



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

April 21, 2026

Dear OFS members of the Juan de Padilla Region,



I have resigned as minister of the region. I spent time in prayer and discernment, sought counsel from my family, friends, local fraternity council, local spiritual assistant and considered the implications of my departure from the council.

Serving on the REC takes a good amount of time, desire and passion, and prayer. I am still working full time, helping plan my daughters wedding, and desiring to devote more time to a deeper prayer life. I could no longer commit the time and effort required to fulfill all the requirements of the office.

I served several years on the regional executive council: first as councilor, then secretary, and lastly as regional minister. During this time I learned a lot, developed valuable lifelong skills, built lifelong friendships at all levels, and traveled. The work on the council is never done as there is so much to do. St. Francis said it so well, "Up to now we have done nothing, let us begin," and "I have done what is mine to do, now it is up to you to do yours." I truly am feeling both of these statements as I write this. I am at peace with the decision as Julie Oswald has the time and skills to carry on the work as minister. The OFS belongs to the Lord and the Holy Spirit and I trust that He will provide who and what is needed to carry on the work of the Order.

I hope to attend Summer Gathering in July and help out during the National Chapter in Wichita in October. Serving with such caring, faithful, hardworking people has been an honor, privilege, and humbling at the same time. During my time on the REC my children graduated high school and college, I got married, and now my daughter is getting married this summer. During this time I went through phases in my spiritual life from The Great Stripping (removing the things that made me proudful), Remembering that I am dust and to dust I shall return/Naked I came into this world, naked I leave this world (I am nothing and have nothing and any good that may have come from me was the Lord's work through me as His instrument), Laying my life down for my friends (giving all of myself and all that I had) and now moving into the way of trust and love (Trusting our Lord and His love for the Order and me personally as the REC and myself move into new chapters).

Juan de Padilla Region is in good hands with the council elected last fall. They are committed, faithful, Franciscan minded people with servant hearts with a desire to lead this region over the next few years until the next election in Fall of 2028. The Province has appointed a new regional spiritual assistant who you will get to meet and know beginning at the summer gathering in July. The combined summer gathering and chapter meeting July 17 - 19, 2026 at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita will be a great time to be together in this Franciscan Jubilee Year to ask the Lord to Enkindle in Us the Fire of Your Love. I invite you to attend The National Chapter in October as an observer to meet members of the National Executive Council, regional ministers from across the country, and observe the business as it happens on the National level.

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It is a blessing and gift to belong to the Secular Franciscan Order and particularly to the holy Juan de Padilla Region. I am thankful for the opportunity to have served on Juan de Padilla Region Executive Council and I look forward to opportunities to grow in faith and love with members of this region and in my own personal vocation. May God bless you all.

In Christ's peace and love,  
 Brenda Haas OFS  
 Former Regional Minister, Juan de Padilla Region



Peace and All Good in this  
 Franciscan Jubilee Year of Grace!

### Transitions & New Beginnings

First, a deep **"Thank You"** to **Brenda** for her many years of service on the Regional Executive Council (REC). While we are sad to see her leave the Regional Minister role, we fully support her prioritizing family and are glad she will remain active in her local fraternity.

As of April 19, 2026, I have tiptoed into the role of Regional Minister. While I am a self-admitted **neophyte** to the REC, I am blessed to be surrounded by veterans on the REC who I trust will keep me centered. We are currently discerning our next Vice Minister—please keep the REC in your prayers during this process. If the Holy Spirit nudges you with a suggestion, please reach out to that person on the REC!

### About Me

For those I haven't met, I belong to the **St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity** (Leawood, KS). My journey began with a conversion many years ago in Medjugorje. Eventually, it led to what is now nearly 26 years as a professed Secular Franciscan.

I've always felt a deep connection to God's creation and St. Francis' simple joys. In my free time, I pretend I am a wildlife photographer, travel with friends, and I am a "Sloth hiker" (I get there eventually!). I share my home with my two Bloodhounds, Sadie and Bailey, and other critters that seem to wander on my acreage! Full disclosure: I am much more of a Martha than a Mary, so I ask for your patience (and forgiveness) in advance!

### Spiritual Assistant Updates

- **Farewell & Gratitude:** **Fr. Mike Scully** is retiring as our Regional Spiritual Assistant. We are so grateful for his years of spiritual guidance, formation, and workshops. He will remain with the Brother Jacoba Fraternity in Lawrence as their Spiritual Assistant.
- **Welcome:** We welcome **Fr. Sales Pathrose**, a Capuchin from Wichita, as our new Regional SA. He is full of Franciscan joy and energy! Come meet him at the **Regional Gathering on July 17** in Wichita. You can also google his name and check out some of his YouTube videos.

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## Upcoming Gatherings

- Regional Summer Gathering (July 17-19, Wichita): Join us at the Spiritual Life Center for "Rekindle in us the Fire of Your Love", an opportunity for fraternal connection and a rare chance to celebrate with three Capuchins. Fr. Charles Prolifka, (Retreat Director), and Fr. John Cousins will join us throughout the weekend. Fr. Sales Pathrose will be available for a meet and greet the evening of July 17. We will also celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Juan de Padilla Region and hold a Chapter on Saturday (1:00 PM – 3:00 PM). This is a Franciscan Trifecta Jubilee event you don't want to miss!
- The Quinquennial (Lexington, KY): The theme for the Q in Lexington, KY is "*The Easter of St. Francis - Rekindle the Flame.*" *On a recent pilgrimage to Assisi, I was reminded of the instant bond we share as Franciscans—visible Taus led to immediate hugs! We already have about 15 people from our region attending; I hope more will join us for a group photo and plenty of "Franciscan hugs."*

## A Call to Action for all of us...

I am SOOO EXCITED for this FRANCISCAN JUBILEE YEAR! How privileged we are to be living at this moment in time. Standing at the remains of St. Francis in March at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, I prayed for our Region, for new vocations, and that each of us will be touched by the grace from this year!

My challenge to you (and your Fraternity): Do not treat "this Jubilee year" as "just" another year. This year should be different for each of us as individuals and a celebration for all of us in Fraternity!

- Rekindle: Dive into the words our Father Francis left to us, especially the Rule, Admonitions, and *Franciscan Readings and Prayers*, many of which can be found in *The Ritual and other Formation resources*.
- Show your Fire: Evangelize! Ensure your Parish Priest knows you are a Secular Franciscan. Speak at Mass (if allowed), use the bulletin, set up a table after Masses, work with other Fraternities to get communications out in your area. More information on this is coming from National to for the weekend of Sept 26-27 to kick off October as "Franciscan Month".
- Fraternal Love: "*And after that the Lord gave me brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the same Most High revealed to me that I had to live according to the form of the holy Gospel.*" Be intentional about caring for your brothers and sisters in Fraternity and caring for the Fraternity as a whole. Reach out to those who have been away. Here is an old article that is true today:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-09/pope-encyclical-fraternity-francis-assisi.html>





## New Juan de Padilla Regional Spiritual Assistant Fr. Sales Pathrose OFM Cap.

Fr. Sales Pathrose, O.F.M. Cap. is a Capuchin Franciscan friar originally from India. He is best known for being one of the founding members of the **St. Carlo Acutis Friary** in Wichita, Kansas, which was established by the Capuchin Franciscans in September 2025.

Fr. Pathrose is a member of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin (O.F.M. Cap.), a reform branch of the Franciscan order that emphasizes poverty, prayer, and service to the poor <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/capuchin-franciscans-religious-order>, <https://www.capuchins.org/who-are-we>.

### Father Sales Pathrose OFM Cap

As of late 2025, Fr. Pathrose resides at the St. Carlo Acutis Friary in Wichita, Kansas, alongside other friars such as Fr. Donald Rank and Fr. Charles Polifka. <https://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/capuchins-establish-friary-in-wichita/>. Father Pathrose has experience working with Secular Franciscan in various apostolates.

#### **Ministry Focus:**

\* **Formation—** In Wichita, he plays a key role in the formation of younger friars and brothers, helping them integrate into the daily rhythm of Capuchin life, which includes prayer, manual labor, and ministry <https://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/capuchins-establish-friary-in-wichita/>.

\* **International Outreach** - He is noted to engage in a specific ministry aimed at assisting \*\*poor youth in his native India. <https://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/capuchins-establish-friary-in-wichita/>.

Previous Residency: - Prior to moving the Wichita, Fr. Pathrose resided at the St. Anthony of Padua Friary in Denver. [https://digital\\_sample.officialcatholicdirectory.com/denver-co/page-310](https://digital_sample.officialcatholicdirectory.com/denver-co/page-310).

#### **Capuchin Arrival in Wichita**

The establishment of the Wichita friary was a significant event for the Diocese of Wichita, fulfilling a long-standing invitation from previous bishops. The friars moved into the new facility in September 2025, with Father Pathrose being one of the six friars who remained in Wichita to launch the community's mission <https://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/capuchins-establish-friary-in-wichita/>. The community follows a strict schedule of prayer (including the Divine Office and Mass), manual labor, and active ministry to the local community, such as serving at the "Lord's Diner" . <https://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/capuchins-establish-friary-in-wichita/>.



***Christian worship is therefore an invitation to sing with the angels, and thus to lead the word to its highest destination.***

***— Pope Benedict XVI***



## 2026 Summer Gathering Retreat Director

### Father Charles Polifka OFM Cap.

Father Charles Polifka will serve as retreat director for the 2026 Summer Gathering at the Spiritual Life Center, taking place June 17–19.

Fr. Polifka has devoted many years to leadership and pastoral service within the Capuchin Franciscan Province of Mid-America. His ministry has included both administrative and spiritual responsibilities, most notably his 13-year tenure as provincial minister—the longest in the province’s history. During that time, he earned deep respect from his fellow friars for his commitment to the formation

of religious brothers in the Franciscan tradition. You can also find numerous videos by Fr. Polifka on YouTube.

He currently serves as Provincial Minister of the Capuchin Province of St. Conrad, which includes regions such as Colorado, Kansas, and Texas.

Fr. Polifka was also among the six friars who established a permanent Capuchin presence at the Carlos Acutis Friary in the Diocese of Wichita. The friary was officially blessed by Bishop Carl A. Kemme on September 7, 2025. There, Fr. Polifka continues his ministry by assisting in the formation of younger friars and serving in hospital ministry.

His long-standing service to the province also includes roles as provincial vicar and councilor, as well as representing the Order at international gatherings, including the General Chapter in Rome.

The Wichita friary is part of the province’s broader expansion efforts, with Fr. Polifka playing a key role in guiding new members into the Capuchin charism of prayer, fraternity, and poverty.



## Region Officers & Commissions

Regional Spiritual Assistant	Fr. Sales Pathrose OFM Cap	
Minister	Julie Oswald OFS	mojosfo@gmail.com
Vice Minister		
Secretary	Deanna Perry OFS	djperry1@gmail.com
Treasurer	Renee Schmit OFS	rene.5ecfran19@gmail.com
Formation Director	Sylvia Ridge OFS	sylviaridge@hotmail.com
Councilor—Kansas	Richard Churray OFS	richardchurrayofs@gmail.com
Councilor — KC Metro	Rebecca Cheek OFS	RebeccaCheekOFS@gmail.com
Councilor— Oklahoma	Richard Cronk OFS	richardcronk12@gmail.com
Regional Webmaster	Bart Ridge OFS	bart@jdpofs.org
Regional Database Managers	Dona Gibbons OFS	donagibbons2@gmail.com
	Claudia Kauzlarich OFS	claudiakauz.sfo@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Dona Gibbons OFS	donagibbons2@gmail.com
JPIC Animator	Susan Tabor OFS	souljourner@sbcglobal.net

Juan de Padilla Regional  
Chapter & Summer  
Gathering

**Enkindle in  
Us the Fire of  
Your Love**

Jubilee Year of  
St. Francis of Assisi

Speaker- Fr. Charles  
Polifka OFM Cap.

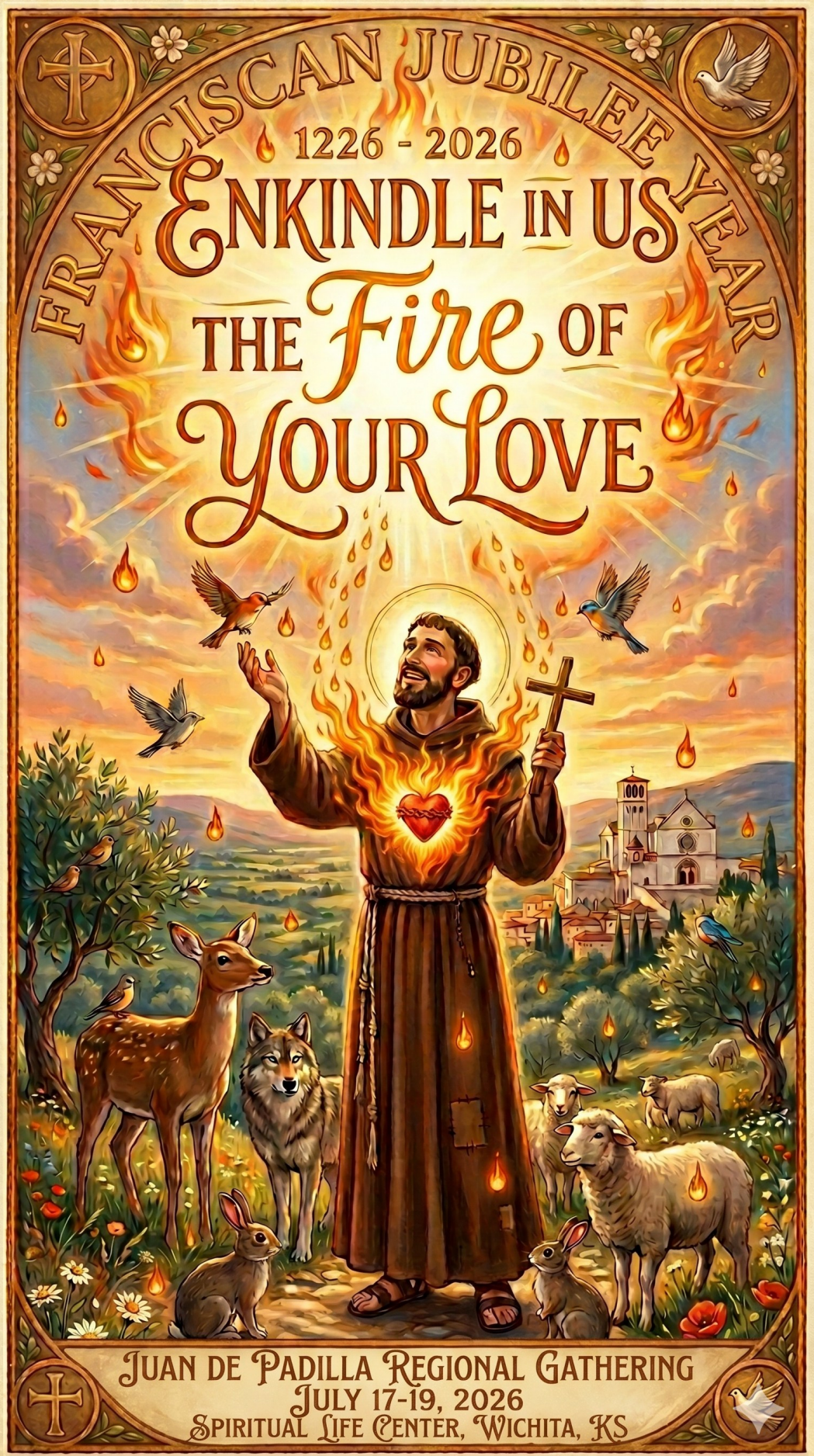
July 17—19, 2026  
Regional Gathering  
& Chapter Meeting

All Members  
Welcome

**Chapter - Saturday  
only (1-3 pm)**

**REC, Ministers & SA are  
required to attend the  
Chapter on Saturday**

Spiritual Life Center,  
Wichita, KS



**REGISTRATION FORM - 2026 Regional Summer Gathering**

July 17 - 19, 2026

Spiritual Life Center 7100 E. 45th Street N. Bel Aire, Kansas

**Registration Deadline is June 13, 2026 Make checks payable to: JUAN DE PADILLA REGION**

**A FREE WILL OFFERING WILL BE COLLECTED TO SUPPORT THE CARUCHIN SAINT CARLO ACUTIS FRIARY**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FRATERNITY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions? Contact Julie Oswald at [mojosfo@gmail.com](mailto:mojosfo@gmail.com) or 816-590-3036 (Regional YMinister)**

**PLEASE CHECK ALL YOUR ROOM AND MEAL CHOICES TOTALS**

Single per night \$90 Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Double per night \$76 per person Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate: \_\_\_\_\_ I need a roommate: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm a Commuter \_\_\_\_\_

MEALS:	Friday dinner	5:30 PM	\$20.00	\$ _____
	Sat breakfast	8:30 AM	\$12.00	\$ _____
	Sat lunch	Noon	\$16.00	\$ _____
	Sat dinner	5:30 PM	\$20.00	\$ _____
	Sun breakfast	8:30 AM	\$12.00	\$ _____

Special dietary needs: (please circle)

Gluten-free      Vegan      Vegetarian      Other (please explain on back)

REGISTRATION FEE FOR ALL ATTENDEES - \$75.00 \$ 75.00

I would like to make an additional donation toward Summer Gathering costs. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL COST OF REGISTRATION FEE, ROOM AND MEALS \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to: JUAN DE PADILLA REGION**

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM WITH PAYMENT OF AT LEAST 50% OF TOTAL**

**Mail check by June 13 and make check payable to: JUAN DE PADILLA REGION and mail to:**

TO: Julie Oswald 1204 N Jeter Rd Raymore, MO 64083

**DUE TO CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS WITH THE SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER, ALL REGISTRATION MONIES ARE NONREFUNDABLE AND WE CANNOT ACCEPT ANY LATE REGISTRATIONS.**

I can assist at Mass: Lector \_\_\_\_\_ Antiphonist \_\_\_\_\_ Cantor \_\_\_\_\_ Musician \_\_\_\_\_  
I can assist at the Gathering: Registration \_\_\_\_\_ Facilitator \_\_\_\_\_ Lead Prayer \_\_\_\_\_ As Needed \_\_\_\_\_



The skeletal remains of St. Francis of Assisi

### Remains of St Francis of Assisi on Display during the 800th Anniversary of his death.

Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed a special Jubilee Year to mark the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, declaring a period of spiritual renewal from **January 10, 2026, to January 10, 2027**. This extraordinary jubilee, initiated by a decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary on January 10, 2026, invites all Christians to follow the example of the “Little Poor One” by becoming models of holiness and constant witnesses of peace.

**St. Francis**, known for his radical embrace of poverty, peace, and care for creation, is seen by Pope Leo as a timeless figure whose life offers a powerful antidote to today’s world marked by conflict, division, and environmental crisis. In a letter to the ministers general of the Franciscan Family, the Pope emphasized that “**peace with God, peace among people, and peace with creation are inseparable dimensions of a single call to universal reconciliation.**” He urged the faithful to imitate Francis’s humility and courage, especially in times of war and social unrest.

**The Jubilee offers a plenary indulgence** under the usual conditions—sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and prayer for the Pope’s intentions—for those who make a pilgrimage to any Franciscan church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis. Those unable to travel due to illness or age may still obtain the indulgence by spiritually joining the celebrations and offering their sufferings to God.

**Pope Leo XIV traveled to Assisi in January 2026** to pray at the saint’s tomb and reaffirm the Church’s commitment to the Franciscan spirit. The jubilee also includes the public display of St. Francis’s relics in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, drawing pilgrims from around the world. This year-long celebration is not just a commemoration but a **global spiritual journey**—a call to rediscover the Gospel’s power to heal, reconcile, and transform lives.

### Did you Know...

#### Members of the OFS can gain a Plenary Indulgence on these Occasions

According to a 1972 decree by the Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary, members of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) may gain a **plenary indulgence** on the day of their profession, provided they fulfill the usual conditions: **confession, Eucharistic communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope**, along with the renewal of their promise to observe the SFO Rule.

This indulgence is granted specifically on the **day of profession**, as well as on the **days of admission**, and at the **conclusion of an official visitation**, and on certain feast days including those of **Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Clare, Saint Elizabeth, and the Immaculate Conception.**

The indulgence remains valid today and is tied to the renewal of the evangelical commitment made during profession.

## [The Easter of St. Francis](#)



**Source:** CIOFS Centenary 2026 — Formation Material

**Original document shared by:** CIOFS Secretariat for Formation, February 16, 2026

**Author:** Friar Robert Williams, OFM Cap., General Definitor

The full presentation can be accessed at: <https://ciofs.info/2026/02/17/8th-centenary-of-the-easter-of-st-francis-material-from-formation-secretariat/>

### E X C E R P T

A religious Order is a charismatic gift for the whole Church. It is charismatic because the genuine foundation and movement of the Order always comes from the Holy Spirit. It is for the whole Church, not because all of the members of the Church are called to be members, but because the members of that Order are called to live a particular way of living in and for the Church — which is a unique way of shining the light and joy of the Gospel into the whole world.

The charism of a religious Order develops over time. A charismatic founder is granted a divine inspiration to live a certain way in the world. St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Philip Neri, St. Theresa of Calcutta (Mother Theresa) are just a few such people. While they lived, much of the formation of their Orders and communities reflected their personal charism. After they died, the charisms of the communities they formed were able to develop and grow. Their personal charism is foundational to the communities they formed, but the charism of the community is something even greater and is formed by its many members over the centuries.

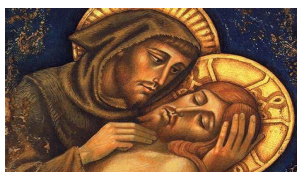
Before his death, St. Francis proclaimed to the friars:

*"I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you yours."*

— FA:ED, LM, p. 642

He understood, on his deathbed, that the Franciscan family he founded was something much bigger than him. It was, and is, his role to be the inspiration for a way of life that continues to thrive 800 years after his death. Over these centuries, generous and holy men and women have embraced the challenge of living lives of minority, poverty, and penance as joyful sons and daughters of a medieval Italian merchant's son.

In **John 20:17**, Jesus tells Mary Magdalen not to hold on to him after his resurrection. She is overwhelmed with inexpressible joy and amazement at seeing Jesus risen from the dead in the garden. She does not want to lose him again. But Jesus knows that, once he ascends and the Holy Spirit descends, Mary will be more intimately united with him than she could possibly imagine. We too, who have received the gift of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, are granted the grace of being united with Christ and one another more intimately than we can imagine in this life. Because we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in us, and we live in Christ — united with one another for ages unending.



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This same Holy Spirit instructs us, if we are willing to listen. The Holy Spirit shows us what we are to do. The Holy Spirit shows us how we, as Secular Franciscans, Poor Clares, Franciscan Sisters, and Franciscan Friars, are to live as joyful sons and daughters of St. Francis — so that we, like him, may share the truth of God's goodness, God's mercy and love, God's unfathomable abundance, and the ever-shining unconquerable light of Christ with the whole world. We do this by simply being who we were created to be, by living our Franciscan charism, and doing what is ours to do.

As we now approach the **800th anniversary** of the death of St. Francis and his heavenly birth, let us ask his intercession that — just as he allowed Christ to guide him throughout his life by the presence and grace of the Holy Spirit so that he might accomplish all that God wanted him to do — so may we now invite Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to cast his light into the darkness of our hearts, and grant us right faith, firm hope, and perfect love, with wisdom and insight, so that we may know and accomplish God's holy will in our lives.

## Sylvia Ridge OFS Regional Formation Director



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	NAME(S)
May 2, 2026	Elections—Little Portion Fraternity	St. Bridgit Catholic Church, Tahlequah, OF	Fraternal—Richard Cronk OFS Ecclesial—Judith Cronk SA
May 16, 2026	Day of Reflection—Knights of the Holy Eucharist, Br. Augustine OFM	St. John Lalande Catholic Church, Blue Springs, MO	Holy Eucharist Fraternity—all invited to attend
May 26, 2026	Ministers Zoom Meeting	Zoom	All Fraternity Ministers, SAs
June 30, 2026	Ministers Zoom Meeting	Zoom	All Fraternity Ministers, SAs
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
August 23, 2026	Visitation—St Elizabeth of Hungary	Cure d' Ars Catholic Church, Leawood, KS	Fraternal— Renee Schmit OFS Ecclesial—Dona Gibbons SA
May 26-27, 2026	Franciscan Month		All Fraternities
October 10-17, 2026	National OFS Chapter— JDP Hosting (Volunteers Needed)	Spiritual Life Center Wichita, KS	NEC, Regional Ministers Observers Welcome
November 8, 2026	Elections—St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity	St Anthony Church, Wichita, KS	Fraternal—TBA Ecclesial— TBA
November 17, 2026	St Elizabeth, Patron of OFS DAY OF SOLIDARITY— Service Projects	Fraternity—various areas	Regional Fraternities

# Mother St. Frances Cabrini Fraternity Liberal, Kansas



Beginning in January, 2026, the Mother Cabrini fraternity of Liberal, Kansas, entered into agreement with St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Guymon, Oklahoma to meet in their facility for our monthly fraternity meeting. Three of our professed members are members of the parish of St. Peter, and they had several friends and acquaintances who were interested.

In the picture, Stanley Cordova, OFS Minister, Fr. Jim Dieker OFS Vice Minister are at the end of the table, Lina Alvaraz, OFS is joining by Zoom from Manhattan, Kansas, Mary Anne Burdo, OFS, Fraternity Treasurer, and Emilee Fischer, Fraternity Secretary are at the table with 4 inquirers. The picture was taken by Harry Fischer, husband of Emilee. Our fraternity is planning a day retreat at the Shrine of Mother Cabrini on Memorial Day in Golden Colorado. - Fr. Jim Dieker OFS

## *Sister Death—May They Rest in Peace*

*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.*

DATE	NAME	FRATERNITY	LOCATION
December 3, 2025	Yvonne Minters OFS	Queen of the Angels	Buckner, MO
December 28, 2025	Leo Guzman OFS	Holy Eucharist Fraternity	Independence, MO
January 22, 2026	Ferman Sabala OFS	St. Stanislaus & St. Adalbert	Broken Arrow, OK

## Father Mike—He is finally retiring—Well, Almost!

### Father Michael Scully, O.F.M. Cap.

Father Michael Scully, O.F.M. Cap., has faithfully served for many years as the Juan de Padilla Regional Spiritual Assistant. Even when he became eligible for retirement, many in the region earnestly asked him to remain in this role—and graciously, he did.

As he now steps into retirement, Father Mike will continue his ministry as the Spiritual Assistant for Brother Jacoba Fraternity in Lawrence, Kansas.

Our region has been richly blessed by Father Mike's presence. He is especially known for his creative and engaging approach to formation, which he shared so generously at Summer Gatherings and Franciscan Workshops. He was also a regular contributor to the regional website, particularly through the ***Franciscan Footprint*** section, where his reflections inspired many.

Father Mike has served the Capuchin Province of Mid-America in numerous leadership roles, including Provincial. His ministry has also included service as a vocation director, youth minister, pastor, and educator.

He is widely recognized for his unique ability to connect the Gospel with popular culture. Through his website, [www.frmikescully.com](http://www.frmikescully.com), he shares reflections, meditations, and information about his ministry, including his radio programming. His decades of service in Kansas include notable roles as principal of Thomas More Prep-Marian High School in Hays, director of the Thomas More Folk Chorus, and later as a vocation director and pastor in Lawrence.

Father Mike's ministry highlights include:

- **Radio Host:** Creator and host of *Message at the Top* on KJLS-FM (Mix 103) in Hays, Kansas, where he explored popular music through the lens of Christian leadership.
- **Author:** Writer of books such as *The Message of Youth* and *The Gospel in the Modern Media*, integrating Scripture with contemporary culture.
- **Speaker:** Presenter of the well-known *Rock Music and Leadership* program, reaching tens of thousands of students over the years.

As Father Mike transitions into retirement, we offer our deep gratitude for his years of dedicated service, his joyful Franciscan spirit, and the lasting impact he has made on our region. We Love You, Father Mike!



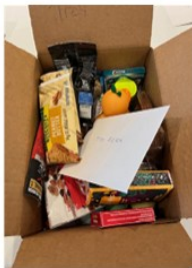


# Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity Olathe, KS

On March 1, Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity met at Megan’s house to assemble gift boxes for the seminarians from our home parishes. We prepared six boxes with treats, Easter themed spiritual items and notes of encouragement. Deacon Bob Rooney will receive a note about prayers being offered for him as a spiritual bouquet for his ordination.



Left: Megan Ratzlaff and Renee Schmit.  
Right: Rebecca Cheek and Megan Ratzlaff.  
Bottom left: Rebecca, Renee, and Mike.  
Bottom right: Megan, Beth, Renee, Rebecca, Marina, and Mike.



OLS Fraternity helped residents to Mass at Villa St Francis in Olathe, KS.  
Left: Charles Gurera, Megan Ratzlaff, Marina Zeller, Rebecca Cheek, and Mike Pottorff.  
Right: Marina, Mike, Beth, Megan, Rebecca, and Charles.



OLS Fraternity attended Mass together at Holy Trinity in Lenexa, KS.  
Left: Genna Ferrell, Megan Ratzlaff, Beth Antonacci, and Marina Zeller.  
Right: Megan Ratzlaff, Beth Antonacci, and Marina Zeller.



# Holy Eucharist Fraternity Begins New Year with Study of the Easter of St. Francis



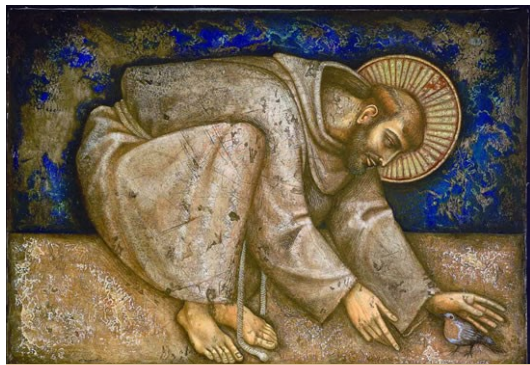
Karen Schamel and Kathy Wescott were Welcomed into the Holy Eucharist Fraternity. A previous Welcome Ceremony was conducted in the ICU at St. Luke’s Hospital for Kathy Wescott in the presence of her husband, Lou Wescott OFS. Pictured from (l-r) Dona Gibbons—SA, Karen Schamel—candidate and Carolyn Dennis—Minister.

CELEBRATING THE EASTER OF ST. FRANCIS 1226-2026



## New Regional SA Visited HE Fraternity in March!

Little did we know our visitor was going to be the new Regional Spiritual Assistant!! Fr. Sales Pathrose OFM Cap., was our surprise visitor in March! What a surprise for us! God bless you, Fr. Pathrose.



*Father Serra encouraged people to share the prayer with those who need it.*

**Prayer for Inner Peace**

Lord Jesus,  
I present to You what is in my heart.  
You know it better than anyone,  
so I surrender it to You,  
that You may transform all my anxieties,  
my fears, and worries into blessings.

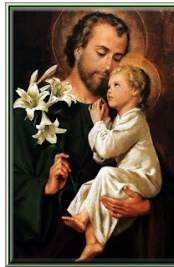
Show me the way,  
so that, with You by my side,  
I may walk safely toward heaven.  
Amen.

**Jesus, be our refuge in times of tribulation!**

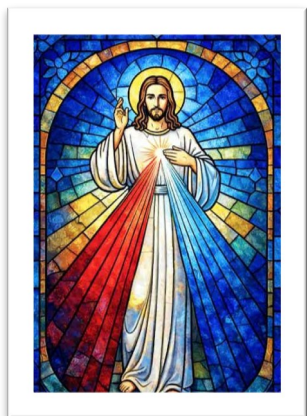
# St. Joseph Fraternity Hays, KS



Divine Mercy Prayer Service at IHM church in Hays (picture below) on April 12 From left to right Brent Weichers inquirer, Troy Haas, Judy Donley, Michel Werth, Ramona Herman, Geri Rupp, Joanne Wasinger and Brenda Haas.

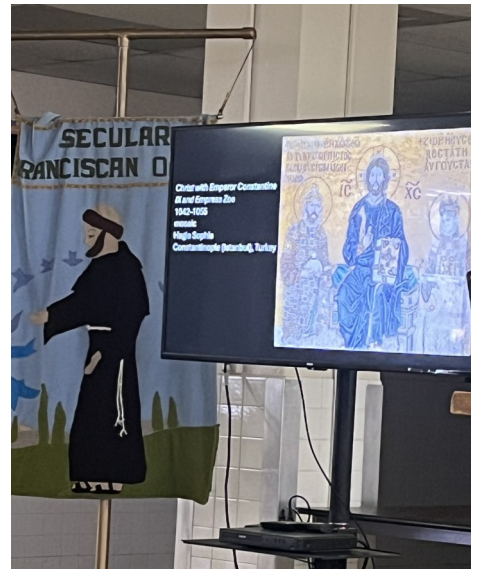


Divine Mercy Service held at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hays, KS



Dr Erica Werth Bittel PHD from the icon presentation at Kennedy on January 18, 2026.

Fr. Curtis Carlson OFM Cap. Welcomed all in attendance.





## JUSTICE, PEACE, & the INTEGRITY of CREATION

by Susan Tabor OFS, Regional JPIC Animator

Our nation is in a lot of turmoil. And no matter what our position is on any issue(s), we may be considering taking some action and we may want to ask ourselves some questions in the context of prayer before we do so:

If I take action, how will my action promote respect for life and the dignity of the human person? (As Franciscans, we do not support illegal and hostile actions being taken against marginalized people or any people, for that matter. All lives are to be respected and their dignity upheld and respected.)

Will, or how will my action promote peace and peacemaking? (Jesus and Saint Francis of Assisi were both strong champions of and for peace.)

Will or how will my action promote the common good? (As Franciscans, we promote and support the common good because doing so expresses respect for life, the dignity of the human person and non-discrimination/lack of prejudice.)

We may also examine these questions and issues not from the standpoint of political actions only, but as human rights concerns. We remember that no matter how small or insignificant our action may seem, that it is light in the darkness for others taking action and for the people for whom the actions serve as protection or advocacy.

And of utmost concern is that any action for the welfare of humanity and our country be bathed in the love of Christ, for which Francis of Assisi stood.

Again, this is not merely politics, but these are issues of dignity of the human person and respect for life. Examples of these issues includes but is not limited to: Unborn and other vulnerable children, immigrants, migrants, refugees, those who inhabit our jails, those who live in poverty and substandard housing and those who are victims of war or other violence, and any marginalized (outcast, on the fringes, unequal) groups in any society.

The Bible calls us to protect widows, orphans, and the downtrodden. As we seek to bring about justice in our world, which Scripture also calls us to do, may we seek and carry out God's guidance as we seek to carry out God's mission.



### Little Portion Fraternity, Tahlequah, OK

#### Professes New Members

Pictured are professed members of Little Portion Fraternity in Tahlequah Ok, at St. Brigid Church, following professions of Karan Housley and Laura Leto on February 7 (on front row). Donna Villa and Vito Villa (on right in back) were professed at their home parish of St Joseph's in Fayetteville, AR. On March 28. Also pictured are Dcn. Mark Keeley, OFS and Fr. David Medina, pastor of Saint Brigid Parish.