

LA TILMA

NEWSLETTER OF OUR LADY OF GUADLUPE
EMPRESS OF THE AMERICAS REGION #75

Summer 2023

“Listen, discern, go Forth”



Message from Regional Minister Sofia U. Villarreal, OFS

Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Francis and Clare:

As I begin my message to you, I would like to quote 2 John 1:12, “I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper. Instead, I hope to come to visit you soon and talk with you face to face ...”

In this period of serving as your regional minister, I assure you that we, the Regional Executive Council, have worked as a team to accomplish all that we have been able to, for the good of our beloved Region. Next month we will have our elections on Sept. 22-24, and I pray that we are all ready to say YES to our calling as servant leaders.

This Region which is led by our Blessed Mother Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Holy Spirit and the inspiration of Our Seraphic father, St. Francis, is now giving us a chance to be his instruments and has been preparing us for this event. I (we) know only faith and God can help us take that step to our next chapter in life.

This month of August, if we look at it, is in celebration of our Blessed Mother Mary and dedicated to her, especially on the 15th, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the 22nd, the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary and so on. Please celebrate this month in your hearts and know she will lead us to her son, Jesus. There are some words that come to my mind that she always tells us, “Do not to be afraid, take courage and go forth”, which follows our Theme of “Listen, Discern, Go Forth”. Dear family, this is what we will be doing next month at our elections. May the Holy Spirit guide and give us the wisdom to know His will in the election of our new regional council. God bless you all.

Your sister,
Sofia U. Villarreal, OFS
Regional Minister





MESSAGE/GREETINGS
Brother Gordon, O.F.M.
Provincial-Regional Spiritual Assistant

Dearest sisters and brothers in St. Francis, for some weeks now, the Gospel proclamations at Sunday Mass have been taken from the writings of the evangelist Matthew and those passages relating to parables about planting, growing, harvesting, and baking.

For this month's *La Tilma*, I feel called to reflect upon Matt. 13:28. In this verse, Jesus stated that the "kingdom of Heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

I'll use the "flour" as an example of everyday life. That is, much of what we do day in and day out is morally neutral or mundane—it's neither good nor bad. For example: preparing and eating breakfast, getting ready for the day, using the phone, catching up on chores or the newspaper, exercising, reading *La Tilma*, watching TV, driving, shopping, even going to church, and the Franciscan Gathering, *etc., etc., etc.*

I'll use the yeast as an example for Franciscan-Christianity. Hopefully, you see my point. The blessing we continue to receive in living the call of the Gospels, we Franciscans *should* be as leaven (and "salt"—Matt. 5:13) to the Fraternity and all others. Remember to embrace the concept of accepting the responsibility of Franciscan-Christianity soon after our feet touch the floor as we get out of bed. We don't know what challenges await us outside our homes (or *within* them for that matter).

I suppose the opposite analogy of being good leaven is being a "bad apple." Think about it. It doesn't have to be (and *usually* isn't) a constant state or temperament. But being a spoiled or bland member, especially at a Fraternity Gathering, is unhealthy for the fraternity.

If a sour or bland attitude continues, the recipe for "living from Gospel to life and life to Gospel" has an increasingly bad effect on the membership. Collectively, *WE* are "the salt of the earth." But, *individually* imagine each of us as a spice. So, if the Spice of Sally, or the Spice of Henry, or the Spice of Sue, or Billy go bad (or missing), the recipe for a witnessing fraternity will ruin itself. We are each "called by name" (Isa. 43:1c) for a life-giving reason.

In the midst of these hottest days of summer, may we help to contribute toward the wonderful gift of being a serving Franciscan sister or brother to each other.

With Christ through Francis,
Br. Gordon Boykin, O.F.M.
— Prov.-Rgn'l. Spiritual Assistant



MESSAGE/GREETINGS
Gigi Gregory, OFS
Regional Vice-Minister

Most of you know how much I love you all. Serving as your Regional Vice-Minister has been a pleasure and one of the highlights of my life. Getting to know you on a personal level has brought you closer to my heart. You are indeed, my brothers and sisters!

You and I have "walked" together through many journeys. Truly walking as Franciscans together has enriched my life with many special unspoken treasures.

One treasure has been to be open to servant leadership. Many of you might know that soon after I was professed, I was elected secretary of my local fraternity. Now that was a journey! My inexperience meant I had to "grow" into the position. But God is good.

It seems I have served at the pleasure of Our Lord since then. I am truly grateful on how serving has brought joy, enhanced learning experiences, and let's not forget the challenges! Without a doubt working through the challenges has brought me the most spiritual growth.



We have enjoyed events together, for example: Elections, Visitations, Professions, Epiphany Celebrations, Workshops, Special Presentations, Franciscan Order celebrations, the "Q", Chapter meetings and on and on. But I would like to think as Robert Browning once said "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be ..." I believe that is what we promised each other when we professed. We will continue our journey together with the guidance of the Rule, General Constitutions, National Statutes and the love we share as Franciscans.

The best is yet to be!

Your Regional Vice-Minister,
gigi gregory, OFS

REGIONAL FORMATION by Carmen Aguilar, OFS



Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome to the Formation Section in this issue of *“LaTilma,”* our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas #75 Bulletin. Today, I want to bring to your attention the Introduction that our National Bulletin the *Tau-USA* has about what our Secular Franciscan Formation is.

Many of you might say that you already know what it is, but I think it is always good to remember that we are continuously being formed or “transformed” if we allow God to do the work in us. Let’s appreciate the efforts that our Formation Team members are doing to provide us with what they are given for us. Even if you “already know” what is being presented to you, the Holy Spirit always has something new for each one of us. We can compare it to the *Lectio Divina* where you read part of the Holy Scripture and you let the text do its work with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. May we all open our heart, our mind and our whole being so that we are docile as St. Francis of Assisi was.

Peace and All Good to You All!

Carmen Aguilar, OFS
Regional Formation Director

Introduction to Secular Franciscan Formation: [1]

Our model is St. Francis who “was a man in permanent formation: “Let us begin, brothers and sisters, to serve the Lord our God [2] He was a master of Gospel life and through his example, his rule and his teachings: ”He gave a Rule of life to all and indicated the way of salvation to each one according to his own situation’,[3]

“To form” means to give form to, to mold something or some person according to a model or vision, using the necessary and suitable means to attain that purpose. In our case, “to form” concerns a person as a being, perfectible up to the end of his life, by means of education, teaching and example. Formation includes *“transformation”* which is **allowing the Holy Spirit**, the actual formator, to transform our lives to become an “altus christos” or another face of Christ to others.

In this context, formation is to help brothers and sisters to discover the novelty and vitality in their own call as a gift of the Spirit in following Jesus in the manner of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Ongoing Formation

Ongoing Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order is **lifelong and continuous**, with the purpose of offering Secular Franciscans an ever growing richer and intensive spiritual life, accompanying them in their faith path, to **consolidate their Franciscan discipleship**, updating it continually in line with the teaching of the Church and to allow it to evolve in the daily interchange with our Society.” Ongoing formation takes place at all levels of the Order: the local fraternity, the regional fraternity, the national fraternity and the international fraternity.

[1] The Presidency of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, “Guidelines for the Formation of the SFO,” Rome, 2001.

[2] LM 1, 1.

[3] IC 37.

Hermanos y Hermanas,

Bienvenidos a la Sección de Formación en esta edición de "*La Tilma,*" Boletín de la Región de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Emperatriz de las Américas #75. Hoy, quiero traer a su atención la Introducción que nuestro Boletín Nacional la *Tau-USA* tiene sobre lo que es nuestra Formación Franciscana Seglar.

Muchos de ustedes dirán que ya saben lo que es, pero creo que siempre es bueno recordar que continuamente estamos siendo formados o "transformados" si permitimos que Dios haga el trabajo en nosotros. Agradecemos los esfuerzos que hacen los miembros del Equipo de Formación de nuestra Fraternidad para proporcionarnos lo que se les da para nosotros. Aunque "ya sepamos" lo que se nos presenta, el Espíritu Santo siempre tiene algo nuevo para cada uno de nosotros. Podemos compararlo con la *Lectio Divina* donde lees parte de la Sagrada Escritura y dejas que el texto haga su trabajo con la inspiración del Espíritu Santo. Que todos abramos nuestro corazón, nuestra mente y todo nuestro ser para que seamos dóciles como lo fue San Francisco de Asís.

¡Paz y Bien a todos!

Carmen Aguilar, OFS

Directora Regional de Formación

Introducción a la Formación Franciscana Seglar: [1]

Nuestro modelo es San Francisco que "fue un hombre en formación permanente:" "Comencemos, hermanos y hermanas, a servir al Señor nuestro Dios [2] Francisco fue un maestro de vida evangélica y con su ejemplo, su Regla y sus enseñanzas: "Dio a todos una Regla de vida e indicó a cada uno el camino de la salvación según su propia situación"[3].

"Formar" significa dar forma, moldear algo o a alguna persona según un modelo o visión, utilizando los medios necesarios y adecuados para alcanzar ese fin. En nuestro caso, "formar" se refiere a la persona como ser, perfectible hasta el final de su vida, mediante la educación, la enseñanza y el ejemplo. La formación incluye la "**transformación,**" que es permitir que el **Espíritu Santo**, el verdadero formador, transforme nuestras vidas para convertirnos en un "altus christos" u otro rostro de Cristo para los demás.

En este contexto, la formación consiste en ayudar a los hermanos y hermanas a descubrir la novedad y la vitalidad de su propio llamado como don del Espíritu en el seguimiento de Jesús a la manera de San Francisco de Asís.

Formación Permanente

La Formación Permanente en la Orden Franciscana Seglar es **permanente y continua**, con el fin de ofrecer a los Franciscanos Seglares una **vida espiritual** cada vez más rica e intensa, acompañándolos en su camino de fe, para **consolidar su discipulado Franciscano**, actualizándolo continuamente en línea con la enseñanza de la Iglesia y para permitirle evolucionar en el intercambio diario con nuestra Sociedad." La formación permanente tiene lugar en todos los niveles de la Orden: la Fraternidad Local, la Fraternidad Regional, la Fraternidad Nacional y la Fraternidad Internacional.

[1] Presidencia del Consejo Internacional de la Orden Franciscana Seglar, "Orientaciones para la formación de la OFS", Roma, 2001.

[2] LM 1, 1.

[3] IC 37..



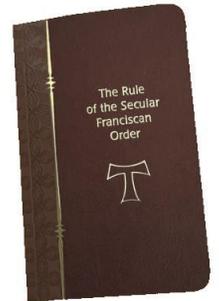
The following prayer “Praying The Rule” was taken from the Prayers For Fraternal Life section of the OFS USA website. The Spanish version of this prayer follows on the next page. It was translated by our sister Magdalena Chavez of Inmaculado Corazon de Maria Fraternity #133.

PRAYING THE RULE

O Lord, our God, we intend to make present the charism of our Seraphic Father Francis in the life and mission of the Church, in various ways and forms but in life-giving union with one another. By our profession, we pledge ourselves to live the Gospel in the manner of St. Francis by means of our Rule approved by the Church (Arts. 1-3).

Help us, we pray, so that daily we may:

- observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis, going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel (Art. 4);
- seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in our brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church and in the liturgical activity (Art. 5);
- go forth as witnesses and instruments of the Church’s mission among people, proclaiming Christ by our life and words (Art. 6);
- conform our thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by the radical interior change which the Gospel calls “conversion,” making use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation on the way to renewal (Art. 7);
- let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all we are and do (Art. 8);
- imitate the Virgin Mary’s complete self-giving in her openness to the Lord’s every word and call (Art. 9);
- fulfill faithfully the duties proper to our various circumstances in life (Art. 10);
- seek the proper spirit of detachment and purify our hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power (Art. 11);
- acquire the purity of heart needed to set ourselves free to love God and our brothers and sisters (Art. 12);
- accept all people as your gift, Lord, and an image of Christ (Art. 13);
- exercise our responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service (Art. 14);
- be in the forefront of promoting justice by the testimony of our human lives and by courageous initiatives (Art. 15);
- esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption and service of the human community (Art. 16);
- cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for life in our families, striving to make it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ (Art. 17);
- respect all creatures, animate and inanimate “as bearing the imprint of the Most High” (Art. 18);
- be bearers of peace and messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance as, immersed in the resurrection of Christ, we serenely tend towards Sister Death and our ultimate encounter with you, our Father (Art 19).



All this we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Brother. Amen.

[Proposed by Cyndy Garwood, O.F.S., adapted from Fr. Liam McCarthy, O.F.M. by Deacon Dave & Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., Revised July 2017]

La siguiente oración "Orar La Regla" fue tomada de la sección Oraciones por la Vida Fraterna del sitio web de OFS USA. Esta versión en español fue traducido por nuestra hermana Magdalena Chávez de la Fraternidad Inmaculado Corazón de María #133.

ORAR LA REGLA

Oh Señor, Dios nuestro, queremos hacer presente el carisma de nuestro Seráfico Padre Francisco en la vida y misión de la Iglesia, de diversas maneras y formas, pero en unión vivificante entre nosotros. Por nuestra profesión, nos comprometemos a vivir el Evangelio a la manera de San Francisco por medio de nuestra Regla aprobada por la Iglesia (Arts. 1-3).

Ayúdanos, te rogamos, para que todos los días podamos:

- observar el evangelio de nuestro Señor Jesucristo siguiendo el ejemplo de san Francisco, yendo del evangelio a la vida y de la vida al evangelio (art. 4);
- buscar el encuentro con la persona viva y activa de Jesucristo en nuestros hermanos y hermanas, en la Sagrada Escritura, en la Iglesia y en la Eucaristía (Art. 5);
- salir como testigos e instrumentos de la misión de la Iglesia entre los hombres, anunciando a Cristo con nuestra vida y palabras (Art. 6);
- conformar nuestros pensamientos y obras a los de Cristo por el cambio interior radical que el Evangelio llama "conversión", sirviéndose del sacramento de la reconciliación en el camino de la renovación (Art. 7);
- que la oración y la contemplación sean el alma de todo lo que somos y hacemos (Art. 8);
- imitar la entrega total de la Virgen María en su apertura a cada palabra y llamada vuestra (Art. 9);
- cumplir fielmente los deberes propios de nuestras diversas circunstancias de vida (art. 10);
- buscar el propio espíritu de desprendimiento y purificar nuestro corazón de toda tendencia y anhelo de posesión y poder (Art. 11);
- adquirir la pureza de corazón necesaria para liberarnos para amar a Dios ya nuestros hermanos y hermanas (Art. 12);
- aceptar a todas las personas como tu don, Señor, e imagen de Cristo (Art. 13);
- ejercer nuestras responsabilidades competentemente en el espíritu cristiano de servicio (Art. 14);
- estar a la vanguardia de la promoción de la justicia con el testimonio de nuestra vida humana y con iniciativas valientes (Art. 15);
- estimar el trabajo como don y como participación en la creación, redención y servicio de la comunidad humana (Art. 16);
- cultivar el espíritu franciscano de paz, fidelidad y respeto por la vida en nuestras familias, procurando que sea signo de un mundo ya renovado en Cristo (Art. 17);
- respetar a todas las criaturas, animadas e inanimadas "como portadoras de la impronta del Altísimo" (Art. 18);
- ser portadores de paz y mensajeros de perfecta alegría en toda circunstancia, como sumergidos en la resurrección de Cristo, nos dirigimos serenamente hacia la Hermana Muerte y hacia nuestro último encuentro contigo, Padre nuestro (Art 19).



Todo esto te lo pedimos por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor y Hermano. AMÉN

[Propuesto por Cyndy Garwood, O.F.S., adaptado del P. Liam McCarthy, O.F.M. por el diácono Dave y Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., Revisado en julio de 2017]



Regional Multicultural Representative
Lita Pino, OFS

"EVERYBODY IN NEW MEXICO IS RELATED"

The above term has been used by me and others many, many times.

Recently I found out I have a 75-year-old nephew I didn't know about. So, I remembered the aforementioned term. I started checking things out and found out it is not just New Mexicans that are all related. The term I'll have to change to is "all south westerners are related". I have found relatives in northern California, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, etc.

This experience has opened my eyes to what relations do to our ancestry. I appreciate what modern technology does because without it I wouldn't have inherited my new family. My nephew, daughter, and two grandchildren visited us recently. I am the only surviving aunt that he knows of. It was wonderful. It seemed as if we had always known each other.

Our story has a happy ending. My nephew had wonderful adoptive parents and he is happy to have found two half-sisters, an aunt, and several cousins.

When comparing notes, my newfound grandniece and I found that some of my close relatives live in her California town and surrounding area. We laughed, because of modern technology her children will avoid marrying their cousins. Even her auto mechanic's wife is her newfound cousin. I find that anytime I am communicating with strangers, I find relatives. This goes to show that my theory was wrong! So much for "everyone in New Mexico is related!!!!"

Lita B. Pino, OFS
Espiritu Santo Fraternity #133
Albuquerque, NM

News From Our Fraternities

Fire of Assisi (forming group) #10002 – Gallup, NM

Profession Ceremony – May 21, 2023



The forming group Fire of Assisi joyfully celebrated the Profession of two new sisters, Olga Velez and Yolanda Chavez. Yolanda is pictured in the center of the front row and Olga is pictured in the center of the back row below the San Damiano crucifix.



Our Lady of Guadalupe Region is their sponsoring fraternity and Regional Minister Sofia Villarreal received Olga and Yolanda's profession. Pictured with the members of the Fire of Assisi forming group are Reg. Minister Sofia Villarreal standing to the left of Provincial/Reg. Spiritual Assistant Br. Gordon Boykin, and professed members from St. Patrick, Sagrado Corazon de Jesus and Inmaculado Corazon de Maria fraternities who travelled to Gallup, NM, to celebrate with the brothers and sisters of Fire of Assisi.

St. Anthony Fraternity #101 – Albuquerque, NM

St. Anthony Fraternity held a Welcoming Ceremony for six new Inquirers on June 25, 2023, at “A Becoming Place”, the Provincial Archive and Retreat Center in Albuquerque, NM.



Minister Israela Garcia presides at the **Welcoming Ceremony** for the new Inquirers; **Left to right:** Reina Romero, Martha Ramirez, Geri Blanco, Israela Garcia, Ann Sims, Lisa Barczak, Lisa Trujillo

Also present at the **Welcoming Ceremony** were Mary Dean, Minister of St. Francis Fraternity #121 in Santa Fe and Luz Elena Tena, Minister of Espiritu Santo Fraternity #133 in Albuquerque. They are pictured here to the right of Israela Garcia and Br. Gordon Boykin.

Mary Dean was instrumental in the introduction of Inquirer Reina Romero to St. Anthony Fraternity.



St. Anthony Fraternity initiates an additional year of “Ongoing Formation for the Newly Professed” by Linda Williams, OFS and Frances Lucero, OFS

Our Formation Director Rena Xuereb along with our Formators Marilyn Migliarini, Carol Ann and Ed Dzienis have been providing an awesome formation for us here at St. Anthony Fraternity in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

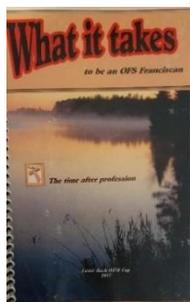
After four plus years, I thought that my formal formation was complete, but I was wrong. Rena informed our group that there was another year needed to recap what we had learned. This additional year was to enable us to use the rule St. Francis gave us and share his gift with others.

As a result of Rena’s suggestion, three of our newly professed groups: Consuelo Chavez, Felis Otero-Armijo (Professed 2018) Regina Lubeck, Frances Lucero, (2020), Bill Parras, Linda Williams (2022) merged to join the class. We met once every four months for a year to read and discuss Lester Bach’s book, “What it takes to be an OFS Franciscan.” This year enabled us to work together and get to know each other better.

It is one thing to know the rule and other components of our Secular Franciscan vocation, but another thing to know how to put into practice our given gifts with others. In L. Bach’s words, “Special growth and integration of the Rule in daily life is a necessity.”

We are extremely grateful for our Secular Franciscan formation and the support from our St. Anthony Fraternity.

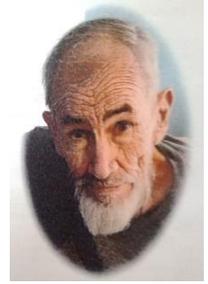
Based on our experience during this additional year we recommend that all Fraternities with newly professed Franciscans use the “What it takes to be an OFS Franciscan” book to strengthen vocations. In addition, the *General Constitutions - Article 44.2* states: “The fraternity has the duty to give *special attention* to the formation of the newly professed and of the temporarily professed, to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging”.



Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap, has provided the textbook: **What is Takes to be an OFS Franciscan- The time after profession** (image on left). The textbook includes seven Chapters on elements of our Franciscan spirituality with discussion questions. It can be purchased through Smoky Valley Printing, PO Box 189, Lindsborg, KS 67456 Phone: 785-227-2364 Email: svprinting2364@gmail.com

St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity #104 – Carlsbad, NM

St. Margaret of Cortona fraternity had planned for a Profession Ceremony for our brother Tony Lopez on July 22, 2023, but sadly had to cancel it. Tony had recently been diagnosed with Leukemia and was in Wichita, Kansas, with his son and too ill to make his profession. The fraternity instead had a healing Mass for him at San Jose Catholic Church in Carlsbad, NM.



Our brother Tony passed on to eternal life the following day on July 23, 2023.



Along with the members of St. Margaret of Cortona fraternity, those in attendance at the Mass were Regional Minister Sofia Villarreal, Regional Vice-Minister Gigi Gregory and Regional Councilor Pedro Alvarez of El Paso, TX.



Also in attendance at the Mass was National Minister Jane DeRose-Bamman of St. Francis Fraternity #119 in Roswell, NM, pictured here with Fraternity Minister Lupe Galindo and Regional Minister Sofia Villarreal.



Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity #113 – Las Cruces, NM



Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity joyfully celebrated the Profession of Antoinette Bencomo and Sandra Bustos at Holy Cross Retreat Center on May 7, 2023

A reception was held after Mass in the dining hall. There were many guests present including members from other fraternities.



Newly professed Sandra Bustos, on right, with family at reception



Arturo Villarreal, OFS and Richard Payares, candidate, of St. Patrick Fraternity at the reception



Donna Hollis, Natl. Councilor and member of Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity, pictured above serving cake to the guests

St. Francis Fraternity #119 (Roswell, NM)

104 Years and Still Giving... BLANCHE HORTENCIA ORTEGA STEPHENS, OFS
by Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS

Born: February 24, 1919
Professed: October 21, 1984
Entered Eternal Life: May 23, 2023



This woman was petite, but feisty. She lived 104 years and the length of her obituary showed it. She was unwavering in many things...but especially about her faith and her care for doing what is right.

Blanche Stephens, OFS, was a member of St. Francis Fraternity in Roswell, New Mexico. She was one of the original “YouFRA” in NM, as she professed to live the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order in her early teens when the pastor (a Franciscan) started working with the youth of the parish to make sure they stayed out of trouble. Later, she reconfirmed her profession in 1984, when she was 65 years old. She lived her vocation most keenly for nearly 40 years.

She fulfilled the Rule in many ways. She was active in politics – mostly to assist those who didn’t have a voice. She served as a City Councilor. A business woman who built her own beauty school, she started her career in the 1940’s. Amazing for a woman, let alone a woman of Hispanic ethnicity in that time in history. She wasn’t deterred. She maintained her cosmetology license until she was well into her 90’s. She was a role model and taught so much more to her students, co-workers and clients. We can do anything you set your minds to!

She was active in spreading the faith. She was involved with the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). This is where she met several people and would recruit them to the OFS. In fact, our current minister, Barbara Barrows-Stulce, OFS, was drawn to the OFS after her confirmation.

She was active in spreading the joy of the Gospel even in the most difficult times. At her funeral, the funeral director shared that he postponed his vacation two days when he found out the date of Blanche’s services. He recounted that Blanche would come to the funeral home for her clients. She would go into the embalming room to style the hair of the deceased clients so that the families would have a wonderful lasting remembrance of their loved ones.



Her daughter, Yolanda, also a cosmetologist, styled Blanche’s hair for her last farewell. It was such a beautiful sign of love for her mother. Blanche truly looked beautiful. Our sister is now resting comfortable with Our Lord, Our Lady, St. Francis, St. Clare and all the saints. Our beautiful, loving sister who wouldn’t take “no” for an answer, is interceding for us now. Thank you, dear Blanche!

Mary Immaculate Fraternity #106 – El Paso, TX

“Come and See” Event and Celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel – July 16, 2023

Members of Mary Immaculate fraternity gathered at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church on the occasion of the patronal feast day of the church to join in the celebration and convey a “Come and See” message to the parishioners attending Mass. They participated in the procession from the old Mission to the new church before every Mass beginning at 7:00am and ending at 2:00pm. After each Mass, some of the members would be present at the entrance to the church to greet the people as they were exiting the church and pass out “Come and See” brochures to them. Other members were present in the church hall for the reception where the fraternity had a table set up with information about the OFS. Terry Craig, OFS, graciously allowed us to display the beautiful quilt that she won in the raffle at “The Q” in Phoenix last September. It helped draw the people’s attention to our table. We received several responses from interested inquirers. We hope they will “come and see” what the OFS is all about.



Members of Mary Immaculate Fraternity carrying the banner and participating in the procession before each Mass of the day



Mariachi 'las mañanitas' serenade to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at the first Mass



Matachines!

Gigi Gregory at Mass



Members of Mary Immaculate fraternity with Pastor Fr. Miguel Briseño, OFM Conv.



Members of Mary Immaculate fraternity with Spiritual Assistant Fr. Juan Zuniga-Lopez, OFM Conv.



Bonnie Franco, Mary Ellen Vega, Percy Navarrette, Keely McDonald and David Akers



Grace Akers, Keely McDonald and Gigi Gregory



Grace Akers, Percy Navarrette, David Akers and Pedro Alvarez at the OFS table

Fraternidad Sagrado Corazon de Jesus #108 – El Paso, TX

Fraternity Elections Held On August 6, 2023



Fraternity elections were conducted at Roger Bacon Franciscan Seminary. Pictured above with Presider Gigi Gregory, Regional Vice-Minister, on right, is the newly elected council. **L to R:** Flora Guzman, Councilor2; Amada Ibarra, Councilor1; Maria Elena Montes, Formation Director; Veronica Garcia, Treasurer; Julieta Lopez, Secretary; Norma Maldonado, Vice-Minister and Susana Beltran, Minister

Saint Juan Diego Fraternity # 129 – Lubbock, TX

Sister Mary Ann Is Here!

Saint Juan Diego Fraternity feels so blessed to announce that Sister Mary Ann Mishurda, OSF, former Spiritual Assistant of the fraternity, arrived back in Texas on Aug. 9th for 2 weeks. She will be visiting the fraternity and St. John Neumann church families, as well as her many, many friends in Lubbock. Sister currently resides in community with other sisters of her order, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities in Warrendale, PA, outside of Pittsburgh.



She is pictured here on her arrival at the Lubbock airport with **L to R:** Sr. Jenna Chang, Roland Moreira, Bob Miller and Lanell Ramos



Sr. Mary Ann leading ongoing formation for the fraternity

Saint Juan Diego Fraternity # 129 – Lubbock, TX

The Journey of Hazel Vas – May 21, 2023 by Lanell Ramos, OFS, Minister



Lanell Ramos, Hazel Vas and Elizabeth Trevino

Hazel Vas was to be in our last formation group that professed on February 11th of this year. She had gone through 2/3 of the formation process when COVID interrupted just about everything. She had even been able to attend the ceremony marking their transition from Inquiry to Candidacy, because we Zoomed that out to the rest of the fraternity and just the candidates and the council were physically in attendance. That was in early 2021. Hazel was 89 at that time and had been diagnosed with throat cancer shortly thereafter and began to undergo radiation treatments. These compromised her immune system and of course, made her extremely tired. Her breathing was also affected so since that time, she has been on oxygen.

After she entered Candidacy, we worked to continue formation with Hazel, as we were doing formation with her classmates by Zoom for a time, but at times there was difficulty contacting her son, Alan, and the scheduling did not work out for her, as she would nap periodically during the day. Her family, as you can imagine, was and has been extremely protective of her, especially after Covid, the cancer, and radiation therapy. So, even formation at her home was difficult to complete. As the day of profession approached, Elizabeth Treviño, who had developed a very close relationship with Hazel and her son, Alan, during her time as minister, had to explain that even if we were able to now complete her formation process, she would not be able to profess alone; it had to be done in community. Hazel and Alan discussed how that would truly be impossible for her. Hazel was sad and disappointed, but she understood and accepted the decision.

Hazel's lifelong wish had been to become a Franciscan like her mother and grandmother before her. She was faithful in her attendance of formation classes and very excited at the prospect of becoming a Secular Franciscan in our fraternity. The unforeseen circumstances of Covid and cancer diagnosis prevented her from realizing that dream. The fraternity, in preparation for the profession day and in hopes that she would ultimately be able to profess, had purchased a Tau for her along with the others. So, our Council, earlier this year, after the profession of her class and then some discussion, decided in charity and with love, that we would at some point try to have a ceremony where we would present her with the Tau, and she would at the very least be considered an Associate of our fraternity. Yesterday, that presentation became a reality when Elizabeth and I went to the home of Hazel, who turned 91 on May 3rd, and we were able to Zoom this celebration with the rest of the fraternity. I have to say that it was a tremendous gift for me personally, for Elizabeth, and the rest of our fraternity to witness this. I was so very touched and moved by the tears in her eyes and that beautiful, beaming smile that lit up her face. It was such a happy afternoon for her! I know that St. Francis had to have felt the same as we. Above are some pictures of our time with Hazel yesterday.

A Personal Pilgrimage To Canton, OH – April 2023 by Lanell Ramos, OFS, Minister

In early April this year, a 10-minute EWTN video caught my eye. It told of a miraculous healing that had taken place after a visit to the home of Rhoda Wise in Canton, OH. For years, I have been praying for a dear friend of mine who has a progressive lung disease that is life-threatening, so I watched the video with interest. The video features the miraculous healing of a man who had stage 4 cancer and was given 6 months to live. His wife traveled to the home of Rhoda Wise to pray for him after hearing about the miracles occurring through Rhoda's intercession. The wife took an old ratty shirt of her husband's, placed it on the chair where Rhoda Wise had said that Jesus sat when He appeared to her, knelt down, and prayed an Our Father. When she returned home, she placed that shirt next to her husband as he lay in his bed. Almost immediately, he got out of bed, walked around and told her that he was hungry and wanted to get something to eat. He is alive and enjoying his family to this day, though he still takes some medication.

This miracle, is now being offered to forward the canonization process of Rhoda Wise, who has been declared by the Church as a Servant of God. During Wise's life, some 300–500 people a week came to her home seeking help, and many additional healings were reported, just as Jesus had promised her would happen.

After watching this amazing and exciting video, I decided right away that I was going to go to Canton and pray for my friend. I wanted to step out in faith for my friend and leave the outcome to the Good Lord.

Canton is also the hometown of Mother Angelica who was healed of a debilitating stomach ailment when she was 18 years old through the intercession of Rhoda Wise. After her healing, Mother Angelica, who was known as Rita Rizzo at the time, spent the next few years volunteering at the Wise home helping with all the pilgrims because they were having thousands of pilgrims coming through there, and at the same time learning about the faith from Rhoda. "That was the absolute turning point in her life. Completely changed her life," according to Barbara Gaskell, director of the Mother Angelica Museum in Canton which I also visited.

Rhoda Wise's home still remains, having been willed to Mother Angelica and EWTN and later deeded to the Rhoda Wise Shrine. Today, the [Rhoda Wise House](#) includes exhibits and a prayer grotto. Included here are pictures of the Rhoda Wise Home before and today, the altar that Rhoda Wise's husband built for her, pictures of blood-stained clothing from the stigmata she received, the chair where Jesus sat, and the grotto of the Sacred Heart. I took with me many, many petitions for healing when I went to Canton. I placed pictures, a scapular, articles of clothing, as well as the sheet of petitions from our fraternity on that chair where Jesus sat. I marveled at the stories the guides shared about different healings that had occurred over the years. I had some beautiful encounters on the way, and only God knows what He has done and continues to do with all those petitions from my trip, but I am thankful, so very thankful for the journey!



Rhoda Wise home as it was



Rhoda Wise home today



The chair next to Rhoda's bed where Jesus sat



Altar that Rhoda's husband built



Sacred Heart & Little Flower



Blood-stained clothing from stigmata

Inmaculado Corazon de Maria Fraternity #135 – El Paso, TX
Attendance At The Ordination Mass For New Franciscan Priests

On June 29, 2023, Minister Leticia Briones, OFS, Margarita Sigala, OFS, and Irene Sotelo, OFS, were present for the Ordination Mass of Friar Ivan González Caro, OFM, and Friar Asunción Xicoténcat Jiménez, OFM, at Templo Santuario y Parroquia de Santiago Apóstol in Coroneo, Guanajuato, Mexico. These friars belong to the Franciscan Province of San Pedro y San Pablo de Michoacán and studied at St. Anthony Seminary in El Paso, Texas, where the fraternity of Inmaculado Corazon de Maria meets.



PROVINCIA FRANCISCANA DE
SAN PEDRO Y SAN PABLO DE MICHOACÁN

*Tiene el honor de invitar
a la*

**ORDENACIÓN
SACERDOTAL**

DE SU HIJO

Fr. Jesús Iván González Caro, OFM

JUEVES | HORA
29 JUNIO | 12:00 PM

TEMPLO SANTUARIO Y PARROQUIA DE SANTIAGO APÓSTOL,
CORONEO, GTO

POR LA IMPOSICIÓN DE MANOS DE MONS. FIDENCIO LÓPEZ PLAZA,
OBISPO DE LA DIÓCESIS DE QUERÉTARO

f TRANSMISIÓN EN VIVO: SANTUARIO-PARROQUIA DE SANTIAGO APÓSTOL

CANTAMISA

LUNES | HORA
10 JULIO | 6:00 PM

PARROQUIA SAN JERÓNIMO CD. ALDAMA, CHIH.

f TRANSMISIÓN EN VIVO: PARROQUIA DE SAN JERÓNIMO

RECEPCIÓN DE LA VENERABLE IMAGEN DE
NTRA. SRA. DE EL PUEBLITO 5:15PM EN EL JARDÍN PRINCIPAL

OFM
Ordenes de Frades Menores



Took a side trip to visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City

Leticia, Obispo Fidencio López Plaza, Fray Asunción and Margarita with grandson

Nuestra Señora del Pueblito, patroness of the Franciscan Province of San Pedro y San Pablo de Michoacán



L to R: Presider Gigi Gregory, Reg. Vice-Minister; Secretary of Elections Alma Rodriguez; Friar Witness Br. Gordon Boykin, OFM, Reg. Spiritual Assistant

Inmaculado Corazon de Maria Fraternity #135 had elections on August 20, 2023. Pictured above is the newly elected council. **L to R:** Br. Gordon Boykin, OFM, Reg. Spiritual Assistant; Esther Perez, Councilor; Dana Oshiro, Councilor; Leticia Ramirez, Minister; Rosalva Romero, Formation Director; Alejandra Franco, Treasurer; Patricia Terrazas, Vice-Minister; Margarita Sigala, Secretary; Fr. Emilio Flores, Fraternity Spiritual Assistant; Gigi Gregory, Reg. Vice-Minister

Farewell Luncheon For Fr. Alberto Hernandez, OFM

Members of Sagrado Corazon de Jesus Fraternity #108, San Luis Rey Fraternity #128 and Inmaculado Corazon de Maria Fraternity #135, Br. Gordon Boykin, Reg. Spiritual Assistant and Gigi Gregory, Reg. Vice-Minister attended farewell luncheons at Roger Bacon Seminary on August 6th and 20th, 2023, for Fr. Alberto Hernandez, Spiritual Assistant for Sagrado Corazon de Jesus Fraternity in El Paso, Texas.



The National JPIC Retreat – “Being Christ” by *Diane Pyle, OFS*



Dear Brothers and Sisters of Our Lady of Guadalupe Region #75,

The National JPIC Workshop/Retreat was held in St. Louis, MO, at the Divine Mercy Conference and Retreat Center on May 4-7, 2023. I would like to share with you not just what took place, but how it impacted me on a personal level. I was very nervous and excited about going to St. Louis, Mo. As I was preparing for this trip on short notice, I had a sense as if God was testing me. Testing my love for Him, and my trust in Him. I felt as if I was blinded to where I was going and what was expected of me. To my surprise on Thursday night, I met Susan Tabor OFS, who is blind. Watching her faith in those around her to help in activities of daily life made me realize how I need to trust others more. I don't have to do it all by myself. One of the most important things I learned is, God gave me brothers and sisters. I need to do what is mine to do, and you need to do what is yours to do.

Through the weekend we focused on our **National Theme: Listen, Discern, Go Forth**. Thursday night we ate dinner together and then did formal introductions with relationship building and discussed the agenda. On Friday morning we started with Breakfast and then did a Metetatio reflection with discussion. Next we listened to Carolyn Townes, OFS give some reflection on Listening. She split us up in small groups to share our thoughts on what some obstacles are to listening and how to overcome them. In my small group were RoseMarie LeClercq OFS, Mike Huck OFS, and Edd Ringlein OFS. We came back together as a whole to have a group discussion. Then we had some time for personal reflection and meditation. The rest of the weekend went like this after the Discern and Go Forth sessions. We ended each day with relationship building where we talked about some of the different challenges our Fraternities experience.

My personal take away from the Listen session is to “be present”. To do my best to understand where the other is coming from. Ask questions to find out what their needs are. Don't analyze or advise, just listen. Listen for what is behind the words, and listen to understand. I don't need to fix the problem, just be present.

Later in the afternoon on Friday we focused on Discern. Christian discernment is not the same as decision making. Listening and responding from that peace within our deepest desires is in line with God's will. Taking a Franciscan pause to allow God to speak to me. If I am sufficient, then I have no need for others. Discernment is always about us. It is never about me alone. Discernment is my relationship with the Holy Spirit. Some questions to ask myself; Is God calling me to be an instrument? When do I discern? What do I discern? Am I discerning proactively or reactively?

On Saturday we focused on Go Forth. Sometimes we pray and nothing gets accomplished. Pray and move your feet. We talked about the four most common roles with JPIC. Helpers; who see a need and do direct service. Advocates; see a need and direct the person to the systems available to serve that need. Organizers; work to change broken systems. Rebels; the protesters. I am naturally inclined to be a helper.

In our small groups we talked about what role we fall in, and what the obstacles are, and how to overcome them. Throughout the weekend we shared struggles our fraternities are experiencing, and ideas to help build justice and peace. Here is a list of a few that I wrote down.

1. Ask those in Initial formation what do you see as a problem in the fraternity? Why do you think God called you to be Franciscan? These questions could be asked to everyone.
2. Is there transparency with the council and the rest of the fraternity?
3. Communication - encourage it and strengthen it.
4. If there is something that is a “hot topic”, avoid using a word or words that cause controversy. For example if someone doesn't believe in climate change, then make the focus something that causes climate change. (recycling, composting, etc)
5. If using the term JPIC turns people off, use Justice and Peace.
6. For fraternities that lack younger members. Partner with groups or organizations that have younger people in them. This gives us an opportunity to get out in the community, but also teaches the community who we are. Maybe one or more of those individuals are being called to be Franciscan.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go meet some of our extended Franciscan family members. Each one of them holds a special place in my heart. We laughed, cried, sang and danced together. I will send a few of the pictures I took.

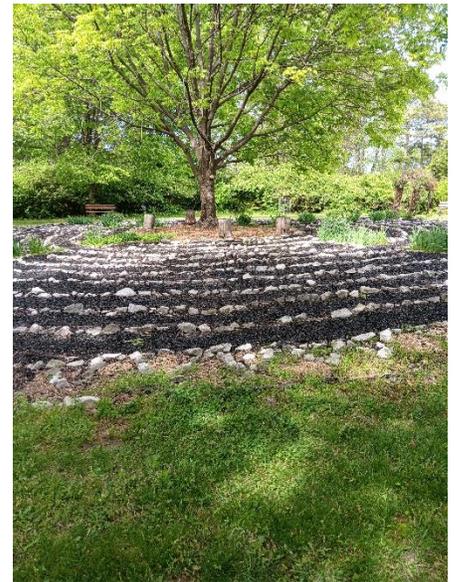
Peace and All Good,
Diane Pyle, OFS
Saint Juan Diego Fraternity #129

Pictures Taken at the National JPIC Retreat

By Diane Pyle, OFS



**Focusing on
the National Theme**



Listen, Discern, Go Forth

The Final Chapter of Mats of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province – Albuquerque, NM



From May 29th through June 1, 2023, the friars of the Southwest had their final gathering of the “legacy” province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, attended by friars young and old. On October 17th of this year they will be transitioning into one new U.S. province of the same name. Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS-USA National Minister and member of St. Francis Fraternity in Roswell, NM, of Our Lady of Guadalupe Region, was invited as a guest speaker on the final day of their chapter. The below excerpt is from the June-July 2023 issue of “The Padres’ Trail” newsletter of the Franciscan Friars of Our Lady of Guadalupe Province.

“On Thursday morning, the friars assembled for the final part of the Chapter of Mats. Invited as a guest speaker was Jane DeRose-Bamman OFS, National Minister, Secular Franciscan Order – USA. Jane is well-known to many of the friars of the province, over 21 years of accompaniment with the friars of the province, particularly in Roswell, New Mexico, where she and her family make their home.



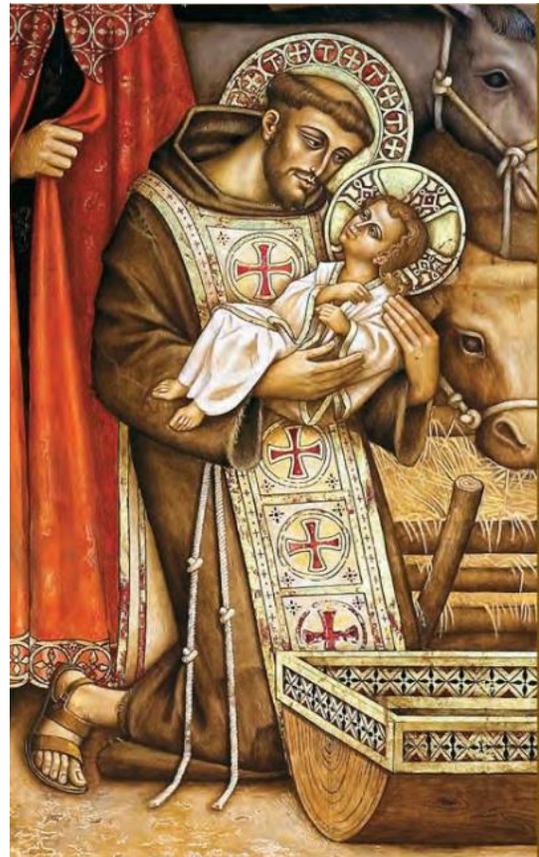
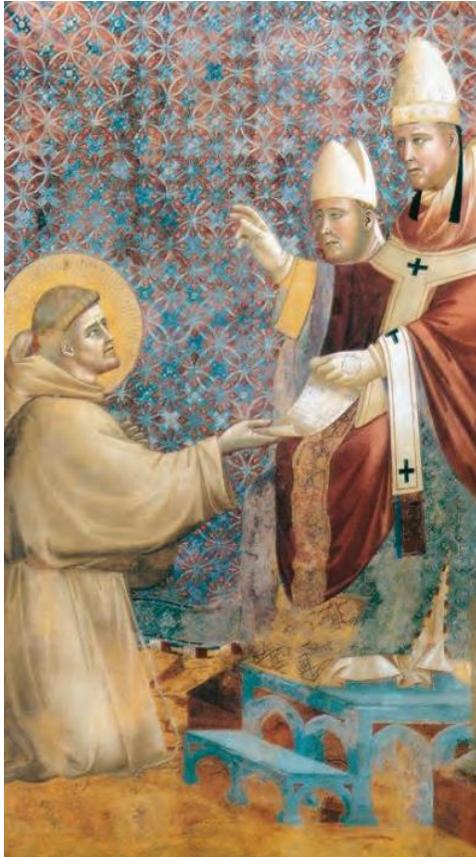
Jane chronicled her own Franciscan vocation, noting that “joy is what drew me to the Franciscans.” She went on to describe the role that lay Franciscans—as a vital part of the overall Franciscan family—play in the world, and in relation to the friars: “We need you...we need each other,” she said. The over 11,000 Secular Franciscans in the U.S. belong to some 500 fraternities. Many lack an association with First Order friars or other religious Franciscan men and women.

She urged the friars to promote the “vital reciprocity,” the spiritual bond between the members of the Franciscan family and encourage one another in a “journey guided by the Spirit.””



L to R: Fr. Larry Bernard, OFM (*Spiritual Assistant to St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity #104-Carlsbad, NM and St. Francis Fraternity #119-Roswell, NM*); Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS, (*National Minister, OFS-USA*); Br. Gordon Boykin, OFM, (*Provincial-Regional Spiritual Assistant*)

Celebrating the Centenary as a Franciscan Family



Celebrating the Rule
1223-2023

Celebrating
Christmas at Greccio
1223-2023



RECOGNITION OF 50+ YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION

St. Anthony #101 – Albuquerque, NM
Arthur R. Lente, OFS – 10/22/1945

Sagrado Corazon de Jesus #108 – El Paso, TX
Flora Guzman, OFS – 10/2/1972

Mary Immaculate #106 – El Paso, TX
Ann Brennan, OFS – 11/17/1965

RECOGNITION OF 25+ YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION

St. Anthony #101 – Albuquerque, NM
Frederick E. Bates, OFS – 10/29/1989
Joanne G. Elfers, OFS – 10/24/1993
Barbara Heilman, OFS – 10/24/1993
Alcaria B. Valdez, OFS – 10/29/1989
Lydia M. Wroten, OFS – 10/24/1993
Rena G. Xuereb, OFS – 10/24/1993
Victor A. Xuereb, OFS – 10/24/1993

St. Francis #119 – Roswell, NM
Patricia J. Lopez, OFS – 10/3/1993

St. Francis #121 – Santa Fe, NM
Anita Lopez, OFS – 10/21/1989
Cecilia C. Rivera, OFS – 10/4/1987

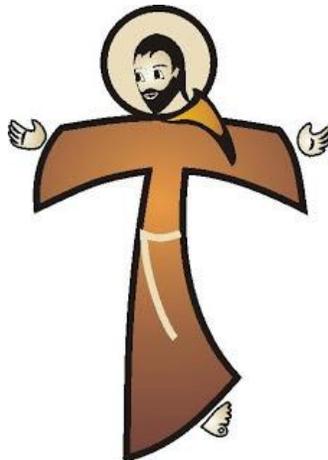
San Luis Rey #128 – El Paso, TX
Maria Ines Chaparro, OFS – 10/6/1997
Teresa Chaparro, OFS – 10/6/1997

St. Margaret of Cortona #104 – Carlsbad, NM
Richard Y. Macias, OFS – 10/3/1998

Inmaculado Corazon de Maria #135 – El Paso, TX
Juan E. Elixavide, OFS – 10/4/1996
Ester Elixavide, OFS – 10/4/1996

Sagrado Corazon de Jesus #108 – El Paso, TX
Maria De Jesus Flores, OFS – 10/4/1990

Our Lady of Guadalupe #113 – Las Cruces, NM
Marie Bianca, OFS – 10/9/1994



TENTATIVE

ELECTIONS/ VISITATIONS/ORIENTATIONS 2023-2025

(AUGUST 2023)

The following dates for your elections and visitations can be changed according to your needs. This is only a draft with projected dates. It is a work-in-progress.

ELECTIONS 2023

(NOTE: where Visitation and Election are listed together; Visitations will be held in morning with outgoing Council. Elections in the afternoon.)

2023 TENTATIVE ELECTIONS

- #114 Santa Isabel de Hungria – Election Retreat/Elections **TBD**
- #108 Sagrado Corazon de Jesus – Election Retreat/Elections - August 6, 2023 *Completed*
- #133 Espiritu Santo – Election Retreat/Elections – April 15, 2023 *Completed*
- #135 Inmaculado Corazon de Maria – Election Retreat/Elections - August 20, 2023 *Completed*

2023 TENTATIVE VISITATIONS

- #119 St. Francis (Roswell) – March 25, 2023 *Completed*
- #104 St. Margaret of Cortona – March 26, 2023 *Completed*
- #108 Sagrado Corazon de Jesus – May 7, 2023 *Completed*
- #135 Inmaculado Corazon de Maria – April 23, 2023 *Completed*
- #130 Bros & Sisters – **October 28, 2023**

2024 TENTATIVE ELECTIONS

- #101 St. Anthony – Election Retreat/Elections TBD - *Elections completed in 2021*
- #109 St. Patrick's - Election Retreat/Elections TBD (3rd Sun.) - *Elections completed in 2021*
- #128 San Luis Rey – Election Retreat/Elections TBD (4th Sun. 8 am) - *Elections completed in 2021*

2025 TENTATIVE ELECTIONS

- #106 Mary Immaculate — *Elections completed in 2022*
- #113 Our Lady of Guadalupe — *Elections completed in 2022*
- #121 St. Francis (Santa Fe) – Election Retreat/Elections TBD – *Elections completed in 2022*
- #129 St. Juan Diego – Election Retreat; Elections TBD - *Elections completed in 2022*
- #130 Bros. & Sisters – Election Retreat; Elections on TBD - *Elections completed in 2022*

ORIENTATIONS

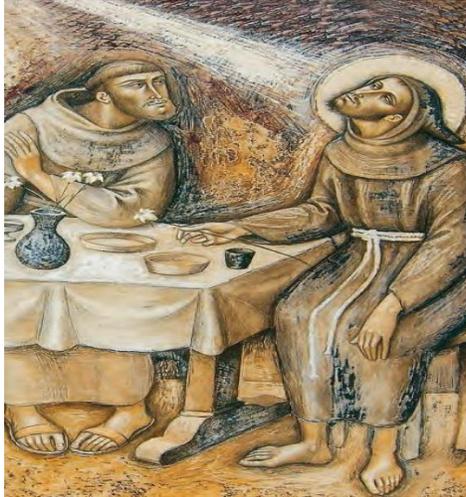
- #106 Mary Immaculate – scheduled 12/14/22 – *Completed*
- #113 Our Lady of Guadalupe – scheduled 12/14/22 – *Completed*
- #101 St. Anthony – March 26, 2022 – *Completed*
- #121 St. Francis (Santa Fe) – May 21, 2022 – *Completed*
- #129 St. Juan Diego – May 21, 2022 – *Completed*
- #130 Bros and Sisters - May 21, 2022 – *Completed*
- #133 Espiritu Santo – June 10, 2023, 3:00 p.m. *Completed*

PENDING

- #107 Queen of Angels – Deactivation in progress, letter to Bishop Seitz
- #126 Santa Chiara - Pending transfer of active members

Future Local, Regional and National Events:

- August 20 – 25, 2023, OFS-USA Chapter, Fraternal/Pastoral Visitation, St. Louis, Mo.
- September 22 – 24, 2023, Regional Chapter/Elections, El Paso, TX
- October 2023 The process of uniting six OFM provinces will be complete.
- November 2024 OFS Chapter of Mats, postponed to 2026
- July 29 – August 2, 2026 – “Q” Griffin Gate Marriott, Lexington, KY



Call for Articles for LA TILMA

Articles for future Newsletters must be received as follows:

Winter: By 11/01 /23 for 12/31/23 publication

Submissions may be e-mailed. ALL fraternity members are invited and encouraged to take part and contribute Fraternity News of events—past or present, election results, professions, activities, as well as articles, poetry, etc. Don't forget to state Fraternity Name and Location, as well as your own name and address when making a submission.

****NOTE: Local Ministers are responsible for ensuring all their local fraternity members receive a copy of this Newsletter either via email or printed, if necessary.**

E-mail articles to:

Editors: Sofia: sofiaofs@yahoo.com or Gigi: gggregory@sbcglobal.net

