



Our Lady of Indiana

Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity



Website: <http://olirf-ofs.org/>

June 2021

Volume 8, Issue 3

"Live a Life Worthy of Your Call": National Theme 2021

A Letter to All of Us . . . Across the Centuries



Our Regional Prayer

Holy Virgin Mary, there is no one like you born in the world among women: Daughter and Handmaid of the most high, sovereign King, the heavenly Father, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for us with St. Michael the archangel and with all the powers of the heavens and with all the saints together with your most holy beloved Son, Lord and Teacher.

This year, 2021, marks the 8th centenary of the Rule of 1221, which is quite important to the whole Franciscan family of Orders. It is also important to the Church as a whole, since St. Francis received a commission when he was meditating on the crucifix at San Damiano some years before: "Go and rebuild my Church."

We all know the story how he then began to acquire what was needed to rebuild that particular dilapidated church. We also know that the commission meant far more than that. It was a call to serve the Church as a whole. In his poverty, he witnessed to the riches of the life of the Church: the Gospels, the Sacraments, and its teaching. In the midst of the struggles of his time, he witnessed the joy, peace, and fulfillment of a true son of the Church. In his weakness, he witnessed the call to servanthood.

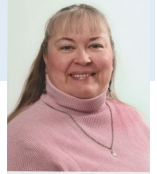
St. Francis wrote two letters to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. The second letter was written following the Fourth Lateran Council and on his return from the

Middle East. What could this document possibly have for us today?

Over the next few years, the International Council will be emphasizing our call to servant leadership.

This second letter to our Order gives us a kind of framework to go by. Francis describes himself as a servant to all, in spite of his bodily weakness. He speaks of the angel Gabriel who served by delivering the message of the Incarnation to Mary, who in turn accepted her vocation to serve as the mother of the Son of God. Francis goes on to describe how Jesus served the disciples at table during the Last Supper and then served all of humanity by his sacrifice "on the altar of the cross." (FA:ED, page 46). Jesus continues to serve us by being "present on the altar in the hands of a priest" when he "so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself

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Francis's Gift to the "Brothers and Sisters of Penance"



T "Brother Francis, their servant and subject, sends esteem and reverence, true peace from heaven and sincere love in the Lord to all Christian religious people: clergy and laity, men and women, and to all who live in the whole world.

Because I am the servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and to administer the fragrant words of my Lord to them. Therefore, realizing that I could not visit each one of you personally because of sickness and the weakness of my body, I decided to offer you in this letter and message the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which are spirit and life (FA:ED, Vol. 1, p. 45)."

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Barb Braley, OFS : Regional Minister
 Cyndi Pilot OFS: Regional Vice-Minister
 Sharon Roberts: OFS: Regional Secretary
 Susan Solloway, OFS: Regional Treasurer
 Tim Short, OFS: Regional Formation Director
 Regional Councilors: Linda Julius, OFS,
 Richard Cain, OFS, Chris Bercaw, OFS
 Jack Hill, OFS: JPIC

Regional Spiritual Assistants:
 Sr. Agnes Marie Regan, OSF
 Kathleen White, OFS



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under an ordinary piece of bread!" (ibid, *Letter to the Entire Order*, page 118). The most beautiful call and the essence of our servanthood comes at the end of this short passage in this letter: "Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He Who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally!" (ibid)

Servanthood, and, in fact, servant leadership, requires humility and total generosity. It may or may not mean that any one of us may be called upon to serve on the Council – at any level of fraternity. It may or may not mean that any one of us may be called to serve in a soup kitchen. It may or may not mean that any one of us may be called to be a reader at Mass. It may or may not mean a lot of things. What is absolutely DOES mean is that we offer ourselves freely and generously to whatever we are called to do.

As I explain to those in initial formation, servant leadership isn't necessarily an elected position or a position with authority. Servant leadership in the Franciscan tradition is being an example of what it means to live as Jesus and Francis (and Clare, too!) lived.

Show Mercy to His Brothers

"And let him have and show mercy to each of his brothers as he would want them to do to him were he in a similar position."

St. Francis of Assisi
 Second Letter to the Faithful

Reread Chapter 2 of our Rule – slowly and carefully. Read the Second Letter to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance if you have it in a volume somewhere. What does each article mean to you and for you?

I'll close with the words of St. Francis himself at the end of this letter.

"I, brother Francis, your lesser servant, with a wish to kiss your feet, beg and implore you in the love that is God, to receive, to put into practice, and to observe, as you should, these words and the others of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and love." (FA:ED, *Second Letter*, page 51.)

Peace and all good!

Your little sister,

Barb

T "The most high Father made known from heaven through His holy angel Gabriel this Word of the Father, so worthy, so holy and glorious — in the womb of the holy and Glorious Virgin Mary, from whose womb He received the flesh of our humanity and frailty. Though he was rich, He wished together with the most Blessed Virgin, His mother, to choose poverty in the world beyond all else. (FA:ED, Vol. 1, p. 46)."



" . . . I beg and implore you . . . To receive, practice and observe these words . . . "



The journey of St. Francis to Damietta and his significant conversation with Malek-al-Kamel, was fruitful in many ways: his unflinchable belief in

the Providence of God, his ability to dialogue with someone considered an "enemy", his courage in the face of potential martyrdom, and so many other things.

Another precious gift to our Order was his composition of the **SECOND LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE** written after his return in 1221 from Egypt. Though Francis seems to have received Luchesio and his wife Buonadonna already in 1209 when visiting the area near Poggibonzi, the Franciscan Book of Saints puts it this way:

"If Luchesio and Buonadonna were really the first Tertiaries, they must have become such not long after St. Francis founded his First Order in 1209. The first simple rule of life, which St. Francis gave to the first Tertiaries at that time, was supplanted in 1221 by one which Cardinal Hugolino prepared in legal word-wording. And in the same year Pope Honorius III approved this rule verbally. For this reason the year 1221 is often given as the date of the founding of the Third Order of St. Francis (Fran Herald Press, 1959)."

In any case, the **SECOND LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE** written by Francis in 1221 laid the foundations for all families of the Third Order that were to come: that of the Secular Franciscan Order as well as the Third Order Regular of St. Francis

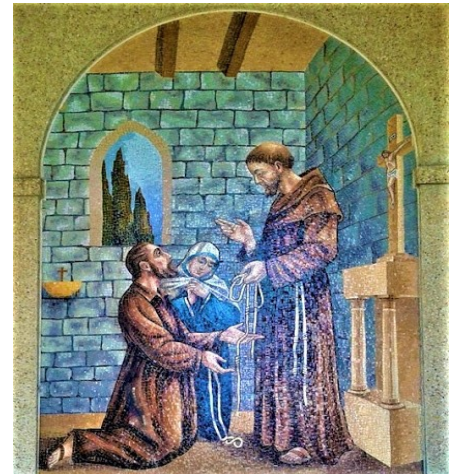
both men and women's communities. Thus we see that the recipients of this letter were then as they are now ". . . all Christians who had committed themselves to living more intensely their baptismal commitment through a life of penance (FA:ED, Vol. 1, p. 45)."

The content of Francis' letter is a clear invitation to ways of conversion, the ways his followers live fraternally, the joy of poverty, and certainly the important of the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Prayer. A serious, prayerful reading and reflection of this powerful letter, shows it to be a magnificent roadmap for following, not only in the footsteps of St. Francis, but a sure way of allowing ourselves to be transformed more and more into the image of Jesus — the one about which St. Clare wrote so eloquently by her use of the mirror image. Of this comparison Fr. Murray Bodo, OFM, wrote:

"By looking into the mirror who is Christ and recognizing yourself, you become a mirror of Him whom you contemplate, and you in turn mirror, through Christ to the Father, all the creation. You see yourself both *in* a mirror and *as* a mirror (Murray Bodo OFM, *THE WAY*

OF ST. FRANCIS – The Challenge of Franciscan Spirituality for Everyone, Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1995, pages 29-31.)

But this is exactly the message give to us by our Holy Father, St. Francis so long ago when he asked us to receive, practice, and observe these word of our Lord Jesus Christ. During the year as we celebrate the composition of this letter, may we all become more like the image we reflect upon in this precious letter!



T "By how happy and blessed are those who love God and so as the Lord Himself says in the Gospel: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.* Let us love God, therefore and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind, because He Who seeks this above all things has said: *True adorers adore the Father in Spirit and Truth.* For all *who adore Him must adore Him in the Spirit of truth.* And day and night *let us direct praises and prayers to Him, saying;* Our Father Who art in heaven . . . for we *should pray always and not become weary* (FA:ED, Vol. 1, p. 46-47)."

Regional JPIC Animator: Jack Hill, OFS

Prophecies are specific whispers of messages by the Holy Spirit to a particular person who was precisely wired to hear it and who will choose to act on it. (But then again there is irrepressible Jonah! Book of Jonah, NRSV)

Prophets are anointed peoples by dint of the attributes breathed into them when God created them. We are prophets. You and I are designed in such a way that you hear the Holy Spirit in a frequency and a decibel that is different from mine because each prophecy was made only for one unique pair of ears.

Love is the catching creative force by which the prophet receives and transmits the message so that it can be heard in its proper context and serve its intended transformative purpose. The prophecy, the prophet and the love are confluent.

I cannot fathom the measures of Our God the Father's LOVE for humanity that He will sacrifice His only begotten Son to reconcile us to Himself after our first parents' poor choices that affected the whole created world for all time. (Can you imagine, we could be in paradise right now if it were not for their thoughtlessness...sigh!) It was as if God was seized by love of you and me and everyone on earth that He cannot help Himself but save us from our limited selves.

When we are captive in the throes of love (Love=God=Pursuing only the good of the other), the quality and the quantity of our service will be creative to infinity. Franciscans are ahead of the curve in this. Franciscans are marked by their vow of poverty. This vow is unique and missional in that it is a way of life where one is not bogged down by the requirements of a complicated life. Hence the Franciscan is agile in extending his presence to another in need. Promptness in service to one outside of oneself is Franciscan.

Perhaps Franciscans are "born" for such a time as ours, a time when church hierarchy led by our Pope Francis spots the light on St. Francis' openness to peoples of all persuasions, to birds and animals, and to all of creation to fulfill the prophecy of rebuilding God's church.

There used to be two parallel universes in our world: the hopeful and the hopeless. It used to be the hopeless is unseen, residing in the underbelly of polite society but now, the hopelessness is emerging into the light of day everywhere. The unpretentiousness of wickedness in all sectors of society are alarming and oppressive to the soul because we cannot deny that it exists like we used to.

How are we to respond to the call of the Pope as Franciscan Seculars, personally, locally, regionally and internationally? May I hazard a few intuitions on the personal and local in the form of wishes:

I wish for a rigorous inductive study of the Sacred Scriptures because St. Francis calls us to live the Gospel. Jesus The Christ said Himself, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17-18, NRSV). We cannot be properly creative in our conduct (orthopraxy) without proper beliefs (orthodoxy). We have to hear Jesus' "Sermon on The Mount" in Matthew 5, 6, and 7 (NRSV) which is His prescription for a blessed way of life.

Leaving the world of commerce and knighthood was a phenomenon and still is even in our era of material wealth and honor – how did St. Francis do that? Why and how was it that St. Claire had the burden for the poor?

As a corollary to the above, I wish for an "in-depth study in community" of

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T "We are spouses when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers, moreover, when we do the will of His Father How is in heaven; mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through love and a pure and sincere conscience; and give Him birth through a holy activity, which must shine before others by example (FA:ED, Vol 1, p. 49)."

Clambering through the Carceri

Cavers name the hard spots.
Tall man's Trial, Fat Man's Grief.
The small and slight
need no reminders:
they slip through narrow places
with practiced, agile ease,
almost like St. Francis
greeting Sister Death.

— Sr. Felicity Dorsett, OSF



Continued from page 4

the Franciscan martyrs. What was it about Maximilian Kolbe that made him choose death in the stead of another? What made Marianne Cope decide to leave her healthy life in Syracuse, New York to live with and care for the lepers in Molokai? What made Thomas More prefer beheading to a stellar life set in politics?

I wish for true community in which one can know where the sisters and brothers are coming from so we can love each other. We cannot love each other if I do not know you and you do not know me. We cannot pray for each other profoundly and sincerely if we are strangers. Will we allow this vulnerability? I realize there are two sides to the coin of “knowing” but are we Franciscan enough to find joy in and with one another? Can we purify our thoughts and the meditations of our hearts (Psalm

119:14, NRSV) by avoiding prejudice, judgment, condescension, patronizing, rudeness, unhappiness in our differences of opinions? Can we look at each other as God means for us to see each other as someone so very important for whom His Son was crucified? **How can I harm you** when I “know” your troubles, your dreams, your cares, your losses?

If so, can we thusly attract others to join us, a peaceable and a patient fraternity, until Franciscan spirituality and thought covers the earth?

And oh, I lied...I also have one, big wish for the regional and international organizations... and that is to come together in a huge retreat! What a festival of Franciscans – just conjuring the possibility in my mind makes me happy! I cannot wait for “Unity Day” to arrive...is it August yet?

T “We must also frequently visit churches and venerate and revere the clergy not so much for themselves, if they are sinners, but because of their office and administration of the most holy Body and Blood of Christ which they sacrifice upon the altar, received and administer others. And let all of us know for certain that no one can be saved except through the holy words and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which the clergy pronounce, proclaim and minister (FA:ED, Vol. 1, p.47-48).”



Prophetic Creativity — Franciscan Style



Reflection by Noli Banda, OFS, of St. Boniface Fraternity in Lafayette

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T "Let *every creature in heaven, on earth, in the sea and in the depths. Give praise, glory, honor and blessings* to him Who suffered so much, Who has given and will give in the future every good, for He is our power and strength, Who *alone is good*, Who alone is almighty, Who alone is omnipotent, wonderful, glorious and Who alone is holy, worthy of praise and blessing through endless ages. Amen (FA:ED, Vol. 1, p.49-50)."



Continued from page 6

(NRSV) which is His prescription for a blessed way of life.

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hearts (Psalm 19:14, NRSV) by avoiding prejudice, judgment, condescension, patronizing, rudeness, unhappiness in our differences of opinions? Can we look at each other as God means for us to see each other as someone so very important for whom His Son was crucified? **How can I harm you** when I “know” your troubles, your dreams, your cares, your losses?

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St. Francis and Flowers

“Once the three young men in the furnace of burning fire invited all the elements to praise and glorify the Creator of all things, so this man, full of the spirit of God, never stopped glorifying, praising, and blessing the Creator and Ruler of all things in all the elements and creatures. How great do you think was the delight the beauty of flowers brought to his soul whenever he saw their lovely form and notice their sweet fragrance? He would immediately turn his gaze to the beauty of that flower, brilliant in springtime, sprouting from the root of Jesse . . . Whenever he found an abundance of flowers, he used to preach to them and invite them to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason (1 Ce 80—81).”



T “I, brother Francis, your lesser servant, with a wish to kiss your feet, beg and implore you in the love that is God, to received, to put into practice, and to observe, as your should, these words and the others of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility ad love. And may the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit bless all those men and women who receive them with kindness, understand them and send copies of them to others, if they have persevered to the end in them. Amen (FA:ED, Vol. 1, p. 51).”

What HOPE Looks Like

From a message sent on May 6, 2012 from Ted Boczkowski, OFS, Minister of St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity in St. John.

Good Sisters and Brothers,

Too often, we face uncertainty in the future of the Church and are resigned to a smaller, less active Church moving forward. If yesterday was a glimpse into the future, those fears, while a possibility, are becoming less so. We had two young women and five young men from the "Christ in the City" organization aid us in our service to those in need. We put them to work picking up debris around the site and preparing the meal. But, what they excelled at was interacting with those who came to join us. I have included some photos. Please keep them in your prayers.

Pax et bonum,

Ted

Pax et bonum, Ted



Sister Death has called to our
Heavenly Home . .

May all our Franciscan Brothers and Sisters, who have passed to our Heavenly Father's hands, rest in peace!

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION FRATERNITY

John Cheeseman, OFS, on
4.29.2021

A SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST

I am asking for prayers for our Sister Catherine, one of the founding sisters of our community here in Montana, who died this morning (5.20.2012). Please pray also for our small community left behind — five of us who are deeply affected by her loss. Thank you and God bless you!

Sister Jane Sorenson, OSC

(For those who may not know or may have forgotten, **OSC**, is the abbreviation for *Order of St. Clare*).



T Some Reflection Questions:

How am I a true adorer of the Father? What are the ways that the Word of God grounds my call to the Franciscan way of life? What would Francis say to me today about love and about devotion expressed in my personal prayer in the solitary places I choose to focus my heart entirely on God? Francis chose caves, clefts of rock and abandoned church to be alone: where is my heart most attuned to the soft, gentle words and presence of God?

News From Around the Region

Congratulations to Linda Grady, OFS, and Ron Julius who gifted each other



with the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony on Saturday, May 15, 2012. All of us in Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternal wish the greatest happiness and the fullness of blessings to Mr. and Mrs. Ron Julius!

OUR LADY OF LOURDES: *The following message was sent from Rich Cain, OFS, Regional Councilor: Please join all the Franciscan Family in congratulating the new council for Our Lady of Lourdes fraternity, elected on May 15, 2021, in Cedar Lake:*

Minister: Kathy Dominguez, OFS
 Vice Minister: Deacon John Bacon, OFS
 Secretary: Christine Casiello, OFS
 Treasurer: Mary Jo Biscan, OFS
 Formation Director: Christine Popiela, OFS
 Councilor: Sharon Marmalejo, OFS
 Councilor: Carol Hoffman, OFS

Prayers for you all in your servant leadership from all your brothers and sisters.



The **PEOPLE OF PEACE FRATERNITY** met in person in May for the first time since the pandemic began. Nineteen Franciscans were in attendance, including our recent transfer from Fort Wayne, Deacon Jim Kitchens and a woman who is a potential transfer from New York. It was a delightful experience even though we eliminated our shared treats and wore our new Franciscan masks, except when individually speaking from our socially distanced tables.

Our discussion was on the importance of Scripture in the life of St. Francis and also in our own lives. Members shared favorite resources for scripture and on-line morning and evening prayer options. They also shared experiences they have encountered by wearing their Tau crosses ("Preaching the Gospel at all times, when necessary, using words"). Every single person participated, which, as you know, is a hard thing to accomplish. Such joy in being together again! We had held virtual meetings with good results also but this meeting was special.

We are planning a retreat for those in formation and a celebration of Profession for two candidates in July. We have also been invited to join Sacred Heart Fraternity to conduct Vespers for their parish on the feast of the Sacred Heart on June 11. This is the first time Secular Franciscans have been invited to do so and we look forward to this shared experience. *Account from Burke, OFS, Minister of People of Peace.*

ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS: Minister, Ted Boczkowski, was concerned about having a sufficient number of helpers for the soup kitchen in Gary on one recent Saturday, when he received a wonderful offer from a very special Guardian Angel. Three missionaries from "Christ in the City" offered to come join them to help serve their guests. Ted wrote: "Let each one confidently make know his need to another that the other might discover what is needed and minister to him. Let each one love and care for his brother as a mother loves and cares for her son in those matters in

which God has given him the grace (Earlier Rule, IX, #71)."
See also story and pictures on page 8 of this issue.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION FRATERNITY: welcomed Martin Bickel and Shane Perley to Candidacy at their monthly Gathering at St. Thomas in Elkhart on May 15, 2012. Not even the pandemic could slow these two gentlemen from continuing their journey in the footsteps of St. Francis.

SACRED HEART FRATERNITY: is using an opportunity to fulfill their Franciscan charism of feeding the hungry by joining with "Ernie Pyle VFA Post 1120) in their monthly activity of feeding the homeless in downtown Indianapolis. The fraternity is hoping to make participation in this a regular monthly event.

LADY CLARE FRATERNITY: held elections on Friday, May 21, 2012, and the following brothers and sisters accepted the Spirit's call to minister to their fraternity:

Minister: David Brown, OFS
 Vice Minister: James Konopa, OFS
 Secretary: Katherine Svec, OFS
 Treasurer: Yolanda Ianson, OFS
 Formation Director: Marilyn Brown, OFS
 Councilor: David White, OFS

Congratulations to each of you and know that our prayers will be your support.

UNITY DAY

August 14, 2012

St. Joan of Arc

Kokomo

Our Lady of Indiana Secular Franciscan Regional Fraternity



International Website:

www.ciofs.org

National Website:

www.secularfranciscansusa.org

Regional Website:

www.olirf-ofs.org

To join OUR LADY OF INDIANA list-serve send a blank email to:

OLI-Region-subscribe@googlegroups.com

Follow us on Facebook

Dates to Remember

- June: 12 —Regional Executive Council
13 — St. Anthony of Padua
- August: 2 — Solemnity of Our Lady of the Angels
11 — St. Clare of Assisi
14 — Unity Day: more information to follow
- September: 17 — Stigmata of Our Holy Father Francis
- October: 3— Transit of Our Holy Father Francis
4 — Solemnity of Our Holy Father Francis
- October: 9 — Regional Executive Council
- November: 13 — Chapter of Mats
17 — St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Patroness of the Third Order Regular and Secular
- December 8: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the United States and Patroness of Our Lady of Indiana Region
- December: 25 — Solemnity of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ

"We, the Secular Franciscans of Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity, are called by virtue of Baptism and Confirmation to holiness. We are committed by our Profession to living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in our time according to the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi for the rebuilding of the Church.

With the help of Mary our Advocate, Protectress, and Patroness, we will foster prayer, vital fraternities, and communication. We will provide direction, support and resources to local fraternities for understanding and implementing the Rule, the General Constitutions, and the National Statutes of the Secular Franciscan Order, and our Regional Fraternity Guidelines."

Theme for 2021 GENERAL CHAPTER

"ANIMATE AND GUIDE with
SERVANT LEADERSHIP"

20th Quinquennial Congress —Franciscan Jubilee!!!!

*"To celebrate and renew our Franciscan calling in the spirit of
Conversion"*

August 3—7, 2022 in Phoenix, AZ

