



Hearts and Hands Across the Region

Winter, 2014 Volume 1, Issue 2

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Welcome!

....to the second issue of Hearts and Hands Across the Region!

In this issue, we will take a look at the apostolates that are being performed throughout the Region.

The reason for this focus is not to pat anyone on the back for what they are doing, but rather to share what we are doing with the hopes that it will inspire another brother / sister / fraternity to try it themselves.

We want to emphasize again that this newsletter is for every single Brother and Sister and every single Fraternity within our Region...that's 28 Fraternities and 740 Brothers and Sisters!

To those who did send in the 'happenings' of their Fraternity, we are very grateful. To all the others, we hope you will join in the next issue. Remember it can be anything noteworthy that is going on in your Fraternity.

If you have an idea for a theme or topic we should tackle in a future issue, please, please send an e-mail to Scoop Kleinert:

kkleinert@msn.com

All ideas are very welcome!

'Til next time...may we all move a little closer to Our Lord, through the footsteps of St. Francis.



Did you know? On the feast of St. Agnes, (January 21), two lambs are presented to Pope Francis for his blessings. The lambs are then taken to an order of nuns in Rome where the lambs are shorn, the wool spun into yarn and then woven into palliums that the Pope will present to the Archbishops on June 29 - the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

From the Heart of Our Regional Minister

Mattie Ward, OFS

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Peace to each of your hearts!

All of you know by now that technology is not exactly my strength. I have, for many years, been perfectly content to live with a “dumb” phone. I would often wonder, while riding home on the train and observing the faces of many of my fellow passengers aglow with a faint blue-like light, what all the excitement was about in having a phone that did almost everything but act as a phone should ... that is, be an instrument of conversation. But, contract terminations and the kindness of a dear friend introduced me to the world of the “smart” phone and the marvelous “apps” that could be added to make the ride home a little more enjoyable.

As a result of this acquisition, I have fallen upon an “app” entitled Laudate, which is operated by the British Jesuits, which has led me to another “app” entitled, Sacred Space, which is operated by the Irish Jesuits. All of this brings me to the reason for this writing because I found an Advent reflection through Sacred Space, which I would like to share with each of you.

There is no better Advent companion than Mary. The first Advent touched her most deeply. Her time of Advent was longer than ours. Her ‘holy waiting’ lasted nine months until her promised son saw the light of day. We can learn from her. Everything in her life centers on this child. She is totally self-forgetful. She grasps in some deep way that the God of majesty, known through mighty deeds on Sinai and in the Exodus from Egypt, is coming into her world. The God who created the world in all its beauty, the God who met Moses in the burning bush, the God who swore everlasting love to his people, this God is coming to birth in her. As she makes a meal, trims a lamp and prepares baby-clothes, she knows that something much bigger is going on which gives all these actions new meaning. There is a new horizon to her life. The sequence of days is no longer aimless. It has a purpose, a divine purpose. Every day brings God closer. The future, she sees, IS God, present among us!

She is open to surprise. That God should ask her - of all people - to bear the Son of God! That from now on people would find themselves bumping into God when they ran into Jesus! She wonders how they will respond. Will they take the child to their hearts?

Now that Christmas is a warm memory and we continue our journey through the season of the sleeping seed, maybe we can ask ourselves, how open are we, like Mary, to being surprised by God? God asks each of us, in a certain sense, to be bearers of Christ to one another. How are we doin’?

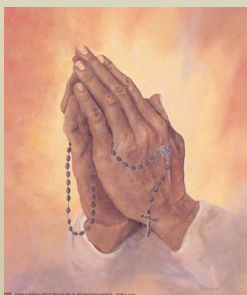
Do we pray
like

Samuel?

“Speak,
Lord, your
servant is
listening.”

Or do we
say...

“Listen,
Lord, your
servant is
speaking!”



A Journey of Perseverance

It was back in 2003 that Cristina Williams Helms came to visit Holy Assumption Fraternity. We saw each other at Daily Mass in what is now a merged parish of Sts. Francis & Clare and I invited her to come to our gatherings.

She hardly ever missed coming to our gatherings. However, I was unaware at the time that “Tina” was Episcopalian. She told me she loved going to Mass and would consider becoming a Catholic.

At that time, I was coordinating the RCIA program at the parish and “Tina” decided after speaking to Father Matthew Morreale O.F.M. that she would go through the program and she presented to him the necessary documents. It was after she was received into the Catholic church that I found out that she would need to present documents to the Diocese because Joseph, her dear husband who is Catholic, was married in her church without a dispensation.

Well, here we are a few more years down the road. Tina was still attending our gatherings and keeping a journal. She explained to me that she wore a medallion in the Episcopalian church that was from a women’s group. Since she was new to the Catholic faith I knew she would have to wait awhile before discerning to become a Franciscan.

It was in 2008 that I became parish secretary and our Pastor Father Adam asked me to convey to Tina what would be needed to get her marriage blessed. What an honor and blessing it was to help Tina take this step.

I was so happy when Father Adam told me to fill out a marriage certificate so that Tina and Joseph could have their marriage blessed. Holy Assumption fraternity has their gathering on the first Sunday of the month so Tina was finally professed on December 8th 2013.

I was very happy to be there for her profession and to see how important it was to her never to give up for she truly wanted to become a Secular Franciscan.

Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation

Kathy Agosto, OFS, Councillor at Large, JPIC Coordinator

“But let me stress again that these are my views. For contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for president. I am the Democratic Party’s candidate for president, who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters, and the church does not speak for me.” Thus spoke the presidential candidate John F. Kennedy when he was up against the ropes in the middle of his campaign, trying to quiet his opponents who implied that he would be the puppet of the Vatican if he were ever to become president.

Yet, fifty years later, we can look back and see that John F. Kennedy, though not the Catholic candidate for president as he had clarified, took the wisdom from his faith community and made the sentiments and highest aspirations of his faith community come alive in his words before his untimely death.

Just as the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) representatives have been called to “animate peace” by our National JPIC Animator Carolyn Townes , Kennedy took in the words of Scripture and also what was promulgated in the then newly released encyclical *Pacem in Terris* and breathed them out in a novel way in the speeches he made and in the actions he took in 1963.

Taylor Branch is the author of *Parting the Waters, America in the King Years 1953-63*. I was reading this text this past summer when I was stunned to see all that transpired in the civil rights movement and during the Kennedy Presidency which show clearly that Kennedy, despite his attempts to distance himself some from his Catholic faith, took bold action for peace and for justice, almost in spite of himself, unequivocally deeply moved by the events transpiring in front of him and also clearly influenced by his religious scruples.

History also demonstrates that Kennedy was a wily politician, a man who attended church regularly but who was not ostensibly religious. One could even say Kennedy was something of a playboy who was chronically unfaithful to his marriage and who , notoriously under his father’s watchful eye, a consummate political animal.

During his too brief presidency, Kennedy and, even Nikita Khrushchev, saw the world teeter on the cusp of total war. Documents now show that Kennedy, after the Bay of Pigs debacle, began to distrust his advisors who endorsed invading Cuba and even had thoughts of dropping a nuclear bomb on Cuba, even going so far as making the statement that “if after a nuclear war, there are only 4 Americans alive and only 3 Russians, then we would still win”.

To his credit, Kennedy grew more into the role of president and had the chutzpah to be comfortable in learning to listen to the counsel of his own heart. In Branch’s very detailed book of what went on behind the headlines, one sees the Kennedy administration as initially wary of Dr. King and the civil rights movement.

The first and only meeting with JFK was not publicized and seemed almost an afterthought when Robert Kennedy took King to lunch and offered him a tour of the White House afterwards. John Kennedy then suddenly emerged on the tour and greeted King and his entourage but the participants were told not to share that this meeting did, in fact, occur.

Despite the fact that the Civil Rights’ movement was drenched in the ideas of Gandhi and advocated non violence, the South erupted into violence when the marches began, when the Freedom Riders rode their busses through the South, when the sit ins at the lunch counters occurred, when the first Black student arrived at the University and when the dogs, billy clubs and fire hoses were brought out.

The Kennedy and King connection could not be kept secret long as the atrocities grew more grisly with each new confrontation. It all reached a critical mass when King sent a telegram to Kennedy on “the beastly conduct of law enforcement officers at Danville, telling Kennedy once more that “the Negro’s endurance may be at the breaking point,” imploring the Administration to seek a “just and moral” solution. King wrote “I ask you in the name of decency and Christian brotherhood to creatively grapple with Danville’s and the nation’s most grievous problem.” In the newspapers, King was urging Kennedy to begin speaking of race as a moral issue from the White House, pledging a March of Washington.

Kennedy, now absolutely unable to sidestep the question any more, goes on national television and makes an almost extemporaneous civil rights’ address, despite the outrage of his staffers who thought he was committing political suicide. Kennedy was thinking about the life chances of two newborn American babies, one white and one Negro and concluded “We are confronted primarily with a moral issue.” He declared. “It is as old as the Scriptures and as clear as the American Constitution. The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.”

Kennedy continued “We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it. And we cherish our freedom here at home. But are we to say to the world- and more importantly, to each other-that this is the land of the free, except for Negroes, that we have no second class citizens, except Negroes, that we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race, except with respect to Negroes ?

Now the time has come for this nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore the facts. We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and a people. A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all.”

Kennedy diverged off the prepared text and said “We owe them, and we owe ourselves, a better country”. King immediately responded positively: Kennedy had done what the civil rights leaders had urged him to do.

On another issue, namely on the issue of war, Kennedy had made his famous speech at American University the previous day in which Kennedy had spoke on the need to take risks toward a reduction in worldwide nuclear armaments, announcing a temporary suspension of nuclear tests in the atmosphere. He said he was going to pursue a test ban treaty with the Soviet Union, ending with the sentiment that “no government or social system is so evil that its people must be considered as lacking in virtue”. The speech was an instant success and hailed as a step away from the Cold War and making connections to the sentiments expressed in Pope John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in Terris*.

We are very blessed that we have had fifty years and can benefit from some great scholarship so that we can understand Kennedy’s development into an epic leader. It is interesting to see that grace does indeed build on nature and Kennedy was gradually emboldened by his faith and not a moment too late. Kennedy, a World War Two veteran, became unwittingly and suddenly a champion for peace and civil rights.

Like Schindler, he continued to be a flawed man who, we now know, had moments of greatness.

We, as Secular Franciscans, are called to animate peace in much the same way. By making ourselves familiar with the issues of our times, by imbibing the Sacred Scriptures, by reading the teachings of our church in the encyclicals, by seeking ongoing conversion as we study our Rule, we too can animate peace and leave this world just a little bit better , because we too “owe the poor, the disenfranchised and the little ones “a better country” So let us “begin again,” as Francis says “for up to now, we have done nothing”.

Don't Let Anyone Rain on Your Dreams

Joe Ruggiero, OFS

Behold
the
Lamb of
God so
that we
may
become
what we
behold.



I have had many dreams and goals in my life. Some were very realistic and others seemed to be out of the reach of reality. One such dream was to write and produce a screen play based on my first novel. After several rewrites with the help of my friend , Dwight Wilkins, and the support of my wife, Bernadette, we shot our independent film, *A Rose On Ninth Street* in 2011. I must say there were times I was close to throwing in the towel. But, my inner voice, I believe the Holy Spirit , recharged my passion.

In October of this year, we partnered with Churches , High Schools And a non profit agency to show the film while raising money for charity.

Over 800 people have viewed our film in four different venues. The response from the audience has been very positive. The impossible has become a reality.

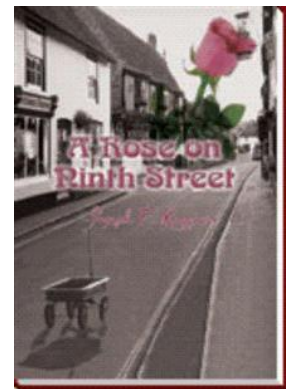
There our many talented people out there. If you have a passion to write, Write, don't get discouraged, even if your work has been rejected by a publisher. If you have a dream follow it through. Nothing is impossible with

God, He gave you the talent and it is his spirit that fires your passion.

This 71 year old husband, father and grandfather has written two novels, a screenplay and has produced a movie. Guess what, I'm not the smartest guy around. God makes me look good. And when I think our project has gone as far as it can, he pulls the rug from under my feet. It looks like we may have a deal with a distributor. What!

Friends, discouragement will come as I am sure you know, but your talent and the passion within you for the arts will overcome.

Don't let anyone rain on your dreams.



The Magnificat Day

Maria Innocenti, OFS

I am blessed to be a member of the Archdiocesan Choir of Philadelphia. This Choir is comprised of Music Directors and Choir members from Parishes around the Archdiocese and sings for the major liturgies of the Archdiocese, such as The Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday; Priesthood and Diaconate Ordinations. We were thrilled to be a part of Magnificat Day in Philadelphia, providing music for Morning and Evening Prayer, as well as the Eucharistic Procession from the Convention Center to the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul and accompanying the relics of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, ending with Benediction by Archbishop Chaput on the steps of the Cathedral.

These are my experiences as a musician at Magnificat Day, Philadelphia on November 9, 2013.

Friday, November 8, 2013. My experience actually began on Friday evening, when we held a 'Tech rehearsal' at the Convention Center. It seemed as if there were at least a dozen different things happening at the same time. There were actors on the stage rehearsing their parts for the play about Saint Thérèse while stage crews climbed tall scaffolding around us to set the lighting, while someone else moved an organ into place, others bustling back and forth performing other duties necessary for such an immense undertaking. All the while, Fr. G. Denis Gill, Director of the Office for Divine Worship, provided answers to the various technicians as we waited our turn for the sound techs to give

for the sound techs to give the word our Director, Dr. John Romeri, for us to begin singing so they could adjust the systems accordingly. There appeared to be so much confusion, we wondered if it would all come together in time.

Saturday, November 9, 2013. The day began with my assisting a DRE friend to usher at the well-attended 7:15 AM Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. Pilgrims from around the country as well as the world also wished to begin their day with Mass. After the last of the Pilgrims we were directing to the Convention Center left, we were also able to leave. God was smiling on us as two women, recognizing us from the Cathedral, stopped to offer us a ride and thank us for our hospitality.

Music was offered throughout the day by a variety of wonderful Choirs, Orchestras, and other groups, with a variety of arrangements of the Magnificat being presented. The opening began with a warm welcome by the staff of Magnificat, and Morning Prayer offered to a packed Ballroom. It was heartwarming to experience Lauds in such setting and among so many whose voices were raised in song and prayer.

There were presentations by both Father Robert Barron speaking on 'Reflections on Revelation 3:7-12' and a riveting Keynote address 'Faith as Confession,' by Father Peter John Cameron, O.P., Editor and Chief of Magnificat, whose presentation

The Magnificat Day

continued

included a delightful skit of Saint Thérèse and her Confessor. Hearing of her doubts gave me much pause to reflect on my own, and realize the truth in the statement, 'saints are ordinary people who do extraordinary things.'

The crowds were electrifying. Just being among them while waiting to view the relics of Saint Thérèse and her parents, Blessed Louis and Azélie Martin, hearing them confess their faith, strengthened my own. The lines for confession were unbelievably long. I wanted to receive this Sacrament during this faith-filled day so I decided to be patient. The woman in front of me, a foreigner and visiting from New York for the day, was visibly distraught, so I introduced myself and we began to speak. She indicated her desire to speak with a priest about some serious issues in her life, but the line was so long and we had already been waiting a while. She was unsure if she should leave, since she needed to catch a train back and was not familiar with the area. I urged her to wait and told her I would direct her to the train when we were done, as it just seemed as if she really needed counsel. Suddenly, it seemed as if we sped through the line and it was our turn. After I prayed my penance, the woman approached me to thank me for keeping her company and urging her to wait. She said the priest she spoke with was exactly who she needed, and her concerns were answered. After a Franciscan kiss and hug, she went on her way. I was then able to spend some time in

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

It was time for me to join the Archdiocesan Choir to prepare for our chanting of Evening Prayer. The very first time I heard sung Vespers, many years ago, I fell in love with it. I believe this experience led me further on my journey to become a Secular Franciscan. Who would have thought that, 20 years later, I would be participating in Sung Vespers with 3,000 others from around the world?

Following Vespers, we prepared for our candlelight procession through the streets to the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. The Choir processed along the procession in groups of 10 in order to support the pilgrim in the singing. The Eucharistic hymns were old favorites: Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All; At that First Eucharist; Gift of Finest Wheat; Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; and O Sacrament Most Holy, among others. Pedestrians stopped along the sidewalks and watched, some actually joining in singing. When we reached the steps of the Cathedral, Archbishop Chaput held Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The voices raised in song for Tantum Ergo Sacramentum resounded in Logan Circle. The day ended fittingly with a hymn to Mary, Hail - Holy Queen - whose Magnificat we celebrated all the day.



Apostolates – what we do and why we do it

Kate Kleinert, O.F.S

Brothers and Sisters, you have been called and chosen; work all the harder to justify it. If you do all these things there is no danger that you will ever fall away. In this way you will be granted admittance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

2Peter 1; 10-11

a-pos-to-late

ə'pəstə,lāt,-lit/

I'd like to think if you looked up the word apostolate, you would see a picture of Pope Francis. He not only understands the meaning of the word, he lives it. In a nutshell, the word apostolate means "the work you do for the Lord".

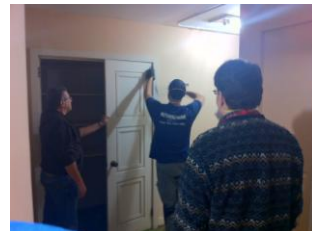
Some of us are intimidated by that word....I don't have any talent....I don't have the time....I'm not able to go out and work in a soup kitchen....I'm not able to go out at all.

The reason I wanted all the Fraternities and all of our Brothers and Sisters to share with us what work they do for the Lord, is so that we can all benefit. I'm sure with the information we have collected, there will be something you haven't thought of before, something that you would be able to do, or something you would love to try.

So take a look at these different apostolates that are being done throughout our Region and **be inspired!** There is something here that you can do and do it for the least of these.



St. Francis Springfield in addition to fund raising has offered the Mother's Home* one Saturday morning each month for 4 hours with our brothers and sisters to interact...we have reached out to the home for their thoughts on what we might do...we plan on cultivating and expanding that relationship in the new year and then adopting a second community outreach program. **The Mother's Home is located in Darby – Delaware County, "As a residential shelter, Mothers' Home provides a safe haven for vulnerable, pregnant women in a crisis who choose life as a sacred gift."*



St. John Neumann Fraternity

Our fraternity has chosen as our apostolate Assisi House, the retirement /nursing home of the Sisters of St. Francis. Last spring we celebrated a hymn sing with the residents. Our fraternity members lead the sing-a-long of old-time favorites and contemporary favorites. A short history of the hymn preceded each selection. We also sponsor "mini" Apostolates by collecting and delivering paper items and personal care toiletries for Ann's Place, a women's respite center in the city of Chester.

Apostolates – what we do and why we do it *continued*

*My
Brothers
and Sisters,
what good
is it to
profess
faith
without
practicing
it?*

James 2:14



The **Holy Cross Fraternity**, Order of Franciscan Seculars has received permission from the Secretary for Catholic Life and Evangelization, Director of Faith Formation, Diocese of Allentown to address individual Parishes within the Diocese of Allentown concerning Saint Francis and vocations to the Order of Franciscan Seculars. With that permission, the individual Parish Pastor still needs to agree to the outreach within His parish. The lists below are the Parishes in which we have received pastoral approval and the dates we have scheduled and the Pastors we are still in dialog with. We anticipate that this list will grow. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will be with us. We encourage members of the Holy Cross Fraternity to be at these events. We also welcome any Sisters or Brothers from the Region to attend. Any Fraternity wishing to conduct their own outreach can contact the Holy Cross Fraternity for assistance and advice. Contact us by using our web site: www.hcfsfo.org or by e-mail at: tedjohn@windstream.net



St. Casimir Fraternity in Riverside/Delran, NJ has an Epiphany-related apostolate. We assemble “home blessing kits” that are available in both the churches in our parish during the Christmas season. Each kit includes a container of holy water, a piece of blessed chalk,

and a prayer for blessing the home.

The fraternity meets to assemble the kits, which are then blessed by the pastor and distributed to both churches. This is an easy and inexpensive apostolate that keeps a beloved custom alive for the families in our parish.

If another fraternity would like to adopt this practice, Barbara Szyszkiewicz, OFS, can be contacted at cookbookmom@gmail.com for details and a copy of the prayer.

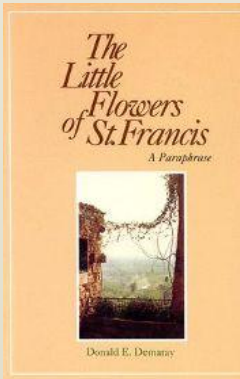


St John the Evangelist St. John the Evangelist Fraternity has been active in many apostolates throughout the years and has been committed to working with prisoners at a State institution by way of their presence each month. The men with whom they have been involved have been an example to them of living the Gospel despite very difficult circumstances. The Fraternity also provides books and rosaries to local institutions and is working with men and women outside of their Fraternity who are interested in discerning a call to the Secular Franciscan vocation.



Apostolates – what we do and why we do it

continued



Just as one flower has enough seeds to become a garden, so too, one act of kindness will re-seed itself and brighten many lives!

Throughout the Fall, **Holy Stigmata** deadheaded marigolds to harvest the seeds. They were collected from a variety of sources and then blended together, some from tall yellow marigolds, some from brilliant orange, some from small red and yellow.

A very ecumenical collection! The seeds were placed into small plastic bags with a label reading: **We wish you a very "mary-gold" Christmas! These marigold seeds have been gathered from the garden at a Baptist Church, a Franciscan Monastery, Sisters of Mercy Convent, a Secular Franciscan's home, and from family and friends, We hope they bring you joy! We are holding you close in prayer during this holiday season. Peace and all Good, the Holy Stigmata Secular Franciscan Fraternity** The seed packets were mailed out in our Christmas cards and handed out in each member's parish after the Masses on Christmas Day.



Each year, the members of **St. Bonaventure Fraternity** in Levittown, PA, through the kindness of our Poor Clare Sisters in Langhorne, PA, place an Angel Tree in the Monastery Chapel. We've been doing this for 11 years

and each year the response by the "angels" who attend Mass each Sunday at the Monastery, has been phenomenal. The gifts they purchase are for the benefit of the many families in the Lower Bucks County area who need a little assist at Christmas time ... and throughout the year ... since the season of giving lasts 365 days a year through Catholic Social Services. Along with the Angel Tags, the tree is decorated with multi-colored lights which are lit at Christmas Eve Mass and throughout the Christmas season to serve as a reminder that although many parts, we are all one body.



Theresa Kistler, OFS from **Holy Stigmata** prays the rosary for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. While doing this, Theresa uses the special rosary just for praying for the Holy Souls. The first decade is black, the second dark gray, the third a lighter gray, the fourth a cream color and finally the fifth is pure white – the same transformation of the soul she is praying for.



Apostolates – what we do and why we do it

continued

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry

Give drink to the thirsty

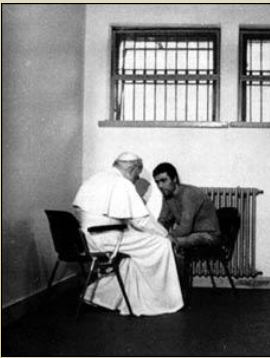
Clothe the naked

Shelter the homeless

Visit the sick

Visit the imprisoned

Bury the dead



In a bare, white-walled cell in Rome's Rebibbia prison, Pope John Paul II tenderly held the hand that had held the gun that was meant to kill him.

Anne Gormley, OFS, the Minister of **Queen of the Universe** shared an apostolate that Mary Connaire, OFS, lives each day. Mary works at Rite Aid as a cashier. She wears her Tau Cross always and so when at work the Tau does the SFO work for her. When questioned, she tells her customers what she is wearing and that she is a Secular Franciscan and where we meet and what we do. Finding a welcoming spirit, they usually take the time to tell her that the about their problems and she responds by telling them she will pray for them.

I saw Mary in action, Anne continued. I went with her to get my flu shot at the store. While we were waiting for the Pharmacist a woman tried to get out of her seat and so I offered her my cane. She refused but she explained she had an accident and injured her foot. Mary immediately told her about a Saint she could pray to for healing. The woman thanked her and said she would ask that Saint for help. The stories go on and on about our Mary at Rite Aid.



There are things you can be doing from home, too:

Are you good at writing letters or sending cards? Mary, Mother of Captives offers a prison pen pal program that provides complete anonymity to the Pen Pal. You receive the name and address of a prisoner and the prisoner only knows you by your first name and the first three letters of your last name. Your 'return address' is an office in Philadelphia where the volunteers of Mary, Mother of Captives remail the prisoner's letter to your home address. The prisoner never knows your complete name and home address.

I have been involved with writing to prisoners for more than 27 years and never had a problem. Believe me, I receive much more than I give from these folks. I look for greeting cards for any and all occasions because they get so much enjoyment from them. When you receive a letter back saying your card was the first birthday card, or Christmas card they have ever received, it warms your heart.

Can you knit or crochet? The Mother's Home mentioned above would welcome baby blankets. They give a baby shower for each woman right before she is due to provide some of what is needed for a new baby. A handmade baby blanket would make a wonderful addition.

How about a prayer shawl for the cancer center at your local hospital? You pray for the recipient while you are crocheting or knitting. The cancer victim is not only wrapped in the warmth of the shawl, but in the warmth of all your prayers.

There are lots of patterns available to knit or crochet caps and hats for cancer victims who have lost their hair. Make them colorful or silly or whatever strikes your fancy to lift the spirits of these folks who are facing a difficult journey.

I sincerely hope that there is something here that you can begin to do. There are just as many things we can do as there are Brothers and Sisters in our Region – and more besides! Ask the Holy Spirit....He has lots of ideas, too!



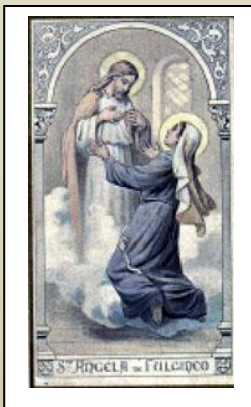
Saint Angela de Foligno, OFS

from www.ciofs.org

At Christmas, 1308, Angela told her companions she would die shortly.

A few days later Christ appeared to her, promising to come personally to take her to heaven.

She died in her sleep on January 3, 1309.



YES! Blessed Angela de Foligno, OFS is now a saint! Her feast day is celebrated on January 7 by the Franciscan family.

The following information has been copied from our international website:

On October 9th, in response to numerous appeals to the Holy See by Bishops and Ministers General of the Franciscan Family, Pope Francis declared Blessed Angela de Foligno of Italy a saint. Born in Umbria in 1248, the mystical writer, after experiencing a stunning conversion, wrote of her experiences and visions, recorded in her Book of Visions and Instructions. **This is a canonization that is equal in force and significance. It was Pope Francis' desire to declare her a saint on October 9th, without the necessity of having a public ceremony for her canonization.** The Congregation for the Causes of Saints released this announcement on Friday, October 11th. The Holy Father after having received in audience Cardinal Angelo Amato S.D.B., prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, **extended the liturgical cult of Blessed Angela of Foligno of the Secular Franciscan Order**, born in

Foligno (Italy) in 1248 and dying in the same place in 1309, to the universal Church, inscribing her in the catalogue of saints. **Saint Angela of Foligno** is a Secular Franciscan. She is our sister, a lay woman, and a mother in the fullest sense. She is a mother of the children born of her womb and prematurely lost, a mother of the disinherited for whom she sold her earthly possessions, and a mother to her spiritual sons and daughters who remained at her side till the end of her life.

The life of Saint Angela began with a worldly existence, rather remote from God. But, later, her encounter with the figure of St Francis and, finally, her encounter with the crucified Christ, reawakened her soul; it is only with God that life becomes true life, because, in sorrow for sin, it becomes love and joy. This is how Saint Angela also speaks to us.

Living a daily life of prayer, Saint Angela is a master guide. The secret of her conversion and her union with Christ crucified, is constant prayer. "The more you pray", she would say, "the more you will be enlightened; (...) the more profoundly and intensely

Saint Angela de Foligno, OFS

continued

In the course of time the fame of her sanctity gathered around her a number of Tertiaries, men and women, who strove under her direction to advance in holiness. Later she established at Foligno a community of sisters, who to the Rule of the Third Order added the three vows of religion, without, however, binding themselves to enclosure, so that they might devote their time to works of charity.



you will see him, the more you will love him."

"Without heavenly light, no man can be saved....if you wish to gain possession of this light, pray...; if you wish to increase this light within you, pray; if you want faith, pray; if you want hope, pray; if you want charity, pray; if you want poverty, pray; if you want true obedience, pray; if you want chastity, pray; for whatever the virtue you seek, pray. And pray in this way: by reading in the Book of Life, that is, in the life of the One who is God and man, Jesus Christ" (Instruction II, lines 229 ss.).

Pope Benedict XIV called Saint Angela the "Mistress of Theologians", because all doctrine has been developed on the Book of Life, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This identification with Jesus equally signifies living what Jesus himself lived: poverty, contempt and sorrow, because, as she declared, "through temporal poverty, the soul will find eternal riches; through contempt and shame, it will obtain supreme honor and very great glory; through penance, undertaken with pain and sorrow, it will possess with infinite sweetness and consolation the Supreme Good, God Eternal"

Today, we all risk living as though God does not exist; he seems so distant from daily life. But God has thousands of ways. one for each of

us, to be present in the soul, to show that he exists and knows me and loves me. And, Saint Angela wants to make us attentive to these signs with which the Lord touches our soul, attentive to the presence of God, so as to learn life with God and towards God, in communion with Christ crucified. (*Benedict XVI 2010 10 13*)



Saint Clare, Patroness of Good Weather

Another longstanding tradition of popular piety is praying to St. Clare for the blessing of good weather, or, as one Franciscan scholar states very precisely, *good weather with a CLEAR sky*. Said scholar was also very exact about the traditional offering to be made for a "CLARE-sky" day: *the gift of one dozen eggs to the nearest monastery of Poor Clares!*

May the Franciscan Saints set the table for these new souls who are now sitting at the Heavenly Banquet. May they rest in peace and hold our intentions in their prayers ~

Kay Walsh, OFS
St. John The Evangelist

Fran Kuzalowicz,
OFS
Spirit of St. Francis

Dorothy Gandzig,
OFS
St. Joseph
Wilkes Barre

Marie Schwind, OFS
St. Francis LBI

Leo Shannon, OFS
Sts. Cyril and
Methodius

Rosalie Chance, OFS
Spirit of St. Francis

Marion Roy, OFS
St. Francis
Brant Beach

Mary Lee, OFS
St. Francis,
Springfield

This section is for all of us 'across the Region' to share what is going on in our Fraternity. We can't print what we don't know about! Please be sure to share all the happenings in your Fraternity. All of us will reap the benefit!

On Sunday December 8, 2013...the **St. Francis Fraternity of Springfield PA** held our first inter-fraternity Christmas Gathering with invitations to the brothers and sisters of **Holy Stigmata Fraternity** and **St. John Neumann Fraternity**.

Despite the inclement weather some fifty brave souls managed to attend. In attendance were ten mothers and their children from our first community outreach project...the Mother's Home in Darby, PA... after a brief introduction and prayer our formation director Lee Potts offered an inspiring explanation of what it means to be a Secular Franciscan...after our Creche Ceremony all were treated to an excellent repast at Central Park restaurant, the music of Joe Staffieri and Son, the Magic Show of our sister Suzanne McIlvenney, OFS and her husband and a wonderful Fraternity sing-a-long led by our music committee (reminiscent of another band of troubadours singing while rebuilding San Damiano some 800 years ago..we sang while we were building new friendships)...the merriment was capped off by a visit from Santa & Mrs. Claus...we were blessed for to see the smiling faces of the children was to see the face of the Lord... naturally as with everything else our humble success was solely due to the yeoman efforts of Lee Potts, OFS and Marie Gilligan, OFS - what a blessing they are... Peace and all good...Love, Frank

At our last meeting of the year December 15, 2013, we celebrated our Christmas and our Rose Viraghs, OFS, 25th Profession Anniversary. Rose was very surprised and happy that her special day [December 4th] had been remembered by her 'newly adopted' Fraternity - **St. Maximilian Kolbe**. Rose, our appointed Formation Director, has been sent to us from God, St. Francis and St. Clare. She is a gift to our Fraternity. She always volunteers and helps any and all of our members. Also given to Rose was the 25th Anniversary Profession Certificate which was filled out in beautiful calligraphy by our Spiritual Assistant, Father Paul Varga, OFM.



St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity

We professed 7 people yesterday, Nov. 3. Their names are: Virginia Coll, OFS, Barbara Neil, OFS James Moench, OFS, Maryellen Moench, OFS, Cheryl Krzaczuk, OFS, Kathryn Powers, OFS, and Frank Gradel, OFS. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful celebration.



Across the Region

continued

May they rest in peace....cont'd

Jean Miller, OFS
Living Word

Kazimere Welsh, OFS
St. John the Evangelist

Frances Springer, OFS
St. John the Evangelist

Lois Wagner, OFS
Poverello

Lucille O'Rourke, OFS
St. Maximilian

Phyllis Romano, OFS
St Francis, Brant Beach

Fr. Robert Yetsko, TOR

Fr. Roland Faley, TOR

From Madge Peroni, OFS, Minister of Spirit of St. Francis

Msgr. Dermond spoke to the fraternity yesterday re: the two fraternities, St. Bonaventure and St. Francis Assisium. The fraternity of St. Bonaventure was started by Fr. Peter Jacketti, OFM at St. Francis Assisium Church and established in 1878, but he was then moved to what is now Immaculate Conception Church of Our Lady of the Angels parish, but was originally called Our Lady of Lourdes, before Immaculate Conception.

Between the years 1878 and 194_ something, when Fr. Yunger was assigned to St. Francis Assisium Church, he re-established the fraternity, but there are **60 years of information lost by the**

Franciscans that are unaccounted for and cannot be traced, (Msgr. Dermond tried very hard as pastor of St. Francis Assisium parish to unearth that information, and couldn't.) But Fr. Yunger did not start a new fraternity, he re-established what was originally started there. So what was known as St. Francis Assisium Fraternitiy has to be a remnant of St. Bonaventure Fraternity which was already at St. Francis Assisium Church in the late 1800's. Therefore, I beleive that these two fraternities should be noted as the two oldest fraternities of St. Katharine Drexel Region.



From Vince Iezzi, OFS, St. John the Evangelist

The following people were professed on 12/22/13:

- Charles Bressi, OFS
- Thomas DiFelice, OFS
- Mark Vorini, OFS

Mark your calendars! May 30 - June 1, 2014

The Saint Katharine Drexel Region Fraternal / Pastoral visit will take place in Easton, PA over the weekend of May 30 - June 1.

There will be two visitors from National conducting the visit with the Regional Fraternity (all Ministers and Formation Directors) We haven't been told yet who our National visitors will be, but we would like to welcome them with a large turnout of all our Brothers and Sisters.

As we get closer to the weekend, more details will be published. But in the mean time, mark your **calendars** for this important event.



The Regional Annual Meeting

Most often when we come together, there's a form given to those who attend asking for their thoughts about the meeting and how/what we can improve. We usually don't hear from everyone, but a fair number of our sisters and brothers respond. There were about 70 who came to our Annual Meeting in November and we received 48 evaluations which we share with you here. We are most grateful to those who were able to participate. Thank you!

Meeting Format:	Excellent 29	Good 18	Fair 1	Poor_____
Prayer Services:	Excellent 34	Good 14	Fair_____	Poor_____
Presentations:	Excellent 25	Good 21	Fair 1	Poor_____
Meeting Location:	Excellent 29	Good 15	Fair 4	Poor_____
Facility:	Excellent 19	Good 20	Fair 9	Poor_____

Liked – Franciscan fellowship; sense of family and renewal of commitment; kept to agenda; prayer services were well planned; particularly liked the Liturgy of Creation; division of fraternities by colors (folders); overall, everything was good; Bro. Juniper!; receiving good information; learning, always learning; ; discussions in small groups; Rosie Viragh's presentation; discussion on commitment and consecration renewed passion for OFS vocation; JPIC presentation concise and interesting; location of facility and access; candle procession; prayer and time to share; continental breakfast; size of gathering; good parking; snacks

Disliked – too crowded; needed more space; acoustics; faulty microphone and sound system, making it difficult to hear/concentrate; lack of accessibility for those with physical disabilities; restrooms on a different floor and not easily accessible; playing musical chairs; calling individuals up for recognition; sufficient copies of handouts were not provided; listening to budget when unable to vote – boring; discussion and vote on annual budget should be open to ONLY the members who are eligible to vote; not having sufficient time in Chapel; talk about money; guests having to sit through reports and voting; \$200 for recruitment is not good. Let the Holy Spirit bring people to the order. We are not the Marines looking for a few good men and women.

Suggestions – shorter lunch; more central location; smaller breakdown groups to enable folks to hear themselves speak; consider those who are physically challenged in choosing a facility; steps were difficult to navigate; consider overhead display or power point display to facilitate presentations; guest speaker for an AM session – perhaps from a Franciscan college/Spiritual Center; separate the budget process from the meeting. If Regional Guidelines are to be discussed, the questions asked should be “repeated” by the moderator to help with clarity; have a retreat with the meeting or a retreat on a different day; have discussion and vote on annual budget during a weekend retreat and have only members

The Regional Annual Meeting

continued

Suggestions continued: who are eligible to vote attend; other members who cannot vote should spend time in prayer or on the grounds of the retreat center in reflection or social time in another area; for Anniversary Celebration, make it potluck rather than pay for food; have inquirers/candidates share their vocation story

A questionnaire was also given to those who attended the Annual Meeting seeking their assistance in planning for our second and third rounds of district gatherings in the next two years, as well as future Annual Meetings. Of the 28 Fraternities within the region, 23 Ministers/Delegates responded and 24 other attendees provided their opinions. Following is a report of the information we received:

Topics for District Gatherings:

	Ministers/Delegates	Others
Ongoing formation and why it's vital	15	13
The elements of a good Fraternity gathering	11	15
Life in Fraternity	10	14
The joys of leadership and why I embraced it ... or may one day be called to embrace it, so then I'll know what to do	8	6
Initial formation and why it's vital	6	6
I'm on Council – now what do I do?	5	4

Suggested topics by Ministers/Delegates:

- Regionally sponsored fraternity events;
- Commitment and staying the course;
- How to bring the Franciscan spirit out into the community;
- Lists of: Franciscan Education Centers in region; Poor Clare convents in region; Franciscan retreat houses; Franciscan outreach to shelters; soup kitchens; 3rd world Initiatives; a short presentation by group representing Franciscan youth in region; commission activities in region; demographics – m/f, age (over and under 60); best directions to places for meeting, if possible; and
- Getting brothers and sisters to “dialogue” during the formation segment of the monthly gatherings; how to achieve the attitude of the disciples “along the road to Emmaus” after the resurrection. The sense I get is they prefer to be entertained, but don't want to think/share their interpretations, insights. It would be awesome if they could ask questions!

Suggested topics by other participants:

- The Life of Francis and Clare, their love of Jesus and the Rules need to be continued on a regular basis;
- Recruitment; and
- Need to prioritize the day that your Fraternity gathers.

The Regional Annual Meeting

continued

Annual Meetings, which Ministers are obligated to attend, but to which all others are welcome:

	Ministers/Delegates	Others
Keep the schedule as it is (one day in November)	16	14
Go to a weekend format, combining the annual meeting with a formation workshop	4	4
Move the annual meeting to one day in the Spring	4	4
 Preference for Retreat or Semi-Annual day of Recollection		
A semi-annual Day of Recollection	12	11
Weekend Regional retreat	10	9
An Annual Day of Recollection	1	

Gifts to Share - there were many sisters and brothers willing to share their gifts through music, prayer service preparation, serving as lectors or extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist; hospitality or wherever needed. We are so very grateful for their offers to serve.

A Prayer to St. Francis for Healing

Oh, Holy St. Francis, most joyful of all saints, your love for God and His church made you worthy, when on earth, to be the founder of your three orders. So filled with the love of God, your joy and hope caused others to follow your way in following Our Lord by living the Holy Gospel. We implore you, for the love of God, to obtain a healing for the one reading this prayer. As you kissed the leper, please kiss this illness and bring it to an end, not only for this person but for all who suffer in the same way. O loving Saint Francis, whisper this petition to the baby Jesus in the crèche and to Jesus on the San Damiano Cross. As He spoke to you, speak now to Jesus and the gratitude of our hearts will be yours forever.



O Antiphons for Winter

We have received a suggestion to include a Question and Answer section in this newsletter.

If you have a question concerning our Order, any Council position, Formation, or any question at all that you would like to see discussed here, contact Kate Kleinert, OFS, at kkleinert@msn.com

Have you read a book concerning our Order, St. Francis or our Faith that you would like to recommend? Let us know!

If there is any topic you would like to see explored here, just say the word. Until our next issue, Peace and all Good!

O frosty season, Come!
Come etch your face onto
our windowpane.
Light a candle in our hearts each
morning.
Reveal to us the beauty of waiting
in the darkness.
Keep vigil with us in this nurturing
season.
O Come!



O season of the sheltered seed,
Come! Come call us to be the
guardians of life.
Smile through the darkness of long
nights.
Remind us that each seed needs a
winter.
Invite us to trust what is shrouded in
mystery.
O Come!



O season of the long darkness,
Come! Come with your misty grey
cloak.
Cast your dark robe over all that
needs sleep.
Protect us in the night.
O come!



O wise season of reflection,
Come! Come with your teachable
moments.

Summon our spiritual strength.
Invoke our interior silence.
Heal our reluctance to wait for
spring.
O Come!

