



K A N S A S † M I S S O U R I † O K L A H O M A

M i n i s t e r ' s M e s s a g e

- Minister's Message
- Humility of Francis

Rome and Assisi ~

Even though at this writing it has been almost 6 weeks since I returned from my husband's and my pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi, the memory still blooms fresh in my heart. It was such a blessed opportunity and such an unforgettable experience. Our fellow pilgrims were wonderful, and holy and inspiring. I hope you won't mind this issue's message to be a little more chatty, as I reminisce a bit and share some of the experiences that stirred my heart.

We traveled with Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs out of Wisconsin. Let me say this, if you are planning a trip to Italy, try go on a pilgrimage not a tour. I had wanted to go to Italy for some time, but knew I only wanted to go with a group who had Catholic and Franciscan sensitivities to these holy cities. And I found them. We were also

so blessed to have a small group, only 16, and two wonderful guides, Fr. John Quigley, OFM from Cincinnati and an artist (happens to be Fr. Murray Bodo's house mate!) and Sr. Barbara Vano, OFS, from Lourdes University near Toledo, Ohio. There were two Franciscan brothers from Taiwan, two Franciscan priests from the Philippines, two sisters from Zambia and a Poor Clare from Belgium, who was given special permission to leave her monastery so she could go to Assisi. She was the most joyful and free-spirited woman I had ever met! And she was by far in the best shape of all of us too! The rest of the group were lay people from all over the USA.

In Rome we stayed at Casa Tra Noi, a modest hotel that was a 20 minute walk to the Vatican - straight down, or so it seemed. It really seemed so when we walked back each day - straight up.

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We walked these hilly cities 5 to 8 miles a day. It was a struggle at first, but my mind said, "yes" and my body seemed to follow. I will be better prepared for my next pilgrimage.

Our visitation sites and churches were all associated with Francis, which is why we only spent 3 days in Rome as his associations on his multiple trips there were usually in the same places. But 3 spectacular days they were. St. Peter's, the Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel, St. John Lateran, the Catacombs and Trastevere. Our first day we held Mass in St. Peter's at the altar of St. Jerome, where the body of St. Pope John XXIII is entombed. I had no idea when I volunteered to be reader that day that I would be sharing the same space with our holy pope and saint!

When we left Rome on our way to Assisi, we stopped in Greccio at the hermitage where Francis re-enacted the first Christmas. Greccio is a tiny town of few buildings near the top of a small mountain. At the very top of the mountain are the caves that Francis and his brothers used. The Franciscan Sanctuary of the Nativity has developed over the years including a wooden structure with rooms and eventually a friary and chapel, all built by other Franciscans including St. Bonaventure. Francis' cave was all the way to the very back of the sanctuary - a small, bare, cold space, naturally formed in the mountain. His penitent spirit was truly alive there. We had a ceremony at the site of Francis' nativity scene, and said Mass at the Chapel of the Nativity.



Before leaving, we had a "light lunch" at one of the restaurants in Greccio that was the talk of the rest of the trip. Warning: the food in Italy is fabulous, and the Italians are generous people. Father had asked for just antipasto, pasta and dessert, but no main dish so to keep the lunch simple. This dear chef fed us like we were farmhands! 11 antipasto dishes later we finally got our amazing plate of gnocchi and fabulous dessert including home made liqueur in a chocolate cup. Yes, light lunch indeed. Father laughed about it the rest of the day.



But Assisi - ahhh, Assisi. There is nothing like walking through the town for the first time. Pink stone buildings, clean but narrow slate and cobblestone roads, small shops and restaurants, and everywhere the feeling of St. Francis and St. Clare. Yes, the locals capitalized on pilgrims and visitors who came there because of Francis and Clare, but it was, for the most part, very tasteful. And I obliged by bringing home several Assisi mementos.

We stayed at the Casa Papa Giovanni (translated "home of Pope John" XXIII), a very popular pilgrim pensione that was down a side road from the Piazza de Comune, the center of town. By the way, pensiones are inexpensive hotels, usually for pilgrims, with most meals included.

In Assisi follow a road, and you will find a church, cathedral or basilica that had something to do with Francis or Clare - San Rufino where they were both baptized, Santa Maria Maggiore the bishop's cathedral where Francis gave everything back to his father, Basilica of St. Clare with the original San Damiano cross and Clare's tomb and the Basilica of St. Francis, the resting place for our beloved saint. A little less than a two mile walk from our pensione was San Damiano. Two miles outside of town was St. Mary of the Angels Basilica with the Porziuncola preserved inside. We took a bus trip up a mountain just outside of Assisi to the Carceri hermitage, another mountain get away for Francis' retreats. And we took a two-three hour bus trip to La Verna and spent the entire afternoon in meditation on the mountain.



(Continued from page 2)

Every place we went I could feel the spirits of Francis and Clare. I touched the stone walls of the Porziuncola and imagined Francis in his church rebuilding days. I knelt at the place in the dormitory where Clare died. I prayed over the spot where Francis received the stigmata. I dipped my fingers in the baptismal fount where both Clare and Francis, along with several other saintly Assisian Franciscans, were baptized. I walked in a dream for the entire 8 days I was there, and never once felt like a stranger.

But there was another side. I had heard for years from fellow Franciscans how wonderful Assisi was, how powerful the spirit there was and that just being there transformed you. I went to Assisi with that in mind - expecting an earth-shattering realization, or a near miracle change in how I saw everything. Instead I found a peaceful and calming transformation, the same as all the changes in my life have ever been. Not earth-shattering. Not miraculous as I had lead myself to believe it would all happen. In truth, it reminded me of the "Mountain Man" chapter in FRANCIS, THE JOURNEY AND THE DREAM by Fr. Murray Bodo. In it Francis, who could never wait to get back to the mountains, to throw himself on the floor of his cave, and commune again with Jesus, observed his brothers as they approached the same mountain more with fear than the joy he felt:



They would wear themselves out trying to be like him ... Sometimes he saw in their eyes that frightened, lonely look that said simply that they had followed him to the mountain to find what he had found but instead had found only themselves.

"It was then that he felt closest to them; for that void, that emptiness, was the prelude to being filled with the Mountain Man, with Christ Himself.

At that point they were finally free of Francis and ready to meet Jesus. They were open, receptive, emptied of all illusion and pretty daydreaming.

They would, if they reached that point and were strong enough to persevere, be freed of loneliness and dependence forever."

I have since mused if this is what happened to me at Assisi. Did I find me more than I found Francis? Had I gone looking for someone else's dream or someone else's experience, but found instead a quiet certitude in my own dream? And was I now freed of dependence on the stories and the academics of my profession? All I know is that I will carry Assisi in my heart forever. And not only because it was the home of St. Francis and St. Clare. Not even because it has now become my spiritual home. No, we are all pilgrims on a journey, and no place is really our own here. But Assisi is for me my place of refuge and peace, just as St. Francis and St. Clare have been for me all these years.

Pax et Bonum,

Judith

Regional Minister





The Humility of Francis

And What it Means for You

On December 2, 2017, the beginning of the 2018 Church year, Secular Franciscans from across the KC metro area gathered at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Independence, MO to gain a deeper understanding of our Seraphic Father and his humility. Fr. Michael Scully, OFM, Cap, Spiritual Assistant for the Juan de Padilla Region lead the Day of Reflection on Franciscan humility.

Father Mike's first gift of the day was a prayer journal for each person in attendance. We were encouraged to use it beginning that day and daily. Using a prayer journal is a step in humility. No lofty thought or deep inspiration is expected from my pen. Blank, intimidating pages; so begins humility.

Father directs us to study the humility of Francis, as a step to understand the humility of Jesus. Jesus came in total humility. He came as a powerless child in complete poverty. Francis recognized that to live the message of the Gospels you must be childlike. How did he recognize this without the abundant Gospel commentaries available to us today; or movies like Jesus of Nazareth, Brother Sun, Sister Moon or Clare and Francis to provide food for thought?

On Francis' feast day the Gospel reading is taken from Matthew 11:25-30: Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to *infants* (i.e. *childlike*); yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Father Scully referred us to Francis' writings specifically Admonition I Body of Christ: "Therefore: children, how long will you be hard of heart? (Ps 4:3). Why do you not know the truth and believe in the Son of God? (Jn 9:35). Behold, each day He humbles Himself as when He came from the royal throne (Wis 18:15; Phil 2:8) into the Virgin's womb; each day He Himself comes to us, appearing humbly; each day He comes down from the bosom of the Father (Jn 1:18) upon the altar in the hands of a priest.

Humility for Francis was first knowing that he was a sinner. Once when Francis was returning from the forest and from prayer, Friar Masseo asked, "Why to you, why to you, why to you?" Francis responded, "The most holy eyes of God did not see among the sinners any one more vile, more insufficient, or a greater sinner than me." Second, Francis was inspired by the humility of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Father pointed out that in today's world we may first think "How is the world hurting me" or "How can I get back at you." Franciscans should never seek revenge. Having power can creep in our lives and you don't realize that it is there. Power can lead to retaliation. (Father, forgive me for all the times I have prayed for the person that just cut me off in traffic to have 4 flat tires!) As Franciscans we are called to be childlike; to live a life of humility.

Francis chose "minoras" for his followers. A word describing serfs who had to work for a living. The "Lesser brothers". The majors were from the nobility. Today we live in a world of majors. Our society is on the road of upward mobility. All TV commercials lead us to believe this to be true. More money, more things. Father Mike stressed that in the use of goods, including money, we should practice "the minimum necessary, not the maximum allowed." Franciscans are called to the selfless way of Christ. The Divine way is the downward way which is unnatural for us because of our human nature. We Franciscans must be on the reverse road. We must be downward mobile. Francis would say to us "You want to be a major even though you promise to be a minor."

We must place the yoke of Francis and Jesus upon ourselves.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 28:30

Peace and All Good.

Claudia Kauzlarich OFS, Regional Treasurer





THE FORMATION CORNER



Janice Keeley
Formation Director
In the Sea of Galilee

I hope you are all having a joy-filled Advent, awaiting the coming of our dear Savior as an innocent babe. The meaning of Christmas has become so much more special to me since I have become a Franciscan. To REALLY BELIEVE that Jesus was incarnated into this world because of His great LOVE for us, and that He would have come as a human even if Adam had not sinned just "knocks my socks off."

Before I write my "Christmas Gift" to you, I want to THANK all of you who took the effort to attend the Franciscan Renewal Workshops. The reviews you wrote were quite favorable and also gave us ideas for planning and improving what we offer next year. Thank you for that. And, thank you also to the local ministers who promoted these workshops to their members. Ministers, your help was invaluable. And, FORMATION TEAM, I love you. Thank you for SO MUCH hard work.

Now, here is my "Christmas Gift" to you: (This was an e-mail forward that I received from a local parishioner in 2000. When I looked for it on the web, it is there in many places, so it is in the public domain).

The Night before Christmas

(A more spiritual version)

By Sister St. Thomas, B.N.D. de N

T'was the night before Christmas,
and all through the town,
St. Joseph was searching, walking up roads and down;
Our Lady was waiting, so meek and so mild,
While Joseph was seeking a place for the Child.
The children were nestled, each snug in their beds,
The grown-ups wouldn't bother,
"There's no room," they said.

When even the innkeeper sent them away,
Joseph was wondering where they would stay.
He thought of the caves in the side of the hills,
"Let's go there," said Mary, "it's silent and still."
The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow
Made pathways of light for their tired feet to go;
And there in a cave, in a cradle of hay,
Our Savior was born on that first Christmas Day!

The Father was watching in heaven above,
He sent for his angels, His couriers of love.
More rapid than eagles
God's bright angels came,
Rejoicing and eager as each heard his name;
"Come Power, Come Cherubs, Come Virtues,
Come Raphael,
Come Thrones and Dominions,
Come Michael and Gabriel;
Now fly to the Earth, where My poor people live,
Announce the glad tiding My son comes to give."

The shepherds were watching their flocks on this night,
And saw in the heavens an unearthly light.
The angels assured them, they'd nothing to fear,
It's Christmas, they said, the Savior is here!
They hastened to find Him and stood at the door,
Till Mary invited them in to adore.
He was swaddled in bands from His head to His feet,
Ne'er did the Shepherds see a baby so sweet!
He spoke not a word, but the shepherds all knew,
He was telling them secrets and blessing them too.
Then, softly they left Him, the Babe in the hay,
And rejoiced with great joy on that first Christmas Day.
Mary heard them exclaim as they walked up the hill,
"Glory to God in the Highest,
Peace to men of good will!"



All peace and all good with prayers for you all,

Janice OFS



Fraternity News

Brother Jacoba – Lawrence, KS Election Results



October 8, 2017 – Brother Jacoba Fraternity elected Ruth Entwistle, treasurer; Bob Brill, minister; Lynne Lonnquist, secretary; Dan Lonnquist, vice minister; and Jean Finch formation director. (pastoral visitor was Sr. Doris Engeman OSF and fraternal visitor, Judith Cronk, regional minister)



St Elizabeth – Leawood, KS Professes New Members

October 29, 2017 - Nikki Gutierrez, Deacon Tyrone Gutierrez and Deanna Perry make profession to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order, at Cure of Ars, Lenexa, KS . Father Richard Storey is behind the lecture and Deacon Phillip Nguyen assist Linus Drouhard, minister and Diane Drouhard, formation director on the right.



Fatima Rosary Rallies Held Nation-wide for the 100th Anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun



Cathy Herndon of Queen of the Angels organized a Public Square Rosary held on October 14th in Blue Springs, MO. One Catholic who was just driving by, stopped and joined in with members of both Queen of the Angels and Holy Eucharist fraternities.

Pictured on the left are; front row – Carol Sikorski, Jo Keller and her aunt, Cathy Herndon, Virginia Forbes, Janice Cox. Back row – Monsignor Ralph Kaiser, Stan Sikorski, Pope Francis (at least in imagine and spirit!), Dr. Steve Mesa, Dave Forbes, Kathy Johnson(behind Dave) and friends who joined in to pray. (Several were hiding or taking pictures.)

Fraternity News



Holy Family Visitation – Tulsa, OK November 19, 2017



Holy Family admitted candidates Michael Smith and Lynn Forsyth (front) the Order. Leila Savfi, minister, Maxine Coats, formation director and Sr. Maria Cordis Guyer FSGM, spiritual assistant in the back row.

Front: Delta Chavez, Michael Smith, Lynn Forsyth, Mary Mead, Pastoral Visitor. Middle: Karen Spurgeon, Leila Safavi, St. Maris Cordis Guyer FSGM, Michael Smith. Not pictured was Judith Cronk OFS Fraternal Visitor.



Sister Death

NAME	FRATERNITY	CITY, STATE	DATE
Patricia Durham OFS	Queen of the Angels	Buckner, MO	February 2, 2017
Thomas Doyle OFS	Servants of Divine Mercy	Stillwater, OK	March 28, 2017
Melody Ramirez OFS	St. Elizabeth	Leawood, KS	March 30, 2017
Yvonne Werth OFS	St. Joseph	Hays, KS	April 5, 2017
Pat O’Gara OFS	Holy Eucharist	Independence, MO	June 25, 2017
Mary Weeks OFS	Holy Eucharist	Independence, MO	October 22, 2017
Fred Brown OFS	St. Monica	Kansas City, MO	October 24, 2017
Mary Kay Schmidt OFS	St. Joseph	Hays, KS	November 26, 2017

(Please let Judith know of any deaths in your respective fraternities.)



St. Anthony, Wichita, KS



Above is pictured soon-to-be professed Dr. Tony Barba playing the accordion at the December 3 Christmas dinner in the Sunshine Room of St. Anthony Church in Wichita.

Newly elected officers: (l-r) Sylvia Kerschen, secretary; Antonio Ramirez, councilor; Chris Riggs, minister; Larry Menestrina, vice minister; Denise Richey, councilor and Chet Kirby, treasurer. (not pictured) Regional Minister, Judith Cronk was the Fraternal Visitor and Ann Marie Neuok, Pastoral Visitor were also present.

Queen of the Angels , Buckner MO



Once a year, the bishop of the diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph hosts a dinner honoring the newly professed religious sisters. This year, the location for the dinner was at the Franciscan Prayer Center in Independence, MO. Queen of the Angels fraternity in Buckner, MO. agreed to serve dinner to these special women. Cathy Herndon OFS of The World of Francis Catholic Store, provided each sister with a third class saint relic card. Secular Franciscan members pictures above are: Helen Boos, Kathy Johnson, Dave Forbes, Virginia Forbes, Cathy Herndon, Dona Gibbons of Queen of the Angels and our Franciscan Sister, Carol Sikorski, of Holy Eucharist fraternity.



St. Monica, Kansas City, MO

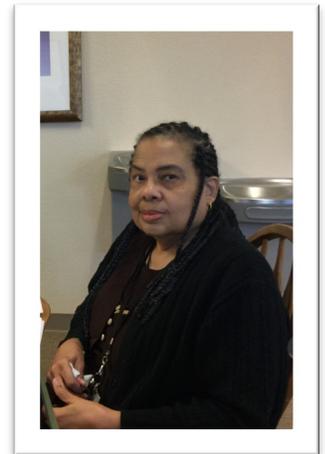


Nancy Herbert, minister of St. Monica Fraternity invited the Regional Council to their last meeting *"before our 'At Rest' status"* on December 17th in Kansas City, KS. They celebrated with Bart Ridge's famous Spaghetti dinner.

Members participated in a formation lesson on profession from the FUN Manual and Nancy Herbert presented all members of St. Monica's with a certificate of profession provided by the Regional Council. W. Yvonne Minters, councilor, held the highest honor as being professed as a Secular Franciscan for 55 years.

Members present were; Sister Josephine Boyles, spiritual assistant, Nancy Herbert, minister, Bart Ridge, vice minister, Sylvia Ridge, secretary, Greg King, treasurer, and W. Yvonne Minters, councilor.

Regional council present were; Greg King, vice minister, Dona Gibbons, secretary, Claudia Kauzlarich, treasurer, and Maria Epperson, KC Metro councilor. Maria brought her husband, Steve. *(More pictures of the dinner are posted on the regional website under Galleries)*



W Yvonne Minters OFS professed 55 years



Sylvia and Bart Ridge



Nancy Herbert



Steve and Maria Epperson, Sr. Josephine Boyles and Greg King



CALENDAR EVENTS 2018



DATE	EVENT	Location
February 9, 2018	Regional Formation Committee	Haskell Catholic Center, Lawrence, KS
February 10, 2018	Regional Executive Council Meeting	Haskell Catholic Center, Lawrence, KS
February 15, 2015	Fraternity ANNUAL REPORT ARE DUE!	Email copy of report to Judith & Claudia
June 22-24, 2018	Annual Regional Summer Gathering	Franciscan Prayer Center, Independence, MO
September 21-23, 2018	NAFRA Visitation to Region – Chapter Meeting	Franciscan Prayer Center, Independence, MO



The Capuchin Friary Victoria, KS

While attending the Victoria, KS Franciscan Renewal Workshop, members were excited to see Father Felix Petrovsky OFS Cap, former Regional Spiritual Assistant.

Judy Carpenter and Susan Tabor visited with father and submitted the following:

Per Fr. Felix, this is an original carved wooden statue of St. Conrad of Parzham, after whom our Denver-based Capuchin Province and the Friar's Residence in Lawrence are named.

Per my Google overview, St. Conrad of Parzham died in 1894; he was beatified in 1934. He was the first German to be recognized as a Saint after the Protestant Reformation of 1517. At his birth in

Father Felix Petrovsky, OFS Cap Spiritual Assistant to St. Joseph Fraternity in Hays, KS and former Regional Spiritual Assistant holds a first class relic of St. Francis of Assisi.

1818 in Bavaria, Germany he named John Evangelist Birndorfer. As an adult, he became a Third Order Franciscan, then a lay brother, who took the name Conrad. He was the door-keeper of the Capuchin Friary in Alttoting in Bavaria, similar to the daily work of the more recently beatified Saint Solanus Casey.



St. Joseph Fraternity, Hays, KS

Franciscans in Action Faith in the Heart of the USA

Before I became a Secular Franciscan, I traveled I70 back and forth between KC and Denver many times to take my kids to college. And now my daughter and her husband are permanent residents of Denver. I have always loved the drive, finding the topography of the prairies, rolling hills, and majestic high plains of Kansas a great time to pray and mediate.

When you passed by Hays, it was easy to see that there was a strong Catholic presence in the middle of Kansas. It was clear that these people were doing their best to make a difference in the world by evangelizing their faith with Divine Mercy bill boards at all four major interstate entrances to Hays. They also evangelize through a faith-filled radio station promoting the hope and love of the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ. Now, I have met the Catholics, the Secular Franciscans who have helped to evangelize all of the souls on the interstate.

Hays Franciscans are a light in this dark world and give us all hope for our country. God bless our brothers and sisters in this special place. - Dona Gibbons



Brenda Lager, minister of St. Joseph submitted these pictures taken by Troy Haas, vice minister, on his way to work at the cattle auction.



Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
 from whose embrace no living person can escape.
 Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
 Happy those she finds doing your most holy will.
 The second death can do no harm to them."
 – St. Francis of Assisi, *Canticle of the Creatures*.



October 4 is the day the Church sets aside to celebrate St. Francis of Assisi's *dies natalis* — his birth into eternal life. Francis is easily one of the Church's most beloved and venerated saints. Thus, even the *vigil* of his death is celebrated in style. October 3 is the vigil of his passing over and bears a special name — his *Transitus*. The word is derived from the Latin meaning "passage," "crossing" or "going over."

The *Transitus* specifically remembers the Poor Man of Assisi at his holiness moment — the moment in which he met His God. It calls together the friars, sisters, nuns and secular members of the Franciscan family at which Francis might give us his one, last, perfect lesson.

In some of the earliest Franciscan documents, the saint's reliance upon prayer and his community as he lay dying:

While he was staying in the palace of the Bishop of Assisi, blessed Francis, realizing that he was getting sicker by the day, had himself carried on a litter to the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula. For he wished to give back his soul to God in that place where, as has been said, he first knew the way of truth perfectly.

Although racked with sickness, blessed Francis praised God with great fervor of spirit and joy of body and soul, and told him: "If I am to die soon, call Brother Angelo and Brother Leo that they may sing to me about Sister Death." Those brothers came to him, and, with many tears, sang the Canticle of Brother Sun and the other creatures of the Lord, which the Saint himself had composed in his illness for the praise of the Lord and the consolation of his own soul and that of others.

[Armstrong, [Regis J.](#) Francis of Assisi - The Founder: Early Documents, vol. 2 (Francis of Assisi: Early Documents) "The Assisi Compilation." May 1, 2000. #5. pp. 120-121]

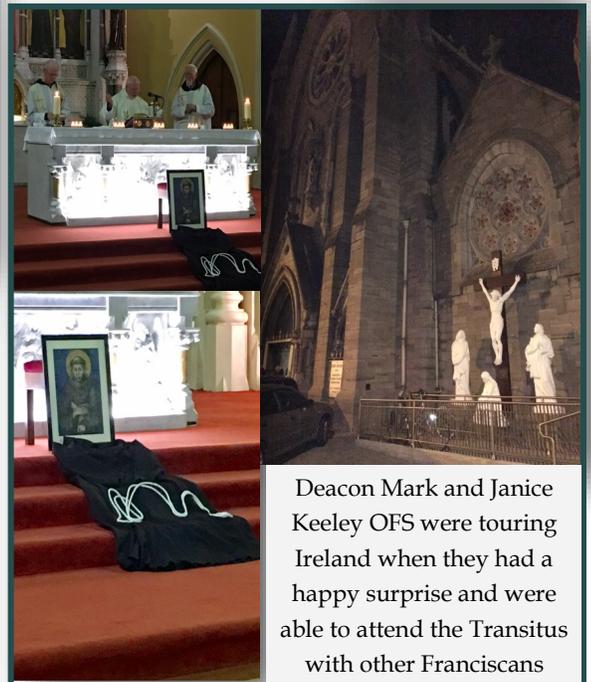
Queen of the Angels in Buckner, MO - Dr. Steve Mesa, Jo Keller, Dave Forbes, Cathy Herndon, and Helen Boos prayed the *Transitus*. Brother Jacoba almond biscotti & cookies were served after the service.



St. Stanislaus & St. Adalbert sent their post-*Transitus* pose. Pictured are front (l-r) Judy Hart, Trish Hanlon, Ann Marie Neuok, Ginger Thummel, Letah Lewis, Dee Hrankaj, back (l-r) Ferman Sabala, Rich & Judy Ewing, Paula Guimnip, Tom Firm, Dominick Palsimo.



Brother Jacoba Almond
 Recipes on
www.sfojudepadilla.org



Deacon Mark and Janice Keeley OFS were touring Ireland when they had a happy surprise and were able to attend the *Transitus* with other Franciscans



Franciscan Book Review

By Susan Tabor OFS



Just as the film *The Sultan And The Saint* moves us to envision and experience radical kinship, so too does the book I've chosen. A book just published in November of 2017, it stretches us to open ever wider our circle of kinship.

Barking to the Choir by Gregory Boyle, S.J.

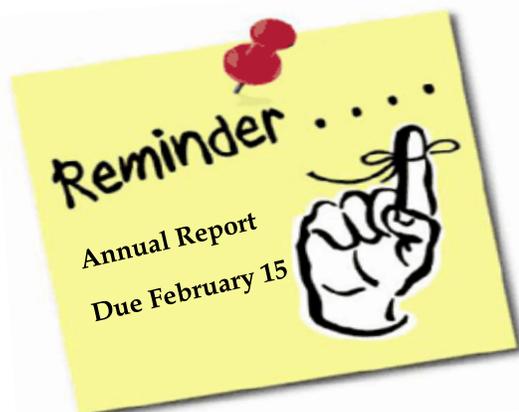
The Power of Radical Kinship

In a moving example of unconditional love in difficult times, the Jesuit priest and bestselling author of *Tattoos on the Heart*, Gregory Boyle, shares what three decades of working with gang members in Los Angeles has taught him about faith, compassion, and the enduring power of kinship.

In his first book, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, Gregory Boyle introduced us to Homeboy Industries, the largest gang-intervention program in the world. Critics hailed that book as an "astounding literary and spiritual feat" (*Publishers Weekly*) that is "destined to become a classic of both urban reportage and contemporary spirituality" (*Los Angeles Times*). Now, after the successful expansion of Homeboy Industries, Boyle returns with *Barking to the Choir* to reveal how compassion is transforming the lives of gang members.

In a nation deeply divided and plagued by poverty and violence, *Barking to the Choir* offers a snapshot into the challenges and joys of life on the margins. Sergio, arrested at nine, in a gang by twelve, and serving time shortly thereafter, now works with the substance-abuse team at Homeboy to help others find sobriety. Jamal, abandoned by his family when he tried to attend school at age seven, gradually finds forgiveness for his schizophrenic mother. New father Cuco, who never knew his own dad, thinks of a daily adventure on which to take his four-year-old son. These former gang members uplift the soul and reveal how bright life can be when filled with unconditional love and kindness.

This book is guaranteed to shake up our ideas about God and about people with a glimpse at a world defined by more compassion and fewer barriers. Gently and humorously, *Barking to the Choir* invites us to find kinship with one another and convinces us all of our own goodness.





JPIC Corner

I hope all of you have checked out the Juan De Padilla website. It is rich in resources for our personal formation and enrichment as Secular Franciscans. It's awesome! Please make good use of it!

Unity Productions has completed a docudrama called *The Sultan and The Saint*. It details for us the meeting of Francis of Assisi with the Islamic Sultan during the Crusades and we get an appreciation of the respect they each developed for the other.

This docudrama will air on PBS on Tuesday, December 26, not on December 18 as we originally thought. After the PBS viewing, groups are invited to set up showings in their communities to enhance dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

In our region, our fraternity in Oklahoma City is leading the way. They have been planning an event for months and are in the final stages of planning. Neal Dunnigan has sent the following resource information for me to share which I know will be useful if your fraternity plans a viewing event:

There is a companion video of scholar comments that has been released which can be used with the docudrama. Information is as follows:

The DVD of the scholar comments is called: *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking*. That DVD is available on Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Footprints-Francis-Sultan-Model-Peacemaking/dp/1616365447/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_74_t_1?encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=5M8R6Q206JFR3WJENX8P

The video of *The Sultan and the Saint* can now be pre-ordered from Unity Productions. It will be mailed just after Christmas. You may order it at: <https://www.sultanandthesaintfilm.com/product/sultan-dvd/>

Oklahoma City also has a tentative date set at which time they will provide training for their facilitators. Other interested parties may attend. If you want more information, please contact Neal Dunnigan at:

ndunnigan@globalthinkinginc.com. Be sure to consult your TV listings for the viewing time for *The Sultan and The Saint* on December 26th in your area.

And now, let me take this opportunity to wish a peaceful Christmas and New Year to all of you as we all move forward on our Franciscan journey!

Susan Tabor OFS

Regional JPIC Animator