



LA VERNA · SFO · REGION

La Verna Vision

Be the Bridge to Fraternal Life **SPRING 2017**



Minister's Message

by James Carlson, OFS,
La Verna Regional Minister

Living in the Spirit -Formation, Spirituality and Vocation

The above theme of our district meetings is an appropriate follow up to the 2016 “Q” “Reviving Our Spirit”. It is necessary that we share the gifts we have been given in order to animate them better in our Franciscan way of life, Our Regional formation team already has as an outline and top notch presenters—should be great!

2017 Formation Journey

In response to a critique by CIOFS and NAFRA, most fraternities have agreed to evaluate their Franciscan way of life. The Region will gather formation directors annually and with the assistance of the higher fraternities will assist the directors in providing ways for the fraternities to evaluate. The National Fraternity has reassessed the use of the Dun Scotus Trust Fund. Hopefully this will help regions/ fraternities to obtain grants to help provide the gatherings mentioned and for members to attend.

Annual Reports

At National Chapter the National Minister commented that a committee was working on simplifying the annual report form. As soon as we receive a copy I would like to work with a committee to simplify the form the FECs have to file-make it simpler.

Elections

The region and certain fraternities will be holding elections this upcoming year. The region’s nominations committee has surfaced members willing to assume leadership roles. The Handbook-Servant Leadership Guides 7 and 9 are

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helpful, They suggest executive council’s should discern leadership potential at this time of year and encourage members to assume leadership roles consistent with their potential.

Wills, Wakes and the like

In going through our archives I waded through Rev. Ulric Buening’s files on “Wills, Bequests, etc.” The gifts ranged from \$100-\$23,42.87. The last was received in 1994. It is a nice thought to gift the order in some fashion. If you do make a gift be sure you specify who you are gifting- be it the International, National, Regional, or Local fraternity or perhaps some outreach program of any of the above. Along those lines, identify who your survivors should contact regarding turning over Secular Franciscan files, archives, or regarding the type of funeral services you would like. We do have a few Franciscan funeral garments in our archives as well as information from past fraternity retreats regarding preparing for “Sister Death” including a model “Wake Service for Secular Franciscans” that we have used. Let me know if you would like more information regarding such matters.



What to Remember When Waking

What does an English teacher give to her friends, the answer is easy ... poetry of course! I hope you enjoy the following poem, and I wish each of you a blessed Easter.
- Lee Ann Niebuhr

What to Remember When Waking

By David Whyte

In that first hardly noticed moment in which you wake,
coming back to this life from the other
more secret, moveable and frighteningly honest world
where everything began,
there is a small opening into the new day
which closes the moment you begin your plans.

What you can plan is too small for you to live.
What you can live wholeheartedly will make plans enough
for the vitality hidden in your sleep.

To be human is to become visible
while carrying what is hidden as a gift to others.

To remember the other world in this world
is to live in your true inheritance.

You are not a troubled guest on this earth,
you are not an accident amidst other accidents
you were invited from another and greater night
than the one from which you have just emerged.

Now, looking through the slanting light of the morning
window
toward the mountain presence of everything that can be
what urgency calls you to your one love?
What shape waits in the seed of you
to grow and spread its branches
against a future sky?

Is it waiting in the fertile sea?
In the trees beyond the house?
In the life you can imagine for yourself?
In the open and lovely white page on the writing desk?
-- from *The House of Belonging* by David Whyte

Making a Visit

Karen Pierce and I (Portiuncula Fraternity) visited another excused, elderly member. Grace Nienaber is 92 years, has been professed for 51 years, and she still lives independently. During our visit, we had her renew her commitment to the Order and gave her a TAU cross, which she much appreciated. We also gave her a "pocket prayer shawl."

Submitted by Ellen Jennings



NEC Report to NAFRA

(National Executive Council Report to
National Fraternity Council)

The following topics are included in this report:

1. Computer Committee Transition – New Website and Database Committees to Form
2. Website Committee Chair Needed
3. Ideas for 2021 Quinquennial
4. National Opportunities to Serve

1. Computer Committee Transition – New Website and Database Committees to Form

As previously announced, after many years of dedicated service Dan Mulholland, Bob Herbelin and Roger Raupp are retiring from the Computer Committee. Due to this change in personnel and in order to better achieve newly set goals, the Computer Committee will undergo a structural change.

The NEC has set two new goals: (1) a major redesign of the NAFRA website (basically a new website) and (2) a transition to a new national database. To achieve these goals the NEC will set up two new committees – Website and Database – and appoint a new Chair for each. These two committees will each have a distinct focus, but will communicate as needed and work together on projects wherever their areas of expertise overlap.

The Website Committee will consist of a Chair and one or two other members, chosen by the Chair, as it is important to have several persons available to update and maintain our website. We are very grateful to Vickie Klick who has wonderfully maintained our webpage for many years. Vicky will continue to maintain our current webpage until a new one is developed and will assist in the transition as needed.

The Database Committee will initially be coordinated by Vickie Klick who has accepted a one year appointment as a Database Transition Chair.

2. Website Committee Chair Needed

The NEC is currently seeking a Website Committee Chair and we kindly request your assistance. Please distribute the following notice, which will also be included in the next issue of TAU-USA, and please let us know of anyone who may be a good candidate for this position.

Website Developer Needed

After many years of quality outreach and service, the NAFRA website is due for a major redesign. The National Executive Council is seeking a Secular Franciscan who has the skills necessary to design, develop and maintain a website that will appeal to newcomers as well as serve our members.

The ideal candidate must have sufficient experience in Web Development and Multimedia Design or the equivalent to create and maintain a creative and interactive online presence for the NAFRA page. He/she will work with a committee of OFS to access our needs, write copy, and provide photos, etc.



If you are interested in applying, please send your resume to Jan Parker at ofs.national.minister.usa@gmail.com and Jane DeRose-Bamman at janedsfo@msn.com.

Please include links to websites you have designed and whether you would offer this service as member of a volunteer committee.

3. Ideas for 2021 Quinquennial

The NEC is interested in your ideas for the 2021 Quinquennial. Please send us your ideas for a theme, a keynote speaker, etc., and any other suggestions you might have. The search for a Q Chair is underway.

4. National Opportunities to Serve

The National Fraternity needs your help. If you are interested in any of the following positions, or for more information, please contact National Secretary Jane DeRose Bamann at janedsfo@msn.com.

- National Calendar Coordinator and National Listserv Coordinator - Need detail oriented and technologically skilled persons to update and maintain our OFS National Calendar and National OFS Email Listservs
- Website Committee Chair
- 2021 Quinquennial Committee Chair
- National Historian



Interfaith Airport Chapel of Milwaukee

*Submitted by Karen Ann Pierce
Treasurer of the Portiuncula Fraternity*

The Interfaith Airport Chapel of Milwaukee Inc. ...

Although our legal name as listed above remains the same, we are currently doing business as the Airport Meditation Room - Milwaukee.

As you may recall, in late 2009, secular Franciscan Suzanne McKinney, initiated the project of providing Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee with a place for prayer. Several other secular Franciscans from the Portiuncula Fraternity joined the effort and served on the board. Suzanne did a marvelous job in the organizational ground work. First of all and most important was the approval process with the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, then getting an architectural design and a construction company on board as well as developing various fundraisers. She is to be commended for her vision, leadership and perseverance. In November 2014, Suzanne resigned as chair of the board and became a member of the advisory board.

When Ruth Agrusa, became chairperson, she and the board worked to achieve a modified architectural design that was more cost effective, but still retained the beauty and ambiance of a sacred space. Now at year-end 2016 with the financial goal achieved, our chair and vice-chair will be meeting with airport administration in January to prepare



for the construction process. By mid-year 2017, we expect travelers to find a quiet place to connect with the Lord.

We thank you for your many prayers over these past years and ask you to please continue with your prayers. Once construction is completed, the next stage is to develop a chaplaincy program. ***We believe Visions can become Reality with Hard work, Perseverance and Prayer.***

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Profession Ceremony

Submitted by Sharon Dale, OFS

Our Lady Queen of Heaven fraternity in Wisconsin Rapids recently professed Carla Koeshall in a beautiful ceremony at St. Lawrence Church. The Mass and profession was officiated by Fr. Placid Stroik OFM.

A profession in December is quite rare for us; we combined this joyous occasion with our annual Christmas Party. Most of our fraternity members and several guests were present to welcome Carla into the Secular Franciscan Order. She was presented, as is our custom, with her profession candle, a San Damiano Crucifix, and a TAU Cross necklace (the first picture shows current Formation Director Karen Juntikka OFS placing the Tau over Carla's head).

The second picture shows Fr. Placid, Carla, and minister Patrick Ruesch OFS.

Following the Mass and ceremony all were invited to a Pot Luck dinner, the opening of Profession gifts, songs, and Take-Away BINGO. It was an evening that will be long-remembered.



Prayer of Peace & Hope

"Peace" is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Where there is hatred let me sow love.

Father, forgive them: they know not what they are doing.

Where there is injury, let me show pardon.

Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe.

Where there is doubt, let me show faith.

Hope will not leave us disappointed, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has given to us.

Where there is despair, let me show hope.

You are the light of the world. Your light must shine before men so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father.

Where there is darkness, let me show light.

I tell you truly: You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices; you will grieve for a time, but your grief will be turned to joy.

Where there is sadness, let me show joy.

He comforts us in all our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we have received from him.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console.

God has given us the wisdom to understand fully the plan he was pleased to decree in Christ.

Grant that I may not so much seek to be understood, as to understand.

If I speak with human tongues and angelic as well, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal.

Grant that I may no so much seek to be loved, as to love.

Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

For it is in giving that we receive.

Forgive us the wrong we have done as we forgive those who wrong us.

For it is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

~Unknown source~

My Moment of Mercy

The following was written by Frances Vershowske, OFS, an excused member of the Portiuncula Fraternity. She has been a Franciscan for 61 years and is 97 years old. This letter was sent to the TAU with no response from them at all. It is the pleasure of the LaVerna Region to acknowledge her.

MY MOMENT OF MERCY - Our thanks go out to Pope Francis for declaring this "The Year of Mercy." Reflecting on how we're involved is like reading an exciting novel. It also reminds me of playing an old game of "Give and Take" - only we RECEIVE mercy. The more we receive, the more graciously we give in return.

Today at 97, I find myself in the "Receiving Mercy" time of life. One and a half years ago I was released from the hospital after a 1-1/4 weeks of hospital stay due to internal bleeding. After many tests and procedures, the bleeding was finally stopped, and I returned to my daughter's home where I had been living for the past year. However, the internal bleeding resumed one day later, but after having been through so much during my last hospitalization, I decided that I just could not return to the hospital. I told my daughter of my decision and, we then spoke with the visiting nurse who explained the options for hospice care in our home if my condition worsened. This was a very scary time for me and a huge decision to make in deciding that medical intervention would not be taken.

My Moment of Mercy was in knowing that I would have the comfort of my daughter's home for care but an even GREATER Moment of Mercy was when two months later my internal bleeding miraculously stopped and has not returned - thanks be to God!

My purpose in writing is to also tell you a story about Rose Plotz. Rose's daughter, Elizabeth, and my daughter, Jean, went to school at St. James. Transportation was a problem to and from the school. It brought our families closer together. Rose and I created a real bond when we made our profession to the Secular Franciscans at St. James Church in Mukwonago. We helped missions by donating a cow and garden equipment. Following Rose's death, her daughter, Elizabeth, shared a story she had written about her Mother's last years and the legacy she left behind:

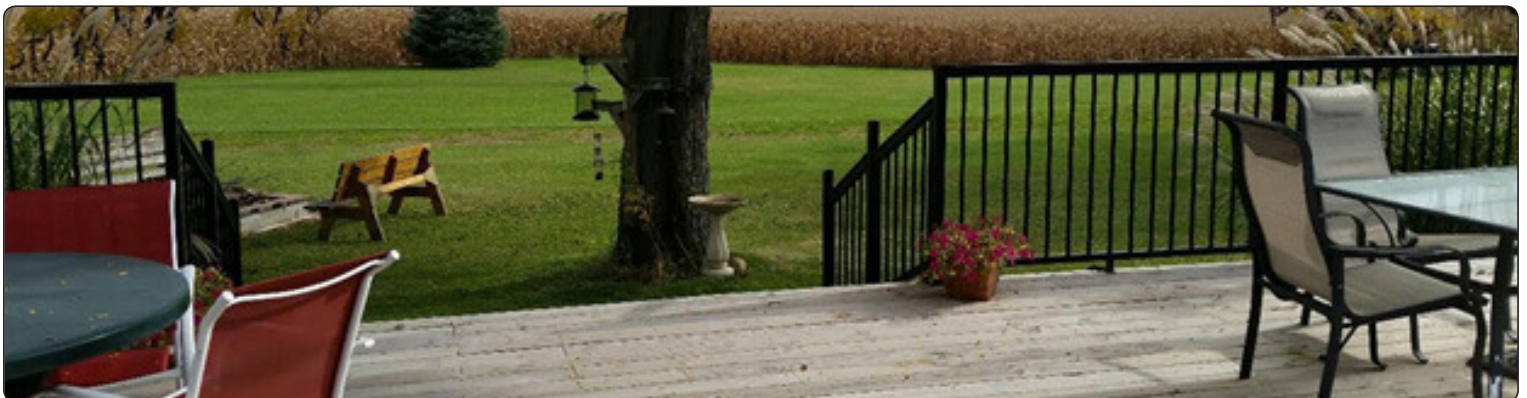


Rose would make pressed-flower card and stationery. All profits going to the missions. After the diagnosis of cancer and onset of depression, that stopped. In the late spring of 2000, Rose sat down at a table once again and began working with her pressed flowers. She began moving them here and there, helter-skelter, mixing and matching colors and blossoms. The pattern began changing and taking a shape in front of her. She realized, suddenly, that a rosary was beginning to form. In a burst of creative energy, Rose began putting more blooms into place, praying with each one; then, drew the cross, added a few last petals and finished her masterpiece. That original is now in the possession of one of her granddaughters. They named it "God's Garden of Flower Power / THE ROSE-ARY"

NOTE: From Me, Ellen Jennings OFS
Suzanne McKinney and I visited Fran Vershowske on Wednesday (Oct. 19th) and some pictures were taken.

We visited with Fran for 2 hours. We joined her in the "Renewal of Commitment to the Secular Franciscan Order." As a memento, I had a copy of the renewal typed separate with her name and the date of renewal at the top. After saying the renewal, I put a new TAU cross on her. She was thrilled. Susan had also brought a treat to share and Fran was given a "Pocket Prayer Shawl" which brought tears to her eyes. Before we left, Susan and I prayed with her and for her.

Pictured are Suzanne McKinney, Minister, Fran Vershowske (97 yrs. old), professed for 61 years, and Ellen Jennings, Councilor.



Franciscans Downtown: A Ministry of Peace

Submitted by Bob Crane OFS

“A place of Gospel Refreshment; Rest and Conversation on the stories of our lives.”

Franciscans Downtown, is not only a place that I like to volunteer at several times each week, but also a place that I like to share with all of my guests, including a few out of town visitors that stopped by today.

A few years ago my friend, Fr. Placid Stroik, retired from 30 years of service at Covenant House in New York City. He moved back to his home state of Wisconsin, where he took a position as a Chaplain at large convent near Manitowoc. He still found himself with spare time and energy and a desire to take on another outreach mission.

While visiting family in his hometown of Stevens Point, he noticed a vacant storefront, from an old tuxedo shop called Andrews Downtown. This is when Fr. Placid’s plans started to gel. Placid then activated a network of volunteers and secured financing from his order, The Franciscan Friars of the Assumption BVM Province, to open this mission and run it for the first year.

Franciscan’s Downtown was to be a “a place for Gospel refreshment ... an oasis to read, listen, reflect, write, talk; sharing with one another stories of our lives.”

Though this mission was started by a Priest, who already has a full time job on the eastern side of the state, it did not take long to gather a full crew of steady volunteers to keep the mission alive. Currently, we have two Franciscan Priests, a couple of Franciscan Nuns, several members of the Secular Franciscan Order, along with numerous other Catholic lay people from the community.

We seem to have a multi-functional mission in the community we serve. A certain percentage of our guests



include people from the general community and the local parishes, who are seeking a little bit of gospel refreshment and conversation in their week. Another welcome part of the community that has joined us are the homeless, who enjoy refuge from an often hostile world for a few hours each day.

I am always impressed with the activities that are presented in our little Downtown home. Some days are very busy with concerts, movie days, discussion groups, bingo, and other special events.

Many days it is much quieter at Franciscans Downtown and you will find people from the community enjoying our library, coffee, refreshments, and conversation.

Sometimes we will do things in conjunction with the many Catholic parishes in town, like the recent Mercy Marathon, offering reconciliation during lent and other special occasions, and having a Priest available to fill in at the many parishes around town.

Regardless of the activities of the day or the hour, one thing that is always on our mind while working at Franciscans Downtown is the importance of the Ministry of Presence.





Pregnancy Services Ministry in Escanaba

by Dorothy Kollmman, St. Francis Fraternity, Escanaba

In Escanaba the Franciscan Fraternity has one particular endeavor that has lasted for the past twenty years and has the potential for growth.

As Advent draws to a close, the Secular Franciscans shop for newborn clothing to donate to the newly formed center, Pregnancy Services of Delta County.

The Center has been in existence the past two years. Prior to that, Services were provided in a woman's home and garage. She ministered to many girls and women by phone and through donations from her garage. That Ministry grew and grew. Through prayer, prayer and more prayer others discerned it would be possible to open a Center in Escanaba.

A house was rented, furniture acquired, laborers recruited and a program set up to train volunteers as Mentors. Pleas went out to the community for prayers, volunteers and

funding. And so it began, the effort to share the love of God that is shown us through His Son, Jesus.

Those who come through the doors of Pregnancy Services are often nervous, fearful, and sometimes desperate. Staff is not there to chastise them or to debate with them, the issues of the day. Instead they are shown love, compassion and truth. In turn they find something they want and need – hope for their situation.

Because of this loving acceptance, Staff sees women choosing life for their unborn and a desire to attend classes to learn how to care for their babies and to become good parents to those children they have at home.

St. Francis would say, well done my children. Instead of wringing your hands over the number of aborted babies, find out why women choose abortion, love them, listen to them, educate them, accept, Pray! Trust that the Lord is present in every situation!

Save
the
Date

April 29, 2017
Central District Gathering
Woodruff, WI hosted by Our Lady of the Universe
Fraternity in Woodruff.



Reflection on the Rule

The Franciscan Heart

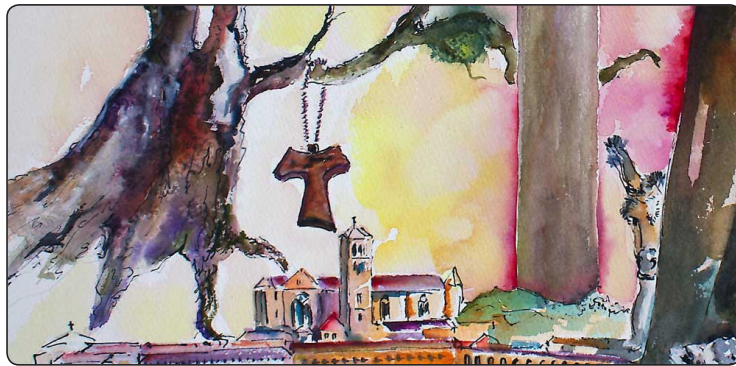
Submitted by John McDonnell, OFS
St. James Fraternity, Wausau

Have you ever met a Franciscan brother or sister and walked away from the encounter thinking, “now there is a Franciscan”? It may be a feeling, a hunch, something she said, a look that he gave, an outlook or some other “something” that was hard to miss. Perhaps you were touched by the Franciscan Heart.

The Franciscan heart is joyful: joyful in the human sense way and joyful in the Franciscan sense. The Little Flowers of Saint Francis recount the story of Francis walking with Brother Leo and discussing joy. To Francis, joy was not the beauty of physical miracles, the knowledge of scripture and prophecy, the understanding of science, or the conversion of non-Christians. Joy is experiencing the same pain that Christ suffered. It is not the endurance of that same humiliation, but the joy of understanding our place in His heart. “As a child rests in its mother’s arms, ever so my soul.” (Psalm 131) It is the joyful countenance of resting in His embrace. Oh, yes, the Franciscan heart is not just joyful, it also has a great, gentle sense of humor.

The Franciscan heart is serene. Remember all those tales of Solanus Casey enduring, ignoring, or maybe even being oblivious to the snide comments in his community? Maybe Solanus’s gaze was elsewhere, sort of like the halfback running to the end zone and not seeing all those arms reaching out to tackle him. The Franciscan serenity doesn’t ignore the trials and tribulations of life. It just puts them in perspective.

The Franciscan heart is prayerful. The Franciscan doesn’t corner the prayer market, but she surely brings a spirituality



of its own dimension. Remember Father Benedict Groeschel’s stories of Solanus Casey’s all night vigils in front of the Blessed Sacrament? Recall Saint Francis’s experience at Alverno. Look at some of the members of our own Secular Franciscan fraternity. Prayer is the life, breath, and depth of the Franciscan.

The Franciscan heart is hospitable. Feeling a little blue? Take a trip out to Saint Anthony’s and take a meal in the dining hall at a table full of Secular Franciscans. Road trip north to Merrill and check in at the Holy Cross community. After that much laughter and fellowship, that bad mood won’t last long.

The Franciscan heart doesn’t have a mean thing to say about other people. He knows that conversion takes place not through scolding, but through solicitude. In the legend of the Three Robbers, Francis reprimands Brother Angelo for chasing away three criminals who sought shelter and a meal at Monte Casale. Angelo brought the robbers back and eventually to conversion. The Franciscan sees the best in people.

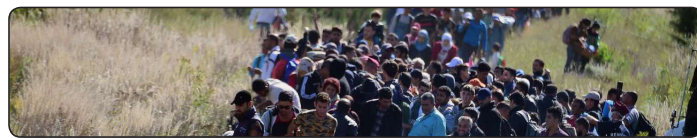
“Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” (Matthew 5:16) O Father in Heaven, one day may those around me be blessed with the light and the touch of the Franciscan heart.

Prayer for Refugees & Immigrants

Regional Vice-Minister Jeff Gumz shared information from NAFRA Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee regarding the impact of President Trump’s Executive Order on refugee resettlement. In addition to reading the press release (statement) from Franciscan Friars of the United States, we are asked to come together in prayer and solidarity for our refugee and immigrant brothers and sisters:

Merciful and loving Father,

We beseech you, open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality and refuge to migrants who are lonely, afraid,



and far from their homes Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as Christ in our midst, to invite them into our communities as a demonstration of Christ’s love for us. We pray that when we encounter the other, we see in her the face of your Son, when we meet a stranger, that we take his hand in welcome. Help us to live in solidarity with one another, to seek justice for those who are persecuted and comfort for those who are suffering. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(The Prayer for Migrants, USCCB)

Nominee Bios for Regional Election

Kathryne Sutliff, OFS, St. John Neuman Fraternity, Rhinelander, WI

I was professed in 1991 and have been active on the local level since that time. I was vice minister for two terms, formation director for two terms, and am currently minister for our St. John Neumann Fraternity in Rhinelander. I was councilor on the first regional council until I became ill and had to resign. I then accepted an appointment as secretary for the region in 2003 and was elected for two additional terms. In 2013 I was appointed secretary once again to complete the vacated position and was subsequently elected in 2014 for another three-year term.

Though single I adopted two children and now have grown children and grandchildren. I have been on my parish council, been a minister of the Eucharist, and a sacristan in my parish and am a volunteer at the cancer center here in Rhinelander and the food pantry.

I am running for Secretary or Councilor this year. If elected I will do the best I can to be a servant to the REC and the local fraternities.

Jeff Gumz, OFS, St. Ann Fraternity, Green Bay, WI

Jeff grew up in rural North Central Wisconsin and graduated from Colby High School in 1988. He graduated from UW Oshkosh in 1992 with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, with a minor in Spanish. He spent 1992-1994 in the cloud forests of Eastern Ecuador working with sheep and guinea pig farmers as a Peace Corps Volunteer. He has been a teacher with Green Bay Area Public Schools since 1999, where he began as a bilingual social studies teacher. Currently, he is teaching IB Psychology and Grade 9 Social Studies at Green Bay West High School. Jeff is a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Champion and has served his parish as Eucharistic Minister and Lector. Jeff has served as minister of his fraternity since 2010. Jeff has served as Vice Minister of the La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order since 2011. His philosophy of leadership is the Servant Leader, which means that you're not dictatorial, you don't put yourself forward, you are collaborative and seek to exalt the gifts of your brothers and sisters. He is running for Regional Minister.

Peter J. Bekkers, OFS, St. Joseph Fraternity, Appleton, WI

Born in Combined Locks, WI 9/25/34 and grew up in the Fox Valley area where I lived all my life. I married my wife, Carol, 10/5/57 and together we reared 8 children, 3 girls and 5 boys. I've spent my life in the accounting profession working for several companies taking early retirement in 1990 to devote my efforts to my business as a public accountant and tax professional. I owned my own company doing accounting and personal and corporate taxes part time for over 50 years until I sold the business in January 1998.

I spend my retirement doing volunteer work wherever and whenever I can. I drive for Theda Clark Hospital Auxiliary in Neenah, WI as a volunteer. I'm also the treasurer for several different "non-profit" organizations at the present time. At the point of retiring I promised myself that "I would not spend my retirement practicing being dead."

I am running for Treasurer or Councilor this year. If elected, I'll do my best to fulfill this commitment.

Teri M. Doughty, OFS, Sacred Heart Fraternity, Oshkosh, WI

I was professed as a Secular Franciscan in 1984 at the St. Joseph Fraternity in Appleton, WI. I later relocated in Oshkosh and joined the Sacred Heart Fraternity where I was Formation Director for two terms and now serve as Newsletter Editor. I have served on the Regional Executive Council as Councilor since 2014.

I am a retired sleep technologist, and I'm active in my Oshkosh parish, St. Jude the Apostle, as a Eucharistic Minister, a member of the Caring for God's Creation and the Human Concerns committee. I strive to bring my Franciscan values into all aspects of my life and my parish, having a special interest in social justice and ecology.

I would appreciate the opportunity to serve the Secular Franciscan Order as a Regional Councilor for another term, and if elected, will serve the local fraternities assigned to me with a spirit of hospitality and collaboration.

Sharon Dale, OFS, Our Lady Queen of Heaven Fraternity, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

This year marks my 20th anniversary as a Secular Franciscan. I've served on our local fraternity council in various positions: minister, treasurer, and currently as 2nd term secretary.

I'm currently serving as one of our Region Councilors, and as such have the privilege of meeting many members of our local fraternities as delegated Presider at local elections and Fraternal Visitations. I had the unique opportunity of being appointed as Region Delegate at the NAFRA elections in 2015, sitting in for Jim Carlson.

I am running for Vice Minister or Councilor this year. With Our Lord's guidance and the spirit of Francis of Assisi, I hope to renew my commitment to the Region Council.

Debra Martin, OFS, St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Milwaukee, WI

I was professed as a Secular Franciscan in May 2016. I am a proud mother of two sons, both of which have spread their wings and flown quite successfully from the nest. I have resided in the metro Milwaukee area for most of my life, and for the last 25 years, in Thiensville. I currently serve

as Secretary on the Executive Council of our fraternity, St. Francis of Assisi Milwaukee. I am a member of the worship community of St. Benedict the Moor, located in the inner city of Milwaukee. I am honored to volunteer and serve on the Board of Directors for Franciscan Peacemakers, a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting women with the healing and skills needed to leave the streets of prostitution. My personal passions include meditation, time in nature, gardening and caring for my one year old grandson, Holden.

I am honored to have included my name for nomination of either Secretary or Councilor. If elected, I will serve the position with great care and dedication, promoting peace and all good to my fraternal brothers and sisters!

Sue Bashynski, OFS, St. Katharine Drexel Fraternity, Beaver Dam, WI

I am the Minister of St. Katharine Drexel OFS Fraternity in Beaver Dam, WI. In October of 2012, under the guidance of the REC of the LaVerna Region, five parishioners and our Pastor joined together, and began formation toward profession as Secular Franciscans.

My husband and I were blessed to adopt and raise three behaviorally challenged special needs children. I am currently serving as a DRE for a small parish, and as the Confirmation Coordinator for St. Katharine Drexel Parish.

I am running for a position as Regional Councilor because I believe there is so much work to be done, and many people to reach out to. If I'm selected, I pray that my service on the council will join with others to bring energy and inspiration to the fraternities and cells in the LaVerna Region, and the communities we serve.

Charlie R. Neuman, OFS, St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Milwaukee, WI

It was and is an honor to be requested by the nomination committee to serve on the Regional Executive Council as a Councilor. I'm the third youngest of three children. I was born and raised in Two Rivers, WI. My present occupation is that of an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher. My main hobby is being a fiber/artist. I have served and I am serving on the Saint Francis of Assisi Fraternity, in Milwaukee WI as secretary and vice-minister. When asked to serve, I immediately responded with a yes. I feel as though this is another step in helping Francis rebuild the church.

Sue Spencer, OFS, Sacred Heart Fraternity, Oshkosh, WI

I was professed in 2002 with Oshkosh's Sacred Heart Fraternity. In the past, I have served as the Treasurer and currently am serving as the Vice Minister. I have also served as a formation team member helping our Formation Director.

My degrees are in Medical Technology (aka Clinical Laboratory Scientist) and Chemistry, and I worked most of my career in the field of Forensic Toxicology. After leaving that field, I worked at a hospital in Central Iowa as

a Supervisor/Tech in the laboratory and finally at Bellin Clinic's laboratory before I retired.

As part of my Franciscan call, God has called me to minister to hurting married couples through Retrouvaille. I currently volunteer at the Day By Day Warming Shelter in Oshkosh. I am a member of St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church.

It is an honor to be considered for nomination as a Councilor for the LaVerna Region.

Nicholas Crane, OFS, St. Peter Fraternity, Stevens Point, WI

I was professed as a Secular Franciscan in 2010, 2 years after graduating from Saint Lawrence Seminary High School, a boarding prep school run by the Capuchins. My time with the Capuchins enkindled the Franciscan Spirit in me.

I have held the council positions of Treasurer and Vice-Minister in our fraternity. During this time, I was also actively involved with the formation activities in our fraternity. I have held other positions in professional clubs and organizations. I own my own Forest and Land Management company where I can set my own schedule and get to enjoy the beauty of nature in Wisconsin. I also teach CCD on Wednesday nights to 8th grade boys.

I am running for Councilor this year and if elected I can help the council out by sharing my unique insights, ideas, and enthusiasm to the best of my ability.

Bob Crane, OFS, St. Peter Fraternity, Stevens Point, WI

Born in South Dakota and raised on a Dairy Farm in Northwestern Wisconsin. Attended UW Stevens Point, where I earned degrees in Forestry - Administration and Communications - Public Relations. Currently ministering to our fraternity, St. Peter's in Stevens Point, caring for my family, and running our forestry consulting business.

In addition to serving as the Minister of our local fraternity I am also very busy with several apostolates in Stevens Point and as a regional councilor for the past 3 years.

Now is the time to reverse this declining trend of membership and work hard to let the world know that we exist, bring in new members, and grow new leaders who can revitalize our fraternities. The outreach methods that have served in the past may not be enough, we need to employ new and more far reaching methods including mass media, social media, and grass roots promotion. We also need to take a more active role in ministering to the youth in our region, finding ways to reach out to them and reinvigorate their enthusiasm for Christ and the Church.

During the next term in the Regional Council I look forward to serving where needed; as your Minister, Vice Minister or Councilor.

**La Verna Region
Secular Franciscan Order
236 Elizabeth Street
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Francis & The Beggar Bowl

Francis realized one day that the priest he was staying with was providing him with special food.

Francis reflected, “Wherever you may happen to go, do you suppose you will find another priest who will treat you so kindly? This is not the life of the poor such as you wished to choose: rather you should go, bowl in hand, from door to door, and driven by hunger, collect the various morsels you may be given. It is only thus that you can live voluntarily for love of Him who was born poor, lived poor in this world, and remained naked and poor on the cross.”

So, one day, with great fervor, he took a bowl and went through the streets of the city begging for alms from door to door just as he had described the begging of the poor. People dropped a variety of scraps into the bowl.

When it came to eating the contents of the bowl, Francis’ stomach turned, for he had never seen such a mess, let alone try to eat it. At last, making a great effort, he started to gulp it down, and it seemed to him the most delicious food in the world. His heart leaped with joy, and he praised and thanked God who had changed what was bitter into sweetness and comforted him in so many ways.

May we learn a similar lesson in our lives.



The La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA consists of Eastern three-quarters of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. The region geographical area is divided into four districts: Southeast, Central, Fox Valley and Upper Michigan. The La Verna Vision is a communication vehicle with the LaVerna Region, and presents a forum for information and insights that relate to the Secular Franciscan Order way of life.