LA TILMA

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



Spring 2026

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REGIONAL MULICULTURAL REPRESENTATIVE
Position Currently Open

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL/ INTERFAITH REPRESENTATIVE
Position Currently Open

I recently read about a particular Saint being described as a Monstrance of Christ. A Monstrance of Christ? How can a person be a Monstrance of Christ?

Over the course of a week, I sat and meditated on this question. What follows is a condensed version of that meditation.

A monstrance is a sacred vessel which offers us, the faithful, a way to encounter Christ outside of the Mass mainly during Eucharistic adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. As Catholics, when we see a monstrance, we immediately recognize Christ is in our midst.

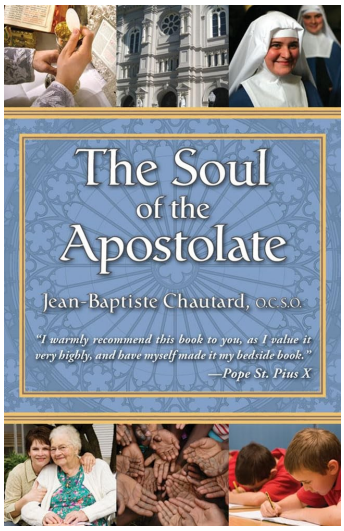
St. Francis nurtured his interior life by spending much of his time in prayer, meditation, and contemplation. He sought the face of the Father, contemplated the Passion of Christ, asked to be made into another Christ. He wanted others to see Christ when they looked at him. When St. Francis was around people felt the presence of Christ, and after receiving the stigmata, they could see Christ's presence; people immediately recognized Christ in their midst. St. Francis was a Monstrance of Christ.

This brothers and sisters leads to several questions, I think, we should ask ourselves.

- Do I spend enough time in prayer?
- Do I spend enough time in the presence of God by meditating on a Gospel or simply sitting in silence?
- Would someone recognize the presence of Christ in me?

I pray we all can answer yes to these questions. If not, now is a good time to start.

If you would like to read more about the interior life, ***The Soul of the Apostolate*** by Jean Baptiste Chautard, O.C.S.O is a wonderful book describing how you too can be a Monstrance of Christ.





THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Sofia U. Villareal, OFS
Regional Minister

Praise to our Lord for He has Risen and Resurrected for he gave his life for all of us!!!

My Brothers and Sister, how joyful we are at this moment because we have just had an Easter that we will continue in our days ahead toward Pentecost the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are never alone and we should not ever doubt our Lord. His words are then, now and forever. Pray you had an Easter with your family, which is what matters most. Engage collaboratively and foster meaningful connections with those around you.

We all have passed a time before our Easter in which we go through a time of penance in our lives, then our conversion daily will strength us to continue. If we had faced what our Lord endured, we would not have survived; his love for us shows how much we mean to him. Let us continue to walk together with each other as a family in this Franciscan way of life.

Our fraternities have experienced significant transformation, and we have consistently supported these developments through our leadership and mutual respect. There should not be any kind of negativism to come into our fraternity, obedience is what we can hold on to. Just like Satan tempted our Lord so we too will also be tempted. And how can this be? At our fraternity by being disruptive, not listening, not speaking to each other, not respecting the council, not attending our gatherings, putting something else more important ahead of our obligations as Franciscans. There are so many other ways we can let Satan come into our minds, hearts, and actions that we follow the wrong path. Family, please always pray so that we will not fall into temptation. Our Lord has given us all and now we must give him all of our all. We are here to serve the Lord and in this way we will serve our brothers and sisters with Love.

As we go into our Region, you have been involved and informed of all that is going on and what is coming soon. All the messages that you receive are the same ones we receive. Our higher level keeps us informed of everything we need to know as an Order. Please go over the emails and see what is being sent, this way you can relate it to the members of your fraternity. Correspondence will continue because this is the way our communications will continue.

The Region is responsible for contacting you regarding all matters of our Order. We have again sent you the calendar for our visits and elections, mention this in your agenda and pray for our Order. For example, National has a schedule all month as to which Region is being prayed for during the month. We too can do that by praying for our fraternities in the Region. Some of our Fraternities are not as strong as they used to be. Some members not able to continue due to illness, deaths and or just leaving their vocation.

The time has come that we will be having elections this year. A new council is scheduled to be elected on November 6 through November 8, 2026. Currently, it is advised that we seek guidance from the Holy Spirit when deciding whom to vote for. But it is not the time to make any decision and spread words about your choice or who we should choose. Our own decision will be how it is done, not someone else's. The Lord and St. Francis will be your guide for we are doing all of this because of our life in our Franciscan journey.

May is near. Our Blessed Mother will guide us and share her strength through her love for her son. Pray your Rosary and devotions to give your heart to her. The months just come and go keep us in time to think ahead and not remain in the past. Being a Franciscan is characterized not by your knowledge, but by your compassion for others and your actions towards them.

My blessing to all of you and your family, we will always be together on this journey that only Our Lord knew who he was calling when he called you by your **NAME.**



MESSAGE/GREETINGS

Brother Gordon Boykin, O.F.M.
Regional Spiritual Assistant

Dearest sisters and brothers in St. Francis,

Most of you know and understand that each Sunday is a direct celebration of the greatest mystery– the Resurrection. *Sometimes* we are surprised (during the Liturgical Season of Ordinary Time) that the focus

of Sacred Scripture is *in*direct to the Resurrection. Such an occasion was Sunday, September 14: the Solemnity of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the feastday of which, is always on September 14. But, it takes

years for it to rotate to falling on a Sunday.

Recall that our beloved Francis annually chose this time for a mini-retreat. One year (1224), just three days after the solemnity, Francis reflected in prayer: "Lord, I ask you for two graces before I die: to experience in myself, as much as possible, the suffering of your cruel passion; and to feel from you the same love that drove you to sacrifice yourself for us." So the above date, over the centuries, is known as the Franciscan feast of the Holy Stigmata. Last year (2024) was the 800th commemoration of this event.

The instruction it offers for us today is that prayer is not an end in itself, or a personal amassing of God's grace, *e.g.*, "I say/said my prayers." But, simply: "I pray/-ed," thus opening ourselves to the will of *God*.

All prayer is answered*!* It's just that the answer isn't always "yes." Sometimes, the answer is "wait,"–as with St. Monica; and, sometimes, the answer may be "no," because God knows best. True and humble prayer opens us to accept God's will.

May Francis (and Clare) forever be our guides,

Br. Gordon, O.F.M.

– Fraternity Spiritual Assistant



Br. Gordon operating a string machine that makes the cords that the friars wear as part of their habit. Photo taken in May 1967.



VICE-MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Gigi Gregory, OFS

Regional Vice-Minister

I often reflect on what the Lent and Easter Season means to me.

My reflection begins on the Resurrection. Since experiencing the loss of my beloved husband and grandson, the thought of the Resurrection brings so much more hope to me. I know I will see my loved ones again.

My personal grief journey has been filled with many feelings. The beautiful memories I rejoice in. And I think of the joy of the women that discovered the empty tomb of Jesus early on Sunday morning after the Resurrection. I also acknowledge the sadness and tears as Mary, Our Blessed Mother, experienced at the crucifixion.

We have all walked thru our own Lents and resurrections during the course of our lives. The resurrections are much easier to live through than the Lents. But we walk hand in hand with our faith in all aspects of our lives whether it may be happiness or sadness.

I pray that you all are experiencing a blessed and joyful Easter Season. Happy Mother's Day to all our moms!

I end by quoting St. John Paul II, "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song."

Gigi Gregory, OFS

"St Francis, stigmatized on La Verna, the world longs for you, that icon of the crucified Jesus. Reopen the doors of hope. It has need of your heart, open to God and to others; of your bare, wounded feet, of your pierced hands raised in supplication. It longs for your voice so frail yet forceful with the power of the Gospel. Francis, help the people of this age to recognize the evil of sin and to seek purification from it in penance. Help them to become free from every structure of sin that oppresses today's society. Rekindle in the consciousness of those in government an urgent need for peace between nations and peoples. Instill in young people your freshness of life that is capable of withstanding the snares of the many cultures of death. To those injured by every type of evil, teach O Francis, the joy of being able to forgive. To all those crucified by suffering, hunger and war, reopen the doors of hope. Amen."

~(Prayer of Pope John Paul II, Mass at La Verna, 17 September 1993)~



REGIONAL FORMATION

Elizabeth Treviño, OFS
Regional Formation Director

Recently, I came across a newsletter on the OFM.org website, that I am offering my view on. The newsletter is called Franciscus. The article is called:

"The Easter of St. Francis of Assisi"

The newsletter is about how death is rarely thought about in society today. It reminds us that we are limited creatures, but also because it exposes false security. St. Francis welcomed Sister Death with a song, because he understood that death is not the termination of everything, but the beginning that allows us to enter full communion with God. Life is a gift, and it must be given back: "holdback nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally!" (letter to the entire order 29FF221)

Towards the end of his life, St Francis discovered, after he contemplated, the presence of the Lord everywhere. In his testament, he repeats. "The Lord gave me, brothers, Francis… The Lord gave me such faith in churches… The Lord gave me, and gives me still, such faith … And, after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but He, the Most High, himself, revealed to me, that I should live, according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel "(Testament 1-14, FF 110 -116.)

The celebration of the 800th of the Easter of St. Francis, invites us to examine our lives, both personally, and as a Franciscan family with the eyes of faith. In doing so, we become aware of the divine presence and action, in everything, even in the difficult situations we have experienced, or are experiencing in our lives. God gives us an opportunity to thank him for the gifts that he has given us, especially the gift of St. Francis of Assisi and the evangelical life he lived, which has become our charism. He has shown to us different ways of discipleship and apostolates and still to this day, has the strength to call out to women and women of all cultures, both inside and outside the Catholic Church. As St. Francis' health weakened, he said to his brothers "let us begin, Brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up until now we have done little or nothing".

He, of course, did not consider that he had already obtained his goal, of the entire pursuit of holy newness. He constantly hoped to begin again. He wanted to "return to the lepers "(1 Celano103, FF500).

(CF. Prayer Inspired by Our Father5, FF2 70).

Celebrating the passing of St. Francis is a time to remember that we too are called to holiness, and like St. Francis, we're invited to reflect on the beauty of the gospel of our Franciscan Vocation, because "holiness is the most attractive face of the Church" (Gaudete et exsultate9)

Paz y bien,

Elizabeth Trevino, O.F.S.
Regional Formation Director



REGIONAL JPIC COORDINATOR

Eileen Gerber, OFS
Guest Contributor

Understanding JPIC

In the Secular Franciscan Order, the concept of apostolates has evolved, with Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) becoming the overarching framework. Rather than replacing older works, JPIC provides a broader, more integrated perspective for living the Franciscan charism in the modern world.

JPIC as a holistic framework: The JPIC framework provides a more foundational and systemic approach. It is not just about what a Secular Franciscan "does," but about who they "are," living out the Gospel in all aspects of their life. JPIC provides a lens for viewing traditional apostolates in a more comprehensive way. For example:

Serving meals at a soup kitchen or serving the needs of the homeless and poor becomes an expression of the call for Justice for the poor. This is truly formation in action, but we should also retain traditional formation classes and prayer time together.

Promoting peace and reconciliation in daily life fulfills the mission of Peace. Supporting programs that support peace in communities and the world also fulfill this response to upholding peace in all things. Using well what we have for the glory of God and caring for the environment becomes living out the Integrity of Creation.

A historical restructuring: In the United States, the formal shift occurred around 2007 when the four older Apostolic Commissions were restructured into a single, unified JPIC Committee. This change consolidated the different apostolates under a single, cohesive vision. This brings together all 4 apostolates into one Commission.

The continuity of ministry—Many of the old apostolates continue to exist but are now understood as expressions of the JPIC vision. A local fraternity may still focus on ministry to the homeless, but that work is now viewed as an integral part of its commitment to building a more fraternal world based on Gospel values.

The JPIC framework: Connects prayer and action: This mission of JPIC is to help Franciscans reflect on their conversion and how it leads to action in the world.

Emphasizes systemic change: JPIC encourages Franciscans to not only address the symptoms of social problems but also to work toward systemic change in the field of public life.

Focuses on right relationships: As former National Minister Tom Bellow stated, "JPIC is the restoration of right relationship with God, with each other and with all of creation." JPIC encourages Franciscans to not only address the symptoms of social problems, but also to work toward systemic change in the field of public life.

In summary, the older apostolates of the Secular Franciscan Order have not been discarded but rather integrated and re-envisioned within the broader, more unified framework of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Cration.

News From Our Fraternities

#101 St. Anthony Fraternity, Albuquerque, NM

December Fraternity Gathering

The December 21, 2025 Fraternity Gathering began with a prayer service meditating on Christmas at Greccio. The Fraternity members participated in "*Back to Greccio: a Franciscan prayer service based on Celano's account of the First Creche.*"

St. Francis wanted people to experience the reality of the Incarnation, the night our Savior and God became one of us. The Fraternity imagined what it must have felt like to be in Greccio that night in 1223 AD. The Fraternity prayed, "Jesus, light of the world, open our hearts to the miracle of the Incarnation….You chose to come to us as a poor and vulnerable newborn baby, born into the silence and pain of poverty. As we gaze upon the simplicity and utter humility of the creche, may it remind us that service to our brothers and sisters is an invitation to serve You in our world."

The Fraternity sang songs, including Oh, Come All Ye Faithful, Away in a Manger, and Joy to the World, and read from the Gospel of Luke. It was a meaningful and moving reflection of all St. Francis set out to portray in the first-ever live Nativity scene and the miraculous vision of the Christ child in the cave in Greccio.

The Fraternity further contemplated the humble birth of Jesus by selecting various pieces from the full nativity scene and shared how each embodied a special meaning.



St. Francis, portrayed by Adrian Montoya, OFS, encounters perfect joy holding the Christ child.



Brother Gorden Boykin, OFM, Spiritual Asst., Nancy Singh, OFS, Vice Min-ister, Gerry Rohrkemper, OFS, Secretary, Lisa Trujillo, Candidate, and Reina Romero, Candidate, read their parts of the Christmas at Greccio reenactment.

News From Our Fraternities

#106 Mary Immaculate, El Paso, TX

Welcoming Ceremony

During the gathering of #106 Mary Immaculate, a Ceremony of Welcoming was conducted on February 1, 2026 for new Inquirer, Maria Varela. Grace Akers, OFS, minister, received her and Spiritual Assistant Fr. Juan Zuniga-Lopez, OFM Conv. gave the blessing.





EASTER RETREAT 2026



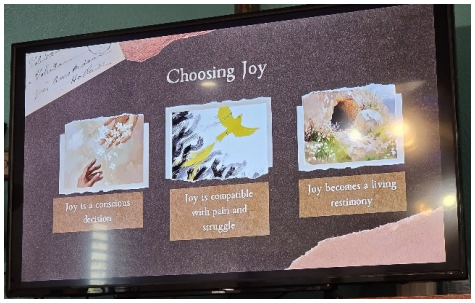
Members of Mary Immaculate Fraternity enjoyed a day of retreat presented by Fr. Cristian Ubaldo, OFM Conv. Spiritual Assistant Fr. Juan was also present. The theme was "From the Cross to Joy: Living Easter in the Spirit of St. Francis". Fr. Cristian led members in reflections on "Embracing the Cross with Christ: The Paschal Journey Begins in Suffering" and "Perfect Joy: Living as the Risen". The retreat closed with Eucharistic Adoration and reflection on the Cross and the Paschal candle, meditating on going from suffering to joy in the light of Christ. It was a Blessed time for all!

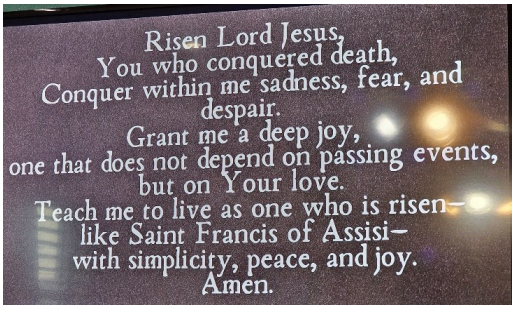


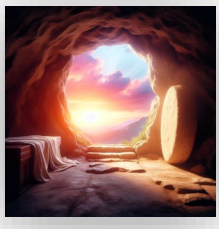


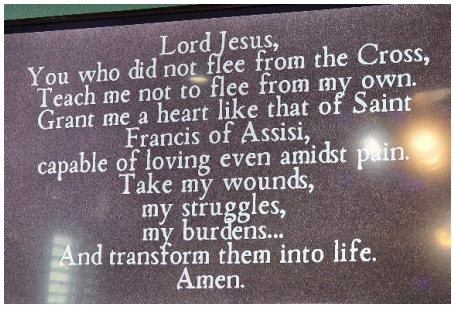


Fr. Cristian Ubaldo, OFM











News From Our Fraternities

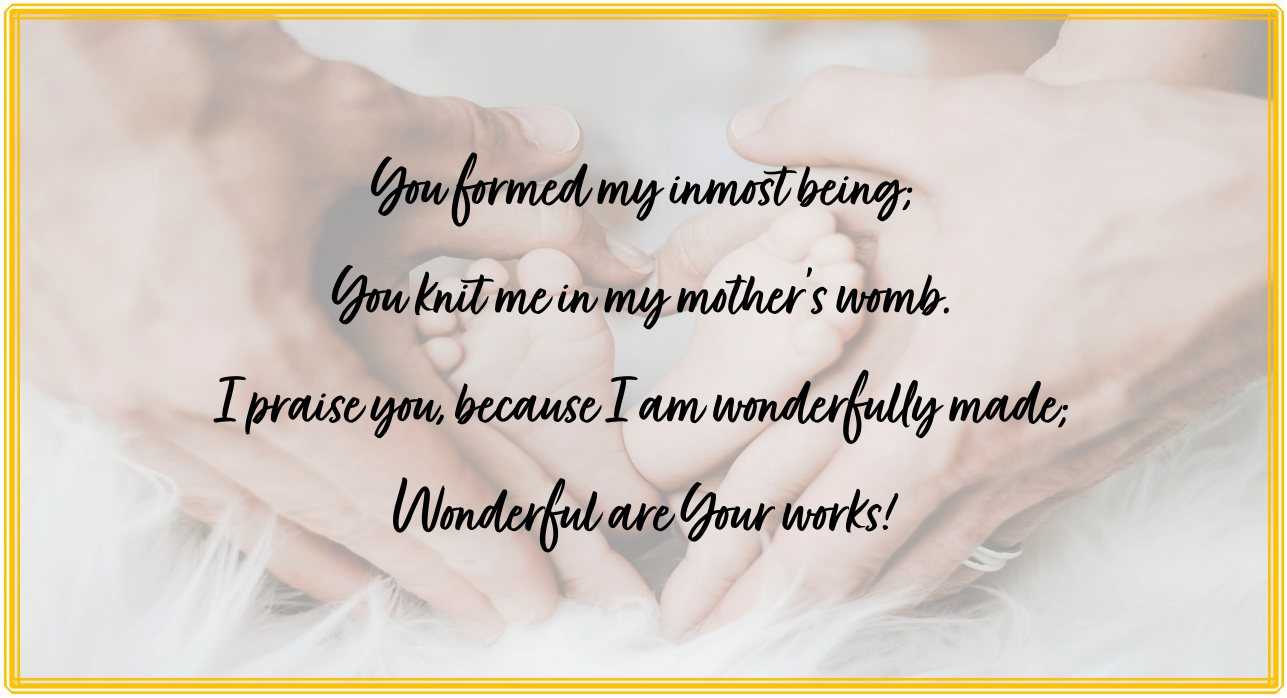
#109 St. Partrick, El Paso, TX

Pro-Life Rosary

Sunday, March 15,2026 #109 St. Patrick Fraternity gathered at San Judas Tadeo Parish to sing and pray the rosary for the unborn babies. Three children, Valeria and Ernesto Borrego and Elijah David Pena offered roses to the Blessed Mother.

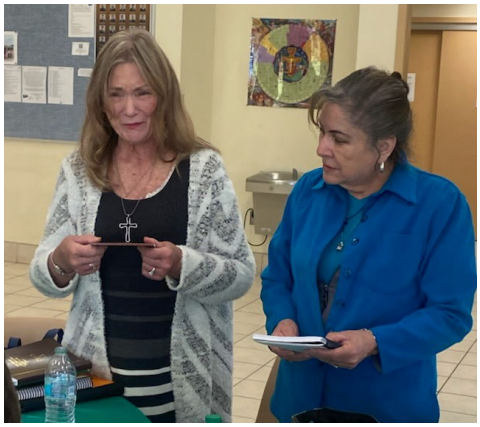






News From Our Fraternities
#119 St. Francis, Roswell, NM

Vickie Purcell, Rite of Admission into Candidacy, January 18, 2026. Other members of her fraternity were present.









The small community of Roswell, NM was blessed to have Vicki I. Purcell. She was a part of the St. Peter Catholic Church community for most of her adult life. She worked and prayed there. Her love for the Lord, others and our Catholic faith was evident and such a support for the many people she encountered. She was creative, observant, and caring. Vicki would lead efforts for the Ladies Society and bible studies both at St. Peter as well as with other Christians. She was on fire for the Lord and thus, a most inspiring person! In recent years, she felt drawn to the Secular Franciscan Order and was admitted as a candidate with the St. Francis of Assisi - Roswell Fraternity (#119) in January 2026. She experienced health issues and met Sister Death on March 21, 2026. The fraternity members miss her smile and deep reflections on how God is working in her life. She was a loyal friend and sister.

News From Our Fraternities
#121 St. Francis, Santa Fe, NM





St. Francis Fraternity #121, Santa Fe, is honored to have Bonnie Hardwick, OFS, as a cherished member. She was professed on September 5, 2009.

At the monthly OFS Gathering on February 14, 2026, Bonnie presented several of her icons, maps and her exhibition catalog containing twenty-nine images of her work, entitled "Conversations: Engaging Ethiopian Iconography".

Thank you Bonnie Hardwick for teaching us this form of sacred art. We all appreciate you and your God given gifts and skills.







News From Our Fraternities

#128 San Luis Rey, El Paso, TX

Advent Retreat November 30, 2025






Lenten Retreat

#128 San Luis Rey held their Lenten Retreat on February 22, 2026. The retreat began with a Mass celebrated by Fr. Jafet Perez, OFM and Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Gerardo Sagrado, OFM and Fr. Carlos Garcia, OFM, a theology student at St. Anthony Seminary guided the retreat.










In attendance: Eva Aguilar, OFS, Lupe Aguilar, OFS Maria Aguilar, OFS Luis Galvan, OFS, Francisco Castillo, OFS, Alfonso Vega, OFS Rosa Valasquez, OFS Imelda Aguila, OFS, Lupita Herrera, OFS, Lupita Karnes, Candidate, and visitors Liz Jimenez and Margarita Aguilar.

News From Our Fraternities

#129 St. Juan Diego, Lubbock, TX

2nd Annual Father Daughter Dance

#129 St. Juan Diego Fraternity, along with the minister from #130 Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis, Plainview, TX, held their 2nd Annual Father Daughter Dance as a fundraiser for the St. Francis Mission Sisters in Wolfforth, TX, as well as a local pregnancy center, the Nurturing Center.







Nurturing Center Dinner

Several members of the #129 St. Juan Diego Fraternity attended the Nurturing Center Dinner, a fundraiser to support the local pregnancy center in Lubbock, TX.











Breakfast

Several members of the #129 St. Juan Diego Fraternity met for a Saturday Mass and then breakfast at a local restaurant.





News From Our Fraternities

#133 Espiritu Santo, Albuquerque, NM

Adelaida Mendoza, OFS; Ramon Valasquez, OFS; and Daniel Sosa, OFS made their permanent profession into fraternity #133 Espiritu Santo, on January 11, 2026 at Holy Family Church in Albuquerque, NM. Family, friends, and members of #133 Espiritu Santo as well as sister fraternities were present.





Come and See

#133 Espiritu Santo Fraternity held a "Come and See" Saturday, March 7, 2026 at the Holy Family Parish Hall. Several #101 St. Anthony Fraternity professed members and candidates participated in the event.



Espiritu Santo Fraternity banner.



Brother Gordon, OFM, offers his insights with the attendees.



Gina Lubeck, OFS, shares her Franciscan journey story since her profession five years ago.





News From Our Fraternities

#135 Inmaculado Corazon de Maria, El Paso, TX

#135 Inmaculado Corazon de Maria hosted a Lenten Retreat at St. Anthony's Seminary, February 28, 2026. Sister fraternities #108 Sagrado Corazon de Jesus and #109 St. Patrick participated in the retreat.















ELECTIONS/ VISITATIONS/ORIENTATIONS 2026
(APRIL, 2026)

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.

As of April, 2026

Maintained by: Gigi Gregory, OFS, Regional Vice Minister

2026 TENTATIVE VISITATIONS

(Please note an audit of your bank account is required as part of your visitation. Please have a qualified non-council member audit your books before your Scheduled Visitation)

#128 San Luis Rey – April 26, 2026, after 8:00 a.m. Mass *Completed*
#101 St. Anthony – June 20, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
#104 St. Margaret of Cortona – August 8, 2025 Time TBD
#114 Santa Isabel de Hungria - August 23, 2026 Time TBD
#121 St. Francis, Santa Fe – September 26, 2026, Noon
#109 St. Patrick's – October 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

2026 TENTATIVE ELECTIONS

#133 Espiritu Santo - June 20, 2026, 1:00 p.m.
#135 Inmaculado Corazon de Maria – September 19, 2026, Mass 12:30 p.m., St. Anthony's Seminary
#130 Brothers & Sisters - TBD

ORIENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS

2026 - Spanish Formation Workshop pending

FRATERNITIES UNDER ACCOMPANIMENT

#108 Sagrado Corazon de Jesus – sponsoring fraternity, #135 Inmaculado Corazon de Maria
#119 St. Francis, Roswell – sponsoring fraternity, Region #75

Future Local, Regional and National Events

Jan. 5, 2026 Epiphany Celebration, 6400 Airport Rd. ELP, TX -#106 MI & #128 San Luis Rey *Completed*
Jan. 26 – 30, 2026 CNSA Meeting, San Leandro, CA *Completed*
February 12, 2026 – Regional JPIC Presentation, zoom 5:00 p.m. MST *Completed*
July 29 – August 2, 2026 – "Q" Griffin Gate Marriott, Lexington, KY
October 2026 – Transitus Celebration, HCRC, Las Cruces
October 13 – 18, 2026 – National Chapter, Wichita, Kansas
November 6 – 8, 2026 – Regional Chapter/Elections – Additional information TBD
November 17, 2026 – Yearly celebration of our patroness, St. Elizabeth of Hungary



May – August 2026

RECOGNITION OF 50+ YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION

St. Anthony #101 – Albuquerque, NM

Erma D. Lente, OFS – May 25, 1962

San Luis Rey #128 – El Paso, TX

Alfonso Vega, OFS – June 28, 1964

RECOGNITION OF 25+ YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION

St. Anthony #101 – Albuquerque, NM

Michael O'Hearn, OFS – May 1, 1983

Ernestine Sedillo, OFS – June 25, 1995

Our Lady of Guadalupe #113 – Las Cruces, NM

Anthony DeCorte, OFS – June 13, 1997

St. Francis #119 – Roswell, NM

Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS – June 4, 1995

San Luis Rey #128 – El Paso, TX

Imelda Aguilar, OFS – June 9, 1984

St. Juan Diego #129 – Lubbock, TX

Elizabeth Trevino, OFS – June 24, 2000

Inmaculado Corazon de Maria #135 – El Paso, TX

Esther A. Perez, OFS – June 10, 1990

Extra! Extra! Family News





Genevieve Ruth Klemme, the 11th grandchild of Fran Cimino, OFS, Formation Director for #129 St. Juan Diego Fraternity, was born 6 weeks early on January 30, 2026. She stayed in NICU for 12 days. She is now 3 months old and thriving.



Sister Mary Agnes of the Most Holy Trinity will be celebrating fifty years with a Mass of Golden Jubilee on May 12, 2026 at 10 a.m. at the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Gudalupe in Roswell, NM.

Jacob Garcia, the grandson of Cipriana Garcia, OFS, Minister of #130 Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis, went on a mission trip to South Africa March 8 through 22.









Call for *A*rticles *for LA TILMA*

Articles for future Newsletters must be received as follows:

Summer 2026 by August 14.

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. Remember to state Fraternity name and location, as well as your own name and address when making a submission. Please include pictures along with the names of members in the pictures. We also encourage individual members to share memorable moments, special celebrations, and milestones.

****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:

Editor: Fran: fran.cimino@hotmail.com