

# SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

## Five Franciscan Martyrs Region

Winter 2014

### POPE FRANCIS: 2013 TIME PERSON OF THE YEAR

Pope Francis has been named Time's **Person of the Year** in its December 23, 2013 issue. The TIME article explained that Pope Francis' message of mercy, his focus on simplicity, and his love for the poor, sick, spiritually destitute, and abandoned has impressed the faithful worldwide. Pope Francis has also refocused on the healing mission of the Catholic Church, stating the Communion is "not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak". This refocus on a healing ministry, TIME writes, may supersede the culture wars of the 20th century that caused division, rather than unification. Pope Francis is a messenger of mercy, with quotes such as, "Who am I to Judge?" and "Pray for me."

Time Editor Nancy Gibbs wrote "Rarely has a new player on the world stage captured so much attention so quickly -- young and old, faithful and cynical -- as has Pope Francis. In his nine months in office, he has placed himself at the very center of the central conversations of our time: about wealth and poverty, fairness and justice, transparency, modernity, globalization, the role of women, the nature of marriage, the temptations of power..."

For pulling the papacy out of the palace and into the streets, for committing the world's largest church to confronting its deepest needs, and for balancing judgment with mercy, Pope Francis is TIME's 2013 Person of the Year"

Pope Francis joins Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II as Popes who have been TIME's "Person of the Year".



Image courtesy of Time Magazine.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Five Franciscan Martyrs Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States is the organic union of all Secular Franciscan fraternities in the State of Florida, South Georgia, and Lower Alabama. We desire to promote in the world a deeper presence of the Catholic Faith and the Franciscan tradition; and we seek to bring the Gospel Beatitudes of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, as personified by St. Francis of Assisi, to all our secular, daily lives. We foster a spirit of prayer, conversion, reconciliation, justice and service, especially to the marginalized in our society. We invoke the intercession, honor the memory, and advance the Cause of the patrons of our Region, the Five Franciscan Martyrs of La Florida, who, in A.D. 1597, freely gave their lives in testimony to the dignity of Christian marriage and family life. (Rewritten from original 1991 version and approved in February 1999, updated February 20.)



Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi, Picture by T. Zesiewicz

# NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY SECULAR

## PHYSICIAN RECEIVES 'JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION AWARD'

*Physician founded ministry to help alleviate poverty in developing countries*

A visit to East Africa in 2001 changed Dr. Margie Sweeney's life. The poverty she saw, and the realization, she said, that God was calling her, led the family physician to found the nonprofit charity, Helping Hands Healing Ministries, Inc. (HHHM) to help alleviate poverty in developing countries.



For her efforts and example, Dr. Sweeney received the Franciscan Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Award during the annual chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, held Oct. 16-20 at Savior Pastoral Center in Kansas City.

National Minister Deacon Tom Bello, OFS, presented the JPIC Award, a glass statue of a pair of hands enveloping the globe, along with a \$2,000 prize. JPIC Chair Kent Ferris, OFS, cited several of her projects, such as assisting a school in Zambia with electrical hook-ups, starting a dairy farm in Tanzania to provide nutrition to 400 people, offering tuition assistance for various students in Africa, and more recently, making a series of medical mission trips to Haiti.



A professed Secular Franciscan herself, Dr. Sweeney is minister of St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity in Tampa, FL. She resides in St. Cloud, FL with her civil-engineer husband, Michael. They have a son, Patrick, and a daughter, Kelly.

Her trip to Africa was memorable for another reason. She landed at Nairobi, Kenya on Sept. 11, 2001. She didn't know about the terrorist attacks back in America until a nun came up to her at the airport and said she was so sorry.

## REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**Hans Hueimmer, OFS**  
Regional Minister

**Marie Thomas, OFS**  
Regional Vice Minister

**Pam Nagle, OFS**  
Regional Treasurer

**Mary Rivera, OFS**  
Regional Formation Minister

**Sue Jacobs, OFS**  
Regional Secretary

**John LoRizzo, OFS**  
Northeast Councilor

**Joy Niklas, OFS**  
West Central Councilor

**Bonnie Barlow, OFS**  
East Central Councilor

**Barbara Gesmundo, OFS**  
Southeast Councilor

**Barbara Carroll, OFS**  
Southwest Councilor

**Alice McDonald, OFS**  
Northwest Councilor

**Fr. Kevin Queally, T.O.R.**  
Regional Spiritual Assistant

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**Theresa Zesiewicz, MD OFS**  
Regional Newsletter Editor



Picture by T.Zesiewicz

“I gained a new level of faith and trust in God,” she told the 80 chapter attendees, representing over 13,000 Secular Franciscans across the U.S. and Guam. “I had a new attitude of gratitude.”

Formerly known as the Peace Award, it was renamed to capture the significant inter-related efforts in the areas of justice, peace and the integrity of creation, noted Ferris, OFS. “Our Franciscan Rule reminds us of our responsibility to ‘individually and collectively be in the forefront of promoting justice by the testimony of our lives.’ The JPIC Award allows us to recognize those who have modeled such courageous efforts.”

The annual award was revived in 2007 after a lapse of several years. The 2007 award recognized the work of Dr. Tony Lazzara, an American physician and Secular Franciscan who operates a clinic and shelter for ailing children in Peru. The 2008 award honored Marie Dennis, a Secular Franciscan who directs the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and who is immersed in advocating on behalf of people marginalized by society, poverty, abuse, war, violence, and human trafficking. The 2009 award went to Don Ryder, a Secular Franciscan from Wisconsin who helped save the Maasai people in Kenya from disease and drought by drilling water wells. In 2010 it honored Br. David Buer, OFM, for his work with the homeless and marginalized in Tucson and Las Vegas. In 2011 the award went to Fr. Louie Vitale, OFM, a Franciscan friar known for protests against war and torture and advocacy for the poor. Last year Janice Benton, a Secular Franciscan from Maryland, was honored for her advocacy work for people with disabilities.

Among the more notable prior recipients were the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

The Secular Franciscan Order is an order of single and married Catholics who profess to bring the Gospel to life in the spirit of St. Francis.



Pictures courtesy of M. Sweeney, 2013

## YOU ASKED: WE ARE DELIVERING

The Region has heard your message of concern! Many of the fraternities and the fraternity councils have requested some sort of “council training” so they feel more secure in what they are accomplishing and the members would have a better idea of what their council is doing because they are mandated to do so.

Therefore the Executive Regional Council will be running area-wide “Leadership Workshops” throughout the upcoming year! EVERYONE IS INVITED! Yes, it will be focusing on what the council needs to do so the entire council should definitely be in attendance BUT ... it will also give every member a better idea of what to expect from the council and to expect when he/she is nominated to serve on the council.

Unlike the “FUN Manual Workshops,” all these workshops start at 9:30 AM, end at 2 PM and will require more small group participation, therefore members will get to know each other better and it will be more fun!

**The schedule to date, for these “Leadership Workshops” is below:**

**West Central Area** – Saturday, March 8, 2014 at Holy Redeemer, Tampa, FL

**West Central Area** – Saturday, March 8, 2014 at Holy Redeemer Church, Tampa, FL

**East Central Area** - Saturday, March 29, 2014 at Ascension Church in Melbourne, FL

**Northeast Area** – Saturday, April 12, 2014 at Holy Faith Church in Gainesville, FL

**We are looking forward to seeing you again!**

## ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT

**by Hans Huemmer, OFS,  
Regional Minister**

The Five Franciscan Martyrs region will have a chapter of election next Memorial day weekend. I ask all the members of every fraternity to pray for the election and for leaders, there will be more info as time gets closer for the nomination and election.



## COMMUNICATION

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by Marie Thomas, OFS, Regional Vice Minister

As I sit here reminiscing about the events in 2013, the multitude of communication gadgets and methods struck me as odd. I say odd because despite all the myriads of methods such as I-Pads, I-Phones, Twitter, Blogs, Face Books, etc. which unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) I do not have nor do I know how they are used, I believe people are communicating less! Oh, I don't mean they are not talking, they are doing a great deal of talking but they are not truly communicating.

What do I mean by this? Have you noticed how some folks 'text' their spouse or friend from their own driveway or from the next room? Real communication involves more than words. It means entering into the other's shoes, heart, and mind. It involves studying the other's eyes, facial expressions and body language. If we are simply interested in dictating our desires to someone and emphasizing that we should be obeyed to the letter, then only our words are necessary. But as Catholics and Franciscans, we must both be Christ to them and see Christ in them. The 5th Article in our Rule states it very well:

Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of St. Francis, who often said, "I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except His most holy body and blood," should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.

Therefore, it is very important for all Franciscans to keep this in mind when speaking to others, especially our own brothers and sisters. Sometimes, we may get caught up in 'doing it right' and we forget that being right is not as important as being kind and loving. If 'being right' hurts someone's feelings or upsets us to such an extent that it disturbs our own peace, we need to re-evaluate our priorities.

Let us keep in mind that God's plan is always at work for everyone... including us. Nothing happens to us or others that He does not allow. In other words, if things don't seem to be going 'right' for us, we are only looking at the surface. God is at work in every single thing that occurs. Thrust your cares on Him and wish only that which He wishes. We need to adopt His will as our own!

Mary, our beloved Mother, showed us how to do this. She did not understand and she realized she would be ridiculed and hurt but she made God's will ~ her will, God's desires became her desires. She did not let bitterness poison her prayer and she did not give in to depression by feeling sorry for herself. She accepted the risks and the pain that were sure to come.

This year, let's resolve to take that leap forward with Mary. Let's change the way we communicate with all people. Let us strive to see God in them first; then speak!



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## FROM THE DESK OF LUKE AMATO, OFS:

*I've recently written a second book, entitled "Praying the Word: Lectio Divina".*

If anyone would like a detailed preview of what book contains, they can go to Amazon.com, input "Lucas J. Amato books" and click on "look inside the book" arrow. I will split the net proceeds for the financial benefit with our Regional Fraternity if you order directly through my email address (rather than through amazon). Here is my email address: [lukeamato@yahoo.com](mailto:lukeamato@yahoo.com)

Thanks, Peace and Love to all,

Luke



## PILGRIMAGE OF POPE FRANCIS TO ASSISI, 2013

Pope Francis visited Assisi, Italy on the feastday of his namesake, St. Francis of Assisi, on October 4, 2013. Crowds lined the streets to see the newly elected Pope in this beautiful Italian town, and to hear his message of love for the poor, mercy, and forgiveness. Some candid pictures of the event are included below, courtesy of Joseph Staffetti, MD, who witnessed the event. The bronze statues depict the parents of St. Francis of Assisi.

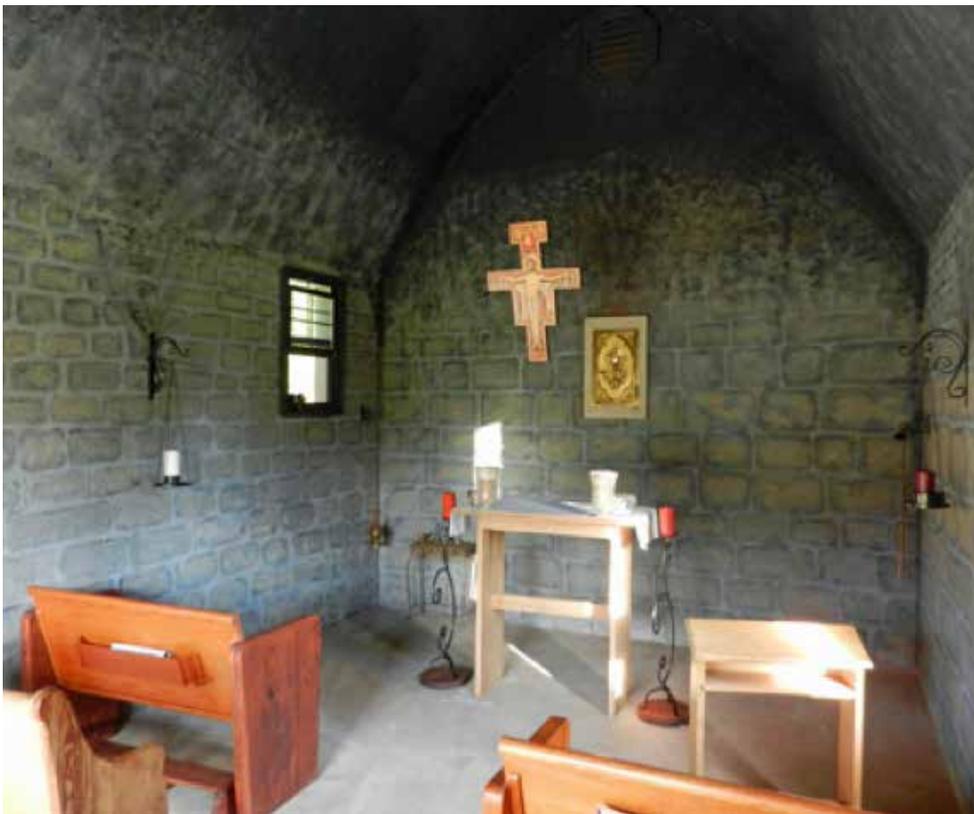




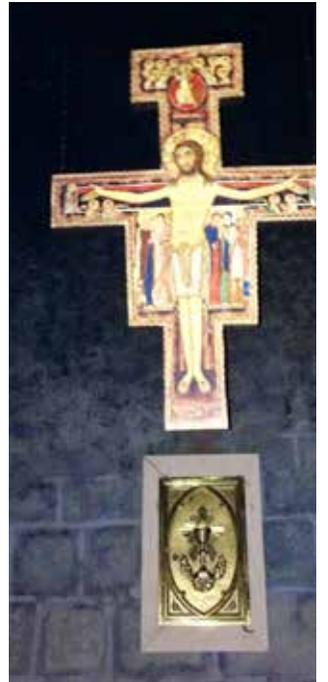
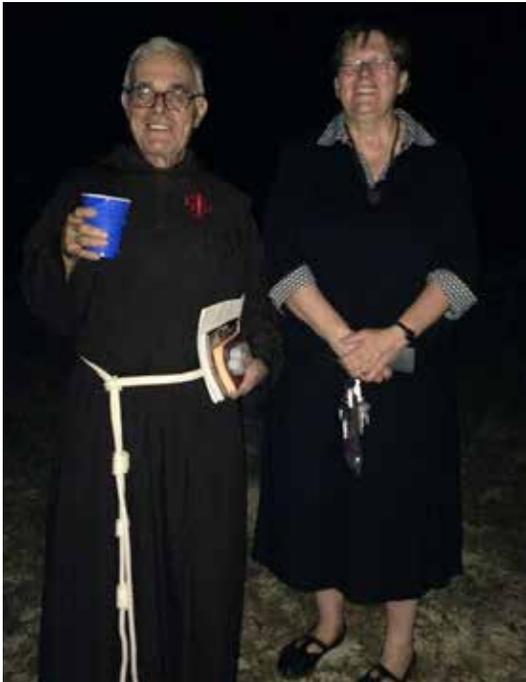
# NEWS FROM THE FRATERNITIES

## NORTHWEST AREA

Alice McDonald, OFS built a replica of the Portiuncula on her property, 50 miles slightly North-East of the area where Tristan de Luna landed in 1559 on the white sandy beach. de Luna and his group thanked God with a celebration of the Eucharist. Alice's Portiuncula is built to size of the original Portiuncula.



Pictures courtesy of Alice McDonald



Pictures courtesy of Alice McDonald

## SOUTHWEST AREA

By Christina Books, OFS

The Southwest Area has been very quiet since last I wrote. Not much has been going on and I only have a couple of Fraternity activities to note. They are reasons for joy.

### *Here's what been going on ~*

**Portiuncula Fraternity** in Bradenton, FL has been very busy organizing the Profession ceremony for its first Candidate to come through the F.U.N. Manual formation. Dan Friedrich is a very spiritual and dedicated Franciscan and is sure to be a great asset to their Fraternity. They will be joined by the St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity from Port Charlotte. The Profession is scheduled for Saturday February 8th at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church in Sarasota, FL and a luncheon at the Sakura Hibachi Buffet will follow.

At the same time, The Portiuncula is getting ready for it's Visitation in March and (like everyone else) working on it's Annual Report. After March, the Council plans on taking a nap.

**St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity** (as noted above) is joining The Portiuncula Fraternity for their Profession of THREE new members, Sandra Geersten, Serafina Goncalves and JoAnn Arnold. Congratulations to all three and to the Fraternity. What a gift of the Holy Spirit!

**St. Clare Fraternity** from Naples, FL writes that their fraternity meetings have been very spiritual and productive and they are attracting several wonderful candidates.

"We feel confident, that with the Grace of God we are heading in the right direction. We had a wonderful Advent Day of Recollection with Fr. Francis from Ave Maria, which was attended by several members from Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity and St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity. We are planning on having a Lenten Day of Reflection, once again using Fr. Francis. Our pre-Christmas celebration was wonderful and was a wonderful vehicle to bond our community together.

We are scheduled to have our Regional Visitation on February 23rd.

We are hoping that this year's celebration of the Feast of St. Clare, to which all the other fraternities are invited, will be the best celebration to date. Currently we are planning to celebrate the feast on Tuesday, August 12th at St. Williams, and our principle speaker will be our great Franciscan author, Fr. Regis Armstrong. You will certainly want to mark you calendar for this event."

## WEST CENTRAL AREA

By Theresa Zesiewicz, MD OFS

### *St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity, Tampa, Florida*

David Koehler was admitted to the Rite of Candidacy in September, 2013.

As part of our JPIC initiative, we have started the Wounded Warriors Ministry at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida. We will be visiting the wounded veterans monthly and taking part in bingo and other activities. If you are in the area and would like to join in, please email us at [tzesiewi@health.usf.edu](mailto:tzesiewi@health.usf.edu).



Photos above, David Koehler's Rite of Candidacy.



Photo above, Pam Scott and Alessandra Staffetti, courtesy of T. Zesiewicz, 2013.

For updates on our fraternity, please visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/saintmichaelthearchangelfraternity>.