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Divine Mercy Regional Newsletter

"Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."
St. Francis of Assisi

A Grace-Filled Day of Reflection

The April 25 Day of Reflection offered participants a prayerful and grace-filled time of fraternity, renewal, and shared spiritual enrichment through several meaningful presentations. Among the highlights were Br. Julius' presentation on Delexi Te, which invited all present to reflect more deeply on Christ's love and the call to live that love through mercy, compassion, and service. His presentation may also be revisited on the Divine Mercy Region OFS website: [Br. Julius explores Dilexi Te.](#)

A Franciscan Call in This Centenary Year

As we mark the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of Saint Francis, we are called not only to remember his life, but to renew our own Gospel vocation in the world.

Divine Mercy Region Guidelines

This is exciting news! As of April 25, 2026, the Divine Mercy Region Guidelines have been officially ratified and are now available on the DMR website: <https://divinemercuryregionofs.org/>.

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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.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

A Prayerful Reflection on Our Secular Franciscan Vocation

“The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people...”

— *The Rule, 4*

I would like to share with you a question that has remained in my heart for some time, and one that I believe is worthy of prayerful reflection by each of us: Are we truly living the vocation we professed as Secular Franciscans, or have we at times become content simply to bear the name? This is not a question meant to unsettle us, but to call us gently back to the heart of our vocation. It is an invitation to pause before the Lord, to listen again for His voice, and to allow Him to renew within us the joy and seriousness of the Gospel life we have embraced in the spirit of Saint Francis.

Our Rule reminds us that we are called to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis, who made Christ the center of his life with God and with others. This vocation, then, is not limited to fraternity gatherings, regional events, or moments of visible service. It is intended to shape the ordinary fabric of our daily lives: our prayer, our relationships, our work, our choices, our family life, and the way we respond to those who are poor, forgotten, or burdened. The authenticity of our calling is revealed not only in what we profess, but in how faithfully we live it.

How, then, do we know whether we are truly practicing this calling?

One sign is that the Gospel is becoming ever more deeply the measure of our lives. We turn to Sacred Scripture not only to read its words, but to be formed by them. We begin to ask with greater sincerity, “Lord, how are You calling me to live this today?” and “How am I being asked to go from Gospel to life, and life to the Gospel?” When these questions begin to shape our decisions, our priorities, and our daily acts of charity, we may trust that our vocation is maturing in a quiet and genuine way. *“...Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel.”*

— *The Rule, 4*

Another sign is a growing spirit of prayer, penance, and ongoing conversion. None of us lives this vocation without struggle. We all know our limitations, our distractions, and the many ways in which we fall short. Yet the Franciscan path has never been about the appearance of holiness; it has always been about the willingness to return to the Lord with humility and perseverance. When we are honest before God, repentant in heart, and willing to begin again in

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER CONTINUED

hope, we are indeed practicing our calling. A Franciscan soul does not rely on self-sufficiency, but on the patient mercy of God. “...*Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily...*” — The Rule, 7

We also know that our vocation is alive when fraternity becomes more than attendance or obligation. I have witnessed, throughout our region, the quiet beauty of brothers and sisters who accompany one another with patience, encouragement, forgiveness, and genuine care. Fraternity is not merely a structure we belong to; it is a grace we are called to cultivate. Saint Francis did not envision holiness as a solitary endeavor. We are given to one another so that, together, we may walk this path of Gospel life with fidelity and joy.

Our vocation must also become visible in the way we bear witness to Christ in the world. The Franciscan charism calls us to be peacemakers, instruments of reconciliation, and persons attentive to both the dignity of the poor and the care of creation. We know we are practicing our calling when our faith takes on visible form in kindness, simplicity, compassion, justice, and generous service within the Church and in society. The world may never know all that is contained in the name “Secular Franciscan,” but it should, by God’s grace, encounter in us something of the spirit of Christ and of Saint Francis.

As we celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Transitus of Saint Francis in 2026, we may also ask what this moment means for us as Secular Franciscans. It means, above all, that we are not simply remembering a beloved saint from the past; we are being called to receive his living legacy more deeply in the present. The broader Franciscan Family is marking this centenary as a time of renewal, prayer, and responsibility, and our place within that observance is both clear and beautiful. We are called to make the charism of Saint Francis present in the ordinary circumstances

of daily life. While others may serve primarily through religious life or ordained ministry, we bear this vocation in our homes, workplaces, parishes, and communities. In that sense, this anniversary invites us not only to honor Saint Francis, but to ask whether his Gospel way of life is truly visible in us. To celebrate the centenary well is to let it renew our profession, deepen our conversion, strengthen our witness as brothers and sisters called to live the Gospel in the world, and rekindle in us a spirit of prayer and contemplation worthy of our vocation. “*Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively...*” — The Rule, 14

Perhaps the clearest sign of all is this: despite our weakness, we still desire to belong wholly to Christ in the manner of Saint Francis. That desire should not be dismissed. It is grace at work within us. If you recognize that desire in your heart, even quietly, give thanks to God. If it seems to have grown faint, do not be discouraged. Bring it once more to prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to rekindle what may have diminished over time. The Lord who has called you remains faithful, and He continues to draw you ever closer to Himself.

My brothers and sisters, it is my prayer that each of us in Divine Mercy Region will renew our commitment to live the Rule with sincerity, courage, and joy. May we never be content merely to be known as Secular Franciscans; rather, may we become ever more fully what we have professed to be: living witnesses of the Gospel in our homes, our fraternities, our parishes, and our communities. Through the intercession of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, may the Lord grant us the grace to persevere faithfully in our vocation, and may He give us His peace.

Peace and all good,
Kathleen

CURRENT EVENTS IN FORMATION

Spring has arrived, and everything is blooming, including Secular Franciscan formation. Quite a few things are happening before we celebrate the 8th centenary of Transitus - the 800th anniversary of a little man, Giovanni di Bernadone, St. Francis of Assisi, and his death this October.

This is an exciting time for us and our order, especially with the declaration of a special year of favor to St. Francis of Assisi by Pope Leo XIV.

The **21st Quinquennial Congress of the Secular Franciscan Order USA (the Q)** takes place from July 29 to August 2 in Lexington, KY. "Sewing the Seeds," the new materials for formation ministers will be presented. This first book of three concerning the time of initial invitation, or Aspirancy (orientation, inquiry, candidacy) will be the standard going forward. Formation ministers of local fraternities and council members will be training with this new book, which will be provided after **the Q**. Registration to attend this event closes June 16. Let us keep all aspects of this national event in our hearts and thoughts by praying with the prayer for this event. Please take a moment to pray with me now:

21st Quinquennial Congress Prayer

This is the Easter of St. Francis. A new beginning to rekindle the flame of our vocation.

In the gentle footsteps of our Seraphic Father, let us recall that our vocation is a daily commitment to live the Gospel. May we embrace the Holy Spirit's presence as we cherish the beauty of God's creation, and extend our whole beings to all living things in need.

In the spirit of St. Francis, let us radiate Jesus' love through our actions, words, and silence, as our charism calls us to be instruments of peace.

This is the Easter of St. Francis; may our hearts beat with an ever-rising passion for our Franciscan charism. May we rekindle the flame of commitment to our Rule, to deepen our prayer life, and to embrace the spirit of fraternity among ourselves. Amen

The Divine Mercy Regional Chapter is September 11-13, 2026, at the Capuchan Retreat Center in Washington, MI. Our theme during this weekend is Transitus: The Consolation of Sr. Death. All members of the OFS are welcome to attend. Housing for national visitors, REC members, and ministers of the fraternities will have priority to reserve overnight accommodations during this event. Registration will be posted on the regional website soon.

Mark your calendars for the **annual regional Fall Formation Day** on October 24, at the Center for Ministry in Saginaw. This gathering is recommended for all in formation; aspirants, and professed members. The theme is Franciscan Virtues. All formation directors and team members are urged to be present with your aspirants. Additional information and registration will soon be found at divinemercuryregionofs.org.

MULTICULTURAL SUMMER EVENTS

Here are a few multicultural summer events and resources offered in a diocese near you.

Diocese of Toledo

July 8 – July 16 | Young adults are invited for a Switzerland Wilderness Retreat with Jason Evert, Crystalina Evert, and Fr. Tom Hunyor. This is a backpacking retreat in the Swiss Alps with teachings by Jason Evert on St. John Paul II's Meditation on Givenness & Love and Responsibility. Please contact rebecca@select-intl.com for more details.

July 26 – August 06 | Germany & Poland Pilgrimage, "In the Footsteps of Pope Benedict XVI & St. John Paul II", with Fr. Andrew Wellmann. Pilgrimage includes a visit to Munich, Tittmoning, Altotting, Salzburg, Krakow, Zakopane, Shrine at Ludzmiierz, Czestochowa, and Warsaw. Learn more at: <https://www.206tours.com/cms/frwellmann/>

Diocese of Saginaw

Now open - Saginaw's Migrant Pantry, located within the Center for Ministry (5802 Weiss Street, Door #18, Saginaw, MI 48603). Accepting donations now and throughout the summer months, Monday through Thursday, from 9:30 am – 2:00 pm. To donate items, please contact Cinthya Monter at (989) 294-2801.

Diocese of Lansing

June 13, 2026 – 8:30 am | 3rd Conference for Hispanic Families, "How to Have a Blessed Family" at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church (2250 East Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor, MI 48104). Event Contact - Susana Chapa schapa@dioceseoflansing.org
Register by 06/09 on the Diocese of Lansing website.

Diocese of Kalamazoo

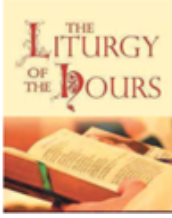
The Aleman Center is a diocesan project which offers free emergency clothing and food services to those in need. If you have donations, they will be accepted May 18 through July 13 at the St. Thomas More Parish Office Garage (1333 West Lovell St. (corner of Monroe and Lovell). Monday – Friday. 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Please contact their office at (269) 381-8917 or by email at sttoms@sttomskazoo.org. After the above dates, donations may be made at the Office of Migrant Ministry (269) 349-8714, ext. 1240.

Archdiocese of Detroit

July 17 – July 26 | Novena at the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit. Each day within the Novena will celebrate a different culture and will take place at Most Holy Trinity (1050 Porter Street, Detroit) due to the restoration taking place at the Basilica of Ste. Anne. For more information please contact (313) 496-1701 or visit www.ste-anne.org/events/novena for more details.

July 22, 2026 | Rising from the Ashes Revival – Experience the fire of renewal and the living water of grace at Detroit's Eucharistic Revival. Speakers include Bp. Daniel Flores, Fr. John Riccardo, Sr. Mary Grace, SV, Jeff Cavins, and Chuck Gaidica. Ticket proceeds support Better Way Detroit, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, Mary's Mantle, The Pope Francis Center, and the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. www.risingrevival.org
August 08, 2026 – 8:00 am | Black Catholic Women's Conference "Rooted in the Peace of Christ: Persevering Through the World's Chaos". Keynote speaker Charlene A. W. Howard, MA. Eventbrite Registration. Vickie Figueroa blackcatholics@aod.org or at (313) 596-7103.

FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES



Praying the Divine Office



Morning Reflection for Professed/Candidate Secular Franciscans

Hosted by the St. Francis Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Saturday, September 26, 2026
9:00 AM - 12:30 PM
St. Vincent Ferrer Parish Hall, 28353 Herbert Street Madison Heights, MI 48071



With Fr. Raphael Ozoude, OFM

Father Raphael is a Franciscan priest serving with the AOD, appointed as Full-Time Priest Support to the Family Sent on Mission parish group. Father was ordained to the priesthood on August 22, 2025.

Please register your name, contact info and fraternity name by September 5, 2026, to Mary Lambrix, OFS, at marylambrix130@gmail.com or text to 586.484.3659. Continental breakfast is provided and we encourage you to bring a personal beverage container for coffee, tea or water. Freewill donations will be accepted.

Fraternity News

Congratulations to **St. Clare Fraternity in St. Clair Shores** for the election of their new council.



From left to right:
Fr. Thomas Skowron, Dan Carsten, Chris Monette, Sally McCuen, Kim Spaniola, Lori Kengel, Jerry Alderman

Also congratulations to the newly elected council of **Queen of Angels in Sanford.**

Minister - Jim Graczyk
 Vice Minister - Kay Logsdon
 Secretary - Sherry Diaz

Treasurer - Barney Torzynskii
 Formation Minister - Mary Griffor
 Spiritual Assistant - Fr. Dan Fox, OFM Cap



| Name | Professed Fraternity | Location | Date Entered Eternal Life |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Robert V. Brady | Queen of Angels | Sanford | April 28 |
| Rosemary Hannaford | St. Paschal | Sylvania, OH | May 5 |
| Ben Stapel | St. Bonaventure | Detroit | May 31 |



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 Database Manager at dmrfratdata@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
STAMP
HERE