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Registration: NEW DEADLINE 5/8
Summer Seminar in Loretto
Registration: DEADLINE 6/24

Dates to Remember

Cluster of Compassion Council Training Workshop 5/4/2019
In Uniontown, call Rita Waltz, OFS at 724-366-2459
Deadline for Regional Chapter of Elections Registration 5/8/2019

Cluster of Love Council Training Workshop 5/11/2019
In Allison Park, call Denise McCarthy, OFS at 412-225-4282

Cluster of Perfect Joy Council Training Workshop 5/18/2019
In Punxsutawney, call Katie Roberts, OFS at 814-939-9483

Lady Poverty Region Chapter & Chapter of Elections 6/7 & 6/8/2019
Summer Seminar Loretto 7/11-7/14/2019
What is Truth?
Before Jesus was handed over to be crucified, John 18:37-38 records an interesting conversation he had with Pontius Pilate. Here’s the exchange:

*Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—I to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”*

Was Pilate serious when he asked that question? Or was he being flippant, or mocking? Pilate was a powerful man and could make his own “truth.” Does he really care what answer Jesus might give? But Jesus doesn’t respond to Pilate’s question – at least not verbally. Perhaps Jesus merely gazed back at Pilate. And perhaps Pilate saw in Jesus’s eyes the eternal gaze of embodied truth. Because we do know that in the next passage, Pilate comes out to the people and says, “I find no fault with this man.” I believe that Pilate, as jaded as he might be, did recognize TRUTH when he was face to face with it. As all of us can.

Recently I was at the Sisters of St. Joseph Hospitality Center in Latham, NY to participate in a NAFRA formation workshop. In the beautiful chapel the entire wall behind the altar was a mosaic of Jesus standing with arms outstretched. Each time I gazed at that wall, all I could think of was Jesus saying: *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* (John 14:6)

If we truly believe this, the quote by Clarence W. Hall, a twentieth-century spiritual writer (above) speaks to the Paschal mystery. In the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus we see an attempt to stamp out, eliminate, and bury TRUTH. But it didn’t work. TRUTH just keeps coming back. As Jesus also said, TRUTH will set us free.

This Easter season, may
Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

Easter greetings! We are truly Resurrection people, and our Franciscan vocation certainly encourages us to celebrate with joy, to celebrate God’s inexhaustible love for us! We proclaim in the Creed, “Jesus suffered, died, and rose from the dead,” and now with our Alleluia, we also proclaim at Easter that Christ brings us with Him!

Article 19 of our Rule: “Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.”

Read and reflect on St Francis’ Canticle of Brother Sun.

Even in suffering, Francis experienced confidence and joy, from: the experience of the fatherhood of God; the invincible faith of rising with Christ to eternal life; the experience of being able to meet and praise the Creator in the universal fraternity of all creatures. Following the Gospel, Secular Franciscans, therefore, affirm their hope and their joy in living. They make a contribution to counter widespread distress and pessimism, preparing a better future. (General Constitution 26.1)

The brothers and sisters, progressing in age, should learn to accept illness and increasing difficulties and to give a deeper sense to their life. This should be undertaken with increasing detachment as they set out for the Promised Land. They should be firmly convinced that the community of those who believe in Christ and who love one another in Him will go forward into eternal life as the “communion of saints.” Secular Franciscans should commit themselves to create in their environment and, above all, in their fraternities, a climate of faith and hope so that “Sister Death” may be regarded as a passage to the Father, and all may prepare themselves with serenity. (General Constitutions 27.1 and 2)

Peace and Joy in this Easter season!

Mary
Workshops

Your Regional Executive Council is holding workshops in each cluster this spring. Please plan on attending, especially if you are currently on your local fraternity council, or if you are interested in serving your Franciscan Order in any manner! The workshop is open to all members and candidates, so please make an effort to join us! One of the hand-outs from the formation section is reprinted here for you. It is a list of questions that your fraternity might use in formation, or that you might use in your personal prayer life.

20 Questions to stimulate reflection and formation

“Dialogue is more important than lecture, sharing more important than discussion.”

What does this (reading, chapter, DVD, homily, prayer, activity, article of our Rule, etc) mean for me, as a Secular Franciscan, in my life today?
Do I have a sense of God’s desire / will for me as a secular Franciscan today?
Does the reading and discussion of this ______ change any of my attitudes regarding life around me today?
How do I create a space for God? In prayer, work, family, community, fraternity?
What do you consider to be your obligations to God? To the members of your fraternity?
Many things take center stage in our lives: family, spouse, children, job, etc. How can Christ be the center of all you do and are?
How well does our fraternity (and my part in it) fulfill the goals in Article 22 of our Rule?
What could a fraternity do to insure all its members attend regular fraternity gatherings? Profession ceremonies?
How does the Holy Spirit keep you faithful to your profession?
How are you aware of grace in your life?
How has your fraternity helped your Franciscan vocation grow? Has it been a hindrance?
How can your fraternity “build up” the Church?
What is your definition of “stewardship?” What is your responsibility in your fraternity, in your local community, or in the larger world?
What does the word poverty mean to you?
How does your fraternity give witness to being followers of the poor Christ?
Who are your brothers and sisters? Who are those whom you find most difficult to love (or to forgive)?
How do you enter the experience of another?
What in your life needs conversion – a turning of self to God?
In what ways can we go “from Gospel to life, and life to the Gospel?”
How do you see yourself as “different” since you started your life as a Franciscan? Do you feel called to service?
Why does being open to election nominations in the fraternity take humility?
Recognize Fraternal Life.  
Be Thankful  
By Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR

“Therefore, let us desire nothing else, let us want nothing else, let nothing else please us and cause us delight except our Creator, Redeemer and Savior, the only true God, who is the fullness of good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good, who alone is good…” These words are taken from Chapter XXIII of the Rule of 1221. Familiar indeed as they can be a prayer. Understand these words in the context in which they were composed. St Francis intends to share with us the experience of gratitude.

Francis surprises us with how thanksgiving pervades his everyday consciousness. But before there ever was a regula, there was a vita, a heart filled with thanksgiving that possessed his every desire. He and the brothers invited all levels of society to join them in a life where thanksgiving and praise prevail, revealing to Church and world the profound gratitude which rooted him and the brothers in their Gospel commitment.

Fraternal life takes us by surprise. It comes in odd packages. It sometimes looks like loss, or mistakes. It acts like rain. It acts like a seed. Fraternal life is both reliable and unpredictable. It’s not what we thought when we were inquirers or what we thought we deserved. Fraternal life supplies what we need, not necessarily what we want. It grows us up. It helps us be what we have professed to be. How can we not be thankful!

“We thank you” are recurring words Francis breathed across creation, redemption, and salvation. But those opening words should not be overlooked: “We thank you for yourself.” These words reveal the rich, personal nature of a relationship of faith that is at the heart of fraternal living. Francis admonishes us to be sensitive to the unconditional goodness of God, “the fullness of Good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good” which brings forth a desire “to love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and exalt, magnify and give thanks…” to this unspeakable mystery of Love.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. It is right and just.

One who is most sensitive to the virtue of gratitude is St Bonaventure. For Francis God is the God of generosity and love. Bonaventure sees Francis as the recipient of incredible gifts. The place of thanksgiving is not only important in our prayer but also in our spiritual journey. If we desire to walk in the truth, to awaken to the true reality of ourselves, of others, of the world around us, of God Himself, we begin our day in gratitude.

Let’s be honest. The first moments of waking up in the morning are about what we have to do rather than who we are. If my consciousness is about what I have to do, I have already overlooked the most important aspect of who I am. In placing doing before being, we are trapped in our egos and fragmented in our identity and become cavalier in living our lives as Franciscans. Let us be mindful; let us be thankful for fraternity.
Calling All Secretaries by Eileen Mantz, OFS

As I write this epistle, I am keenly aware of time, or lack of it. This publication will be emailed to all known email recipients by May 1st. Between this and preparing for the upcoming Workshops in Uniontown, Allison Park and Punxsutawney my time is disappearing faster than normal.

Holy Cross Fraternity in Meadville hosted the first groundbreaking workshop, and it seemed to be well received by the participants. THANK YOU Holy Cross! Much of what we, the REC, consider to be common knowledge, isn’t. Hopefully many of you will attend the rest of the workshops. I’ll attach a copy of the schedule to this issue, maybe it will entice you to come and see. Keep in mind that secretaries are THE record keepers of the fraternities and wouldn’t it be nice if we were all in unison and harmony.

I’m handing out a simple version of meeting minutes, each fraternities database info, and highlighting a directory style. Keep in mind that Article 52.2 tells us that we are responsible for tracking member status, we are the official record keeper for the fraternity, and we are the communications experts. Take that with tongue in cheek.

We are also preparing for the upcoming Regional Chapter of Elections, this entails much nudging to get the slate of nominees, and printing the myriad of documents used in the process. Will you be there? Invite others to come and see the Franciscan Election Process, who knows, maybe the Holy Spirit will start nudging.

Pro-Life Witnesses by Kathy Tagg, OFS

Mary Margaret Gorney, age 87, is a member of St. Alphonsus Fraternity in Wheeling, WV. She and her dear friend Josephine Weidman, age 93, can be seen witnessing for life with their signs at a busy intersection in Wheeling. They want to inform those who pass by about the tragedy of the 3,000 unborn children that are destroyed each day through abortion. Mary Margaret has been a Secular Franciscan for 55 years and she has dedicated the last 46 years of her life to the protection of the innocent unborn from conception to birth.

Photo: Mary Margaret Gorney on the left; Josephine Weidman on the right
St. Clare Fraternity Election

St. Clare Fraternity, in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania held elections on April 8, 2019. Bill Duryea, OFS was the regional representative who conducted the election. The Friar Witness was Fr. Terry Adams, TOR.

The new members are pictured left to right: Bill Duryea, OFS (Council Rep.), Tom Brown, OFS (Vice Minister), Arlene Stewart, OFS (Minister), Anne Pennsy, OFS (Treasurer), Fr. Terry Adams, TOR (Spiritual Assistant), Maryanne Sheofsky, OFS (Secretary), and Katie Roberts, OFS (Formation Director).

St. Clare Fraternity is asking for your prayers as we move forward in the steps of St. Francis as we all move forward to grow in the Spirit of the Gospel and Brotherhood.

Holy Cross Fundraiser

It’s that time of year again for Holy Cross Fraternity to kick off its annual fundraiser at the June Chapter of Election. We awarded two, $500.00 Student Faith Awards in 2018. This year we have enough to award three $500.00 Faith Awards and about $200.00 to donate to Seton Catholic School in Meadville, PA. All thanks to the continuing generosity and support of Lady Poverty Regional Chapter attendees and the laity of Crawford Counties twelve churches, and the hard work of Holy Cross Fraternity members, we hope to continue this work for many years to come.

St. Lawrence in Albion, St. Philip in Crossingville, St. Peter in Conneautville, St. Philip in Linesville, Our Lady Queen of the Americas in Conneaut Lake, Our Lady of Lourdes in Cochranton, St. Hippolyte in Frenchtown, St. Mary of Grace, St Agatha and St. Brigid in Meadville, St. Bernadette in Saegertown, and St. Anthony in Cambridge Springs, pray for us.
Obituary for Bernice Rittner, OFS

RITTNER – Bernice Marie, 86, died April 3, 2019. Wife, mother, medical professional, Secular Franciscan & church volunteer. Born in Loretto, PA on May 15, 1932. She graduated from Cresson High in 1950 and from Mount Aloysius Jr. College in 1953, completing her medical technology training at Conemaugh Hospital in Johnstown in 1954. Later, she went on to complete her B.S. degree and M.Ed. at St Francis University, Loretto. On July 24, 1954, she married James A. Rittner, the love of her life and they had three children.

After the children were older, Bernice returned to work at Altoona Mercy Hospital. She earned national registry certification as a Medical Technologist and became active in the South Central Chapter of the Penn. Society for MTs, holding the office of president in 1981/82. Bernice was promoted several times at Altoona Mercy, attaining Hospital Laboratory Supervisor until her retirement in 1997.

She is preceded in death by parents, C. Leonard Tubbs and Grace (Parrish), husband Dr. James A. Rittner, brother Richard, and grandmother Martha Parrish, who helped rear her. She is survived by two sons, Richard J. Of New York and James A. II of Cresson, daughter Marianne and her husband, David Holmes, of New Mexico, and close family friend Ruth Diehl. She is also survived by loving cousin Florence Bradley of Florida, Kevin McMullen of Cresson, as well as many friends and relatives in the area. Bernice spent the last year and a half in New Mexico, where she enjoyed muchos amigos from church and the fire department, with special mention of Angela Norman and Father José Hernández.

Bernice was a member of the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order. She was active in St. Aloysius Catholic Parish in the Pastoral Council and St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Friends were received on Wednesday, April 24th at Gibbons Funeral Home, 1688 Liberty St., Ashville, PA 16613. Funeral Mass was Thursday, April 25th, at St. Aloysius Catholic Church, Cresson, with Fr. Leo Arnone, Celebrant. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Vincent de Paul via St. Aloysius Parish.
CALLED TO SERVE!

LADY POVERTY ANNUAL REGIONAL CHAPTER / CHAPTER OF ELECTIONS
June 7-8, 2019

Villa Maria Education & Spirituality Center
2067 Evergreen Road, Villa Maria, PA 16135

This year, our Annual Regional Chapter will also be our triennial Chapter of Elections. We will be hosting a representative of the National Executive Council, who will conduct our elections – please welcome Dennis Ross, OFS, National Councilor. Dennis is a member of Br. Jacopa Fraternity in Mentor, Ohio. He was professed in January, 1986 and has served his local fraternity as minister, vice minister, treasurer, and newsletter editor. He has also served as treasurer of St. Augustine Province and as treasurer, vice minister, and minister of St. Maximilian Kolbe Region. At the national level, Dennis served previously as treasurer for nine years, and was elected to the office of councilor in October 2018.

Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, who serves as spiritual assistant to the OFS on the local, regional, and national levels, and who is currently President-in-Turn of the Council of National Spiritual Assistants, will serve as ecclesial witness for our elections.

All attendees are encouraged to participate fully in the two days of our annual Chapter, beginning on Friday with dinner, through dinner on Saturday. A one-day (commuter) option is also available, as well as a 3-day option for attendees traveling from a distance who wish to stay overnight on Saturday.

As per regional policy, all participation costs for Ministers OR their official Delegates, members of Regional Executive Council, and Provincial Spiritual Assistants are covered by Lady Poverty Region.

Please note: Ministers must provide Official Delegates with a letter authorizing them to vote on behalf of the fraternity, which is to be submitted with the Delegate’s registration form. All other fraternity members are invited to attend at their own expense. All those attending who are not Ministers or Delegates will be classified as OBSERVERS. Local fraternities are encouraged to cover the costs for their Spiritual Assistant to attend. Please indicate your status on the registration form (next page). ALL attendees MUST send in a registration form regardless of status.

The tentative agenda for the weekend appears below.

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<th>Friday June 7</th>
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<td>3:00-5:00 PM</td>
<td>7:30-9:00 AM Arrivals &amp; check-in</td>
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<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>7:45 AM Morning Prayer</td>
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<td>12:45 PM Elections</td>
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<td>4:15 PM Eucharistic Liturgy/</td>
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<td>Installation of Officers</td>
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<td>5:30 PM Dinner / departure</td>
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LADY POVERTY ANNUAL REGIONAL CHAPTER/NATIONAL VISITATION  
June 7-8, 2019  
REGISTRATION FORM

NAME ____________________________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS __________________________________________________________________________________

PHONE ___________________________     E-MAIL ____________________________

FRATERNITY _______________________________________________________________________________

I am attending the Annual Chapter/Retreat as:

☐ MINISTER* ☐ DELEGATE* ☐ REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER*

☐ LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT ☐ OBSERVER ☐ PROVINCIAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT*

NOTE: *Indicates costs for these attendees are covered by the Region. Please do not send a payment.  
All other categories (Local S.A. and Observer) – payment is due, as below. Thank you!

Please register me as a:

☐ RESIDENT (Option 1): Friday – Saturday: Room (1 NIGHT) + 4 meals (D, B, L, D)  
Note: ALL rooms have private bathrooms.

☐ Double - $55 / Rooming with: _____________________________________________________________

☐ Single - $80  ☐ Accessible (Single) - $80

☐ RESIDENT (Option 2): Friday – Sunday: Room (2 NIGHTS) + 5 meals (2B, 1L, 2D)  
Note: ALL rooms have private bathrooms.  
PLEASE NOTE: This option is ONLY for attendees who MUST stay over on Saturday night post-Chapter due to driving distance.

☐ Double - $85 / Rooming with: _____________________________________________________________

☐ Single - $135  ☐ Accessible (Single) - $135

☐ COMMUTER (Option 3): SATURDAY ONLY: 3 meals (B, L, D) - $20

Special needs: ☐ Food allergy: _______________________  ☐ Other: ____________________________

NEW Registration Deadline is MAY 8, 2019 – NO EXCEPTIONS!

Please make checks payable to Lady Poverty Region

Send registration form and payment (if applicable) to:  
Patricia Serotkin, OFS, Regional Minister  
1072 North Center Street, Ebensburg, PA 15931  
Questions? Call Pat at (814) 472-4415 or email pserotkin@francis.edu
10th Summer Seminar for Secular Franciscans  
July 11-14, 2019  
“Clare of God: A Spirituality for Our Time”

Presenters

Sr. Loretta Schaff, OSF, is a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia ministering in Portland, OR. She has been a member of her community for over 50 years. She has served the Secular Franciscan Order since 2011. She is presently a Regional Spiritual Assistant for Troubadours of Peace Region in the Pacific Northwest.

Sr. Loretta is blessed to have had the opportunities to serve as a musician, liturgist, and a graduate school professor as well as a Catholic chaplain at Lewis and Clark College for 12 years. She also is a spiritual director and a retreat facilitator. She was part of the Sacred Heart Province OFM Postulant Formation program in Portland, OR.

Sr. Loretta presently represents her community as a Trustee on the Board of CHI Franciscan Foundation, in Tacoma, WA. She has achieved a Bachelor of Music, a Masters in Liturgical Studies, and a Doctor of Ministry. She is a lover of God’s creation. She enjoys exercise walks, reading, dining, coloring, music, and being with family, friends and community. Her love of Clare has been nurtured through the blessing of three Franciscan Pilgrimages to Assisi.

Fr. John Petrikovic, OFM Cap., offers workshops and retreats on Franciscan topics, mission formation for Franciscan Health Systems and retreats for Religious Men and Women and clergy in the English-speaking world. He has preached parish missions & parish retreats throughout the United States.

Ordained a priest friar in 1981, he holds a BA in Counseling Psych (1975), an MA in Liturgical Theology (1980), an MA in Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure Univ. (1986), and an STL from Rome’s Pontifical Antonianum University in Spirituality. After teaching in the Religious Studies department at Borromeo Seminary of the Diocese of Cleveland for eight years, he was asked to take on various posts of education and administration for his Province of Capuchins.

Fr. John served as Vice Rector and Prefect of Studies at the Colle?gio San Lorenzo, the International House for Capuchin Franciscan friars from over 30 countries who are studying at Rome’s Universities (2004-2010); he also served as Liturgical Director there. A regular contributor to Weekday and Sunday Homily Helps for Franciscan Media (formerly St. Anthony Messenger Press) for over 30 years, Fr. John is now in his eighth year as a full-time Minister of the Word. An avid musician who plays keyboards and has animated Liturgies for both National and International Franciscan gatherings, he is a staff member of the Franciscan Pilgrimages Program, offering Franciscan communities, Franciscan health care systems and educational institutions an experience of the places from which the charism of Sts. Francis and Clare of Assisi emerged and thrived. Fr. John is the Province’s Webfriar for capuchin.com.

Endorsed by the National Executive Council of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA
REGISTRATION

♦ RESIDENT registration fee includes residence hall room and all meals beginning with Thursday dinner
♦ COMMUTER registration fee does not include room or meals
♦ Payment must accompany this form and is NON-REFUNDABLE AFTER JUNE 15, 2019 Register before June 1st
to receive a $25 discount on the RESIDENT registration fee
♦ Absolutely no registrations accepted after Monday, June 24th

REGISTRATION LIMITED TO 100 PARTICIPANTS

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RESIDENT (ON CAMPUS) REGISTRATION - Accommodations in Christian Hall

☐ Single Room $305 /After June 1, 2019 registration is $330 per person

   NOTE: LIMITED NUMBER OF SINGLE ROOMS AVAILABLE

☐ Double Room $245 /After June 1, 2019 registration is $270 per person
   ☐ I will be rooming with ______
   ☐ I will need a roommate – match me up if you can

☐ I need an accessible room.

COMMUTER REGISTRATION – (NO ROOM OR MEALS) @ $75 per person

ALL REGISTRANTS, PLEASE INDICATE SPECIAL NEEDS BELOW AS APPLICABLE

☐ Food allergy: _____ ☐ Other: ___

Pay by check: Make check payable to Saint Francis University. Please mail your check and this registration form to: Mission Integration Office, Saint Francis University, P.O. Box 600, Loretto, PA 15940-0600

OR: Pay by Credit or Debit Card: Online registration: https://my.francis.edu/sfubus/ICFL/ICFLseminar.asp