



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

Blessed Advent my dear Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters. Labor Day weekend I was elected and humbly accepted a second 3 year term as the regional minister of this region. Working a full time job and holding this position can be daunting. Thanks be to God for those who said yes and are serving on this council for the next three years to do the work for the region. I humbly ask for your prayers for the council to accomplish what is needed over the next 3 years.

Two weeks after I was elected minister, I attended the National Chapter at Bon Secours retreat center in Maryland and visited St. Anthony Shrine where I prayed for our region in front of the relics of St. Faustina, St. JP II, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and St. Anthony. There was much business to tend to and national elections to be held. The national fraternity dialogued, met in small groups, voted on business items, elected national officers, celebrated Mass, remembered our deceased brothers and sisters, prayed together and socialized with others. I will list business items that were voted/decided at chapter in September or our most recent zoom meeting December 3, 2025:

TAU magazine will be printed and mailed 4 times a year for those who want it. It is encouraged to choose to receive it electronically rather than print in order to save printing cost. This info should be collected at the time of the annual report and reported to Dona, the database manager.

A task force will be created to determine the best way to use the significant bequest left to the national fraternity. It will not be for formation as we have the Duns Scotus for that.

The National Fraternity voted **not** to become an institutional member of FAN. Regional and local fraternities and individuals can participate in FAN if they choose.

Voting Guideline Clarification: If someone is running for a third term in a councilor position (all positions are considered councilor positions except minister and vice minister), they must win the vote by two thirds vote on the first vote. If they do not win the vote on the first vote, they are eliminated from that ballot and may not be nominated or elected to any other position.

Priorities/Theme were chosen. Go into the world and proclaim the Good News. (Mk 16:15)

New formation books are being test piloted and fine tuned. Virtual workshops and guidance for regional Formation Directors will be available when they are released in 2026. Companion editions will be available. A resource called "Sowing the Seeds" to assist with initial formation and other steps of formation is being prepared by Jan Parker, OFS and Mary Bittner, OFS.

On the question of Spiritual Assistant formation, the friars assured us that Spiritual Assistants' (SA) training and outreach are priorities. Plans for virtual and in-person SA training, especially new RSA training, will be made at the next CNSA in-person meeting in California in January. Workshops for local SAs will also be discussed. On the question of coordination of the Regional Spiritual Assistants (RSAs), the RSAs are free to appoint a secretary for their conference; in some cases, it may work better for the REC or one of the friars appointing them to suggest or appoint one. The RSAs are equal and co-responsible; any RSA may go to any fraternity, and the RSAs decide who fulfills which duty. Teamwork and communication are key.

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- Guidelines for Fraternal Accompaniment were approved.
- Guidelines for Affiliates was approved.
- Three in person NEC meetings approved.
- 2026 Chapter will include committee chairs.
- Formation directors at the local level are to be elected, not appointed.

The Budget was approved. There was discussion on raising fair share at the national level. National has already raised it once around my first term our region has not. If national raises it again, it will take a bigger chunk of what we collect at the regional level, leaving less funds for our region to use.

Joe Makley OFS JPIC committee chair has been working with a committee of people to put out a statement from NAFRA on immigration. We reviewed the statement at our most recent National Zoom Meeting on December 3. There were a couple more regional ministers who would like to contribute to the statement before it is approved.

2026 National Chapter is in Wichita, KS. Our Juan de Padilla region is hosting. If you'd like to be on the committee or help in some way during that week Oct 10 - 17, 2026 Please contact someone on the REC. Larry Menestrina OFS, St. Anthony fraternity in Wichita is the lead contact person for arranging transportation for attendees arriving from across the nation for the chapter and for planning the half day away. We have a zoom meeting December 16, 2025 with the national chapter planning committee.

2027 National Chapter is in New Orleans, LA

2028 Chapter will be national elections with the location to potentially be The Casa in Scottsdale, AZ

National Chapters will not be shortened due to the amount of business that needs completed, the fraternity of being together face to face, and the opportunity for committee chairs to attend in non election and non visitation years.

Annual Reports from your local fraternity are due BEFORE December 31, 2025 by email to me, as the database will be locked for some time after that date for national to collect number data. Fair share payments are due no later than February 1, 2026.

A regional treasurer's zoom will take place in January.

The current REC is conducting visitations and elections. We will be updating the schedule when we have our REC retreat Palm Sunday weekend in Victoria. There is much work to be done. We are also working on details for summer gathering in July 2026. The summer gathering and chapter meeting will be held the same weekend in July 2026. This is to cut down on cost. Hosting the visitation and election in August 2025 cost a significant amount and without raising fair share, plus our region hosting national chapter in October 2026, we must be wise in our planning and budgeting.

Consider attending the Q in Louisville, KY July 29 - Aug 2, 2026. There are scholarships available from national to help attend. Celebrating the Centenary 800 years since the Easter of St. Francis, this might be something to seriously consider attending.

The REC made a visit to Basehor, KS to meet with people in that area wanting information about OFS. We have also made a trip to Tahlequah, OK to meet with Little Portion fraternity and a group of people from Fayetteville, AR who are interested in OFS and have been meeting regularly.

During this Advent Season I encourage you brothers and sisters to take time away to pray. Be Still. Read something Franciscan everyday. Pray the Angelus during this Advent Season. Light an Advent Wreath and meditate on the four gifts or themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Pray the 7 Crown Rosary or the Franciscan Family Chaplet. Spend time in quiet in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Give of your time, talent, or treasure to others who could benefit from the gift of yourself.

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Recently I was suffering through a hurtful experience and was humbled once again. I was reminded of the following Scriptures:

Remember man that you were dust, to dust you shall return. (Genesis 3:19) Remembering where I came from and where I will go. Who am I really? What really matters in this life? Am I focused in the right direction, on the right person?

Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I leave this world. (Job 1:21) Our dear Lord Jesus life on earth. His beginning and end. So it will be for me, can't take anything or anyone with me. Jesus born in a manger. Died on a cross. Humility.

Go into the world and proclaim the Good News. (Mk 16:15)

The National Theme for the next 3 years. Am I doing this and doing it well? What or how do I need to change?

May you all have a blessed Christmas and Joyful New Year!

Pace Bene,
Brenda Haas OFS
Regional Minister, Juan de Padilla Region



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	NAME(S)
December 13, 2025	Elections— Our Lady of Sorrows	Prince of Peace Church Olathe, KS	Fraternal—Sylvia Ridge Ecclesial —Dona Gibbons
July 17-19, 2026	JDP Regional Chapter & Summer Gathering	Spiritual Life Center Wichita, KS	Chapter—Ministers & SAs Gathering—All Invited
July 29-August 2, 2026	21st Quinquennial Congress	Lexington, Kentucky	All Invited
October 10-17, 2026	National OFS Chapter— JDP Hosting (Volunteers Needed)	Spiritual Life Center Wichita, KS	NEC, Regional Ministers Observers Welcome

Pictures from the National Chapter in Marriottsville, Maryland



Relics of St Faustina, St Maximilian Kolbe, St John Paul II



Mass with the national spiritual assistants: Fr Jerome Wolbert OFM, Fr John de la Riva OFM Cap, Fr Marek Stybor Conventual, Fr Tomas - international election president



Statue of St Anthony and the donkey as you arrive at St Anthony Shrine



Relic of St Anthony



Acorns fell from the oak trees regularly. It sounded like it was starting to rain or hail, but it was the nuts falling from the trees at Bon Secours.



Art at St Anthony Shrine.



Chapel at St Anthony Shrine



Mary, the Living Temple —

A Reflection for the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

As Franciscans, we are drawn to ponder the quiet moments of God’s grace — the hidden beginnings, the tender “yes” that ripples through salvation history. One such moment comes to us through the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on **November 21**.

Though its story comes to us from the **Protoevangelium of James**, an early apocryphal text rather than the canonical Gospels, the feast carries a deep **theological truth** that transcends the question of historical detail. According to that tradition, Mary’s parents, **Joachim and Anna**, offered their young daughter to God in the Temple when she was three years old, fulfilling a promise made during their years of childlessness.

Whether or not the event happened as described, the meaning of the feast shines brightly: from the very beginning of her life, **Mary was wholly dedicated to God**. The holiness bestowed upon her at the moment of her **Immaculate Conception** was not a static gift but a living reality that grew and deepened. The Presentation reminds us that Mary’s entire being—heart, mind, and body—was a dwelling place for the divine.

In this mystery, **Mary becomes the first and truest “temple”**, not made by human hands but formed by God’s grace. Within her, the Word would one day take flesh. Her life is a model of total self-gift — a quiet, unwavering openness to God’s will.

For us, as members of the **Secular Franciscan Order**, this feast invites reflection on our own vocation to be **living temples of the Holy Spirit**. St. Paul reminds us that “we are God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9) and that Christ Himself dwells within us. Like Mary, we are called to offer ourselves daily — our time, our work, our relationships — to the service of God and neighbor.

In a world that often celebrates autonomy and self-sufficiency, Mary’s presentation teaches us the **beauty of consecration**, of placing one’s life fully in the hands of God. Her example invites us to trust that holiness is not achieved through our own striving but received through surrender.

As we enter this season of grace and preparation, may we ask Mary, the living temple, to guide us in offering ourselves anew to the Lord — with simplicity, humility, and joy — so that Christ may truly dwell within us and shine through our lives.

Peace and all good,
Sylvia Ridge, OFS, Regional Formation Director





The Epiphany “blessing of homes...expresses the blessing of Christ through the intercession of the three wise men, and is an occasion for gathering offerings for charitable and missionary purposes ~ *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, #118*

CHALKING THE DOOR AT EPIPHANY

Since the Middle Ages there has been a tradition that on (or near) the feast of the Epiphany we pray for God's blessing on our homes, marking the door post with chalk (an incarnational image reminding us of the dust of the earth from which we were made.) We mark the main door the home with the initials of the Magi and the minerals of the new year, connected with crosses: 20 + C + M + B + 26

The initials remind of the legendary names of the Magi—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar_ and also stand for the Latin motto: *Christus mansionem benedicat*, “May Christ bless this house”. In the Book of Exodus, the Israelites marked their doors with blood so that the Lord would pass over their homes; but in this ritual, we mark our doors with chalk as a sign that we have invited God's presence and blessing into our homes. The following prayer may be said while the lintel is marked:

The three Wise Men



C Caspar
M Melchior
B and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son
 Who became man
 20 two thousand years ago
 26 and twenty – three years ago.
 ++ May Christ bless this home
 ++ and remain with us throughout the new year.

May this Epiphany blessing be a reminder that Christ incarnate in the love and care we manifest to each other in our ordinary daily lives together. - *Magnificat, Blessing of the Month, January 2006*

EPIPHANY BLESSING OF A HOME

ALL: make the sign of the Cross

Hear O Household: “Peace to this house and to all who dwell here, in the name of the Lord

ALL: Blessed be God forever.

READER: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through Him, and without Him nothing came to be...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, and the glory was of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:13, 14)

Using chalk, write on the outside of your house, above or next to an entrance:

(write the first half of the current year)

+20 + Christus + Mansion + Benedicat + 26 +

(write the other half of the year)

Those words mean, “May Christ Bless this house”. (Each word could be written by a different member of the household.)

Or optionally you may use the names of the Magi

+ 20 + Caspar + Melchior + Balthazar + 26 +

Each name could be written by a different member of the household.

ALL: Lord God of heaven and earth, you revealed your begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. May we be blessed with health, goodness of heart, gentleness and the keeping of your law. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our love for each other may go out to all. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity



Renee, Megan, Beth, Mike and Genna at Holy Trinity in Lenexa, KS.

Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity has been studying the book *Opening the Holy Door* by Joan Watson. We then made a pilgrimage to the Holy Door at St. Peter's Cathedral in Kansas City, KS. We prayed the Prayers for Pilgrimage to the Holy Door, and spent time in quiet reflection.



Marina Zeller, Megan Ratzlaff, Beth Antonacci, Renee Schmit, Susan Tabor (spiritual assistant), Mike Pottorff and Genna Ferrell at the Holy Door in St Peter's Cathedral.



In October, we visited Always and Forever Midwest Animal Sanctuary in Spring Hill, KS. Our members spent time with the animals, and took the dogs for a walk. We also commemorated the Transitus of St Francis at Rebecca Cheek's home, and shared a meal together.



Marina Zeller, Beth Antonacci, Renee Schmit and Rebecca Cheek at the Transitus of St. Francis.



Beth, Marina, Mike and Megan at Resurrection Cemetery.

In November, we prayed the Rosary for souls in Purgatory at Resurrection Cemetery in Lenexa, KS. Members also spent time in Adoration for Our Lady of Sorrows members who are deceased.

Another apostolate we did was to collect adult coloring books, puzzle books and clothing for Advent Health Mental Health In-Patient Treatment Center. Our Adoration time was devoted to those suffering from mental health conditions.



Rebecca Cheek, Marina Zeller, Beth Antonacci, Genna Ferrell and Renee Schmit at the Summer Gathering.

This month we collected Christmas cards to be delivered to soldiers next month as a way to thank them for their service to our country.

We have been focused on strengthening our fraternity through attending Mass, Adoration, the Summer Gathering and sharing meals together.

Three pictures below: Mike Pottorff, Renee Schmit, Beth Antonacci and Rebecca Cheek at the Always and Forever Midwest Animal Sanctuary in Spring Hill, KS.



Brother Jacoba Fraternity - Lawrence, KS

Outreach to First Nation Peoples



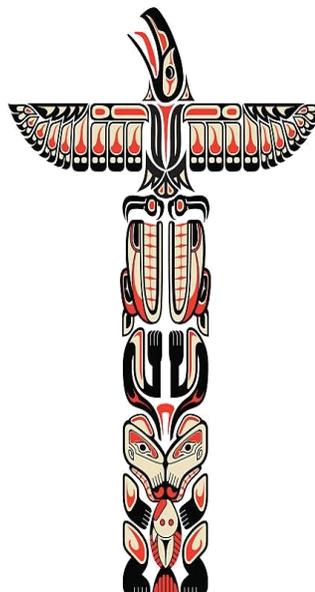
The first 3 photos are from the Black Mesa trip; the next photo is of Fr John Toepfer, OFM, Cap., blessing the truck, drivers, and loaders in Lawrence, Kansas, as we prepare for our trip to Montana; and the final photo is from Tuba City, Arizona, on the Navajo reservation.

In mid-November, David Ehrlich and Dan Lonquist of the Brother Jacoba Fraternity accompanied by John Pfeiffer drove a 26 foot rental truck from Lawrence, Kansas to the Black Mesa chapter of the Navajo Nation in northeast Arizona. The truck was loaded with 25 new mattresses and bed frames, furniture, washer and dryer, clothing, bicycles, children's books, toys, etc. We were able to purchase the mattresses and bed frames as a result of generous donations and through a purchasing program offered to non-profits by Mattress Firm. The mattresses and bed frames are being stored in a hogan at our delivery site until the modular homes which the chapter is erecting for elders of the community are ready. A hogan is a sacred and traditional dwelling place of the Navajo.

Earlier in July, the same trio made a trip to Tuba City, Arizona, part of the Navajo reservation, in a large rental truck loaded with furniture, clothing, bicycles, dining and kitchen

ware, bicycles, books, toys, etc. Then, in August, David and Dan made a trip to the Northern Cheyenne reservation in southwest Montana. A large 6 burner gas stove donated by a couple in Lawrence was the first item loaded on the truck. Accompanying the stove was lots of furniture, many, many new school backpacks filled with new school supplies, clothing, bicycles, toys, etc.

Fraternity members help in sorting and boxing clothing and then loading the truck when we are ready to make a trip. A final trip of the year will be made to the Hopi reservation in Arizona with winter clothes/boots and many, many wrapped Christmas toys. - Daniel Lonquist OFS



Navajo Reservation



St. Joseph Fraternity

Hays, KS

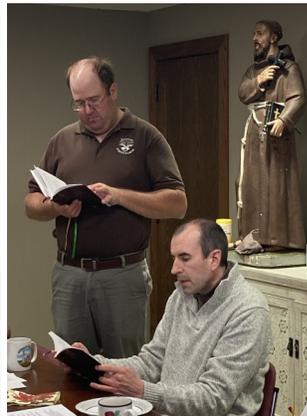


Pictures from lots of events going on in Hays—

Fr Simon Peter from Salina who Troy has been in contact with is interested in the OFS is on the left by Brenda.

Fr. Don Debes OFM Cap. is in back on right. Fr. Jim Moster gave the homily is in the front on the right.
- Troy Haas OFS, Minister

Pictures are from the Transitus in Victoria on October 3 in the San Damiano Chapel. The group photo is of the members that were present. From left to right Brenda, Susan Bowles, Joanne Wasinger, Michel Werth, Karen Marsell, Troy, Judy Donley, Geri Rupp, and Ramona Herman.



Minister, Troy Haas OFS, welcomes Brent Weicher to the St Joseph Fraternity as a new inquirer. Others pictured are Judy Donley, Joanne Wasinger, Geri Rupp and Brenda Haas.

Judy Donley, Joanne Wasinger, Geri and Brenda at our OFS information table at our St Joseph Church Thanksgiving Dinner

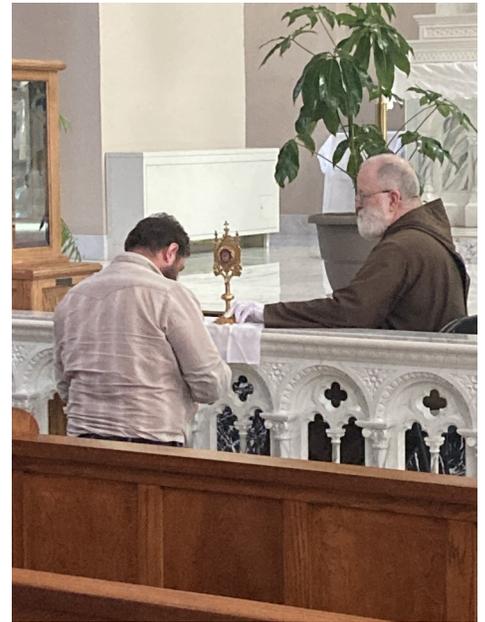
St. Joseph Fraternity in Hays, KS joins with Il Poverello Fraternity from Nebraska at the Spiritual Life Center in Victoria, KS for a Day Retreat



St Joseph and Il Poverello Fraternities



Fr. Curtis Carlson OFM Cap.
Retreat Leader



Il Poverello Fraternity Minister prays before Padre Pio first class relic.

St Joseph fraternity and Il Poverello fraternity from NE at the Capuchin Spiritual Life Center in Victoria on a Day Retreat led by Fr Curtis Carlson OFM Cap.

Mass, Confession, spiritual talk and quiet meditation time was held along with a blessing with the Padre Pio first class relic. Members socialized during a brown bag lunch.

Holy Eucharist and Queen of the Angels Fraternities Join with Blue Spring Parishes to Rally for LIFE



PRAYING FOR WORLD PEACE AND LIFE—FROM CONCEPTION TO NATURAL DEATH.

Members of Holy Eucharist and Queen of the Angels Fraternities joined the two Blue Springs parishes; St John Lalande and St. Robert Bellarmine in praying the rosary at the intersection of 40 Hiway and 7 Hiway on October 11, 2025.

Holy Family Fraternity - Tulsa, OK

Professes New Member



Holy Family celebrated the profession of Wendy L. Benford on October 11, 2025 in the Chapel of the Holy Family Cathedral Office/ School Building. Celebration Cake below.



Pictured are From Left to Right: Father Stuart Crevcoure (Priest at Church of St. Mary, where Wendy is a music teacher), Leila Safavi, Patrick Maher, Wendy Benford, Kenton Miller, Karen Spurgeon and Msgr. Gregory Gier, the Celebrant.

We have restructured procedures for regional prayer requests in order to be more responsive to your need for prayer. The old Mailchimp account has been deleted.

Please continue to use this address for prayer request: prayer@jdpofs.org

Secular Franciscans Celebrate the Transitus

Transitus is the annual celebration by Franciscans throughout the world of the passing of St. Francis from this life to life with God. It is celebrated the night of October 3, the eve of his feast day. The word “transitus” comes from the Latin, meaning passage or crossing.

Holy Eucharist and Queen of the Angels fraternity members joined the Sisters of St. Francis in praying the Transitus at the Franciscan Prayer Center.



Sister Jeanette OSF



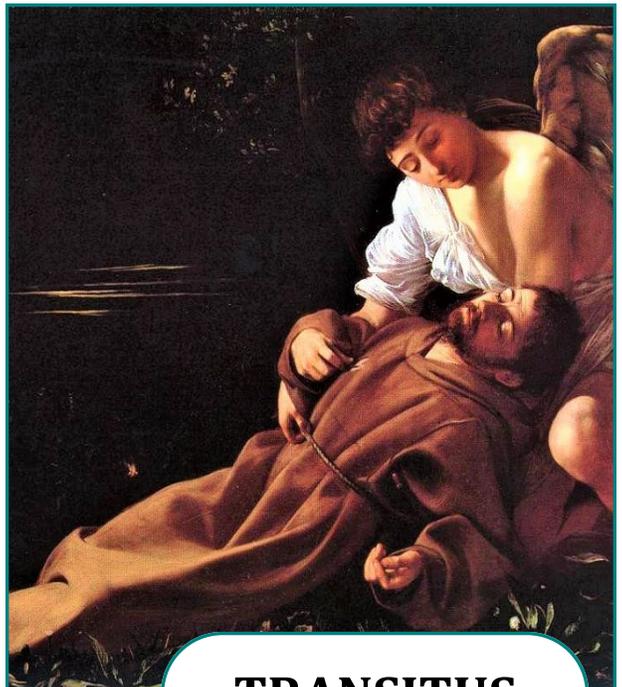
Carolyn Denis, minister, Kathy Hillen, Betty and Stan McClatchey and Otilia Ayala from Holy Eucharist. (not pictured) Janice Cox, minister, Joe Novak from Queen of the Angels fraternity. Dona Gibbons represented both fraternities.



Sisters Sharon, Colette and Connie main readers at the Transitus service.



Queen of the Angels Fraternity prayed for deceased family members at the Church of the Santa Fe in Buckner, MO.



TRANSITUS

“Remember when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received – only what you have given.” -St. Francis





HOLY EUCHARIST FRATERNITY

Independence, MO

Are you confident that someone will pray for your soul after your death?

Secular Franciscans should be able to rely on their Brothers and Sisters praying for them after their death. One member said that this is really important for them because most of their family is not Catholic and do not believe in Purgatory.

Holy Eucharist fraternity began a new tradition singing and processing to beautiful Mexican Altar of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Altar contained a first class relic of St. Francis of Assisi, 19 votive candles for each deceased member of their fraternity along with roses and flowers.

Members read a prayer service for deceased Secular Franciscans and then blessed their TAUs with the First Class Relic of St. Francis.

The fraternity decided to make this tradition a yearly event.



NOVEMBER FRATERNITY TRADITION

Praying for our Deceased Brothers and Sisters





St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity

Wichita, KS

Professes New Members



David and Janice Liang were professed as members of the St. Anthony Fraternity in Wichita during a private evening Mass on Nov. 13 at St. Cecilia Church in Haysville.

Fr. Rick Kotrba, pastor of St. Cecilia, celebrated the Mass. Minister Larry Meistrina, Vice Minister Larry Dougherty, and Patricia Bird received the Liangs on behalf of the fraternity.

Most of the fraternity's members attended the profession Mass. A reception was hosted afterward in the school gym.

The Liangs lived and worked in New Orleans before moving a few years ago to Haysville. Haysville is a suburb south of Wichita.





St Anthony Christmas Party and Donation Gifts



During the fraternity Christmas gathering, Capuchin Franciscan Fr. Donald Rank was presented a check for \$300 for the friars of the newly established Capuchin friary in Wichita. The presentation was made during a fraternity Christmas gathering on Dec. 7.

Sr. Mary Catherine Blanding, the spiritual advisor to the St. Anthony Fraternity in Wichita, was also presented with a check for \$500 for the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters of Wichita, during a Christmas gathering on Dec. 7. With her, at left, is Larry Dougherty, vice-minister, and Larry Menestrina, minister.

Welcoming ceremony, two photos:
Angela Snodgrass, seated, and Lara Law and James Higgs took part in a welcoming ceremony on Dec. 7. They were welcomed during a Christmas gathering of St. Anthony Fraternity in Wichita. With them is Sr. Mary Catherine Blanding, the fraternity's spiritual advisor, Vice-minister Larry Dougherty, at left, and Minister Larry Menestrina.

The other photos are of the fraternity Christmas dinner on Dec. 7.—Chris Riggs OFS





JUSTICE, PEACE, & the INTEGRITY of CREATION

by Susan Tabor OFS, Regional JPIC Animator

The Bishops' Statement on Immigration and Opposing Mass Deportations v. 12, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops released a "Special Message" on immigration. It is the first time the bishops have invoked this type of statement since 2013, when they spoke out against the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive mandate. The message was approved by the bishops at their plenary assembly in Baltimore with 216 votes in favor, five votes against and three abstentions.

The full text of the bishops' Special Pastoral Message follows: As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling an immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to from their loved ones.

Despite obstacles and prejudices, generations of immigrants have made enormous contributions to the well-being of our nation. We as Catholic bishops love our country and pray for its peace and prosperity. For this very reason, we feel compelled now in this environment to raise our voices in defense of God-given human dignity. Catholic teaching exhorts nations to recognize the fundamental dignity of all persons, including immigrants. We bishops advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation's immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and national security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together.

We recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system for the sake of the common good. Without such processes, immigrants face the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Safe and legal pathways serve as an antidote to such risks.

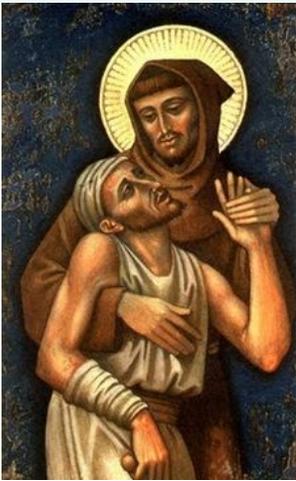
The Church's teaching rests on the foundational concern for the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). As pastors, we look to Sacred Scripture and the example of the Lord Himself, where we find the wisdom of God's compassion. The priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (Zechariah 7:10). In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (2 Corinthians 8:9), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (Luke 10:30-37), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (Matthew 25). The Church's concern for neighbor and our concern here for immigrants is a response to the Lord's command to love as He has loved us (John 13:34). To our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26). You are not alone! We note with gratitude that so many of our clergy, consecrated religious, and lay faithful already accompany and assist immigrants in meeting their basic human needs. We urge all people of good will to continue and expand such efforts.

We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation, and we are grateful for past and present opportunities to dialogue with public and elected officials. In this dialogue, we will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform. As disciples of the Lord, we remain men and women of hope, and hope does not disappoint! (cf. Romans 5:5) May the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe enfold us all in her maternal and loving care and draw us ever closer to the heart of Christ.



A long row of tables on the street where our volunteers give out food and cat with the homeless of Oklahoma City.
(Identities were blocked)

St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity Partners Up with the Parishioners to Provide for the Poor.



Outside the Homeless Alliance in OKC, the members of the St. Francis of Assisi and their like-minded members of St. Eugne Parish in Edmond, set up their tables and open their trunks and trailers, to give away what they have to the homeless of Oklahoma City. On the second Saturday of every month, the members of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity meet at St. Eugene's Ross Hall and orchestrate the preparation of food, clothing, and other necessities for their Homeless Ministry. Through donations from the St. Eugene parishioners during the month, and the funds collected by the Franciscan community, they are able to provide sandwiches, fresh fruit, drinks, and a wide variety of snack foods to 250 – 300 people in need. This month there was a huge donation of new coats, new blankets and sleeping bags as the homeless prepare for the cold weather months.

The fraternity posts invitations to the parish every month and has a number of regulars from the parish who show up every month to help out. Bill Full, minister of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, dubs anyone who shows up for three or more times to help as an honorary Franciscan and gives each of them a cap with a Tau on it. At least ten of the regular volunteers have been blessed with these hats so far, and more volunteers show up each month.

Although the fraternity tries to provide for the physical needs of the people on the street, Bill prefers to call their work “a ministry of presence.” While giving the people food and clothing, the volunteers spend time talking to the people, listening to their stories. laughing and joking as they find out what else the people may need. This monthly excursion is truly a chance to walk with the poor in the footsteps of Christ.

<https://ofsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/OFS-Blog-Image-with-TEXT.jpg>



The donation box the lives at St. Eugene's and is filled to capacity twice a week with needed items for the homeless.



Volunteer Tau hat marks helpers as “honorary Franciscans”

OKLAHOMA FRATERNITIES HONOR THE WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

Little Portion - Tahlequah, OK St. Adalbert and St. Stanislaus—Broken Arrow, OK St Francis of Assisi— Oklahoma City, OK

St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity of OKC, St. Stanislaus and St. Adalbert Fraternity of Broken Arrow, and Little Portion Fraternity of Tahlequah joined together to honor Pope Francis and now Pope Leo's call to serve the poor in a special way on the World Day of the Poor.

The World Day of the Poor was established by Pope Francis in 2017 to be celebrated on the 33 Sunday of Ordinary Time, which fell on Nov. 16 this year. After the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wanted to set aside a day so that throughout the world Christian communities could become ever greater signs of Christ's charity for those in need. The day is a call to go beyond awareness and take action by addressing the root causes of poverty and providing support through initiatives in our own communities.



Seated L-R: Michelle Stearnson, Bernadette Hakes, Teresa Haley. Back row L-R: Ginger Thummel, Randal Burris, Teresa Alderman, Dominick Palmisano, Dcn. Mark Keeley, Richard Cronk and Judith Cronk.

This is the third year these three Oklahoma fraternities have honored this day together. This year each fraternity began by gathering a particular item for the homeless. St. Francis and Little Portion had clothing drives at their parishes, asking their fellow parishioners to donate either t-shirts or winter gloves, hats, and scarves. St. Stanislaus and Adalbert worked within their own membership to gather oral hygiene items. After collecting their items, the three fraternities met at a Sacred Heart Parish in Sapulpa, the most central parish for the three fraternities, and shared their goods. They met over a picnic lunch and then shared what they collected with each other. This way each fraternity was able to take back to their own communities and homeless ministries a variety of needed items.

Richard Cronk OFS, during the t-shirt collection Sunday at his parish, St. Francis Xavier in Stillwater, OK.



Deacon Mark and Janice Keeley organize the winter gloves and hats.



Bernadette Hakes, Teresa Haley, Dominick Palmisano, and Randal Burris divide up the oral hygiene products and toiletries.



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Praise be You, my Lord through Sister Death, from whom no one living can escape. Blessed are they She finds doing Your will. No second death can do them harm. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks, and serve Him with great humility.” St Francis is Assisi, Canticle of Creation.

Sister Death—May They Rest in Peace

DATE	NAME	FRATERNITY	LOCATION
February 8, 2025	Sean Bauer OFS	St. Maximilian Kolbe	Atchison, KS
March 3, 2025	Sr. Josephine Boyles OSF	Sisters of St Francis of the Holy Eucharist	Independence, MO
March 15, 2025	Mary Anne Dougherty	Our Lady of Sorrows	Olathe, KS
July 20, 2025	Sherry Slavin	Holy Eucharist Fraternity	Independence, MO
September 22, 2025	James Kerschen	St. Anthony Fraternity	Wichita, KS