

Minutes for 2013 Regional Council Meeting
Friday, May 31–Sunday, June 2, 2013

This is the year for our NAFRA Pastoral & Fraternal Visitations

Friday, May 31st

The Spiritual Assistants met with Brother Bob Brady, OFM, Mary Bittner, OFS, Sr. Mary Lou Eltgroth, OSF and Kathy Taormina, OFS for 2 hours in the afternoon.

The Regional Executive Council (REC) consisting of the following, Kim Pappas, OFS, Regional Minister, Linzy Martin, OFS, Vice–Minister, Pauline Cahalan, OFS, Secretary, Kathy Fraser, OFS, Treasurer, Hazel Martin, OFS, Iowa Councilor, Larry Reynek, OFS, NE Councilor, Tim Taormina, OFS, MN, WI, ND Councilor, Kathy Taormina, OFS, Regional Formation Director, Sr. Mary Lou Eltgroth, OSF and Cynthia Gunsolly, OFS, Regional JPIC Coordinator met with NAFRA Visitors– Brother Bob Brady, OFM & Mary Bittner, OFS during the early evening before the big welcome of everyone.

Things discussed during the REC meeting with the NAFRA visitors:

1. We plan to have a Formation Workshop on Servant Leadership this next year. It is agreed that we will have one in MN and a second one in Des Moines, IA for the IA and NE fraternities. The format of the meeting will be determined at a future date
2. This region currently has 9 fraternities and emerging fraternities/groups without an appointed Spiritual Assistant. We need more SA candidates going through the course. Being on a Formation Team in a Fraternity may help people get interested in taking the course.
3. Visitations do not have to be closed in one day. If there are issues that cannot be resolved during the time the Visitors are present with a fraternity, the Visitation Report can note this. The Visitation can be continued with objectives, goals, etc. The Visitors would need to check back in 3–6 months to determine progress and potential resolution of the situation.
4. Three years ago the NAFRA visitors noticed great distances within the region.

The Visitors now have more of an appreciation for distances and how this affects everything we are trying to do. They asked, “What are we specifically doing directed toward community building?” We explained we now have Formation to different areas, much more contact with treasurers, meetings taking place in different locations, Spring and Fall gatherings in different locations. We are currently looking at things in the western part of region with

Browns Valley and Grand Forks. Formation meetings have been very successfully attended. We have changed Annual Regional Meeting so more feel welcome. There seems to be expand interest in those who will serve. Fraternities within local communities are starting to bond with those fraternities that are near them. Examples:

Pair up with another fraternity to sponsor the Fall Gathering.

Further discussion will be held regarding the last planning meeting for the Regional Annual Meeting—Could this be done in IA?

It was suggested that when a new council is elected, their first gathering would be a retreat where people just get to know each other.

This meeting concluded so we could all go to participate in the larger gathering of all attending.

7:30pm Welcome by Retreat Center staff—Sr. Brenda Rose

Kim Pappas, OFS, Regional Minister, introduced Regional Executive Council members, the NAFRA visitors, Ann Weltin, OFS and Ann Reynek, OFS, members of the Regional Formation Team, and those who had helped get things organized that afternoon.

Night Prayer Liturgy of the Hours was said together. Then we adjourned for a lite social.

Saturday, June 1st

Morning Prayer was held in the meeting room, followed by breakfast.

At 9:00am Kim began with Regional Remarks.

Fraternity Ministers were reminded that changes were needed in our Regional Guidelines. Copies of these had been sent to each Fraternity Minister with suggestions to be sent to Kathy Taormina, OFS. These will be voted on Sunday morning. Fraternity Ministers can also give Kathy T. their suggestions at this meeting, prior to Sunday morning.

Kathy T. made boards showing how large the region is. Kathy T. also helped create a Wake Service. These boards and documents could be viewed outside the doors of the meeting room. These documents will be put up on the regional website.

Kim reviewed the fact that there are now 5 Regional Gatherings throughout the year so there are many opportunities to get together with our sister and brother OFS members.

Kathy Fraser, Regional Treasurer, addressed the following:

1. Why is the database important? We pay Fair Share for the numbers in the database. This needs to be accurate.
2. Audits—75% of fraternities do not keep a ledger. NAFRA recommends this. Makes Audits easier. Can be done with software, Xcel, or keep manual copies. Please talk to Kathy this weekend if you don't do this now. It will make bookkeeping easier at all levels.
3. If you receive notices from the IRS, it is important to pay attention to these. It is important that your fraternity be set up, during the initial phase, with the appropriate non-profit status.
4. New-Treasurers---Put them in touch with Kathy F. right away. Do not wait. Don't panic. Kathy will teach them what they need to do.
5. Budget—There are 3 really distinct budget years depending on what is going on during each of the 3 years. Each year we have an Annual Regional Meeting involving the first Sunday in June. One year, at that meeting, we have NAFRA Visitors for the election of the Regional Executive Council, One year we have our Annual Meeting without any NAFRA visitors. One year we have NAFRA visitors for our Fraternal and Pastoral Visitation. Each of these years involves different expenses and different budgets. Kathy F. explained the budget for 2014 and answered questions. It will be voted on Sunday.
6. Fair Share is \$50.00 per active professed and active excused member. \$17.00 of this goes to NAFRA.
7. Silent Auction—Proceeds from all of these in MN go to the Region because people from all over donate the items for this activity.
8. Skype is reducing REC expenses because IA and NE people Skype. Need money in travel budget because Tim and Kathy can now fly free but it won't be that way forever. Visitations and elections need to be done in person. They cannot be done on Skype to save travel expenses.

Questions were raised about why the election and visitation cannot be the same day. The purpose of each visit is entirely different. Visitations are for observations, to answer questions and help with challenges. And, there needs to be a written report to help guide the fraternity if there are any challenges. Each visitor is looking at different things so both need to come. The purpose of the visits is to help us grow as OFS people, help the newly elected council, and to help with cohesiveness of the different levels of the OFS organization. Elections will come first. Then 12 months later, we will do a Visitation.

Linzy Martin, OFS, Regional Vice-Minister began by suggesting that those fraternities who could use more members see him sometime during the

weekend for some ideas. Linzy noted this requires working on this concept over time. Look at the Vision of your fraternity. Get yourself into the local church bulletins, especially if you are doing something special within your community.

Another suggestion is a possible Sustaining Fund. Could some of your members make additional donations locally and regionally?

Silent Auction is going on all through the meeting. It will close Sunday morning. Please pay attention to this. There are some really great items. Proceeds from this and the book sale help us keep the Fair Share as low as possible.

Kim announced that our region had received funding from NAFRA for both Formation and also to help send 5 people to The Quinquennial.

Formation with Kathy Taormina, OFS, Regional Formation Director—Five fraternities that could not make any Formation Workshops will meet over lunch.

No specific dates have been set yet but the REC is planning that the Spring Formation Workshop will be about Servant Leadership. Please plan to bring your entire council and there will be breakout sessions—2 full sessions—for each council position. Kathy is trying to keep costs to bare minimum—just for price of lunch. There will be one in the Twin Cities and one in Des Moines. Estimated cost around \$20.00 for lunch. These will happen around the beginning of April, before Palm Sunday and Easter. The focus will be to help find those with the gifts that can be given at either/both the local and regional level. Job descriptions will be presented and reviewed.

Kathy T's Formation presentation was on the Tau Cross and its historical significance with multiple references to its relevance from both scriptural and secular materials. This talk is on the Queen of Peace website in the Formation section.

The Candidates—Pre—Profession retreat will happen again. Date will be coming soon.

Bro. Bob Brady's Presentation:

Bro. Bob expressed gratitude for this REC and all our efforts at meeting the goals that were set up during the visitation 3 years ago. How we live the Gospel out in our life, our vibrancy, and what is going on in the region are all manifested within the current REC.

It is important that we share our brokenness to allow the gift of Christ to be part of our meetings. We bring Christ to be more evident through our gifts of sharing both our brokenness and our joys.

This Council has worked hard to bring vibrancy to this region. Bro. Bob asks all of us to see this as a spiritual gift for this region. Yes, it is costly but because the vibrancy is reciprocal, both the local and regional level benefit. He read Bl. Pope John XXIII quote, “We are not on earth to guard a museum, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life.” We are always here to move forward, not to stagnate. This year we celebrate 50 years since the publication of the *Pacem in Terris* encyclical. Pope John XXIII was involved in negotiations for Cuban Missile Crisis. We are agents of reconciliation and change, healing, etc.

Promulgation of Amended General Constitutions—Letter for this. Bro. Bob referenced this.

Bro. Bob brought us many parts of Pope Francis’s Inaugural mass homily, including the protection of each other, our environment, our vocation, our fraternities, etc. Bro. Bob encouraged attendees to be open to what God is calling us to do, including within the region through this transitional time between the past and the future.

Saturday afternoon presentations began with JPIC—Cynthia Gunsolly, OFS, Regional JPIC Coordinator, passed around a paper so she could get names and email addresses for fraternal JPIC contacts.

Cynthia gave a history of what she has sent out this year so far. The focus is on interrupting the cycle of violence in our society and the Poor Among Us. Scripture and our Rule should drive this for us and help us look at the whole spectrum of life from conception to death.

Encountering the Other—NAMI—National Association of Mental Illness. Gene Venier won J & P award some years back.

Jan. message on human trafficking. Takes place a lot at truck stops. Internet #1 for buying and selling. “Not Today” movie on Human trafficking. Many ages 11–13.

Sex trafficking in U.S. happens a lot. Example given of a woman who escaped and now helps others.

Torture—First principle of Catholic Social Teaching==respect for human life.

Need a universal campaign against this. Bullying is one example, harassment, stalking, sarcasm, etc.

Sr. Diana’s story—Government of Guatemala kidnapped her and tortured her horribly. Escaped to U.S. Embassy and to U.S.

Fr. Rohr Conference— Cindy attended a conference with Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM.

Opening remarks—Recovery from alcoholism. Happiness is foundation. Yes, with energy. Catholics—Many have found Jesus. Others have not. How deep is our faith development? Go into the belly of the Whale at least once. Francis falls in love with the humble Christ. Contemplation—We used to have this. We lost it and now we are back. Beauty in the desert amazing to someone from the Midwest.

The assignment was to listen to an animal or plant for 10 minutes. Then talk to it and asked it what it had observed. May have been similar to what Francis experienced with nature.

Peace demonstration and prayer vigil—Prayer for Immigration Reform with Promise Arizona. People here legally who are campaigning for them to stop destroying families by exporting parents of children born in the U.S.

The rest of the afternoon was facilitated by Mary Bittner and Bro. Bob. First Mary had each attendee select a quote from St. Francis and think about what the quote meant to them. Attendees could then come forward and tell the group what the quote meant to them.

After a break, Mary and Bro. Bob met with the Fraternity Ministers and other interested persons without the REC present.

Mass was held at 5:00pm. After dinner we reassembled in the chapel for a Memorial Service during which we remember all the deceased from the past year for each fraternity, community of sisters who are our Spiritual Assistants and the 4 Franciscan obediences of Friars.

A Social followed. During the social time Darin and Eva Jahnke, OFS, who maintain the regional website were available to assist attendees with any questions and offer assistance. Pauline Cahalan, OFS, was available to help those with NAFRA database issues and training.

Sunday Morning, June 2nd

After Morning Prayer and breakfast the assembly gathered for the Business Meeting. Role call of the fraternities was taken to confirm a quorum was present. 31 Fraternity Ministers or their delegates were present as were all the elected members of the REC.

The budget was approved unanimously.

After extensive discussion and approval of each page, with recommended changes, the Regional Guidelines were approved unanimously. These will be sent out to each fraternity once the required signatures are affixed. They will also be posted on the Regional website.

Visitors Wrap Up:

Bro. Bob encouraged us all to recognize the gift we commemorate on this feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. Bro. Bob also reminded us that once Bernard of Quintavalle witnessed Francis spending the night in prayer and repeating the words "My God and my all", Bernard became the first follower of St. Francis.

Bro. Bob cautioned us that we have been involved in lots of action the last couple of years but that balance needs to be restored by building in contemplation and listening. This will help set our spirits free to continue being creative.

We renewed our professions.

Mary thanked all of us for hospitality and for our openness to sharing.

They will send a report.

Respectfully submitted,

Pauline Cahalan, OFS
Regional Secretary