



Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity

April-June 2025

2025 Formation Teams Workshop

The Formators' Toolbox

Charism and our Identity as Secular Franciscans



◦ **Francis is a living example of how a life can be reshaped if offered into the hands of the Father.**

◦ Artist: Esteban Murillo

On March 8, 17 people representing 11 fraternities gathered in Kokomo for the annual Formation Teams Workshop. The workshop was led by Barb Braley, Regional Formation Director.

The first presentation of the day was *What Formation Is...and Isn't*, and was led by Barb Braley. In this presentation, the participants discussed two questions that all formation, whether initial or ongoing, should address: 1) how does this deepen our understanding of who

I am as a Secular Franciscan Catholic Christian and 2) how do I begin to live it out?

The second presentation, also led by the Regional Formation Director, addressed the issue of *How to Discern Vocations to the OFS*. This presentation reminded the Formation teams that the Council and the entire fraternity share the responsibility of discerning the vocations of those who are in initial formation. Some concrete suggestions were shared.

After lunch, Kathleen White, Lay Regional Spiritual Assistant, led a discussion on how the Local Spiritual Assistant should be an indispensable member of the formation team. It included a survey of the participants as to their knowledge of the role of the Local Spiritual Assistant. With four Local Spiritual Assistants present, it was a lively discussion.

The last hour was devoted to a Q&A session. Several topics were discussed with several suggestions for the regional level that would help the local Formation Directors. One of those suggestions, an online discussion platform for local Formations Directors, has already been put in place.

"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."

A Word from Our Minister...

Mother Nature is playing peek-a-boo. Now you see me, now you don't. One day it's 65 degrees and the next, like today, the first day of spring, there are high blowing winds and a mixture of rain, snow, and sleet. That's northern Indiana for you and what we see on the surface. However, look a little deeper and what seems to be dormant is actually percolating new life.

Now that's an interesting word, percolating. It can mean thinking deeply about something and letting ideas simmer in the background before returning to the issue with fresh new insights. It conjures up phrases like mulling it over. One of my favorites...pondering, even brooding. It spreads slowly, permeates, penetrates. Then these thoughts encourage further reflection, exploration and then the right words, the precise words, generate emotions, deep thoughts, ideas, and a vision.

I have a picture from my 2008 visit to Assisi of a life-sized bronze statue of St. Francis sitting cross-legged under an olive tree with a soft gentle smile on his face gazing out into the valley below. The statue beckons you to come and join him to relax, reflect, and marvel at the splendor of God's creation. To feel the rays of Brother Sun warm your face and the gentle breeze of Brother Wind to caress and cool you. He understood the importance of taking time to watch billowing white clouds meandering in the distance and little sparrows darting from tree to tree surveying the workers harvesting the olives for market. St Francis understood how to be in the moment giving praise and thanksgiving for all creation.

This year we celebrate the 800th year anniversary of St. Francis's creation of the Cantic of the Creatures. People view it as his greatest masterpiece coming just hours before his death. It is certainly that and so much more; it's the culmination of all his life experiences, his prayers, his praise, his salutations, and joys in his oneness with Jesus. St. Francis had done what he was asked to do.

It is my fervent hope, as these last weeks of Lent come to a close and we enter into Holy Week, that we may all feel through times of quiet prayer and reflection, a new enduring closeness to Jesus.

Happy Easter and Spring,
Cyndi Pilot, OFS



The Formation Corner

Back in the '90's, there was a show on TV called *Babylon 5*. It was a science fantasy adventure show, but it had definite religious overtones to it. In an episode that ran during season 3, a group of monks came from earth to become better acquainted with the alien population on the title space station. To earn their keep while on the station, they would be of service to others, both human and alien, by assisting with research and legal documents.

At one point, Capt. Sheridan asked one of the brothers why he had joined the Order. His reply was that he had been so impressed with the story of when Our Lord had been in the Gethsemane. He knew what was coming but chose to stay. The question that he took away from that story was: would he be able to stay when his own "Gethsemane" came, or would he run away? He liked to think that he would stay, but he really didn't know.

This is a good question for each of us to ponder.

In each life, there are a number of Gethsemanes that come to us. Some are easier to face than others. The birth of a child, even though the mother and/or the child might die during childbirth, is easier to face than a diagnosis of Stage 4 cancer.

Likewise, Gethsemanes can come to us in communities. I can guess that there are fraternities, especially in the American southwest, who are facing the reality of members who are arrested and possibly deported. I see this as a Gethsemane moment for the fraternity as well as the individuals. We are, after all, brothers and sisters of the same Order.

In a way, the process of Francis' conversion is a process of Gethsemanes, too. The voice in the vision that asked if the master or the servant could do more for him and the command to go home was the Gethsemane regarding his dream of becoming a knight. The encounter with the leper was a Gethsemane where he had to let go of his own self-preservation. The command to "rebuild My church" was a Gethsemane of doing something for a greater purpose. The confrontation with his father in front of the Bishop and the people of Assisi was the final Gethsemane where he knew he had to let go of all that he had been for the future to which he had been called. This last one tied all the others together. Now he was to live a life for God and others instead of just for himself.

Could he have said no? Of course! He had free will. He exercised that free will just as Jesus had done 12 centuries before.

What Jesus' Gethsemane and Francis' Gethsemanes ultimately led to were the experience of Resurrection. In the still-popular Peace Prayer (not written by St. Francis), the lines, "It is in giving that we receive" and "it is in dying that we are born to eternal life" are still true. We know that at the heart of discipleship, it's not about us. We are only instruments for God's will to be done.

I play several instruments, some better than others. An instrument that sits in a corner in the case is meaningless because it doesn't fulfill its purpose. Of its own, it can't. It's only when a musician plays that instrument that it fulfills its purpose.

Our moments of Gethsemane are like those instruments. They serve a purpose when we let God use them for his own glory. Are these Gethsemane moments easy? Not a bit; not for us anyway. These are the times we must ask ourselves: will I stay? With God's help, let us hope so.

Peace and all good!

Your little sister, Barb

Profession Anniversaries

HOLY FAMILY

4/3/2011 Tricia Bugajski
4/21/1976 Susan Solloway
4/21/2024 Mary Jo Solloway
4/24/2005 William Duffy
5/3/2009 Elaine Cooper
5/15/1989 Sharon Solloway

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

4/17/2021 Arthur Singleton,
5/13/2014 Diana Godish,
5/14/2011 Ruthi Carrillo
5/14/2011 Melisa Shlunt,
5/18/2013 Linda O'Neil
6/15/1996 Frank Vargo
6/15/2019 Amivi Gbologan
6/15/2019 Joan Frances Hurley
6/15/2019 Joan Keller
6/19/2004 Bill Gallagher

LADY CLARE

4/20/2002 David Huemmer
4/20/2002 Loretta Schwartz
5/12/2017 Katherine Svec
5/31/2022 Claudia Dietzel
5/31/2022 Stephanie Donham
5/31/2022 Debra Keller

LITTLE PORTION

4/27/2013 Maria Szczepanski
6/16/2007 William Jannausch

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

4/7/2001 Sharon Marmalejo
4/7/2001 Angela Vargas
4/16/2016 Cindy Varenkamp
4/21/1996 Diane Losiniecki
4/22/2006 Linda Silverio
4/26/2003 Ann Klimczak
6/18/2022 Mary Grace Dy
6/18/2022 Marlene Lichtle
6/18/2022 Norma Nowaczyk
6/18/2022 Terri Spretnjak
6/20/1998 Kathy Georgelas

PEOPLE OF PEACE

4/16/2016 Alysson Braatz
5/1/1984 Louisa Sheets
5/1/1984 William Sheets
6/10/2018 Rosemary Nelson
6/28/1982 Jan Stetzel

PEREGRINOS DE LA PAZ

5/11/2008 Maria Torres Gonzales
5/11/2008 Juan Martinez
5/11/2008 Olga Martinez
5/11/2008 Rodolfo Penaloza
5/11/2008 Emilio Ferrer Soto
5/11/2015 Maria del Refugio Trujillo
5/19/2013 Dolores Gomez Apolonio
5/19/2013 Carmen Medina
5/19/2013 Paula Noriega

SACRED HEART

4/22/2012 Sharon Blunk
4/22/2012 John Rudnick
4/22/2012 Mary Katherine Saucedo
5/5/2019 Lois Irwin
5/5/2019 Lloyd Louks
5/25/2003 Brian Foust
5/25/2003 Margaret Foust
5/25/2003 Fred Kidwell
5/31/1987 William Booher

ST. ANTHONY

4/18/1989 Dorothy West
5/1/1953 Bill Fink
5/15/2011 Dolores Shaw
5/20/2022 Carole Byrd
5/20/2022 Donna Reed
5/20/2022 Mary Rowlett
5/26/2001 Wayne West

ST. BONIFACE

4/28/2007 Linda Chidalek
5/19/2002 Carolyn Pruitt
6/24/2023 Maria Banda

ST. CHARLES

4/15/2018 David Frank
5/19/2019 Barb Cain
5/19/2019 Deb Davis
5/25/1991 Doris Bermes

ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS

4/27/1997 Dorothea Alfini
5/2/1963 Margaret Kowalski

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

4/7/2019 Elizabeth Mendez
4/15/2012 Jan Kaylor

ST. ROSE OF VITERBO

4/6/2018 Linda Gorrell

Protecting the dignity of all: A statement on the drastic changes to U.S. immigration law and policy

The Provincial Council of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe is responding to the changes to U.S. Immigration Law and Policy and to the mass deportations happening across the country. They are asking for a just and compassionate approach in protecting the dignity of all. This response aligns with their year-long [Franciscan Synod](#), which concluded in January, in which they have recommitted themselves to responding to the Gospel's call to care for the needs of the poor, marginalized, vulnerable persons, and our common home.

Jan. 29. 2025

As Catholic Christians in the Franciscan tradition we add our voices to countless other Church and public leaders who are deeply troubled by, and opposed to, the drastic changes to U.S. immigration law and policy contained in the executive orders and proclamations issued by the new administration last week. As we understand them, they seek to effectuate “the largest deportation program in American history,” to end refugee resettlement, to revoke humanitarian parole grants and to end birthright citizenship. Such a course of action, we believe, will result in severe and unnecessary negative consequences that will harm the most vulnerable among us.

Our opposition is based in our Judeo-Christian faith tradition which, from the Hebrew Scriptures, through the Christian Scriptures, and down to the most recent papal and Church statements, call us to welcome the stranger and to exercise justice and compassion when responding to those who are vulnerable. Catholic social teaching demands that we recognize that all human beings are created in the image of God and therefore possess an inherent and inalienable dignity and respect. The human rights that flow from the dignity of each human person include the right to migrate in the face of severe violence or desperate poverty.

While we agree that the U.S. immigration system has—for too long—needed significant changes and updating, the direction being taken by the new administration will, we believe, cause more harm than good—such as tearing families apart, moving us toward a police state, sowing fear, chaos and confusion among the many hard-working and law-abiding immigrants who have been part of our communities for so many years, and inviting further demonization of immigrants.

Therefore, with many religious communities in the United States, we urge Congress and the Administration to:

- Oppose mass deportation as the means to achieve needed and effective immigration reform

- Support orderly border management that is humane, proportional and respects the right to seek asylum
- Reject non-emergency immigration enforcement in schools, places of worship, social service agencies and healthcare facilities
- Take action to protect the “dreamers,” those brought to the U.S. as children who have lived here most of their lives
- Endorse efforts to protect vulnerable groups through such programs as TPS, DED, humanitarian parole and the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program
- Denounce anti-immigrant rhetoric that has no basis in truth

As a nation, let us choose a path forward that effectively secures our borders, even as it protects the dignity of all who come to our shores, through an immigration system governed by mercy and justice.

Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Bring solace to those across the world forced from their homes
Fleeing poverty, violence, and strife.
Protect them in their tribulations,
Strengthen them as they build new lives,
Fill our aching world with your grace and compassion.

Mother of All,
You see beauty and holiness in each of us:
Open the hearts of those who cannot yet see
The dignity of your children seeking refuge.
Unite us to welcome the stranger in your name,
Grant us the courage to break down walls that divide us,
And guide us as we advocate for justice and peace. AMEN.

Provincial Council
Franciscan Friars
Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Lawrence J. Hayes, O.F.M.
Mark Soehner, O.F.M.
John Eaton, O.F.M.
Erick López, O.F.M.
Roger López, O.F.M.
Sam Nasada, O.F.M.
Rommel Pérez, O.F.M.
José Rodríguez, O.F.M.
Edward Tlucek, O.F.M.

Artwork: Br. Kevin Hamzik, OFM

Mary, What Was That Night Like for You?

Contributed by Virginia Anson

Mary, what was the night before Jesus' death like for you, His mother? You likely also celebrated a Passover meal, maybe with family, while your Son celebrated with His apostles, His future priests. I'm not sure if men, women, and children usually celebrated together. But you were likely among those close to you.

I have to believe that Jesus told you that His time had come and that He would undergo His passion and death the next day. I have to believe that God the Father and your Spouse, the Holy Spirit, enlightened you in this to the extent that was necessary for your participation. You had to be more in tune with the Trinity than any other human, given your holy role in the Incarnation and motherhood of God.

Mary, you participated in Jesus' actual passion and death. From what I have read, you felt within yourself what your Son was going through—and, I believe, for the total love of humanity. Horrific as it must have been, you willed Jesus' passion and death, His great sacrifice, just as He willed it—for the salvation and redemption of our souls—of my soul.

But what was the night before His passion and death like for you? I envision you spending a sleepless night in deep prayer and union with the Trinity. I envision you suffering the turmoil of your Son along with Him during His prayerful vigil in the garden. I also envision your Spouse, the Holy Spirit, comforting you or sending an angel also to comfort you, to keep you strong, and to help you totally accept the will of the Father. I envision a night of great stress, a night spent in great passion conjoined with that of your Son. You joined with your Son in a much more complete way than any other human mother could join with her sick, suffering child. Perhaps your prayer and suffering this night brought extra strength to your Son for the horrific ordeal that lay before Him.

I imagine, but I cannot even closely imagine, what you endured that night. My most Blessed Mother, I do thank you immensely for your YES and for your conjoined sacrifices and passion out of total, complete love for us. I thank you immensely for your continued love and work for the redemption and salvation of souls. You truly are the most perfect, loving mother, given to us as our mother by our Son while He hung on the cross.

Thank you, my dear Mother Mary

“Woman, behold your son!...Behold, your mother.” Jn. 19:26-27

Chapter of Elections

St. Mary of the Angels fraternity at St. John celebrated its triennial Chapter of Elections on March 16. Rich Cain, Regional Councilor presided.

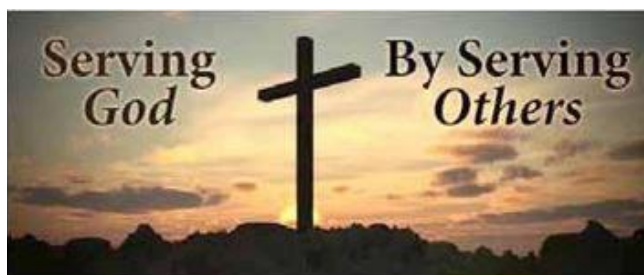
The newly elected council are from left to right:

Deacon Philip Coduti, OFS, Minister
Barbara Harris, OFS, Secretary
Dr Donna Thiernau, OFS, Formation Director
Dorothea Alfini, OFS, Councilor
Joseph Suppes, OFS, Vice Minister
Michael Mrdak, OFS, Treasurer
Michael O'Donnell, OFS, Councilor



Our Brother Who Has Been Visited by Sister Death

Bill Nichter 2/20/2025 St. Charles
Fraternity Professed on 6/26/1996
*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and
let perpetual light shine upon him.*



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:
olirf+subscribe@googlegroups.com
Follow us on **Facebook**

CALENDAR

4/12	9:00 (ET)	REC (Zoom)
6/13-15	10-3 (ET)	Chapter of Mats (with elections & visitations), University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne
6/15		Deadline for July-Sept regional newsletter submissions
8/9	9:30 (ET)	Unity Day, St. Joan of Arc, Kokomo
9/15		Deadline for Oct-Dec regional newsletter submissions
9/?	TBA	Canticle of the Creatures Centenary, Indy
10/11	9:00 (ET)	REC (Zoom)
11/8	10:00 (ET)	Chapter of Mats, St. Joan of Arc, Kokomo
12-15		Deadline for Jan-March regional newsletter submissions

*The Regional newsletter is published in
January, April, July, and October on the
first of the month. The deadlines to
submit news, such as professions,
retreats/days of reflection, election
results, etc., are due by the 15th of the
month prior to publication. **Ministers**,
please email submissions to: Barb
Braley at bbraley345@gmail.com.*

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Minister	Cyndi Pilot	cyndipilot@gmail.com
Vice Minister	Rich Cain	richcain82@gmail.com
Secretary	Margaret Foust	maggiefoust@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Susan Solloway	ssollo42@gmail.com
Formation Director	Barb Braley	bbraley345@gmail.com
Councilors	Chris Bercaw	chriskofc@gmail.com
	Ted Boczkowski	ted.boczkowski13@gmail.com
	Ulma Flores	ulmaflores@gmail.com
Spiritual Assistants	Sr. Anita Holzmer	holzmeran@gmail.com
	Kathleen White	kdwofs@comcast.net

