LA TILMA

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



Summer 2026

MINISTER
Sofia Villarreal, OFS
sofiaofs@yahoo.com

VICE-MINISTER
Gigi Gregory, OFS
gggregory@sbcglobal.net

SECRETARY
Terry Craig, OFS
t.craig2244@gmail.com

TREASURER
Bonnie Franco, OFS
yfranco@aim.com

FORMATION DIRECTOR
Elizabeth Treviño, OFS
trevino.e@att.net

COUNCILOR #1
Leticia Briones, OFS
lbriones@flyinterchange.com

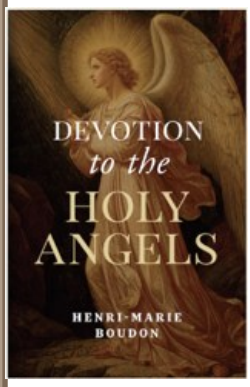
COUNCILOR #2
Israela Garcia, OFS
director@bailabaila.com

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT
Br. Gordon Boykin, OFM
gboykin@friars.us

Br. Joseph Bach, OFM Conv.
brjbach@holycrossretreat.org

LA TILMA EDITOR
Fran Cimino, OFS
fran.cimino@hotmail.com

JPIC COORDINATOR
Diane Pyle, OFS
dmpyle75@gmail.com



St. Francis observed five different "Lents" each year, one being St. Michael's Lent which begins on the Assumption, August 15, and ends of the Feast of the Archangels, September 29. It was during this particular Lent that St. Francis received the wounds of Christ on Mount La Verna. St. Francis had a great devotion to the Holy Angels because of his deep love for God, his reverence for creation, and his humility. This devotion is a model for Franciscan spirituality today.

To observe St. Michael's Lent this year, I am reading a book by Fr. Henri-Marie Boudon called *Devotion to the Holy Angels*. Fr. Boudon explains how the angels are with us and help us at every moment. They encourage us to virtue and help us refrain from doing evil leading us closer to God. Boudon delves into the nine choirs of angels and their roles in our lives. Finally, he includes prayers and litanies to help us call on their intercession.
I received this book as an installment of the Catholic Book-of-the-Month program offered by Sophia Institute Press, however, it is available to purchase without being part of that program.





THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Sofia U. Villarreal, OFS
Regional Minister

All honor and glory to our Lord Jesus and all praise to our Father Francis for their Love endures forever!

Dearest Franciscan family,

What joyous and great blessings we have received since the last time we shared with you our message from the Region. As we continue to move forward in our journey, only we will know how we have been able to accept the path that we have taken. One of the last examples that the Lord tells us is to trust in him. Hold out your hand and reach out for Jesus. He will be there to help us. All our worries, hurts, and illness that we have in our life is in the hands of our Lord if we give them to him. Some of us have gone through rough waters and storms. We all know how it feels, but being in this kind of situation, all of us know that we will be with Christ in the long run.

We are here today, but tomorrow who will know, but know that time is precious. I would like for you to look to the future. If we have him in our hearts, we can know that we have a lifetime with the Lord. Keep all in prayer and forgive, for by forgiving is how our Lord will forgive us.

On August 2nd we celebrated the Portiuncula Pardon of Assisi and walked into the cradle home of our Franciscan family. We have our Lord and Father Francis to forgive us for all our faults and have asked them to receive our deceased family into heaven. Pray that this devotion will remain in our heart forever. Now, the celebration of the second foundress of our Order, St. Clare, on August 11th, who founded the Poor Clares. What a blessing we have to know she is also our patron saint. Her strong love for the Lord, the Eucharist, and living a life of giving, praying, and serving is our pattern in life. Let us continue to follow her example.

I cannot say enough of our life as Catholics. Our calendar is full of life-giving examples of all the saints, feast days, holidays, and much more. We can just turn the pages in our calendar and it will show us all and we can learn about who we are. Be open to receive the holy spirit and let him lead you to salvation and eternal life with our Lord.

Brothers and sisters, let's see what we have to do. In a couple of months our Region will have elections for a new council. When we professed, we said YES to answer the call to serve. Knowing that the time is here, put yourself in prayer. Pray for our Franciscan family that we have worthy leaders and to see what we should do. As our ritual says, "May we see what we should do, have the courage and perseverance to accomplish it. We ask this through Christ the Lord." Please prepare yourself to be ready and remember do not fear for God is with us all.

May the Celebration of the Easter of St. Francis of Assisi and the 800th Anniversary of his death be our vision for we have been invited to have faith and divine presence in everything we do. Give thanks to God for all the gifts we have received. Know that we have received many brothers and sisters and know that we did what is ours to do. See you soon on November 6-8 at our elections.

Paz y Bien

Sofia U. Villarreal OFS



MESSAGE/GREETINGS

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

Welcoming Fr. Cid Joseph to the CNSA



Fr. Cidouane Joseph, OFM (Fr. Cid) is the new National Spiritual Assistant and Provincial Animator for Our Lady of Guadalupe Province, OFM. He succeeds Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM, in this ministry and begins his service with a spirit of humility and fraternity.

In May, Fr. Jerome will move to Rome to study Italian and begin a new ministry there with the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches. We are very grateful for Fr. Jerome's service to the OFS, and wish him the best in his new assignment.

Fr. Cid was born and raised in Haiti and arrived in the United States in 2002. He entered the Order of Friars Minor shortly thereafter, making his first profession of vows in Wilmington, Delaware, in 2006, and his solemn profession at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York in 2009.

He was ordained a deacon at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., in 2010, and to the priesthood at Holy Name of Jesus Church in New York in 2011.

His relationship with the Secular Franciscan Order began prior to his ordination at Holy Name of Jesus Church, where he first encountered Secular Franciscans and developed an appreciation for their vocation.

He has since served as a Spiritual Assistant at multiple levels, including local, regional, and provincial fraternities. Notably, he served as Regional Spiritual Assistant to the Solanus Casey Region. Through these experiences, he has cultivated a deep respect for the Secular Franciscan vocation and the shared charism that unites the Franciscan family.

In accepting this appointment, Fr. Cid has expressed both gratitude and a strong commitment to supporting the fraternities entrusted to his care. He recognizes the breadth of the responsibility of accompanying Secular Franciscans across the United States and emphasizes the importance of collaboration, fraternity, and mutual support in fulfilling this mission effectively.

Fr. Cid has affirmed his readiness to assist Regional Ministers and local fraternities, particularly those within Our Lady of Guadalupe Province, while also serving the broader national fraternity. He encourages ongoing cooperation between the First Order and the Secular Franciscan Order, underscoring the importance of maintaining and strengthening this vital relationship.

Reflecting on his experience, Fr. Cid notes that working with Secular Franciscans has enriched his own vocation as a friar and has deepened his appreciation for the vitality and witness of the Secular Franciscan life.

Members are invited to read his full introductory letter and to welcome him in the spirit of Franciscan fraternity. Fr. Cid's Letter to Regional Ministers



VICE-MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Gigi Gregory, OFS

Regional Vice-Minister

As our elections quickly approach, I want to offer a prayer that we may pray. Please share with the members of your fraternity that we may offer our prayers for the guidance and presence of the Holy Spirit during our region's 2026 elections:

Blessed are You, Father—God of all creation,
In Your goodness, You give us many good gifts:
The gift of, Jesus, Your Son—"the Christ"
Who shows us Your love;
The gift of Your Holy Spirit;
Who moves in our hearts and in our lives;
The gift of Faith;
The gift of Community;
The gift of your Call to follow after You,
The special gift of the Call to be Secular Franciscans.

Gives us the hearts to choose and follow the leaders
Who will work with other leaders
To bring Your will
And help us to fulfill it.
Give us leaders who have the courage to
Stand for what is right,
The humility to know when they are wrong and to make amends,
The vision to see You always in each other.
May the Holy Family, Francis and Clare inspire us.
May the Secular Franciscans who have gone before us,
Pray for us.
May we all help each other as sisters and brothers.

We ask these things, Great God,
With minds open to your words
And hearts that trust in your eternal care.

Amen



REGIONAL FORMATION

Elizabeth Treviño, OFS
Regional Formation Director

Jubilee Year of St. Francis
January 10,2026- January 10, 2027

All members of Franciscan religious orders and the faithful can obtain plenary indulgences for visiting any conventional Franciscan church or place. of worship anywhere in the world dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi.

So, why do we celebrate the Year of St. Francis? Why do we need this year? The Jubilee Year of Hope has passed, but God's love and mercy are always here. This is why the Holy Father was inspired by the Holy Spirit to continue this time of grace as we explore the mystery of God through the eyes of St. Francis of Assisi. This year's focus is to encourage the faithful to renew their commitment to the values exemplified by St. Francis including peace, fraternity and respect for creation.

Peace among others, how we can accomplish this. Love grows through love. *Love is "divine" because it comes from God and unites us to God through this unifying process it makes us a "we" which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is "all in all"* (1Corinthians 15:28)
Seeing Christ in others can at times be difficult, if our relationship with Jesus is fragile.
Article Rule #8 speaks of prayer and contemplation as the soul of all they (we)are to do. It can be difficult to see a person of Christ in others without awareness of his presence in us. Our awareness may not be perfect, but it must grow. We are not perfect and at times others may not see Christ in us. Our task is to find a way to overlook the disguises that hide the image of Christ. Maybe we need to take a closer look at ourselves. St Francis recognized how much love God had for him. As St. Francis grew in a more intimate relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, he became more ready to accept others. When we practice being more welcoming to others, the Holy Spirit will inspire us to show the kind of hospitality needed so other person may experience acceptance.
Being hospitable cannot change people, but it can offer a space where change can take place, and the atmosphere is not aggressive. We must ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so we can learn to grow in fraternal love towards others and live in peace and take good care of the world we live in.

Paz y bien,

Elizabeth Trevino , OFS



REGIONAL JPIC COORDINATOR

Diane Pyle, OFS

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

~ Matt 25:35-40 ~

Many times I've heard this scripture passage, and thought going to a prison is not for me. Isn't it enough to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, or welcome the stranger. Last summer while at David's deacon formation weekends, one of the wives gave a testimony of her experience with prison ministry. She was expressing how one of the inmates was losing hope, and also she was praying for others to join her in the ministry. At that moment, I heard the Lord ask me, "Are you a pilgrim of hope?" I tried to ignore what I heard, but through the following week the Lord kept pursuing me. During my daily Rosary and scripture study I kept hearing the corporal works of mercy are not a suggestion, but a command. I decided to stop making excuses and do what the Lord asked. I reached out to my friend and told her I was going to apply to be a volunteer, she was so excited God had answered her prayer.

As I reflect back on the last year of this ministry, and all the ladies I have prayed with, I am amazed at how much God has blessed me. Many times I've had some of them say, "I was losing hope, and here you are today!" So many of them feel abandoned by their families, friends, attorneys, and even the church. Many of them talk of the evil that is present in the pods. Some have talked about the witchcraft that goes on there, and they ask for prayers for the other ladies in the pods. Many are seeking a relationship with God, but don't know where to start or believe they are not good enough to be loved by him because of what they have done. Some of the ladies see us there, but choose not to come ask for prayer.

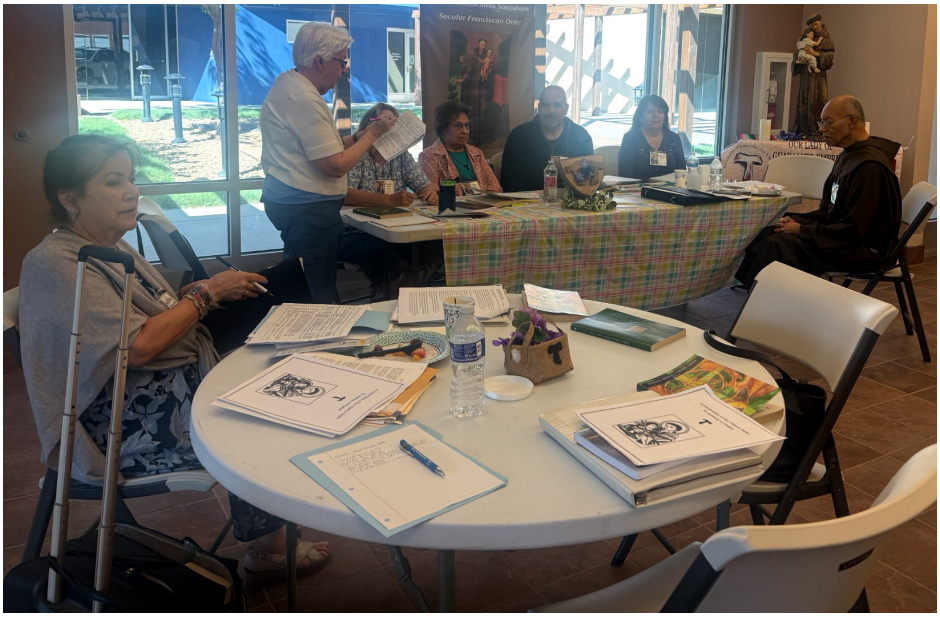
My reason for doing prison ministry was to do as the Lord asked, to be a pilgrim of hope. God has taught me something about myself through these ladies. When I look at them, I see a reflection of myself. I resisted the Lord because I feared the unknown. Many times in my life I have felt abandoned and unloved, and made the choice not to pray or seek a relationship with God. Everytime I am on my way to the jail I am so tempted to turn around and go back home. If I would have made that choice, I would have missed out on the opportunity to tell them how precious they are to God and see the joy that gives them. Also I would miss out on the joy my heart feels knowing I am trying to serve my Lord as he asked.

News From Our Fraternities

#101 St. Anthony Fraternity, Albuquerque, NM

Sophia Villarreal, OFS, regional minister presided with assistance from Letty Briones, OFS, regional councilor at the visitation of #101 St. Anthony Fraternity, in Albuquerque, NM on June 20, 2026.









News From Our Fraternities

#106 Mary Immaculate, El Paso, TX

Mimi Mena, OFS and her husband Ascensión experienced a Camino de Santiago pilgrimage to the shrine of the Apostle James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain.









Mary Ellen Vega, OFS celebrated her birthday at the Sierra Chapel at White Sands Missile Range. Sierra Chapel was designated a place for pilgrimage during the Jubilee year.







News From Our Fraternities
#114 Santa Isabel de Hungria, Las Cruces, NM

#114 Santa Isabel de Hungria Fraternity had their regional fraternal visitation on August, 23, 2026. Gigi Gregory, OFS, Regional Vice-Minister presided and Letty Briones, OFS, Regional Councilor assisted.



Br. Joseph Bach, OFM Conv., Alejandro Flores, OFS; Olga Carillo, OFS; Maria de los Angeles Kennedy, OFS; Lupe Reyes, OFS; Leonardo Reyes, OFS; sitting in the middle: Carmen Lopez, OFS;
not present: Jose Moreno, OFS; Maria Luisa Escarsega, OFS;

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

On July 26, 2026, members of the St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity - Roswell met with OFS Presidency Councilor, Ana Maria Raffo Laos, OFS during a quick visit to Roswell, New Mexico.



From left to right: Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS (member/National Minister); Ana Maria Raffo Laos, OFS, Presidency Councilor; RoseMary Vasquez (Candidate); Mary Ann Delgado (Candidate); Fr. Larry Bernard, OFM (Spiritual Assistant); Margarita Mireles (Candidate); Dolores Barrows (Candidate); Barbara Barrow-Stulce, OFS (Formation Director); Yolanda Edgett (Candidate). (credit: Brian Bamman)

Easter of St. Francis
Rekindle the Flame

News From Our Fraternities

#121 St. Francis, Santa Fe, NM

Rite of Welcoming



#121 St. Francis Fraternity in Santa Fe, NM held a Rite of Welcoming on August 8, 2026 welcoming 5 new candidates into the fraternity. Left to right: Maria Lopez, John Hancock, Mary Mortimer, Michael Clark, and Janis Devoti.



News From Our Fraternities

#128 San Luis Rey, El Paso, TX

#128 San Luis Rey Fraternity had their regional fraternal and pastoral visitation on April 26, 2026.

News From Our Fraternities

#129 St. Juan Diego, Lubbock, TX

#129 St. Juan Diego welcomed Silvia Ballejo, OFS, Brenda Green, OFS, and Roland Moreira, OFS during their Profession Mass on June 13, 2026. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Brian Wood and assisted by David Pyle, OFS.



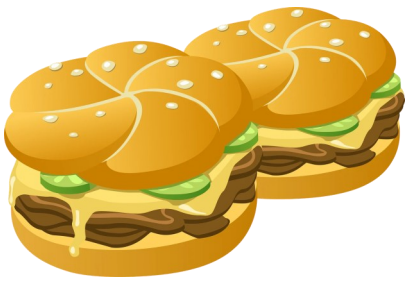


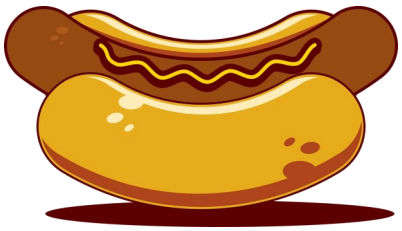


#129 St. Juan Diego Fraternity held their annual July picnic at David and Diane Pyle's home.









News From Our Fraternities

#133 Espiritu Santo, Albuquerque, NM



#133 Espiritu Santo held their election on June 20, 2026 The following are the results from the election results from our sister fraternity: Minister: Hugo Godina, OFS; Vice-Minister: Ramona Velarde, OFS; Secretary: Juan Velazquez, OFS; Treasurer: Daniel Sosa, OFS; Formation Director: Heralio Madrid, OFS; Councilor 1: Diana Madrid, OFS; Councilor 2: Lita Pino, OFS. Lettie Briones, OFS, Regional Councilor presided over the elections.

News From Our Fraternities

#135 Inmaculado de Corazon De Maria, El Paso, TX





Elvia Serna and Marina Cadena de Santiago made their permanent profession into the Secular Franciscan Order on Sunday, August 2, 2026 at St. Anthony Seminary in El Paso, TX.



#135 Inmaculado de Corazón de Maria visited the Virgen de Carmen to pray the rosary with the Carmelite sisters in Las Cruces, NM on July 14, 2026

ELECTIONS/ VISITATIONS/ORIENTATIONS 2026
(SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER, 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 September, 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. *Completed*
#114 Santa Isabel de Hungria - August 23, 2026 *Completed*
#121 St. Francis, Santa Fe – September 26, 2026, Noon
#109 St. Patrick's – October 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

2026 INFORMAL VISITS

#130 Brothers & Sisters – TBD

2026 TENTATIVE ELECTIONS

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

ORIENTATIONS

#133 Espiritu Santo -

WORKSHOPS

2026 - Spanish Formation Workshop pending Grant submittal

FRATERNITIES UNDER ACCOMPANIMENT

#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 *Completed*
September 3, 2026 – REC Budget Mtg.
September 12, 2026 – Local Minister Budget Mtg. at Noon by Zoom
September 27, 2026 – NAFRA Centenary 800th Anniv. of Francis' Transitus – 3 pm Eastern/2 pm Central/ 1 pm Mountain/noon Pacific
October, 2026 – Transitus Celebration, HCRC, Las Cruces
October 13 – 18, 2026 – National Chapter, Wichita, Kansas
November 6-7, 2026 – Regional Chapter/Elections – El Paso, Texas
November 17, 2026 – Yearly celebration of our patroness, St. Elizabeth of Hungary



January – April 2026

RECOGNITION OF 50+ YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION

St. Anthony #101 – Albuquerque, NM
Arthur R. Lente, OFS – October 4, 1945

Santa Isabel de Hungria #114 – Las Cruces, NM
Carmen Lopez, OFS – October 3, 1956
Jose Moreno, OFS – October 4, 1972

RECOGNITION OF 25+ YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSION

St. Anthony #101 – Albuquerque, NM
Joanne G. Elfers, OFS – October 24, 1983
Barbara Heilman, OFS – October 24, 1995
Geraldine Rohrkemper, OFS – December 20, 1992
Nancy T. Singh, OFS – October 7, 2001
Alcaria B. Valdez, OFS – October 29. 1989
Rena G. Xuereb, OFS – October 24, 1993
Victor A. Xuereb, OFS – October 24, 1993

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

Mary Immaculate #106 – El Paso, TX
Yvonne (Bonnie) Franco, OFS – November 28, 1993

St. Patrick #109 – El Paso, TX
Arturo Villarreal, OFS – October 3, 1981
Sofia U. Villarreal, OFS – October 3, 1981

Our Lady of Guadalupe #113 – Las Cruces, NM
Ray Apodaca, OFS – November 18, 2001
Rebecca DeCorte, OFS – November 17, 1999
Myrna Gomez, OFS – October 13, 2001
Esperanza Jaquez, OFS – October 13, 2001

Santa Isabel de Hungria #114 – Las Cruces, NM
Olga Carrillo, OFS – October 4, 1984

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

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

San Luis Rey #128 – El Paso, TX
Maria de los Angeles Aguilar, OFS – December 29, 1991

Brothers & Sisters of St. Francis #130 – Plainview, TX
Manuela M. Cuevas, OFS – November 13, 1999
Lois A. Macha, OFS – November 13, 1999
Juanita G. Perez, OFS – November 13, 1999

Inmaculado Corazon de Maria #135 – El Paso, TX
Maria Ester Elixavide, OFS – October 4, 1996
Graciela Rocha, OFS – October 4, 1985
Patricia Terrazas, OFS – October 4, 2000

Extra! Extra! Family News

Coach John Beard, son of Gigi Gregory, OFS, was inducted into the El Paso, Baseball Hall of Fame on August 2, 2026.







Fran Cimino, OFS has been remodeling her house since March 2026. The stove before and after says it all.





The 21st Quinquennial Congress of the Secular Franciscan Order of the USA was held in Lexington, KY July 29—August 1, 2026. Visit the Secular Franciscan National Website to see highlights of Q2026 by clicking this link Updates from the Q – July 29th through August 1st, 2026 – Secular Franciscan Order –



Members of Region #75 at the Q2026.



Ana Maria Raffo Laos, OFS, Presidency Councilor; Tibor Kauser, OFS, Minster General, and his wife, Mrs. Kauser, OFS.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas Region # 75

Regional Chapter of Elections

November – 6-8, 2026 – Holiday Inn El Paso West

900 Sunland Park Dr.

El Paso, Texas 79922

Link to Registration Form

Observers are encouraged to attend and experience a regional chapter/election meeting.

Please click on the link above to register by September 15.

Call for *Articles for LA TILMA*

Articles for future Newsletters must be received as follows:

Winter 2026 by December 5, 2026

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