

Tau Cross Region

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

Minister's Message

Joan Geiger, ofs
Regional Minister

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Peace be with you!

I wish you and your loved ones good health and abundant blessings throughout the New Year!

As you know, I attended the annual NAFRA Chapter in Dallas, TX from Oct. 21-26. The weather was delightfully warm as was the atmosphere throughout the Chapter. There was more dialogue and participant participation than in years past. The days consisted of reports from various Committees and Commissions as well as from the National Fraternity Officers. This was my 5th NAFRA Chapter. What impressed me this year was the camaraderie and spirit of fraternity felt throughout the 6 days. At our Fall Gathering, I spoke about Fraternity using Pope Francis' Message for World Day of Peace 2014 as my reference. His Holiness writes that Fraternity is the foundation and pathway to peace. Teresa Baker, OFS, our guest presenter, chartered two anagrams using the words Fraternity and Shape. As we begin a new calendar year, it would be good to reflect on fraternity – not just as a member of a particular fraternity and all that it entails, but also how it is needed to build a just society and lasting peace.

In his Annual Report to the Order, National Minister, Dcn. Tom Bello also stressed the importance of

fraternity. He states: First and foremost, Fraternity is essential to our Secular Franciscan call in that the fraternity is where Secular Franciscans work out our salvation and the salvation of our sisters and brothers: In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state (Rule 2). The fraternity is 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 (Rule 22). The vocation to the OFS is a vocation to live the Gospel in fraternal communion. For this purpose, the members of the OFS gather in ecclesial communities which are called fraternities. (G.C. Art. 3.3)

Statistically, there are 12,739 active professed Secular Franciscans in the United States. We have 1,014 Candidates and 637 canonically established fraternities.

The 6 priorities chosen by NAFRA for 2012-2015 are: Spiritual Assistance, Formation, Youth, Outreach/JPIC, Communication and Vocation. I will briefly report on each of them.

Spiritual Assistance – On the national level, we are blessed to have Friar Representatives from the 4 Franciscan Orders: OFM, OFM Cap., OFM Conv. and TOR. Our own, Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap. is part of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA). In addition to conducting elections and visitations, Friars presented at the Summer Seminar hosted by St.

Francis University, Loretto, PA and at the National Retreat. We had two Formation power-point presentations: A Different Way of Looking at Franciscan Servant Leadership (reflected on St. Francis' Prayer before the Crucifix) and The Joy of the Gospel and Our Holy Rule (reflected on Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation and the OFS Rule). The mother and daughter team of Sue and Christy Nelson presented on Youth and Young Adults. They hope to promote vocations to the OFS by appropriate and dynamic initiatives. Christy presented "The Generations" Traditionalists (70-94+), Baby Boomers (54-69), Gen X (35-53) and Gen Y (Millennials 13-34) comparing technology, cultural and historical shared experiences, and attitudes and values. Carolyn Townes is Chair of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committee. Carolyn continues to keep us updated via emails that I have passed along to the Fraternity Ministers. Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas, Bishop of Tucson, AZ was awarded the JPIC Award for his tireless commitment and work over the last decade to speak out in defense of human dignity and immigration reform. The Communications Committee (TAU-USA, Public Relations and Computer Committees) are consistent in their efforts to further effective communication between and among all levels of the Order. The Vocations Committee will focus on "best practices" throughout 2015 and track and monitor events (open house, bulletin announcements, etc.) to empower and inspire regions and fraternities to conduct outreach activities.

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Minister's Message continued

This is a nutshell summary on NAFRA's Priorities. I will remember to bring my binder to the Spring Chapter for your viewing.

On April 25, 2015 the Region will have a Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation conducted by Bro. Bob Brady, OFM and Mary Frances Charsky, OFS. I ask you to reserve the date on your calendar. The Spring Chapter will be held in the school cafeteria at Holy Family, Flushing. More details will be given as we get closer to the date.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. Let us continue to pray for one another.

Peace and all good,

Joan

An OFS Anagram Worth A Message

Fraternity / Fraternity Shape

F amily	S pirituality
R elationship	H eart
A llegiance	A ttentiveness
T rust	P urpose
E vangelical	E ngage
R eliance	
N ecessary	
I ntimacy	
T ruthfulness	
Y ou	

Also –

We “pledge allegiance” to the fraternity, above any other activity, except family. When there is a conflict between parish ministry and our gathering, we are called to choose the gathering. It is second only to family and ordained ministry.

Thank you, Teresa Baker!

Fr. Matthias' Message

Rev. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap.
Regional Spiritual Assistant

FIAT: Let it be done

In a commentary on the Annunciation, Sr. Mary McGlone, a Sister of St. Joseph, gives a description of a painting by Blessed Fra Angelico. In late 2005, early 2006, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City had an exhibit of Fra Angelico's paintings. In viewing the exhibit you are almost awestruck by the brightness of the paintings, and so much gold in his paintings and the overall beauty of his paintings. This results in not paying too much attention to the details of the paintings. Going to museums and being in the presence of so many people trying to look at the same paintings, and sometimes the presence of school children, and oftentimes the noise, and then the fact that there are so many paintings, you might tend to just glance at painting after painting and not pay too much attention to a particular painting.

Sr. McGlone comments on one particular painting of Fra Angelico, a painting of the Annunciation. Fra Angelico said that his paintings were composed under divine inspiration and they should not be changed. In this particular painting of the Annunciation, Fra Angelico wrote the words of the conversation between Mary and the angel in the space between them. The angel is gesturing, almost emphasizing the words, and then there are the words, written right into the painting. I went on the internet to get a closer view of this painting, and sure enough, there were the words. The angel's declaration to Mary is written there, able to be read, but the response of Mary, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me, according to thy word,” is written upside down and backward. You would need a mirror to read them. Sr. McGlone commenting on the unusualness of the writing put into the

painting, and then written upside down and backwards, says that from the moment Mary spoke those words, her life was forever changed. Her life was to be turned upside down. She spoke those words not from a position of ability, but of availability.

When we make Profession into the Secular Franciscan Order, so much of our decision, even in choosing the Franciscan Order over other Orders, involves our choices and what we are comfortable in living; in a sense, what attracts us. But living the Gospel, and the result of our making a Profession, is the ongoing call to be available, generous, and as God continues to be present among humanity, that presence will depend on our continued Fiat, our availability and our generosity of letting God manifest the divine presence among us. We are called to give birth to Christ today. Christmas has passed; a new year has begun. We are called to extend the mission and life of Jesus in our world today.

We made Profession; we pronounced our *Fiat*. Now we grow in attentiveness, so that we can hear well, and be open to what God hopes to do through us, even though it might seem unimaginable, much less fit into our plans. We consent, we practice a willingness to let our lives be turned upside down, a willingness to let go and let God, in order for God to work within us. We make our lives available and are generous in giving of ourselves.

Very practically, we apply these thoughts when our lives seem to be turned upside down; when our children decide to come back and live at home again, when we lose our job, when we must move, when sickness enters our life, when death comes to someone we are close to, and we suffer great loss. That is time to renew our Profession once again and say our *Fiat* with Mary, “Yes, be it done according to your word.”

A YouFra Update

Jean D'Onofrio of
St. John XXIII Fraternity
Regional Youth and Young Adult
Coordinator

One thing about working with young adults is that I am always learning and being challenged to live my Franciscan vocation in today's world! Kelly Moltzen in formation at Immaculate Conception Fraternity, challenges me to learn more and pray more for issues nationally and internationally in the field of peace and justice. She is now on the Franciscan Action Network Board of Directors, as well as continuing her work with Franciscan Earth Corps (FEC), and continuing her initial formation. She asks for help in locating other young adults to join her in FEC projects. You can contact me with names and email addresses and I will forward them to her.

Alex Mancuso is stepping down from her commitment to YouFra (she is working two jobs now and needs to devote her time to them--one job is in

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Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap. Spiritual Assistant: (631) 286-7921 ext 28; mwesnofr@aol.com

environmental teaching, the other is as a youth minister for her parish). I know that she brings her Franciscan spirituality to both of those jobs! And I look forward to meeting up with her in the future to collaborate on projects or, down the road, perhaps continue the Franciscan journey with the Seculars.

With the new NAFRA chairs for Youth and Young Adults we are challenged again. After prayer and discussions, here is what we are proposing for our region. We as Seculars can offer our support to our parishes for their already established elementary school faith formation classes, under the parish's religious education director's direction. Not to establish a separate youth group in the parish, but to assist those established. If you are involved in parish or retreat center catechesis with elementary age students please contact me so that we can let NAFRA know that we are doing this !

Also please note that Diocesan regulations governing volunteers apply: Virtrus training, 2 adults present at all times, and criminal background check conducted by parish. On the high school level, we can develop a high school/college club model with presentation materials, and take it to each Catholic school or campus ministry in the diocese, one by one. Whatever comes of that, group wise, could then be networked in the region. For this I would need some volunteers to help me in writing this program. Please call me to discuss this!

And lastly, for our young adults, I have established a meeting space at St. Louis de Montfort Parish on the 2nd Wed. of the month at 7 PM. I am asking for your help in promoting this and inviting other young adults, (ages 18-30-ish) who have a Franciscan spirit to contact me so that I can give them more information and further directions.

Thank you for your support as we try to live out Article 96 in our constitutions: "The OFS, by virtue of its very vocation, ought to be ready to share its experience of evangelical life with the youth who feel attracted to St. Francis of Assisi and to seek the means of adequately presenting it to them."

In His Joy,
Jean A. D'Onofrio, OFS
631 928-7894
jld10756@optonline.net

Barbara Woessner Celebrates Number 60!



Congratulations!

And in her own words:
"I was called to the Secular Franciscan's in the early fifties. A Capuchin priest recommended that I go to St. John's in N. Y. I was professed there; (and) my husband not long afterward.

After we married and moved to L. I. we joined St. Bonventure Fraternity and (later on) joined St. Lawrence.

I thank God for calling me and am grateful for the many wonderful Franciscan brothers I was privileged to be associated with and the many wonderful Spiritual Directors who aided me on my Franciscan journey including Frs. O'Hare, Thaddeus, Rufin, and our present beloved Fr. Matt."

Thank you, Barbara, for your faith, your commitment and perseverance; a role model for us all!

Do You Hear Me Now?

Frank Scotto, ofs
St. Helen Fraternity

There has been much discussion in religious circles as to whether God replies directly to us in answer to our prayers. Have we ever wondered whether God has heard our prayers? How does He answer them? Does He pick and choose which prayers He answers? How will we know if or when our prayers are answered?

Isaiah 65:24 tells us:

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Early in our Catholic education we were taught prayer is communication with God. Prayer is God's gift linking us to Him from the heart. It is a solemn covenant between God and man through Christ Jesus; and by this conditional promise serves as a holy communion through the reception of a 'living relationship' established with our heavenly Father.

When in prayer we should enter into a dialogue where we speak to God and listen for His reply. Some wait for a magical display in answer to their prayers: the trembling of the earth, an apparition, the opening of the sky, or a burning bush. They might be waiting for a very long time! God speaks to us in His own time in a way we can understand if we truly learn how to 'hear'. No prayer is overlooked, ignored or unanswered.

Psalm 34:16

....the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are toward their cry.

Is it out of the realm of possibility that God could or would speak

audibly to anyone? Certainly not! Read the passages in scripture which relate to His spoken words: Exodus 3:4, Joshua 1:1, Judges 6:18, Job 40:1, Isaiah 7:3, Acts 8:26, writings of Jeremiah, Samuel and other biblical passages.

Although God has in the past spoken audibly, it is highly doubtful that it will happen to us, or hear of it in our lifetime, but never rule out God's surprises!

More commonly, God speaks to us with sounds, sights, feelings, emotions, impressions, thoughts and events in our lives. In 1 Peter 3:16, God uses conscience to convey his love and guidance:

...do it with reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are maligned those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.

By speaking to us in this way, He forms our thoughts to develop us spiritually as in Romans 12:2:

....do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind; then you will be able to discern what is the will of God, what is good, pleasing and perfect.

He prepares us for those events in life that affect us both good and bad 1 Peter(1:6-7):

...in this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials.

It takes time to 'tune into God's radio station'. Even if we are tuned into God, it might be necessary to raise up the volume so we can hear His wishes, not drown them out with our own idiosyncrasies, and worldly distractions.

In Matthew 6:6 , guidance in the manner of pray is provided:

..... when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

If we are to truly know Jesus, then we must establish a very special dialogue with him through prayer. If we are to receive the knowledge of him in our hearts, we must learn to 'hear' him. And if we are to follow Jesus, we must learn to walk with him every day in faith, hope and charity.

In the words of Saint John Chrysostom:

O Lord Jesus, open the eyes of my heart that I may hear your word..... open my eyes that I may perceive your wonders..... speak unto me....your wisdom

We can accomplish wonderful things for ourselves and others if we learn to listen to God speaking to us. His words will change our lives and the lives of those around us forever.

REMINDER

**This year
The Tau Cross Region Chapter
will be held at
Holy Family Church,
175-20 74th Ave.,
Fresh Meadows, NY. 11366.
on April 25.
This will be our Chapter of
Visitation
from the National Fraternity.**

**Each fraternity minister or
his/her representative
must attend**

Around the Region

Anniversaries

- 60 Years:** Barbara Woessner,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity
53 Years: Ron Chirco,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity
46 Years: JoAnn Brewer,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity
40 Years: Gerard Crean,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity
40 Years: Gertrude Crean,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity
25 Years: Valarie Johnson,
Our Lady Queen of Angels Fraternity

Professions

- 10/3:** Rose Furcron Harris
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity
10/4: Isbelia Dinora Trujillo,
Clara Villatoro,
Pedro Rodriguez,
Matias Rodriguez
St. Louis Fraternity
10/27: Dcn Thomas Page,
St. Adalbert Fraternity
11/9: Daphne DeMills,
St. Monica Fraternity
11/20: Augusto Cuchapin
Sonia Cuchapin
Mauricio Ordenez
Michael Renna
Holy Family Fraternity
11/23: Lizbeth Rivera
St. Michael Fraternity

Deaths

- 9/21:** Anthony Justice
Cure of Ars Fraternity
10/11: Clara Toscana
St. Helen
Fraternity
10/12: Florence Sembler
St. Monica Fraternity
10/19: Helen Arcaro
St. Boniface Fraternity

12/2: Dorothy Esposito
St. Helen
Fraternity
1/9/15: Carol Grant
Our Lady Queen of Angels
Fraternity

Activities

- 10/3: Transitus Liturgies held at:**
St. Joseph the Worker Parish, East
Patchogue, NY
St. Joseph Parish, Kings Park, NY
St. Adalbert Parish, Elmhurst, NY
11/15: Fall Regional Gathering held
at Cure of Ars Church, Merrick, NY.
11/29: Advent Day of Recollection
held at St. Anthony High School,
Melville, NY
1/9/15: Epiphany Party held at
St. Joseph Church, Hewlett, NY
sponsored by Bl. Raymond Lull Frat.
1/11/15: Epiphany Party held at St.
Matthew Church, Dix Hills, NY
sponsored by New Pentecost Frat.

Upcoming Events

**April 25: Tau Cross Region
Chapter** to be held at Holy Family
Church, 175-20 74th Ave., Fresh
Meadows, NY. 11366. **National
Visitation this year.** All ministers or
reps are required to attend

April 28-30 Regional Retreat at
Cormaria, Sag Harbor. see notice on
this page.

August 17-20: F.L.I.C. to be held at
Mount Alvernia Retreat Center,
Wappingers Falls, NY. For more info,
contact Dcn Robert Campbell at
516-599-4256 or ARCYC@aol.com

NOTICE

TAU CROSS REGIONAL RETREAT

The 2015 Regional Retreat will, as
in past years, be held at the
Cormaria Retreat House in Sag
Harbor.

The dates of attendance are
Tuesday, April 28 thru Thursday,
April 30.

The stipend will be \$180.00. A
\$25.00 deposit is requested in
advance to reserve a spot.

For additional detailed
information please contact: Dcn
Bob Campbell at 1-516-599-4256
or by email at: ArcyC@aol.com

Always a pleasant experience; well
worth the time.

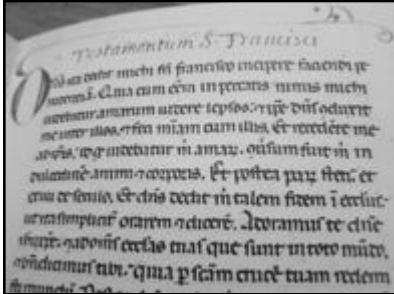
TAU CROSS REGION

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Please send items of interest
(elections, professions, anniversaries,
events, etc. to Regional Secretary
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Around the Region in Photos



Images from the Franciscan Exhibit in Brooklyn
Left: Francis' Testament Right: Francis embellished

Rose Harris professed Oct 3 Blessed Raymond Lull, with son, Jonathon.

Congratulations!



Holy Family Fraternity Profession on 11/20/14 L-R: Mauricio Ordonez, Michael Renna, Fr. Casper Funari, ofs, Sonia Cuchapin, Augusto



Jack Reilly of St. John XXIII Fraternity, winner of the Tau Cross Region Award, 11/15/14



St. Michael's Fraternity Profession. L-R: Isabel McFarlane, Fr. Matthias, Jean Thomas, Lizbeth Rivera (Professed 11/23/14), Angel



St. Thomas More Fraternity



Rosemarie Beitz, Pam Dettmer & Rosa Pessolano of Poor Clare on retreat at the Friars of the Atonement on the weekend of October 4.