

Tau Cross Region

Secular Franciscan Order for The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk

Fr. Matthias Message

Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap
Regional Spiritual Assistant

In Memoriam



Every year in the Region we mourn and celebrate the deaths of members of the Tau Cross Region. In the month of November, in some fraternities, the names of all those who had died since the beginning of the fraternity are read, which can well be over a hundred names. Some fraternities might be over a hundred years old, so the list would be impossible to read. Many of those who died, even recently, are not always remembered because they might have been excused members, members who were not able to attend fraternity gatherings for many years; others might have moved away, or joined another fraternity; others have been in nursing homes for many years. Nonetheless, they were all members of the one family to which we belong and we pray for them and also ask for their intercession before the throne of God. One member of the Region, who died on November 29th of this past year, was Gerard J. Crean. Yes, he died on the feast of All Saints of the Franciscan Order. I am not trying to promote his cause for canonization, but I do not want his death to pass unnoticed, because he contributed so much to the establishment of our Region of the Tau

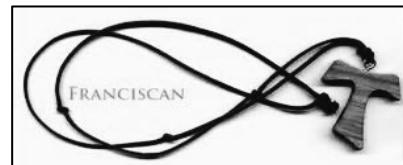
Cross. He is part of our history as a Region.

Gerry Crean had 7 children; a son who is now Minister of the St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity, a daughter who is the formation director of the fraternity, and another daughter who became a Secular Franciscan as a teenager, but shortly afterwards realized that she had a vocation to the Carmelites and is now Prioress of a cloistered Carmelite Monastery in upstate New York. His wife, Gert, is also a Secular Franciscan and served many terms as a formation director and continues to very actively serve within the fraternity.

Gerry was not known for lofty or pious statements, although he is remembered for frequently stating, "There is nothing better in life than to help someone." I developed a relationship with Gerry, which began over 40 years ago, in 1976. There is a funny thing about 'smokers.' We tend to take cigarette breaks at the same time and sort of develop a relationship as we stand outside a fraternity meeting, sometimes in freezing cold. Both Gerry and I were nicotine addicts at one time. So we frequently shared. As mentioned above Gerry was the interim Regional Minister in the very beginning of Regionalization and was very instrumental in the formation of the Region. It was a difficult time here in the Northeast. Today, most people are not even aware that they are, and their fraternity is, bonded to a particular Province of the First Order friars. But back then, the province and the friars were very important. In some instances the friars ran the meetings, did all the formation, collected the common fund, and, we might say, were in charge. The members had

great allegiance to the province and the friars. With regionalization, the 'Third Order' Provinces were gone. This was difficult to accept. It was especially difficult when members of a particular province realized that they were no longer in the majority in the newly formed region. It was a time of divisions and tensions as Gerry worked to establish peace and strove to get the region recognized nationally as a region. The Tau Cross Region was the second to last Region in the United States formally recognized and established by NAFRA because of these tensions and divisions. Through it all, Gerry worked tirelessly with the new regional council, and with great determination. He set up a headquarters for the region at the house of the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn on Remsen St., where we had a room for all the regional records. He did all the things that were required for the formation of the region which, in many ways, resulted in the region we have today.

Gerry died quietly, as he had lived, in a nursing home, but his legacy lives on in so many ways, particularly in his children, but also in his fraternity and in the Tau Region, to which we belong today. We owe him so much for the establishment of the Region. As his memorial card states, quoting St. Francis, "I have done what was mine to do. May Christ teach you what is yours."



Formation Corner

Gene Keenan, ofs
Regional Formation Director

“...mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly...” Rule 19

“...they should strive to move from exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship” Rule 18

On 11/19/16, I had the pleasure and privilege of attending a celebration of Franciscans International, an NGO at the United Nations at Holy Name Parish in Manhattan. It was nostalgic for me since Holy Name is the parish where I grew up, attended school and received all my sacraments. I was graced to

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live in the parish and attend Mass as part of the celebration. I was able to meet and discuss the mission of Franciscans International with Fr. Joe Rozansky, OFM (President of the International Board of Directors) and Fr. Markus Heinze, OFM (Executive Director of Franciscans International).

I learned from our conversations that Franciscans International (FI) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) working for the promotion, protection and respect of human and environmental rights. FI uses advocacy as a tool to combat Program and curb human rights abuses. It promotes human rights in Africa, the Americas and Asia-Pacific through successful advocacy and influence at the United Nations. FI’s Global focuses on three important areas:

- Fighting against extreme poverty,
- Holding businesses accountable for human rights violations,
- Ensuring developmental justice.

When St. Francis was forming his order, I’m sure he never imagined that 800+ years later, an international organization bearing his name would be at the forefront of defending human and environmental rights. Francis viewed all men and women as his brothers and sisters deserving of respect and love. He viewed all of creation as a gift from God to be nurtured, preserved and treasured.

When was the last time we stood up for someone whose rights were being violated? When did we last do something to preserve our

guilty of leaving the water running when shaving or brushing my teeth. I know I should turn it off but I either forget or ignore it. I convict myself of not behaving as Francis would. This is where I need to change. Where do you need to change? Let’s all start by reading Rule 11 and making it a part of who we are.

“*Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God’s children*” If we incorporate this into our lives, we will be one step further on our journey of being true followers of Jesus Christ in the way of St. Francis of Assisi.



Santa & Christmas in Uganda

A Brief Youfra Update

Peace and Good!

Kelly Moltzen gave a well received talk on the imperative nature of our responsibility to connect with youth and young adults at our October Regional gathering. While she enjoys coming to our region, her concern is that her talk may become just a nice feel good event without any follow-up on behalf of the listeners.

Has any fraternity taken up the challenge to enflesh our Rule and Constitutions in this area? If so, please let me know! If not, well, never too late for that New Years resolution!

You can contact me at: jld1075@optonline.net. Put ‘OFS’ in the subject area. Blessings for the New Year
Jean D’Onofrio

Uganda 2016

Louise Sandberg, ofs, Minister
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity

God called me to go to Uganda when I was at a workshop at this year's Quinquennial! Stephen H. Smith, OFS, founder of "To The Nations Missions," gave a moving presentation on his calling to be a Missionary working with the local people to meet overwhelming needs, and how these efforts changed lives. He and the missionaries he assembled in an organization called "To The Nations" built houses for the homeless, kitchens for starving children and provided food. He then invited us to listen for God's call and say "yes" to the next Uganda mission leaving Nov 27. I heard the call loud and clear and answered "YES"!

When I received my "To The Nations" backpack and itinerary I was moved to tears. The itinerary reads: feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned... Gospel to life and life to Gospel. There were 4 of us Secular Franciscans on the mission team. Stephen from Georgia, Lannie Newman from Alabama, and John Newman from Montana who learned of the mission and received the call at the same moment as I did – at the Q!!

Our first stop was the Padre Pio guest house where we met Fr. Francis, the spiritual assistant for all of Uganda, the young man who is the vice minister of Youfra for Uganda and Sister, Margaret Awor, who started Youfra in Uganda. The Social Center of Masaka became our home for the next 2 weeks. We started each day with holy hour,

morning prayer and daily mass in our own little chapel. Three of the missionaries were not Catholics, but they joined right in.

As we turned the corner of a primary school on our first work day, we were handed flowers and fruit, welcomed and the children danced and sang for us. We dedicated their new kitchen, funded by "To The Nations", which helped increase attendance from 85 to nearly 300, and better nutrition contributed to improving the children's passing grade on the national exam from 30% to 85%. Food is very necessary for performance.

We met the core members of the Life Teen group from the local parish, Our Lady of the Rosary, and we worked side by side to build a brick house for a disabled man and his 3 daughters, carrying bricks, "sand" (cement), and water up a hill to the work site with help from the children and adults in the neighborhood. The family that received the first house helped build this house. Little Rachel and her brother carried bricks up the hill along with the rest of us.

We went to town at night and gave rice and beans to the street kids. The boys were asked to leave their homes at the age of 12 because their parents had not enough resources for all the children, and the girls were more vulnerable. "To The Nations" pays a local restaurant to feed them once a day.

The local hospital was nothing like the modern places we are used to. There was a feeding room for malnourished children.

We saw (and smelled) the dried fish that is mixed into the porridge to provide protein for the children. Each mother stayed at her baby's bedside dressed in their best clothes.

A prison with minimal security housed men in yellow outfits accused of a variety of crimes, many never tried for some offenses as trivial as taking a mango from a neighbor's tree. During our visit, the local parishioners joined the prisoners making up a choir led by one of the inmates. At the end, we prayed with each man, English speaking or not. As Paul, the protestant pastor who was with us said, God knows.

Our NAFRA H2O project for 2016 went to "To The Nations" to establish a water line for a village that was without a clean source of water. The cement that housed the faucet – yes, one faucet for the whole village – had painted on it "PACE E BENE OFS – TO THE NATIONS". We were greeted by the whole village, given pineapples, and Stephen cut the ribbon. Scores of yellow jugs waited to be filled to supply water for each household.

So if you feel called to live the Spiritual and Corporal works of mercy on mission contact me, Louise Sanberg at:
louisessandberg54@gmail.com or
Stephen Smith at
Stephenhsmith@gmail.com



Water, water, everywhere
Uganda, 2016

Advent Retreat Day December 3

-Grace Callahan, ofs
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity

A Summary

Ed. Note:

On Saturday, December 3, about 40 Seculars of our Tau Cross Region plus several lay persons gathered at St. Anthony High School for our annual day of recollection or retreat day. It began with Mass celebrated by our Spiritual Assistant Father Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap. followed by a brief simple breakfast, an AM and a PM reflection/conference conducted, as usual, by Br. Richard Contino, osf ending in an hour of silent prayer.

Below is a brief summary of the essence of the topic for the day which we offer here for your own reading and meditation. It was written by Grace Callahan, ofs of Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity.

God being man had great impact on St Francis, especially the way Jesus came under such humble circumstances. He was deeply affected by those who came to Him who were suffering. He heals us like a good doctor, but we have to show Him our wounds first. God did not send a text. He sent a person who speaks through the language of mercy, love and compassion. This is the language of Christmas. Jesus is the reason for the season. Christmas is vanishing as a holy season. There is no safe zone for Christmas. Christians are regarded as medieval. Christmas is not a holiday. It's a Holy Day, a celebration of faith. Because of

Christmas, God sent His only Son who became man and walked the earth. Government and laws cannot deny the reality of Jesus as man. Do you hear what I hear? Do you see what I see? We are in a culture of indifference. Europe has forsaken its Christian roots, now us. St Francis gave us the Crib, but the hearts of people have grown cold. We need a culture of encounter. What am I doing with the time I'm given each day? Make each minute count. There are 86,000 seconds in each day. We need to smile. The smile brings the Gospel to life. Build bonds. Cultivate relationships. Create new networks. Know what is necessary for spiritual growth. Be the light of Christ to others. Bring that culture of Christ wherever I go. We need to pray to St Michael every day. Every time Mary appears to someone, she advises them to pray the rosary. Practice charity. Enter more deeply into communion with God and others. Leave room for contemplation. Then reflect on it.

The Annual Regional Retreat:

Where: Cormaria Retreat House Sag Harbo

When: Tues-Thurs, April 18-20, 2017

Cost: \$190 per person

Registration: 4 P.M.
Tuesday

**For more information
contact:**

Bob Campbell at: 516 599-
4256
or email
ARCYC@aol.com

Around the Region Admission

11/20: James Goodwin,
O. L. Queen of Angels Frat.

Profession

10/16: Mary Ramos,
New Pentecost Fraternity

Deaths

10/23: Carmen Chavilier,
St. Monica Fraternity

10/27: Maureen Farrell,
St. Bonidace Fraternity

11/29: Gerard Crean,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Frat.

Elections

10/09: Eileen Will, Minister
St. Maximilian Kolbe Frat

10/16: Brian Gallagher, Minister
St. Barnabas Fraternity

Upcoming Events

04/18-04/20 Regional Retreat
See page 4 for details

TAU CROSS REGION

The TAU CROSS REGION is published quarterly in January, April, July and in October. Articles by fraternity members are welcome. If accepted, they may be edited. Please submit copies by the 10th of the month prior to publication.

Please send items of interest (elections, professions, anniversaries, events, etc. to Regional Councilor Alicia D'Amato at P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email at: damato1@optonline.net.

Address correspondence to editor, Peter D'Amato, P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email: damato1@optonline.net. TEL: 631-331-7680

Please Note the following upcoming events worth considering:

Secular Franciscan Day of Renewal and Recollection

Hosted by
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity

Saturday August 26, 2017
9am to 3:30pm

Montfort Retreat Center
26 S Saxon Ave,
Bay Shore, NY 11706

Donation for the day \$24

Brown bag Lunch

For information contact:
Mark Crean: 631-698-5403

The Annual Region Wide Picnic

Sponsored by New Pentecost
and Our Lady Queen of Angels
Fraternities

When: Saturday, June 24
Where: Elwood Park
Cuba Hill Road
Elwood, NY.

All members and families are
welcome!

For Information contact:
Pete or Alicia D'Amato at:
damato1@optonline.net or
631-331-7680
Frank Harnos at:
fharnos@aol.com or
631- 499-0074

Save the Date

Franciscans Living In Community F.L.I.C.

Presenter: Brother Richard Contino, OSF

Theme: The Church, St. Francis and Pope
Francis ...

*Franciscan mission and message for
our times*

When: August 7-10, 2017

Where: Mount Alvernia, Wappingers Falls,
NY

Cost: \$300 Includes room and board and
the amenities of a Franciscan
Retreat House

INFO: Contact Dcn. Bob Campbell at
516-599-4256 or ARCYC@ aol.com

Joint Day of Recollection Bl. Raymond Lull and Our Lady of Atonement Fraternities June 17, 2017

At Tabor Retreat Center
60 Anchor Ave.,
Oceanside NY 11572

Time: 9:30 am to 3:30 pm:
Fee: \$25.00 for breakfast
Bring your own lunch.

Info and Reservations:
Call or txt Louise M Sandberg [516
318 7798](tel:5163187798) or email her at:
Louisesandberg54@gmail.com
or contact:
Mary Cammarato
.....marymcam@msn.com



Louise Sandberg (far left) along with other missionaries in Uganda:
"I am in heaven...Morning and evening prayers...and Mass together... Tau crosses and laughter-life giving union." A Truly Franciscan Spirit!



Louise totes bricks as other missionaries work in background. (see article on p.4)



Epiphany Celebration: Bl. Raymond Lull and Our Lady of Atonement Fraternities and guests January 6.



James Goodwin (center) accepted into OLQA Fraternity, Rocky Point on 11/20/16. Flanked by parents Ralph (L) and Margaret (R) & other members (rear) WELCOME



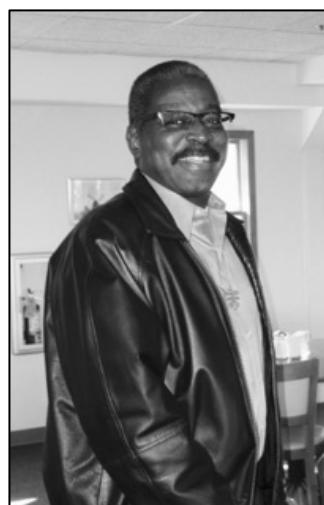
Barbara Hansen, ofs O.L. Queen of Angels



Portiuncula Celebration at St. Anthony H.S.



Jim Abercromby, ofs Cure of Ars Fraternity



Raymond Clarke, ofs
Regional Minister
It has been a busy year!



Uganda 2016
The only faucet for
the whole village
provided by NAFRA H2O