



Divine Mercy Region
Secular Franciscan Order—USA

February 2023
Volume 2, Issue 1



Divine Mercy Regional Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing this while still on vacation. We just returned home from a two-week vacation but have two days left before going back to work. Vacations always provide a nice break from our routines, along with time to reflect on our life and how we are progressing.

Cheryl and I traveled south, well into Florida. This was my first trip ever to Florida. We travelled by car and were able to make many stops along the way to and from Florida at interesting spots. We visited, Charleston, WV; Hilton Head, SC; Savannah, GA; Delray Beach, FL; Jacksonville, FL; Atlanta, GA; Asheville, NC; and Washington, D.C. We met with friends and family at a couple of the stops. Savannah was our honeymoon location. We went to a movie! We haven't done that for probably fifteen years. We visited Catholic Churches, some with great history. We had a great time! However, I would say too much driving. We were on the road forever it seemed. Also, read most of a biography on Padre Pio that I received at Christmas from my daughter. All in all, this was a great vacation that we will always look back on with great memories.

Soon we approach Lent. It too is a time of vacation from the norm. A time to reflect on our lives and how we are progressing. Lent seems like a Franciscan time of the year. A time of penance and conversion. Although we want to be a people of penance and conversion all year, Lent is that special time leading up to the Resurrection. I'm not sure about you, but I especially have trouble with conversion. I am a person of habit. My routines are much the same. I find comfort in doing the

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Visit our website at divinemercuryregionofs.org!



PRAYER REQUEST FROM CIOFS
FOR NATIONAL MINISTER OF OFS
SLOVENIA

We continue to pray for our dear Fani Pecar, national minister of OFS Slovenia who had a stroke and is now in an induced coma. Let us unite as international fraternity in prayer for a good recovery of our sister! May the Lord be with her and her doctors!



If your fraternity is celebrating any new professions or milestone anniversaries this year, please send the names and your fraternity name to the Newsletter Editor, Barb Scott, OFS, bscott3315@gmail.com for publication in the next quarterly issue.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER CONTINUED

same things the same way. It makes things easy. As a sinner, I have habits that I should leave behind. I need to change. That isn't easy. Maybe too, as we age, we fall into some bad habits that we just continue because we don't like change. Regardless, change and drawing closer to God requires the process of conversion. For me, the reading of books on saints, such as Padre Pio is a great help. Reading of others and their difficulties provides a sense of community, that I'm not the only one who has difficulties which aren't easy to deal with. Each of us have our own set of difficulties. Our crosses to bear. Over the years, I have found great solace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I have regularly received both great advice and encouragement in this Sacrament. The Catholic Church provides this great tool that has helped me with my continuing conversion.

As we approach Lent, I pray for conversion amongst us all. If you're like me, it isn't easy, but we all realize the need. I hope that Lent will provide you with the opportunity to step back and reflect on your need for conversion and best of all, SEEK IT.

Lest I forget, let me remind you of our Spring Gathering on April 29, 2023. It will be held at the diocesan center, in Saginaw, Mi. All are welcome. Please make plans. We all look forward to seeing each other in person. More details will follow.

Peace,

Jim Graczyk

Divine Mercy Regional Minister

FROM THE FORMATOR

Lent and It's Challenge

Lent can be an amazing season of personal and communal spiritual growth. Lenten intentions can also be a bit like New Year's resolutions. We can enter Lent with great enthusiasm and gradually lose our momentum over the 6 weeks.

Sometimes that happens as we take on too much in our enthusiasm. We can choose things that are meaningful, but not the root of what God has for us. This year I am advocating we boil it down to its most

FROM THE FORMATOR CONTINUED



simple form.

Our Rule speaks to us if we let it. There is so much there to impact us and the way we interact with others and our world. What if we all, as Franciscans, strive to embrace Article 7 of our Rule this Lent:

United by their vocation as “brothers and sisters of penance”, and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls “conversion”. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily. On this road to renewal, the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father’s mercy and the source of grace.

One Article to focus on, hold each other accountable to and to bravely allow it to draw us to be the women and men God calls us to be.

Even if we all focus on Article 7, we will each be called to embrace it differently. That is good. We are each journeying to God, but we bring to the journey our strengths and weaknesses, talents and preferences.

Let’s focus on Lent as a time to support and lift each other up. Take some extra time to connect with those in your fraternity, especially those in Formation. Show your love to those you encounter at the coffee shop, workplace, restaurant and grocery store. Bring leaven and peace into your sphere of influence. Shine God’s light and share His love.

For reflection:

How is God calling you to daily conversion during Lent?
How can you share God’s love this Lent and beyond?

For practice:

Join together in praying Francis’ Prayer before the Crucifix

Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a correct faith, certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command. Amen.

Use this breath prayer to place yourself at God’s service through the day:

*God’s life is living itself in me. I am aware of life living itself in me.
God’s love is living itself in me. I am aware of love living itself in me.*

Peace,
Michelle Bryk, OFS

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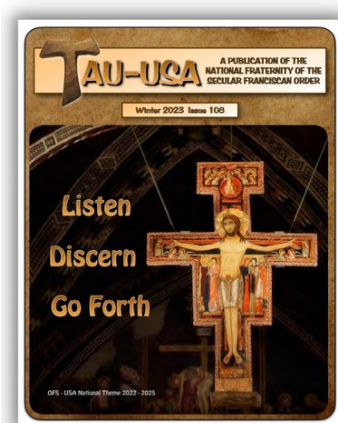
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Congratulations to the newly elected council of Queen of Angels Fraternity!



Queen of Angels Fraternity / Sanford, MI Newly Elected Council 01/15/23

Left to Right: Barney Torzynski, Ann Torzynski, Kay Logsdon, Robert Brady, Sue Ellen DeWyse, and Mary Griffor.



The Winter edition of the Tau Magazine is now available.

[Click here to download and read.](#)



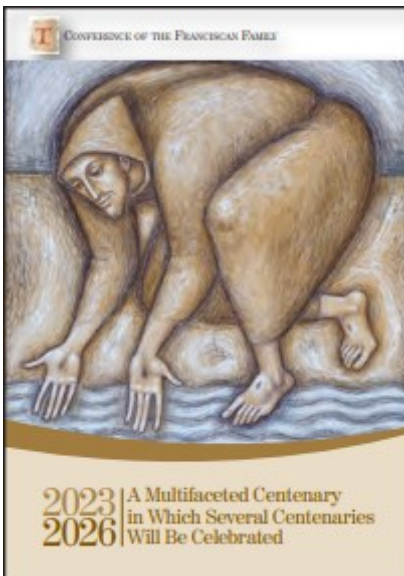
Please pray for the repose of the soul of Letizia (Joy) Lopiccolo, OFS from the St. Bonaventure Fraternity, who went with Sister Death on January 25. May she rest in peace.

J.P.I.C. News

2023 JPIC Gathering

May 4 - 7, 2023 at Mercy Center in St. Louis, MO.

As you may know, many of the retreat centers are fully booked over a year. We were very fortunate to get these dates. If you cannot attend, ask a team member or a delegate to attend. This is our first in person gathering in a few years and it would be great if we had good representation from the regions.



The Franciscan Centenary

In January 2022, the Conference of the Franciscan Family sent out a letter to Franciscans everywhere announcing an important initiative: preparations for the next Franciscan Centenary. [Upload your copy here.](#)

During the Centenary, Franciscans will commemorate the 800th anniversaries of the Later Rule, the Christmas at Greccio (2023), the Stigmata (2024), the Canticle of the Creatures (2025), and the Easter of Francis (2026).

The uploaded text offers guidelines for organizing the various centenaries at the local level and provides a framework on which to base formation.

"Listen, Discern, and Go Forth"

(OFS-USA 2022 - 2023 Theme)

Opportunities Around the Region

Saint David Fraternity in Washington, Michigan is requesting that we all come together at Saint Joseph Chapel and Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Pontiac on Saturday, March 25 for the Feast of The Annunciation, for Mass and fellowship afterwards at a local restaurant for lunch, if one can make it.

This is our annual outreach to support Our Franciscan Priest Father Alex and his endeavors for the Shrine as well as to bring all of us OFS together and celebrate Mass and share some camaraderie together as OFS.

Doors open at **10:30am**, **Confession at 11am**, **Mass at Noon**. Come when you can. If you can only make the Mass, that is fine.

The Shrine is renovated with a new driveway and some other inside and outside updates, all due to generous donations. The address is: 400 South Blvd W, Pontiac, MI. 48341. Hope to see you there!!

Our Lady of Knock, pray for us.

Visit St. David Fraternity on their new Facebook page: Saint David OFS Fraternity

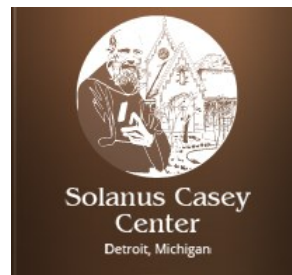
St. Bonaventure Capuchin Monastery/Solanus Casey Center Pilgrimage

May 16, 2023

Hosted by the Grand Rapids Diocesan Council of Catholic Women. The Pilgrimage departs from St. Isidore Parish, 628 Diamond NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Meet in the lower parking lot on Diamond St. at 7:00 am, with a stop in Lansing, leaving Detroit at 4:00 pm.

The one-day luxury coach bus trip includes history movie, tour, lunch, and Mass for \$99.00 (includes gratuity).

[Buy tickets online here](#) or contact Mary Ellen Sparks, 616-452-3054, grdccw@grdiocese.org.



Upcoming Dates		
April 29	Spring Gathering	
May 4-7	JPIC Workshop	St. Louis, MO
August 4-6	Regional Annual Chapter	DeWitt, MI
August 20-25	National Chapter	St. Louis, MO
October 28	Fall Regional Formation Day	

Guidelines for OFS Councils

CIOFS has published a document called [Guidelines for OFS Councils](#) which emphasizes the important role local fraternities play in the order. Local fraternities bear the responsibility of accepting, forming and admitting to profession new members as well as the continuing work of helping professed members remain active in the order. The document also explains how the role of minister in the fraternity differs from that of a leader in another club or organization. This document is a good outline of the responsibilities of council members, citing the importance of service to the fraternity.

See also this [presentation](#) on the document by Diane Menditto, OFS, Francine Gikow, OFS, and Anne Mulqueen, OFS from the National Formation Commission.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

National Formation Commission Chair

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission Chair

Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair

Tau-USA Editor

The National Executive Council is seeking applicants for the above positions. Persons interested in serving in one of these capacities or nominating someone for a position, should contact the National Secretary, Susan Ronan, OFS, at ofsusasecretary@gmail.com AND National Vice Minister, Diane Menditto, OFS, at diane.menditto@gmail.com for an application form prior to March 15, 2023.

Applications will be due by March 31, 2023.

The qualities required for these positions include:

- ∞ Strong knowledge of our Catholic Faith
- ∞ Good writing and communication skills
- ∞ Ability to travel, as needed, including attendance at the annual National Chapter
- ∞ Experience conducting "Zoom-style" and "In-Person" meetings
- ∞ Ability to prepare and meet an annual budget
- ∞ Experience and skills relating to the particular position (e.g., leading formation program or serving as a local or regional formation director; participating in programs to further justice, peace, or integrity of creation (JPIC) or serving as local or regional JPIC chair; participating in Youth/Young Adult activities to share the love of the Franciscan Order with the youth; producing a newsletter for fraternities, other volunteer work including use of specific software programs for newsletter).

Application forms for the individual positions will be emailed to interested persons. The NEC will review all applications and determine whether video interviews will be conducted. The intention is to make appointments prior to August 2023. For additional information, contact Susan Ronan, OFS, at ofsusasecretary@gmail.com.

**DIVINE
MERCY
REGION**

Order of Franciscans
Secular

Lower Peninsula of
Michigan and
Toledo, Ohio

Whenever you have membership changes, please email member updates: information on new candidates/contact information and admission dates, profession dates, change of addresses, dates of deaths, lapse or withdrawal dates, or completed transfer forms to the Regional Secretary at divinemercury.region@gmail.com.

Please remember the National database information must match your fraternity's Annual Report information! Accuracy is imperative! Thank you!

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PLEASE
PLACE
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