

The Joyful Messenger

Fall 2026

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Five Franciscan Martyrs Region

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Regional Minister	Rachel Ahern, OFS
Regional Vice Minister	Sheila Solomon, OFS
Regional Formation Director	Margie Sweeney, OFS
Regional Secretary	Kelly Otero, OFS
Regional Treasurer	Larry Bleau, OFS
Regional Spiritual Assistants	Friar Alberto Bueno TOR, Friar Randall Roberts OFM Cap., Friar Rodolfo Ramon Cabrera OFM Cap.

REGIONAL FAMILY COUNCILORS

Miguel Cruz, OFS
Willie Guadalupe, OFS
Victoria Martinez, OFS
Janice Novello, OFS
Frank Pate, OFS
Kathy Ramsey, OFS
Margaret Wendel, OFS
Jean Ziegler, OFS



STANDING APPOINTMENTS

Webmaster	vacant
Electronic Newsletter Editor	Jack Ditch, OFS
Multi-Cultural Liaison	vacant
Youth / Young Adult Apostolate (YouFra)	Janice Novello, OFS, PhD
Database Manager	Pat Wolfert, OFS
Prayer Requests	Pam Nagle OFS and Deacon Ric Nagle OFS

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Five Franciscan Martyrs Region of the Secular Franciscan Order is to walk in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi by bringing the gospel to life and life to the gospel and promoting a sanctified life

From Margie Sweeny, OFS

FFMR Formation Director

I just want to say a big THANK YOU to all who are offering information regarding your fraternity activities, formation materials, and other workshops, and goings on in our Region and beyond. It is very heartwarming to see the level of interest and engagement.

Recently, I have also been receiving some beautiful prayers that I will be sending out under **Marathon Monday** emails as I don't want to create a new category of emails to send out. I think 3 days a week is a good "happy medium" for frequency of emails.

What's new? The Formation Team is currently working on a 12-month formation course on Ecclesiology that can be useful for ongoing formation for any that are interested. There is no obligation to use this course and there may be supplemental or different topics that you may want to consider that won't be in the 12-month course. I hope to have this course ready some time in 2027. It will be distributed to all Formation Directors and those Ministers who opted-in to receive **Marathon Monday** emails.

I am so grateful and encouraged by all that is going on in our fraternities!

As always, feel free to contact me with any suggestions or concerns. I try to respond within 48 hours.

In His service for the greater glory of God!
Peace, blessings, and all good,
Margie



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Fr. Alberto, TOR

Regional Spiritual Director

My dear brothers and sisters of the Five Franciscan Martyrs Region. I was reflecting on the Sacred Stigmata of our holy father Saint Francis. This reflection brought me to the message that the late and beloved Pope Francis shared at La Verna in 2024. He reminded those gathered there that the wounds of Christ our Lord are not just a sign of His crucifixion, but also of the Resurrection, that is, Christ's Paschal Victory. Thus, in sharing the wounds of the crucifixion with St. Francis, it is not just about suffering with the suffering Christ, but also a sharing in the Lord's victory over sin and death. It is through baptism that we all share in the life of Christ. We were signed with the Cross at our baptism and claimed for Christ. We carry the Cross imprinted on our bodies, as Saint Paul writes in his Letter to the Galatians (6:17) "Let no one trouble me; I carry branded on my body the marks of Jesus." The late Pope Francis reminds us that, "Christians are called to address themselves in a special way to the 'stigmatized' they encounter: to those who are 'marked' in life, who bear the scars of the sufferings and injustices they have endured or the mistakes they have made. And, in this mission, the Saint of La Verna is a companion on the journey, who supports us and helps us not to be crushed by difficulties, fears and contradictions, ours and those of others. This is what (Saint) Francis did every day, … forgetting himself in giving and in service, … going so far, … as to 'disappropriate' himself." This *sine proprio* (complete detachment) is an essential part of our Franciscan life and charism. As St. Francis put it: "Keep nothing of yourself for yourself." We are called to a life of freedom from attachments to material things. This does not mean that we may not use material things for our good and the good of others but rather be so unattached to them that they do not hinder us in living and serving our brothers and sisters in need freely and unencumbered. From our woundedness, we are able, then, to empathize with those who suffer in our world, ministering to them and being their voice in a society that very often ignores, or worse, rejects their humanity. Saint Francis embraced the leper and ministered to lepers. We are called to do the same with all those whom society labels as "lepers" with no distinction. May the Lord give all of you, His peace

Poetry

Jeannette B Grant

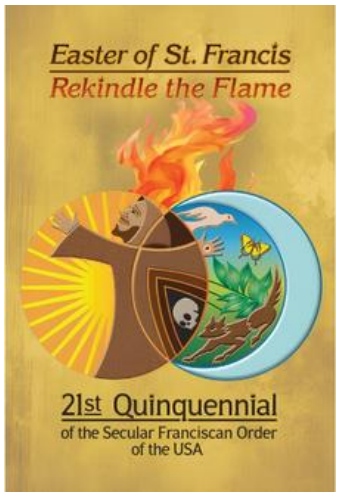
THE UPPER ROOM

In the upper room, we saw Him
We were changed from within.
In the upper room, He taught us love
That can come only from up above.
In the upper room, He taught us about sacrifice
That could change our very lives.
In the upper room, He said we must be born again
This time without pain!
In the upper room, He gave us a new mission
He blessed us and gave us permission.
In the upper room, He said we must give our all
This was to be our new call.
In the upper room, He told all of us
That his name was Jesus.
In the upper room He said that the cross
Was not a total loss.
In the upper room, He said, follow me
A new world we would see!
In the upper room, He said go and fish for men
This could be our new dish!
In the upper room, He said be brave
Souls of men you will save.
In the upper room He said our reward
would come very soon!
From the upper room we did go.
We changed the world as you know!
Now it is up to us
To follow Jesus.
Let us give Him our all
Because we have heard His divine call. Amen.
10-14-26

Celebrating the Easter of St. Francis

Members of our Regional Fraternity that attended the 21st Quinquennial Congress .in Lexington, Kentucky from July 29th through August 1st.





News From the Fraternities

St. Clare of Assisi

Ave Maria, FL

This past August, St. Clare of Assisi Fraternity in Ave Maria celebrated the Feast of St. Clare of Assisi annual tradition at the home of Janet and Will Saladino, OFS. The Fraternity brothers and sisters enjoyed a time of fellowship and sharing a variety of food with those long-professed to those just beginning their Franciscan journey. The celebration of a prayer service dedicated to St. Clare and joined together in praying the Franciscan Crown Rosary







Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity

Tallahassee, Florida

Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity was featured in the Catholic Compass, the bimonthly magazine of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, as part of the Franciscan Jubilee Year celebrations. The September/October issue can be found here: PT0926 | Catholic Magazines.

J. Frank Pate OFS, fraternity minister, appeared on the **Gaudium et Spes** podcast sharing his story as a Secular, and how St. Francis brought him back to the Catholic Church. Look for Episode 133 on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or YouTube, or watch here: Episode 133 - Gaudium et Spes: Living the Secular Franciscan Rule



St Padre Pio

Jensen Beach, FL

On September 5th the Fraternity, joined by 2 members of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity of Port St. Lucie, went on pilgrimage to St. Francis of Assisi Church in Riviera Beach to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of St. Francis in the Jubilee Year of St. Francis and to gain the plenary indulgence granted by Pope Leo XIV.

Fr. Edivaldo Da Silva Oliveira conducted confessionals when we arrived gave a homily tying in the wisdom of St. Francis, Padre Pio, and St. Teresa of Calcutta to the readings of the day. The Home Parish was thrilled to have Franciscans come on pilgrimage to their church. The parish provided booklets with prayers and reflections on St. Francis, as well as a commemorative card containing the prayer to St. Francis, written by Pope Leo XIV for the Jubilee Year. Following the mass, visitors and parishioners prayed the Litany of Franciscan Saints and the required prayers to receive the indulgence. It was truly a grace-filled day of prayer, fellowship, and fraternal joy!



San Damiano Fraternity
Summerfield, FL

Had a joyful time at a picnic in Carney State Park during September as a social gathering. Eighteen members attended, each bringing a sides dish, entree, or dessert. Brother Sun was in attendance, though Sister Wind made herself known as well.



Also, members held a Transitus ceremony to celebrate the memory of St. Francis passing from his earthly life to his life with Our Lord. Seven members read various parts while facing the assembly, as in a play. It was moving and well received.

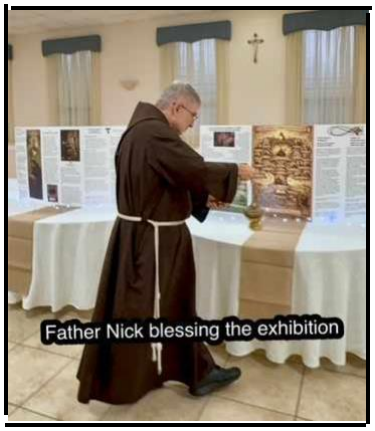




Espejode de Cristo
Hialeah, FL

On September 20 and 21, we held a beautiful exhibition celebrating the **800th Jubilee of Saint Francis of Assisi**. It was a truly blessed event, filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Many people attended and were deeply touched and delighted by the experience. We are grateful to everyone who participated and helped make this celebration so meaningful. May the example and spirit of **Saint Francis of Assisi** continue to inspire us to live with faith, humility, love and peace. **Pax et Bonum!**

Los días 20 y 21 de septiembre celebramos una preciosa exposición con motivo del 800. aniversario de San Francisco de Asís. Fue un acto verdaderamente bendecido, lleno de la presencia del Espíritu Santo. Asistieron muchas personas, que quedaron profundamente conmovidas y encantadas con la experiencia. Damos las gracias a todos el ejemplo y el espíritu de San Francisco de Asís sigan inspirándonos a vivir con fe, humildad, amor y paz !¡Pax et Bonum





Little Flower Fraternity
Daytona Beach, FL

November 8, 2025 a Profession Mass was held for Maggie Cera. Also attending (l to r) Marcia Stamboulian, OFS, Minister, Gale Petrizzo. OFS, Louise Taylor, OFS, Vice Minister, Maggie Cera Jim, Jean and William.



Maximilian Kolbe
Debary, FL

On Saturday, October 3 we honored the 800th anniversary of St Francis Transitus. The celebration was attended by 75 parishioners from 4 parishes. The beautiful celebration in St Ann's Church was followed by a special Holy Hour Adoration.

