

Tau Cross Region

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

Minister's Message

Eugene Keenan, ofs,
Regional Minister

There is an appointed time for everything and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to give birth and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to weep and a time to laugh a time to mourn and a time to dance..." Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4

At the time I write this message, we are more than half way through Lent and look forward, once again, to the joy of Easter and the Resurrection of Our Lord! We are all weary from COVID-19 and how it has kept us from gathering in person and being with other family members. Our fraternities yearn for the time when we can again gather and pray together, to laugh and cry with one another, to hug each other and worship as a Franciscan Community.

Our faith is a faith of hope! We have been hoping that this pandemic would end and that we could return to normal. Our prayers for a vaccine have been answered and our communities, businesses and Churches are being allowed to reopen with higher attendance percentages.

to help bring us to where we are today. But let us never lose focus on Who has truly brought us to "this time to dance"! Christ has inspired the scientists who have developed the vaccines! It is Our Risen Lord who is sustaining us and is bringing us back to a sense of normalcy.

In my last message, I spoke of a new season of growth and hope. Our hope is not in vain. Our belief in the Resurrection gives us the foundation for our hope for the future! We will, once again, gather, hold elections and visitations, admit and profess members at liturgical celebrations, attend funerals and rejoice with members at the birth of new family members.

This is the time for us to ask the Holy Spirit for the grace of perseverance, until we can gather in person, continue with ZOOM meetings, teleconferences, and just speaking to each other on the phone or via email. There are also ZOOM meetings from our JPIC and Formation Commissions that

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will help energize our spirits as Franciscans. On behalf of the Region, I want to offer a special thanks to Brother Richard, Mark Crean and Judy Heffernan for their wonderful Lenten video presentations which you can access on the TAU Cross website.

Article 4 of our Rule calls for us to follow the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let's do this by continuing to wear our TAU Crosses in public, perform works of mercy for those in need, pray our Office every day, pray the Crown Rosary, attend Mass and Receive daily if possible. By doing these things we are living our vocation as Secular Franciscans.

My prayers and those of the entire Regional Executive Council are offered on your behalf. We pray that Our Lord bestows His graces upon you as you continue your Franciscan journey during these most difficult times.

To all my Brothers and Sisters,
HAPPY EASTER!!

and

PAX ET BONUM!!

Spiritual Assistant's Message Joan Geiger, ofs Regional Spiritual Assistant, St. Michael Fraternity

In late October 2019 I traveled by bus with pilgrims in my Deanery to Canada. Enroute to our northern neighbor we stopped at the Shrine of the American Martyrs in Auresville and at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Shrine in Fonda. A highlight of the pilgrimage was visiting the St. Joseph Oratory and the burial site of St. Andre Bessette. The Oratory was the brainchild of Br. Andre who dreamed of building on Mount Royal, a house of prayer in homage to St. Joseph. As doorkeeper at the College of Notre Dame, Br. Andre greeted parent and visitors of the students. During his daily routines, healings took place due to the prayers of the humble Brother. Br. Andre insisted it was not he but confidence in St. Joseph that brought about the cure. Ground breaking for the Chapel which Br. Andre envisioned began in 1904. The Oratory was too small to receive the crowds who came to entrust their sufferings, desperate situations and family circumstances to St. Joseph. The present Basilica has undergone growing pains especially during the Great Depression but in 1967 this monumental masterpiece, a house of prayer and a privileged place of grace and hope, was officially opened. St. Joseph Basilica is the largest shrine in the world dedicated to St. Joseph and is considered by many to be the preeminent international center of devotion to St. Joseph.

Born Alfred, Andre Bessette was the eighth of twelve children. Orphaned at the age of 12 upon the death of his parents, he was adopted and became a farmhand, shoemaker, baker, blacksmith and factory worker. At 25 he applied for entrance into the Congregation of the Holy Cross but was not admitted due to poor health and the lack of formal education. Upon the urging of a Bishop, Andre was finally accepted and given the humble job of doorkeeper, a job he held for 40 years. When someone was ill, Andre would visit and pray for the sick person. He had a lively faith and strong devotion to St. Joseph. Word of his healing powers began to spread. Andre insisted "I do not cure. St. Joseph cures." St. Andre Bessette, CSC was canonized on October 17, 2010. His Feast Day is January 6.

On December 8, 1870 in a decree *Quemadmodum Deus*, Pope Pius IX proclaimed St. Joseph Patron of the Universal Church. On the 150th Anniversary of that proclamation, Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde*, (*With a Father's Heart*) announced a "Year of St. Joseph." There are no recorded words of St. Joseph in Scripture. St. Joseph was a just and righteous man and a listener. He listened to the Angel and took pregnant Mary as his wife. He listened to the Angel and took Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod's murder of innocent boys. He listened to the Angel when he was told to return to the land of Israel and make his home in Nazareth. Joseph, the silent, the dreamer, the carpenter, the husband of Mary, the foster father of Jesus was the right man for the job. There is a painting by James Tissot entitled "The Anxiety of St. Joseph." The original is in the Brooklyn Museum. I have reflected on this artwork many times trying to imagine what was in St. Joseph's mind as he pondered in his carpenter shop. He guided, provided, gave strength and comfort to his family – He magnified the Eternal Word. As we live through this time of pandemic anxiety, I encourage you to *Ite ad Joseph* – Go to Joseph – as he will surely listen to your concerns.



Formation Corner

Judy Heffernan, ofs
Regional Formation Director

Our Connection around the Region has a new look



Where do we find our home and our sense of belonging?

Keeping our vocations alive in this time of isolation has taken on a new form, but I worry for those who have not grabbed onto the new ways to gather and commune with each other. Embracing technology and using it in creative ways to stay connected has brought me great solace and I want to share this with you. I, as most, seemed to be on a rollercoaster ride with my emotions and thoughts. Sometimes a feeling of loneliness and worry would come over me and the unsurety of when we would meet again led me to ask through Spiritual Direction and a meeting with the Regional Formation team on how to stay connected. I tried through my own fraternity to start a group of prayer Via this new program ZOOM. Which now has reached everyone's vocabulary; but with apprehensiveness I was met. One day talking to my dear brother in Francis, Anthony Bozzanca he told me of other fraternities that he had joined in prayer. So, there it began. The groups that I meet with have touched my heart and have given me great support in my prayer life, a sense of home and belonging, a reason to get out of bed. Literally, I am not a morning person. I also shared these meetings with the fraternities around the region and it has grown to having sometimes 9

fraternities represented from the Bronx, Queens, Nassau, to the east end of Suffolk, all the way to Massachusetts. I then tried again to have the fraternities join in prayer every Thursday evening at 7pm to say the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. With the support of my new found family we have truly grown to a larger fraternity family. I know not everyone has a computer and/or the knowledge of how to navigate the technology, that has grown so quickly, But, all it takes is a phone and maybe some help from a family member or Fraternity member.

I know this has been scary times and this doesn't replace gathering in person. But everywhere we turn we hear bad news and it keeps coming closer and closer to home. In my fraternity, we have lost 5 people, 4 of which to the Covid Virus and during this past 6 months, our Fraternity's prayer chain has been passionately trying to keep up with all the prayers and concerns of our members. Using this new-found program, to have initial and ongoing formation groups, wake services, fraternity gatherings, council meetings, days of retreat recorded or Live, Celebrations, prayer gatherings, we have been able to reach more people around the region and within our own fraternities, even the ones that have been unable to attend regular gatherings. Please consider using this and joining in with your brothers and sisters around the region to help us become more alive in this time of isolation. I feel this will be a new way to keep more people connected, a place to call home and a sense of belonging.

May the Lord give you
His Peace,

Judy Heffernan, ofs,
Regional Formation Director

Prayer of Pope Leo XIII to Saint Joseph

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

from USCCB Website



Peace and Good !

The National Commission now has two YOUFRA groups in the USA and one emerging! Many local fraternities and regions, as well as individuals are reaching out to youth in various capacities, even if they are not aiming to establish YouFras at this time. We have a committed group of Regional Animators who are sharing resources and "ZOOM"-time together on a monthly basis. Sharing THE JOURNEY with Youth and Young Adults is a privilege, and a responsibility. To that end, I need to share the following important requirement for those engaged in ministry with Youth.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre (Suffolk and Nassau) has updated the requirements for Virtus status regarding background checks. NOW, as of Nov. 2020, the requirement is that background checks need to be done every 5 years. This is for all volunteers in ministry involving youths (anyone under 18 years of age). No matter what an individual Secular or fraternity (local or regional) is doing to live out the mission by bringing the gospel to our youth, if they are in the proximity of youths under 18 years of age, they still need to be certified according their Diocesan guidelines.

PLEASE check with your parish's Director of Religious Education (or Faith Formation) regarding this VERY IMPORTANT and NECESSARY procedure, required of ANY member and/or Spiritual Assistant working with YOUTH. Additionally, for MANY reasons, it is STRONGLY recommended, upon the advice of the Office of Child Protection in my own Diocese, that any program that a local fraternity or the Region may want to conduct or participate in that engages with youth, be cleared with the parish Director of Religious Education (or Faith Formation) or with the Diocesan Office of Child Protection! For fraternities in Brooklyn and Queens, please note that the Diocese of Brooklyn also has Virtus requirements and members should check into the requirements for their renewal of background checks and status. Fraternities in the Bronx, your Archdiocese of Manhattan, also uses Virtus and you would also need to check into your Diocese's requirements and regulations. In Rockville Centre Diocese that background check fee is covered by the Diocese for those who are engaged in ministries that work with youth. The procedure involves you submitting an online form allowing a secure agency to check your records using your Social Security number. If you live in one Diocese but the fraternity works with youth in another, the member may need to check in and complete the process with both Dioceses. The Secular(s)/ Spiritual Assistants engaged in a youth ministry across Dioceses would need to contact the head of their Diocese to reach out to their counterpart in the other Diocese to verify compliance for a one time service. However, if it is an ongoing youth ministry/ service, then the volunteer may be required to attend training sessions based on the requirements of the other Diocese. There is even a recommendation that the fraternity members, if not already working with youth and already certified, go thru the process together! Even if members volunteer to drive, chaperone, serve a meal, help an existing youth organization, or engage in any activity that involves youth under 18 years of age, they need to have Virtus training, background screening and updated certification.

Regarding our dedicated Spiritual Assistants: The Diocese requires documentation to ensure that individual members of any Religious Community engaged in ministry to youth within the diocese, are in compliance with their Community safe environment standards (which may or may not be Virtus). Without the proper documentation, and background checks, no one in the Order is permitted to work with youth! So, trying to be prayerfully pro-active ("If you build it, they will come" attitude), having the Virtus training, background checks, and certification completed will prove us ready for when Spirit- led activities arise! May we as Seculars foster an attitude of service to participate in parish events held for youth (at the discretion of the Director of Religious Education/Faith Formation), and that our fraternities will be welcoming places for searching young adults

Going forward with best practices for our region regarding local FY/YA animators, I am requesting that anyone who has completed their Virtus Training send me a copy of their Certificate along with the date of their cleared background check. Include fraternity name and email, and/or phone number. Please send to: Jean A. D'Onofrio, OFS 39 Chelsea Drive, Mount Sinai, NY 11766 or email to jld1075@optonline.net. Please put OFS in the RE: section to avoid email getting sent to spam box. Also please keep me informed as to any youth (and/or young adult) outreach that your fraternity is engaged in! Ideally, each fraternity should have a Y/YA coordinator who meets the criteria for Child Safety certification, that could serve as a liaison between myself as Regional Animator and the local fraternity. I would so appreciate "meeting" you!! We go on, because "up to now we have done nothing." (paraphrasing St. Francis).

The Year of St. Joseph & Indulgences, Dcn Robert Campbell, ofs, Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity

On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis proclaimed the beginning of **The Year of St Joseph**, which will last until December 8, 2021. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for us to obtain the many indulgences and graces that are available, and so easily obtained! For example, by praying any prayer to St Joseph on any Wednesday, or the 19th of any Month, or on his Feast days, March 19 and May 1. St Joseph is SO powerful and so loving. A true Father to us and Intercessor for us as well as a Roll Model.

The Vatican See of the Apostolic Penitentiary has issued a Decree granting **plenary indulgences for The Year of St Joseph**...Yes, the Church still offers indulgences. While it is true that there have been past abuses, these have been rectified. God truly desires to "indulge" us - to offer us a kindness – by giving us a "break" on the temporal punishment due to our sins. The indulgences will be granted through prayer and penance and through acts of justice, charity and piety dedicated to Saint Joseph, the Foster Father of Jesus. This is how an indulgence is defined in the Code of Canon Law (can. 992) and in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (# 1471): "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church."

Conditions for Receiving the Indulgence

- a spirit detached from sin,
- receiving sacramental confession as soon as possible,
- receiving Communion as soon as possible
- praying for the Holy Father's intentions

Opportunities for the Plenary Indulgence During the Year of St Joseph

A Plenary Indulgence is granted to those who shall contemplate the Lord's Prayer for at least 30 minutes

1. to those who participate in a Spiritual Retreat of at least one day which involves a meditation on Saint Joseph
2. to those who, after the example of Saint Joseph, shall fulfill a work of corporal or spiritual work of mercy
3. to those who recite the Holy Rosary in families and among betrothed;
4. to those who shall daily entrust their life to the protection of Saint Joseph
5. to the faithful who shall invoke through prayer the intercession of St Joseph, the Worker of Nazareth, so that those in search of work may find employment and the work of all people may be more dignified
6. to the faithful who shall recite the Litany to Saint Joseph or some other prayer to Saint Joseph, in favor of the Church persecuted and for the relief of all Christians who suffer any form of persecution
7. to the faithful who shall recite any prayer or act of piety in honor of Saint Joseph, for example, "To you, O Blessed Joseph"
 - on March 19
 - on May 1
 - on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
 - on the 19th of any month
 - on any Wednesday, the day dedicated to the Saint's memory
8. to the elderly, the sick, the suffering and all those who for legitimate reasons are unable to leave the house.

Consecration to St Joseph

It is highly recommended that each of us make a Consecration to St Joseph during this year dedicated to him. In his book entitled *Consecration to St Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*, Father Donald Calloway MIC offers a 33-day journey with St Joseph. The format involves praying the Litany of St Joseph and reading several pages from the book each day; this takes about 20-30 minutes. Father Calloway brings to life the wonders, the power, and the ceaseless love of St Joseph, Universal Patron of the Church and the Terror of Demons. At the conclusion of the 33 days, an **Act of Consecration to St Joseph** is offered. **ITE ad JOSEPH!**

JPIC Update

LouiseSandberg, ofs
Regional JPIC Animator

Franciscan Love

Thursday I was praying with someone and she told me an amazing story. She had been terribly abused as a child and had ceased believing in God because of it. God did not intervene in her abuse in a way that she could recognize. But in 1986 she was drawn to Mother Teresa in Calcutta to work with the dying. In that process she was transformed. She saw Mother and her sisters as pure love. One dying woman she cared for was speaking Hindi and kept repeating the same phrases. She asked the translator who told her "She is saying she is grateful that you have come all this way to care for her." She was part of the love; instrument of the unconditional healing love she saw and lived. And it changed her. I told her that her abuse was so severe that God drew her to the only place and person in the world at that moment with enough love to heal her. I was also drawn into my African mission work in 1984 through God asking me if I want to be like Mother Teresa. I did not know what that meant, but my friend described the purity and simplicity of her love.

I have been praying and thinking and listening about Racism, trying to get inspiration for a regional Franciscan response to Racism. I woke up one night and heard "Love is the answer". Then I saw a picture of protestors and those in solidarity with prevention of violence who

realize that "Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel" is the Franciscan response to: *Love one another as I have loved you.* (Jn 13:34). Are we willing to love our neighbor enough to transform the world? What a great question. So then the question is what does love look like in my situation in this moment? For Ceil Campbell, candidate for Blessed Raymond Lull, it was sharing with a woman of color on the bus in the 1970's and in the 2020's acknowledging her neighbor's lawn sign, "There is no hate in this house." She then got her own lawn sign "Love your neighbor". For Raymond Clark, OFS, it is acknowledging the sin of Racism and volunteering to help with the Franciscan response to Racism. For Fr. Norbert it is facilitating healing through sharing the stories. For me it is listening and acting as God is calling me, to feed the hungry, write to prisoners, visit the sick, etc. I cannot go on mission physically due to Corona, so I go virtually daily through a few Ugandan missionaries I met on my trip. For my missionaries in Uganda, it is to listen to the cries of the poor for food and water, pray with them and pass on the needs to those with resources to help. I send them donations daily to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and provide clean water for those who thirst. What is that love for you?

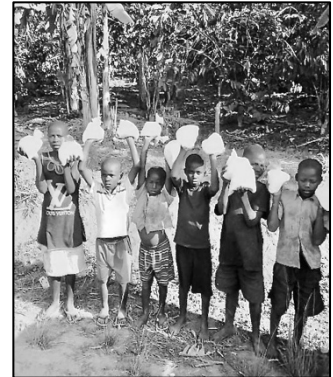
So this is the very good news that Francis gave us at the end of his life. He did "what was mine to do," now it is up to us to do what is ours to do. It is never too late to love.

Join me:

email me at:

Louisesandberg54@gmail.com

or call (516) 318-7798





Profession at St. Helen Fraternity
L-R: Patricia Harold, Tom Delloiacono, and Aura Gordon with Msgr Furnari, ofs.



Candidate/Professed Evelyn Fay, ofs
beside Secular Franciscan Banner.
Profession at: New Pentecost Fraternity,
3/20/21



Minister Lorraine Arcella accepts the acts of
commitment from the candidates during
Profession Liturgy at St. Helen Church.



Evelyn Fay flanked by Br. Louis,ofs,
Minister Ernie DeStefano, Mike Ciervo and
Fr. Duncan Onyango, FMH



New Pentecost profession ceremony



St. Helen Fraternity Profession March 20, 2021.
Msgr Furnari, ofs along with three newly professed
members: Patricia Harold, ofs Tom Delloiacono, ofs
and Aura Gordon, ofs and the Fraternity Council.



John, & Terry Barry and Louise
Sandberg of Bl. Raymond Lull



Barbara Hansen, ofs OLQA and friend
on retreat



Hopefully soon!

FLIC Update

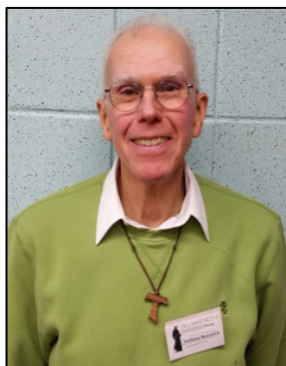
Dear FLICers

FLIC is still pending. I spoke with Fr. Tom at Mount Alvernia last week. There are no programs at the Mount through May. Fr. is hopeful but no guarantee. He said that his Superiors make the decision. I will call him again in May and see what's up. Fr. did say that if open attendees would have to be vaccinated and show their CDC Covid-19 Vaccination Card and social distance would have to be observed in the Chapel, Conference Room and Dining Room, also no sharing of rooms except for couples which will limit our numbers of FLICERS.

Fraternally,
Joan, OFS



+ Grace Callahan, ofs.
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity



+ Anthony Bozzanca, ofs
St. Lawrence of Brindisi

Remember

Our Newly Professed:

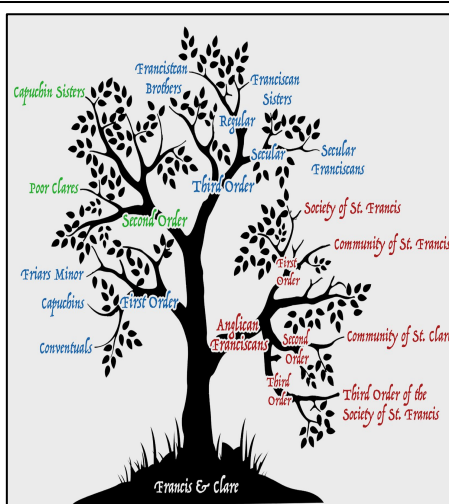
03/20: Evelyn Fay, ofs,
New Pentecost Fraternity
03/20: Patricia Harold, ofs
Thomas Delloiacono, ofs
Aura Gordon, ofs
St.Helen Fraternity

Congratulations to All!

Those Who Have Left Us Deaths:

01/13: Ethel M. Andoh, ofs
Sr. Thea Bowman Fraternity
01/22: Anthony Bozzanca, ofs
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fr.
(COVID)
01/24: Grace Callahan, ofs
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity
02/13: Maureen McDermott, ofs
Cur of Ars Fraternity
03/01: Jo-Ann Brewer, ofs.
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity

FRANCISCAN



Joyful Disciple School



Starting Tuesday,
April'20, 2021
Virtual Zoom Gathering
7 week course/1 hr each
Topic: Franciscan Spirituality
Taught by: William.Short, OFM
Rsvp: Judy Heffernan at
jmh blessings@optimum.net
Or 631-395-5442

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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, Deaths, anniversaries, events, etc.) to Alicia D'Amato at P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY11764 or email her at: [damato1@optonline.net](mailto:damoto1@optonline.net). Address correspondence to editor: Peter D'Amato, P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email: [damato1@optonline.net](mailto:damoto1@optonline.net).

