



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

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

*Silence. Silence is Golden.
Silent night, holy night.*

I tried to write this newsletter and no words or thoughts seemed to come. All I could think of was Greccio. My local fraternity participated in the Zoom event of the tour of Greccio. (It is now on the national website). It brought to life the simplicity and humility of our founding father and his way of life. St. Francis' first nativity only had a manger with an ox and an ass... no babe in the manger, no Mary or Joseph, no shepherds or wisemen.

I tried to put myself there, the night of Jesus birth, imagining what that might have been like to be present. I imagined the night was very cold, with a clear starry night sky, a quiet stillness, with the smells of hay and whatever else may have been present. I imagined the night to be something like my experience of growing up on the family dairy farm and how piercing cold it was in winter, still, and quiet, and stars shining brightly in the sky when I walked from the house to the barn to do the nighttime chores. I pondered what Mary might have been experiencing in her heart, mind, and body and Joseph too. Sitting in silence, thinking, and meditating on that simple manger scene brought such peace, solace, and rest.

Daily life and all its "noise," responsibilities, and busyness, distract us from where our true focus should be. At the beginning of Advent, I was busy with plans, appointments, phone calls I needed to return, zoom meetings to schedule and attend, housework to be done to prepare for decorating and more. I sat down to pray a rosary and our Lord revealed that all these things were a **river of dis-**

traction. My time, attention and focus were on everything except Him. I had become overwhelmed and anxious. He is who and what we need. I decreased the noise by turning off the radio and tv, decreased my online time, canceled appointments, and zoom meetings etc. I began to just be with Him, focusing on that simple manger scene.

I encourage and invite you to enter into the silence. Eliminate the busyness, noise, distractions, etc. during this Advent and Christmas season to spend time in silence with the Christ child in the manger scene. There are many suggestions available on the national website that can be used to help you focus, meditate, or pray this holy time of year. These can be used alone or with your fraternity or small groups. I encourage you to simplify your life, humble yourself, and enter into the silence.

I recommend this beautiful prayer, The St. Andrew Novena, as a possible starting point to enter into that silent adoration of Our Lord on the night of His birth.

*Hail and blessed be the hour
And the moment in which the Son of God was born
Of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight,
In Bethlehem, in the piercing cold,
In that hour, vouchsafe O my God!
To hear my prayer and grant my desires,
Through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ,
And of His Blessed Mother.*

Amen

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 1)

May you have a blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

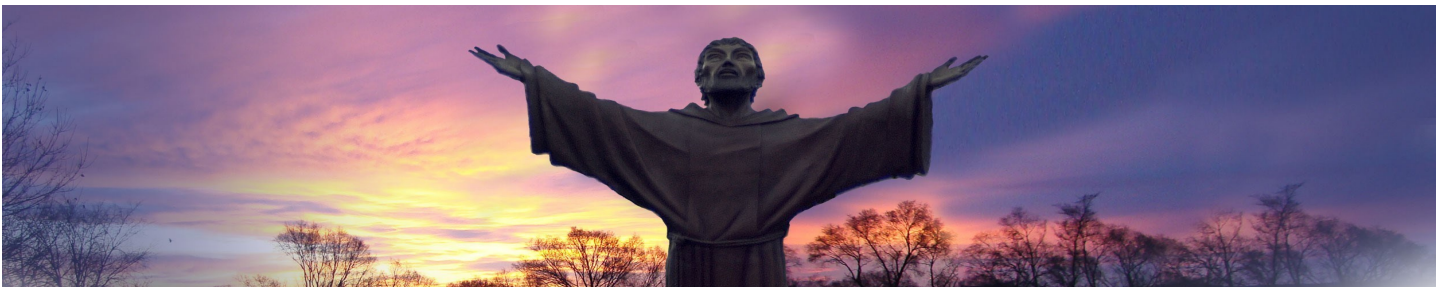
*Brenda Haas OFS
Juan de Padilla Regional Minister*



The REC will begin meeting again in the new year with our first meeting by zoom January 8. We will have our first minister’s informal zoom meeting on January 9. The REC will also begin to focus on scheduling elections and visitations. Make note of important dates: June 14 - 16 is the Summer Gathering. September 14 is the Regional Annual Chapter Meeting at the SLC.



Joseph Francis Novak OFS, poses with one of his patrons, St. Francis Adoring the Crucifix by Guido Reni at the Nelson Art Gallery in KCMO.
(submitted by Sr. Martini) Story is on page 10.



DATE	NAME	FRATERNITY	LOCATION
April 25, 2023	Margaret Madsen OFS	Queen of the Angels	Buckner/Blue Springs, MO
March 21, 2023	Jeanette Harriman OFS	Our Lady of Sorrows	Olathe, KS
January 20, 2023	Robert Brill OFS	Brother Jacoba	Lawrence, KS



The Riches of Poverty

What is it for someone to be meek and humble of heart and how does a soul even begin to learn and practice to become one with such a heart? Francis knew and he knew what was needed - he needed to follow Christ and learn from him. Francis knew this because he fell in love with the meek and humble of heart, that is Christ, and Lady Poverty who would be the one to help him discover the riches of poverty.

Francis learned early of Lady Poverty and with his love for Christ, could not leave the world soon enough. Separating himself from all worldly goods and attachments, Francis walked away from that world into a world where his Lady Poverty waited. Here Francis was able to love Christ as he was called - to serve the Master and live the Gospel. Much of Francis' time was spent in union with God, in preaching the Gospel and loving his neighbor. Francis daily sought to fulfill the request that Christ asks of us all, ... "Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart..." (Mt 11:29)

Seeing Christ's humble beginning in a cave with a simple manger, we find a message that we as Franciscans should also seek the riches that Lady Poverty holds for us. At his birth, Christ received those riches, the gifts of meekness and humility of the manger, and later obedience and charity for the cross and all those gifts hidden within poverty. Francis, seeing Christ's own love for Lady Poverty, embraced her with total abandonment and began following Christ and learning of him.

From our Lord's birth in a manger to his death on a cross, Christ's message has been to follow him in the ways of gentleness and humbleness of heart. Christ the King was born with the yoke of poverty, given to him as a gift from his Heavenly Father. Our Lady Poverty holds many gifts to help our soul towards its own perfection and sanctification.

The following paragraph is taken from the *Introduction for Sacrum Commercium in the Omnibus* page 1543: (*Francis and His Lady Poverty*)

Poverty therefore became for Francis, one might almost say, the essence of his Gospel way of life, or at least the foundation upon which evangelical perfection was to be raised. It could not, of course, be the final end of his striving; the final end could only be God. But poverty was essential to his way of life and it was the rock upon which his whole spiritual life was to be founded on. Once, when the brothers, assembled in general chapter, asked him which virtue would render them most worthy to be called friends of Christ, " he opened to them the secret of his heart and replied: ' Know, brothers, that poverty is the special way to salvation, for it feeds humility and is the root of all perfection; its fruit is manifold, though hidden.' "
(Quote from St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Major* Chapter VII, 1)

We too can invite Lady Poverty to be with us, as Francis did, that we might share in the riches of her poverty and receive the gifts of gentleness and humility of heart. Francis thought this so important he encouraged the brothers to follow the way of Lady Poverty, that they might receive her riches which help obtain perfection and finally a way to salvation.

" Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, *and you will find rest for your souls.*" (Mt.11:29)

Gerri Rupp OFS, Regional Formation Director
Juan de Padilla Executive Council



BROTHER JACOBA ELECTION

LAWRENCE, KS



November 5, 2023, Brother Jacoba elected a new council pictured from left to right: Initial Formation Team Director- Lynne Lonquist, Minister—Ruth Entwistle, Ongoing Formation Director—Gina Shoulberg, Secretary—Kay Sullivan, Fr. Mike Scully OFM, Cap. Fraternal Visitor and Fraternity Spiritual Assistant, Vice Minister—Jackie Monroe, Treasurer—David Ehrlich. (not pictured—Fraternal Visitor- Rebecca Cheek, Regional Secretary)



Sister Josephine Boyles OSF
Ignite Medical Resort—St. Mary's
111 NE Mock Ave.
Blue Springs, MO 64014

Let us remember our retired Spiritual Assistants who spent many hours serving the Secular Franciscans as Spiritual Assistants, retreat masters, confessors, pastors and counselors.

Though they are not able to be with us as much now, we can let them know that they are still loved and prayed for during this holy season.

Visit or send them Christmas cards or letters of during this Christmas Season. (addresses under their pictures)



Fr. Felix Petrovsky OFS, Cap.
St. Fedelis Capuchin Friary
900 Cathedral Ave.
Victoria, KS 67671

St. Anthony's November 2023 Election, Wichita, KS



St. Anthony's newly elected fraternity council (l-r): Chester Kirby—Treasurer, Kristi Stubbins—Councilor, Jacqueline Simon—Secretary, Larry Menestrina—Minister, Chris Riggs—Councilor, Larry Dougherty—Vice Minister. Fraternal and Pastoral Visitors were Richard and Judith Cronk OFS.



Fraternity members tour the food pantry which is located in the church's basement.

Representatives of the St. Anthony Fraternity Secular Franciscans donated a \$1,000 check to the Food Pantry at St. Jude Parish in Wichita Saturday, Dec. 9. Holding the check is Vice Minister Larry Dougherty. Next to him are Sharon Meckenstock, director of the pantry, and Fr. John Fogliasso, pastor. (Courtesy photo)



St. Joseph Fraternity— Praying the Transitus with the Friars Capuchin Spiritual Life Center in Victoria, KS



Members of St. Josephs Fraternity in Hays, KS joined in a German Potluck feast with the Friars in at the Capuchin Spiritual Life Center in Victoria, KS. Afterwards they prayed a Transitus service. Fraternity members fasted for the conversion of souls, with each member taking a day to fast.





The Transitus with the Poor of Jesus Christ, Kansas City, KS

KC Metro Area Secular Franciscans accepted the invitation from the Poor of Jesus Christ to attend their Transitus Prayer Service in KCKS. Julie Oswald reported the it was a beautiful event.



Time to order the 2024 **Franciscan Liturgy of the Hours Guide**.

You can find a **Franciscan Guide** at the CFP Holy Angels Giftshop at:

<https://cfpholyangels.com/liturgy-of-the-hours/> along with more Franciscan items.

Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity

On October 7, Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity celebrated the Profession of Megan Ratzlaff into the Secular Franciscan Order at Prince of Peace in Olathe, Kansas.

This special day occurred on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary formerly known as Our Lady of Victory. Our two newly professed members also celebrated their birthdays together which are on the same day (October 8). This makes them like sisters in a number of ways being professed within months of each other, and sharing the same birthday.



Megan has a deep spirituality, and a Franciscan heart to serve others. She loves to travel to other countries, and visit the churches and shrines. We enjoy the stories and pictures that she shares with us of her adventures. We are blessed to have her join our Fraternity.

Pictured from left to right.

Picture center left: Megan Ratzlaff, Fr. Barnabas Eichor OFM, Cap., Genna Ferrell, Norma Crevoiserat. (Same group in bottom left picture:

Bottom: Sarah Pendergast, Mike Pottorff OFS, Rebecca Cheek OFS, Beth Antonacci OFS, Barry Owens, Renee Schmit OFS, Laura Kloiber, Fr. Barnabas Eichor OFM, Cap., Megan Ratzlaff OFS, Rod Ratzlaff, Connie



As human efforts fail to solve America’s key problems, we turn to God, through His Holy Mother, asking His urgent help.

Priests, parishes and community members join with St. Joseph Fraternity, in Hays, KS. On the other side of the region, Holy Eucharist and Queen of the Angels Fraternities participated in a Public Rosary in Blue Springs, MO. All praying for LIFE, PEACE and help from our Holy Mother.



Hays, KS



Blue Springs, MO



THE ROSARY IS OUR WEAPON—PADRE PIO OFM Cap.

PUBLIC ROSARY

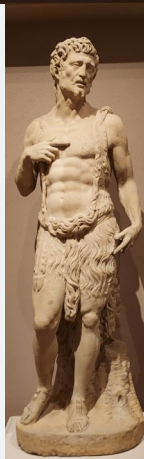
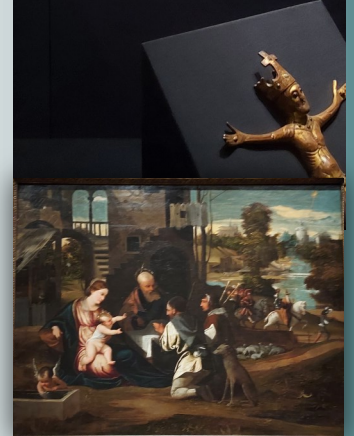
Kansas & Missouri Fraternities Pray for Life from Conception to Natural Death and Peace

Queen of the Angels & Franciscan Sisters Tour Christmas Creches & Medieval Art at the Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City, MO

Queen of the Angels Fraternity celebrated their Christmas Gathering by touring the Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City. Docents led the tour set up for the fraternity and Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Eucharist. The tour included Masterpiece art from 1300 to 1600. It included paintings, statues, reliquary, altars and more.

There were many references to St. Francis including Giotto's portrait of St. Francis receiving the stigmata from the Seraph Angel.

The Docent drew special attention to the original painting of Caravaggio's world famous portrait of St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness which draws tourist from around the world.



Queen of the Angels Supporting Life - St. Mary's Home for Mothers



Last fall, Queen of the Angels Fraternity planted over 400 plants and flowers at the 14 Stations of the Cross at St. Mary's Home for unwed mothers and children. Caitlyn Bailey, horticulturist, guided members in planning matching the flowers to the particular station. For example, the plants at the Crucifixion were all bright red. Veronica wiping the face of Christ, had native plants with the name "Veronica".



They fraternity also provided two cement benches and 10 native Missouri trees to beautify the grounds, making it more conducive to meditation and prayer.



Afterwards, Fr. Rocha led the Stabat Mater as he incensed and blessed each of the 14 stations. Janice Cox and Dona Gibbons were also in attendance. Fraternity members were in awe at the growth of the flowers and plants they had planted the previous year.





Members of the fraternity: (l-r) Marie Braunsdorf, OFS; Paula Willenbrink, OFS; Tom Bauer, OFS; Linda Mayer, OFS; Kathy Ness, OFS; Deanna Perry, OFS.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity ~ Leawood, KS

Minister, Julie Oswald OFS, reports that in September, several members of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity took a road trip to visit the monument of Juan de Padilla, the Hermits cave, and St. John's church.



Juan de Padilla Cross



Hermit's Cave - Kathy Ness OFS



Fr. Juan de Padilla OFM, Servant of God



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2023-24 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	NAME(S)
TBA 2023	Visitation	St. Frances Cabrini, Liberal, KS	
June 14-16, 2023	Regional Summer Gathering	Spiritual Life Cetner, Wichita, KS	All invited
April, 21, 2024	Election	St. Joseph, Hays, KS	Fraternal: Stanley Cordova OFS Pastoral: Fr. Carlson OFM Cap
May TBA 2024	Election	St. Maximilian Kolbe, Atchison, KS	
June TBA, 2024	Election	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Leawood, KS	
August TBA, 2024	Visitation	Little Portion, Tahlequah, OK	
August TBA. 2024	Visitation	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Leawood, KS	
August TBA, 2024	Visitation	Queen of the Angels, Buckner/Blue Springs, MO	
August TBA, 2024	Election	St. Stanislaus & St. Adalbert, Broken Arrow, OK	
September 17-21, 2024	OFS-USA Chapter	Franciscan Renewal Center—Scottsdale, AZ	NEC, Regional Ministers
November TBA, 2024	Visitation	St. Anthonys, Wichita, KS	
November TBA, 2024	Election	Holy Family, Tulsa, OK	
November TBA, 2024	Visitation	Sacred Heart, Emporia, KS	
December TBA, 2024	Visitation	Br. Jacoba, Lawrence, KS	
August 29,30,31, 2025	Regional Chapter of Visitation & Elections	Spiritual Life Center, Wichita, KS	REC, Regional Ministers, Spiritual Assistants
July 29-Aug 2, 2026	Quinquennial Congress	Lexington, Kentucky	All Franciscans, OFS
TBA— 2026	Chapter of Mats	Rome, Italy	Members of NEC



Need Prayer? As a community, we pray and support each other in prayer. If you need prayers for yourself or others, please send your prayer requests to prayer@sfojuandepadilla.org.



NEWS

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

by Susan Tabor, Regional JPIC Co-Ordinator, Member National OFS JPIC Commission

What's New With JPIC?



Hope you're having a wonderful Advent! Look for the richness of hope, anticipation and joy in Advent!

We are preparing our hearts for the coming of the Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace in the form of Jesus Christ at Christmas. How can we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Prince of Peace?

We can start by being sure that our hearts are open to love and reconciliation, and to making peace within ourselves and with others. We can reach for that Franciscan joy that is living within the love of our hearts, and move that joy from inside outward. We prepare the way of the Lord when we're taking good care of ourselves and of each other. After all, Jesus taught us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Saint Francis of Assisi harnessed that Franciscan joy when he called for and helped construct a living Nativity at Greccio, the first living Nativity we know of. This year we celebrate a milestone anniversary of that Christmas at Greccio!

So as you put up your Christmas decorations, particularly your Creche, let your mind take you back to that first scene at Greccio with the telling of the Christmas story amidst the mooing cows and the braying donkeys, let yourself think about what that must have been like. How was it being in the middle of the mayhem? And where did Francis' joy at the sight of this event come from? And how did it get to be so infectious?

That is a treasure of Franciscan joy; it spreads! Pass it on, and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Chris Riggs OFS. shared this beautiful photo with his Franciscan brothers and sisters. It is Piero Casentini's painting of St. Francis of Assisi holding the baby Jesus in the cave in Greccio, Italy, where he set up the first Nativity scene 800 years ago while a priest celebrates Mass is the image the Vatican philatelic office chose for its 1.25-euro Christmas stamp for 2023. The painting was done in 2004. (CNS photo/courtesy of the Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office) Chris says, "God bless you all!"