303 to mean that the friars of the First Order and Third Order Regular are to guarantee the fidelity of the OFS to the Franciscan Charism, communion with the Church, and union with the Franciscan Family."
- Today local fraternities are designated as "bonded" to the friar province that established them.

- The National Statutes of 1995 changed the age for profession from 14 to 21.
- The National Statutes of 2002 established a longer period of formation. (The Time of Initiation: Orientation-no less than 3 months--and Inquiry—no less than 6 months and The Time of Formation—Candidacy: no less than 18 months and no more than 36 months) This replaced the “Novitiate” which had been one year plus one day.
- **NOTA BENE:** The National Statutes will be updated sometime this year to correspond with the International Statute passed in 2024.. ([International Statute](#))

You can find many more interesting historical facts and tidbits about the Secular Franciscan Order in the History

books written by William Wicks, OFS, available on our Gospel To Life—OFS-USA bookstore site. Order form at this link:

<https://gospel-to-life-bookstore.square.site/shop/books/D77LEIEXT3VBDD222FK2DXAR>

For discussion with a partner or at a fraternity gathering:

- +What surprised you about some aspects of the history given above?
- +Do you know to what friar province your local fraternity is bonded? Which one? If not, see if you can find out!

**+Challenge:** Talk to the older (longest professed) members of your fraternity. When did your fraternity begin? What are some things the older members remember about your fraternity and the Order in general?



