

# TRACINGS

ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS | www.queenofpeaceregion.org

## Minister's Quarterly Message

### Threes!

Every time a celebrity dies my husband remarks; "I wonder who else will die - death comes in threes." Usually, it might take a couple of weeks, but he would have his threes.

Well, it turns out good comes in threes as well. I went to a diaconate ordination in Duluth, MN on Nov. 22, 2015 for one of our Secular Franciscans, Tim Richardson, OFS (Spiritus Sanctus Emerging Fraternity, Brainerd, MN).

One of my fellow lectors at my church was going to be ordained a deacon on Dec. 5, 2015. Another Secular Franciscan, Kim Jensen, OFS (San Damiano Fraternity, Elk River, MN) was in the same class and was also ordained a deacon. There had not been a diaconate ordination in five years for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, MN.

That drought is now over and the good that comes-in-threes took two weeks.

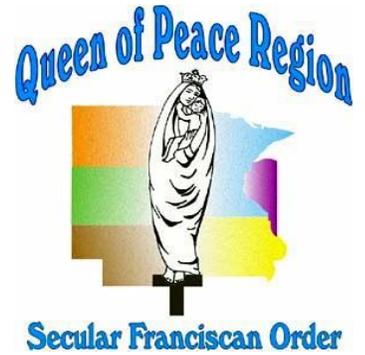
The question that came to me was "do we count our blessings or do we focus

on what we wished we had?" Many fraternities are struggling with aging members. The deacons and priests who attended the ordinations were not spring chickens. This challenge is shared by all religious orders. As Secular Franciscans we must focus on the positives - the faithful fraternity members who attend meetings and are living the Gospel Life.

A line from the ordinations that rings clearly comes when the newly ordained deacons kneel before the bishop and they receive the Gospel "... Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." - threes again. These are things we are all called to do as Christians and most especially as Secular Franciscans. If the example we give as Secular Franciscans is strong, others will be attracted to the Order, just as they were 800 years ago when people flocked to St. Francis and his THREE Orders.

God Bless.

Kim Pappas, OFS



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## A GIFT THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN GIVE

Kathy Taormina, OFS, QOP Regional Spiritual Assistant

As I journey with those in the Spiritual Assistant class, I inevitably learn or renew my learning class by class. Recently though, I was struck so deeply by a new way to look at the "Theology of Profession" that I need to share it with you. It burns within my heart!

*"Secular Franciscans are committed to a fraternal communion of faith and love, nurtured by mutual prayer, reciprocal knowledge and awareness as well as regular presence<sup>2</sup>. Frequent absence from fraternity gatherings does not support fraternal life. OFS profession gives fraternal life a place of preference in the life of professed*

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## ONGOING FORMATION

“I try to learn something new every day.”

Sr. Nancy Miller, OSF

“I try to learn something new every day,” were the words from a parishioner with whom I was conversing recently. His words were refreshing and inspiring and reflected his appreciation of life-long learning and of being ever open to change and being transformed anew. Of course this isn’t easy, because it can challenge us to move out of our comfort zones of thinking and acting. Yet, with its many different dimensions, that is what ongoing formation is about. At the same time the entire fraternity has responsibility for ongoing formation. How we gather and greet one another in our fraternity is a formative experience. Obviously prayer and faith sharing are an integral part of formation in our meetings. Also, having a fraternity service experience, like preparing a meal for a local shelter, writing out cards to its shut-in members or even writing letters to our congresspersons can be formative. (The options are limited only by our imagination.)

We are in exciting times in our Church and in our world with Pope Francis’ two recent documents, *Misericordiae Vultus – The Face of Mercy* and *Laudato Si’ – On Care for our Common Home*. Pope Francis proclaimed an *Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy* beginning December 8, 2015. He calls for it “because this is the time for mercy. It is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and to touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.”

The encyclical *Laudato Si’ – On Care for*

*Our Common Home* addresses being in relationship with humanity, the earth, all creatures and includes our political and economic systems. Pope Francis calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. It is the new appeal from Pope Francis addressed to “every person living on this planet” for an inclusive dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. This encyclical is written with both hope and resolve, looking to our common future with candor and humility. Wow, what a great opportunity for your fraternity to prayerfully study and reflect on these two documents and carry the message to the world in word and action.

Fr. Lester Bach says it clearly, “The Franciscan spirit touches the whole of life. The SFO is not a devotional society that lets you do what you want as long as you pray. Rather it expects that your grasp of the Franciscan spirit will find expression in the actions of your daily life (*The Franciscan Journey – Embracing the Franciscan Vision*, p. 41).

Let us pray and act out of merciful kindness especially during this Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy. As Pope Francis prayed from *Laudato Si’*, “All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one...We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.”

The Spirit of the Prince of Peace fills our world.

## A GIFT THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN GIVE - Continued

*Franciscans. Each member is “co-responsible” for the life of the fraternity. Professed members share their personal gifts in a way that builds fraternal life and contributes to the community of love.*

*Underlying this commitment is the dignity of a Christian who has been baptized and became part of the community of love that we call the Catholic Church.*

*Franciscans are called to imitate God’s love shown through creation and, especially, for God’s love that sent Jesus among us. Our love relies on the model of God’s love made evident in the incarnation – Emmanuel, God with us.”*

During this time of Advent, when the world await the Lord, we, the professed, have the ability to “give birth to him through a holy life which must give light to others by example.” *OFS rule. Who knew that by our baptism, and furthered by our profession, we are part of the great plan of the Incarnation? We can help fulfil the gift of the Incarnation through our profession!!*

By being present to one another in fraternal life during our fraternity gatherings, and thus be present to the world around us, we become that *community of love.*

Quit giving material gifts that will fade and lose their appeal in time.

The gift that no one else can give is **YOU.**

<sup>1</sup> Franciscan Family Connections, 2011 ed.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 2008 Chapter address by Emmanuela De Nunzio – former International OFS Minister

## JPIC - Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

by Cynthia Gunsolly, OFS

Greetings Franciscans!

I pray you are enjoying this beautiful time of year in which we excitedly anticipate, the birthday celebration of Our Lord. During this time, we are presented opportunities to be more aware of our brothers and sisters in Christ who may not be as fortunate as we. There are winter garment collections, requests from food pantries and special requests connected with Christmas celebrations for the poor. Our Lord made it very clear that we are to take care of the poor and marginalized among us. It is one of His themes as stated in the Biblical story of Our Lord's second coming, telling of His separation of the sheep and goats (Matt 25: 31-46)- "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me." The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable is one of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching.

Our Seraphic Father Francis knew and practiced the option for the poor and vulnerable very well - his beloved Lady Poverty (the poor and marginalized) was very dear to his heart.

Article #13 of the Rule states "As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ. A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the

lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ." Francis' words still ring true today.

It's important to teach our children of their responsibility to provide assistance to those less fortunate than themselves. One of my sons (~15 at the time), leaned over toward me one morning in Mass while I was writing my check for the Loaves and Fishes collection; He quietly proclaimed that "next week we will be in the food pantry line"! I assured him, "Sweetheart, we have all we need - we are fine". But those coming to the Church for financial assistance need our help and we should contribute what we can to help them.

Here are some "Reflections on Poverty in America" from the USCCB website that I wish to share with you: "Being a believer means that one lives a certain way walking with the Lord, doing justice, loving kindness, and living peaceably among all people. Christian discipleship means practicing what Jesus preached." US Bishops, *Everyday Christianity*

Come, Holy Spirit, and open our hearts,

minds, and souls to your presence. Grace us with the strength to follow the examples of Jesus. Like Jesus, may the Spirit provide us with a voice to cry out for justice for the poor." *Answering the Voice of the Spirit*, The Catholic Campaign for Human Development

And a few "Real Words from Americans Living in Poverty", the last one I found to be quite clever and hope-filled.

It means having to do without basic needs. It means being last, forgotten, judged wrongly by others. Male, 44, Delaware, household of three, income less than \$8,860

Poor = helpless. Poor + Black = helpless, hopeless. Poor + Black + female + Catholic = encouraged fighter. Female, 62, Ohio, household of two, income of \$11,940 to \$15,019

Take some time to consider what you may wish to be part of during this most sacred time of the year to help Our Lord's "least brothers of Mine".

May our dear Lord hold you close to His Heart well into His New Year - don't forget to wish Him a very Happy Birthday in a few short weeks!

### Secular Franciscan Order Queen of Peace Region Donation Form

I/We would like to make a tax deductible donation to the OFS Queen of Peace Regional Common Fund:

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
- or -

As a Memorial to: \_\_\_\_\_  
My/Our check numbered \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ is included in this mailing.

My/Our Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form and your check to:  
Treasurer, OFS Queen of Peace Region  
22983 W. Martin Lake Drive, Stacy, MN 55079



## UPCOMING EVENTS

## REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

### Minister

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Kathy Taormina, OFS  
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### Queen of Peace Regional Spring Gathering

The Regional Spring Gathering sponsored by San Damiano Fraternity in Elk River, MN, will be held in Little Falls on a Saturday in April yet to be determined. Information as to registration will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

### Annual Regional Fraternity Meeting

The 2016 Regional Fraternity meeting will be held again at Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, MN, June 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> 2016. Attendance by Local Fraternity Ministers or their designated representatives is mandatory. Please mark your calendars for this important event. This is our Region's Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation meeting. The Fraternal Visitor is currently designated as Jan Parker, OFS, National Minister.

### The Quinquennial

NAFRA will hold the "Q" in St Louis, June 30 – July 3, 2016 at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel. Rediscover the Franciscan Charisms and enjoy new growth and fruitfulness in your vocation. Share your joys and your insights as we look forward to future endeavors as a National Family.

### Regional Formation Workshop

A Regional Formation Workshop is being planned for August 13, 2016 at Saint Bonaventure in Bloomington, MN. Mark your calendars for this important event. More information will be provided as planning continues.

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