



Divine Mercy Region
Secular Franciscan Order—USA

June 2024
Volume 3, Issue 2



Divine Mercy Regional Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This will be my last newsletter article. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Divine Mercy Regional Minister. Thank you all for your support, friendliness, and help over the past six years. The reason for our region's success rests with the quality of people we have. We have the best people! Attend any of our regional events and you will witness the exceptional talents and caliber of our members. I look forward to attending all events in the future.

There are so many people that should be thanked. I can't possibly list them all here. There have been so many. I have chosen to write about those that have been elected to our Regional Executive Council over the past six years. I hope you can understand trying to limit the scope of people. There have been many accomplishments over the years. When you have a great group of people, the work becomes enjoyable and manageable. There is no particular order everyone is listed.

Theresa Brown: Theresa has been an integral part of our region's success and a great resource for me. Her attention to detail is amazing! Our region's success with hosting the 2022 National Chapter in Detroit had a lot to do with Theresa paying attention to details.

Brittney Walenzik: Brittney has the energy of two people. I love that! Brittney has led our region in creating one of the first YOUFRA's in the United States. We also have the potential for others in the future thanks to her leadership.

Kathleen Carsten: Kathleen has a great sense with people. As a former National J.P.I.C. Award winner, she demonstrates her Franciscan spirit wherever she goes. So many times she sees

REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINISTER

Jim Graczyk, OFS
jgraczykdivinemercury@aol.com
989-708-8788

VICE MINISTER

Kathleen Carsten, OFS
Parish.nurse@ameritech.net
313-510-2614

SECRETARY

Theresa Brown, OFS
divinemercury.region@gmail.com
248-335-1703

TREASURER

Dawn Pulcer, OFS
dpulcerofs@gmail.com
586-419-5291

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM
ofs.assistant@friars.us
570-401-8684

Linda Solis, OFS

lsolisofs@gmail.com
313-506-9868

COUNCILORS

Beth Price, OFS
bpriceofs@gmail.com
616-915-1757

Brittney Walenzik, OFS

brittneymaltese@gmail.com
586-215-5215

Marilyn Webb, OFS

Webb.marilyn@aod.org
313-757-7484

Visit our website at divinemercuryregionofs.org!

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER CONTINUED

the little details in people that many of us miss. It makes a big difference.

Mike Carsten: Mike is the person I sought out most in difficult situations. Mike has a knowledge of our Franciscan community and how it should work. His wisdom in difficult situations was always a blessing.

Jan Kaeding: Jan has such a great understanding of our Rule. I value her knowledge and logic. Jan was a philosophy major in college and that is one thing we shared. There aren't that many of us around.

Dawn Pulcer: Dawn is someone who has always stepped up to help. She also has a strong desire to try and learn new things. When we have needed an election presider or a fraternal visitor, Dawn has volunteered. I also enjoy that she always laughs at my jokes.

Marilyn Webb: Marilyn has such a caring attitude. You see it in everything she does. Marilyn has brought new insight into our council. She was a fantastic blessing to have in the Archdiocese of Detroit when planning the 2022 National Chapter.

Kevin Wahr: Kevin always has a great attitude! No matter the situation, Kevin looks on the bright side of things. He has tremendous organizational skills and wants to make things better. He has a friendly attitude towards everyone.

Beth Price: Beth has an ability to see through problems and get to what is important. Oftentimes she has the insight to get us to the important things. There is such a value in her abilities.

Mike Okragleski: Mike was the first person who made our budget understandable to me. For a while, I didn't understand our finances. Mike has a way of making them understandable to all. His experience in finance helped us all.

All of these people and so many others have made things easy for me. Thank You!! My fondest memories of our Order will be of my time in distress. Two years ago when I suffered a heart attack. You prayed for me! You encouraged me! You visited me! When I was scared to have open heart surgery, you were there! I felt your love! May I live up to the example that all of you have set. May we all continue to "Rebuild our Church."

Peace,
Jim

FROM THE FORMATOR

“...for such a time as this.” Esther 4:14

“..for a moment like this.” Kelly Clarkson “A Moment Like This”

“For up to now...” St. Francis of Assisi

These phrases have been running through my mind as I have reflected on how to approach living in this current time. I have been asking the Lord in prayer how to approach the “us against them” mentality in so much of our world and unfortunately so often in our fraternities.

As I have been reflecting on this I am reminded again and again of the clarity in our Rule and Constitutions about our role as peacemakers.

Article 23

1. Rule 19. Peace is the work of justice and the fruit of reconciliation and of fraternal love. Secular Franciscans are called to be bearers of peace in their families and in society:

- they should see to the proposal and spreading of peaceful ideas and attitudes;
- they should develop their own initiatives and should collaborate, individually and as a fraternity, with initiatives of the Pope, the local Churches, and the Franciscan Family;
- they should collaborate with those movements and institutions which promote peace while respecting its authentic foundations.

-General Constitutions

So back to the idea of the phrases. After much reflection, I have started to see the current state of relations as a gift. A gift in fact, straight from God. As Franciscans, we are made for such a time as this. As peace bearers we can model a better way to be. In our families, our churches, our fraternities, and our grocery stores; we can respond in peace and love.

If we are speaking with someone with whom we disagree, we can control our own approach. We can refuse to engage in anger. We can refuse to call names, put others down or denigrate in any way those who have a different approach or viewpoint than ours. Instead, we can let people know that we do not want to embrace negativity. We can let others know that we want to dialogue lovingly and look for common ground.

There are so many recent examples of people of all kinds getting along and sharing the wonder of a mutual experience. Think back to the recent eclipse. People went outside together and shared a time of quiet, celebration and wonder at the amazing world God has made.

Let us truly walk in the footprints of Francis and look for ways to reconcile, heal and find the common ground in every situation.

Blessings,

Michelle Bryk

APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

FORMATION DIRECTOR

Michelle Bryk, OFS
michellebofs@gmail.com
616-361-8489

J.P.I.C. ANIMATOR

Doris Allen, OFS
dorisja19@gmail.com
734-547-5912

YOUFRA ANIMATOR

Brittney Walenzik, OFS
brittneymaltese@gmail.com
586-215-5215

DATABASE MANAGER

Jane Bischoff McKay, OFS
jbischme@hotmail.com
248-335-1703

WEBMASTER

Beth Price, OFS
bpriceofs@gmail.com
616-915-1757

ECUMENICAL CHAIR

Jim Graczyk, OFS
jgraczykdivinemercury@aol.com
989-708-8788

VOCATIONS DIRECTOR

Barb Scott, OFS
Vocations.divinemercuryregion@gmail.com
616-550-5916

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Barb Scott, OFS
Vocations.divinemercuryregion@gmail.com
616-550-5916



If your fraternity is celebrating any new professions or jubilarian 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.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM OUR SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT



Ordinary Life

This month I'm processing a flurry of paperwork. Not the most spiritual dimension of my responsibilities as an "animator" for spiritual assistants and the Secular Franciscans they serve. But when I uncovered my reminder to write, as the editor requested, "words of wisdom" for the regional newsletter, I immediately thought of the time I was a pastor and needed to change the phone service.

For anyone who has been on hold waiting for the phone company or any other company to attend to business, you might be able to relate to my experience: over one month, I spent over 40 hours on the phone, either on hold, or working with an agent to convert the three phone numbers I was responsible for to the new company's service.

At first I was told we would have to change the parish phone numbers, for a technical reason. Yikes! But the next person said it was possible to keep them. Each agent was able to get me closer to a solution and also give the appearance that it might be all taken care of. But it wasn't. Several phone calls, each with a different agent, my memory recalls at least five.

But one of the agents said something that re-oriented my frustration. She thanked me for being so much more patient than most of the customers with difficult issues that seem to be never resolved. That reminded me that, even transacting business, I'm still a representative of the Gospel. Those words buoyed me for months after the phone situation was completely resolved. I remembered them frequently and felt encouraged that even if one type of business was slow, a different type of business -- ultimately more important -- was also making an impact on at least one person.

Often I meet people who have a long to-do list. I do as well. But we who profess to live the Gospel do well to remember that it's not just what has to get done but also the opportunities we have to give others Life while we're executing our responsibilities.

Jerome, ofm

Jerome Wolbert, ofm, is a mostly-remote regional spiritual assistant for Divine Mercy Region and lives at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington DC.



Save the Dates!

Friday-Saturday, August 2-3, 2024

Divine Mercy Region Annual Chapter—St. Francis Retreat Center,
DeWitt

Saturday, October 26, 2024

Divine Mercy Region Formation Day—Saginaw Center for Ministry

Regional Announcement

REC Office Hours

Time: Mar 16, 2024 11:00 AM

Jul 20, 2024 11:00 AM

Aug 17, 2024 11:00 AM

Sep 21, 2024 11:00 AM

Oct 19, 2024 11:00 AM

Nov 16, 2024 11:00 AM

Dec 21, 2024 11:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86483093705>

Meeting ID: 864 8309 3705

Dial by your location

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 864 8309 3705

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kc074flmHR>

Opportunities Around the Region



Healing Mass and Relic Blessing

1st Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Capuchin Retreat Center

62460 Mt. Vernon
Washington, MI 48094

Capuchin Retreat Center is not a stand-alone entity, but rather a ministry of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph. Part of our ongoing collaboration has been with the Solanus Casey Center in Detroit. In the spirit of collaboration, as well as to respond to the spiritual needs of people in Macomb County, Capuchin Retreat Center has begun offering evening Mass every Wednesday at 7:00 pm.

As a way to increase the devotion to Blessed Solanus Casey, as well as to extend the healing ministry beyond the city of Detroit, Capuchin Retreat also offers a blessing with the relics of Blessed Solanus on the first 1st Wednesday of every month.

Come and be part of this healing evening and receive the healing through the intercession of Blessed Solanus Casey!



Rita Carleski , OFS

St. Paschal Fraternity, Sylvania OH
Passed to eternal life on May 24, 2024

Dan Jordan, OFS

St Joseph Fraternity, Grand Blanc
Passed to eternal life on June 7, 2024



Fraternity News

Congratulations to St. Thomas More Fraternity/Rochester Hills

Fr. Alex Kratz OFM was appointed SA to their fraternity by Our Lady of Guadalupe Province.



From Our Mother of Sorrows, Grand Rapids:

Congratulations To Our Newly Professed! March 20, 2024



Beginning 3rd from Left: Chris Willmeng, Jack Hartmann & Eileen Schmuker

Flanked by Chris Bueche (Minister) & Paul Wojtas, Michelle Bryk & Beth Price (Formation Team)

Congratulations to the newly professed from St. David Fraternity, Washington, MI:



GAYANNE CHANEY



JACLYNN THOMPSON



CINDY CUPISZ



AL HOPPE

Congratulations to the Newly Elected Council of St. Louis the King Fraternity



Standing left to right: Vice Minister John Brioso; Secretary Anne Marie Burns; Minister Eileen Bernard

Seated: Treasurer George Fettig

Deactivation of Fraternities and transfer of active members:

Immaculate Conception Fraternity/Detroit received an official Decree of Deactivation from Our Lady of Guadalupe OFM Province this past May. Once a fraternity of 18* members, after meeting at St. Anne's Church in Detroit since 1957, the two remaining active members discerned to transfer to the neighboring fraternities; one was accepted into St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity / Dearborn and the other working on transferring to St. Bonaventure Fraternity/ Detroit.

Our Lady of Queen of Angels Fraternity/Detroit received an official Decree of Deactivation from St. Bonaventure OFM Conventual Province in July of 2022. Once a fraternity of 28* members, after meeting at Our Lady Queen of Angels Church (current Church built in 1952, previous in 1915) unsure of when the fraternity actually began to meet, the three remaining active members discerned to transfer to St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity / Dearborn and were recently accepted.

St. Francis Fraternity/Jackson received an official Decree of Deactivation from St. Joseph OFM Capuchin Province in February of 2022. Once a fraternity of 38* members, after meeting at St. John the Evangelist Church since 1943, the ten remaining active members discerned to transfer to St. Joseph Fraternity / Ann Arbor and were accepted.

Divine Providence Fraternity / Paw Paw-Kalamazoo is in the process of receiving an official Decree of Deactivation from Our Lady of Consolation OFM Conv Province. Once a fraternity of 33* members, after meeting since 1960, most recently at St. Mary's Church, the remaining active member, discerned to transfer to St. Anthony Fraternity / Indian River and was accepted.

*Based on Database Statistics

**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 dmrfratdata@gmail.com.

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

Divine Mercy Region
Editor: Barb Scott, OFS
6490 Kingtree SW
Byron Center, MI 49315



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE