



La Verna OFS Region

# LaVerna e-Vision

*Christmas 2025 edition*

**Published by LaVerna Regional Council of the Secular Franciscan Order**



May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. May the true spirit of Christmas shine in your heart and illuminate your path. May God fill your life with love, joy, and peace this Christmas and throughout the New Year and may Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

## Minister's Remarks

### PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

To the person who has no faith, Christmas is merely a pagan festival. It should be far different with us who have a living, active faith in the true meaning of the feast. With faith we welcome Jesus.

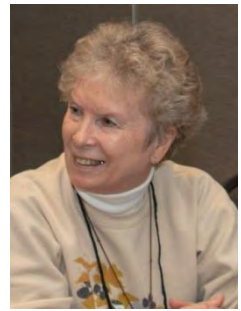
With faith we believe in Him. With faith we love Him. When we look back over the years of our life, we cannot but feel deeply grateful to God for all His gifts and blessings. Our vocation as Secular Franciscans, His everyday guidance, the graces He has granted us throughout the years-- including perseverance-- all these should make us welcome Jesus with grateful hearts. Bowing down before the throne of the Most High God, we should return humble, earnest thanks. We ought to love Him not merely out of gratitude for His gifts, of course, but also, and principally, because He is infinitely good and perfect.

In God there is every perfection and excellence. The Child born to Mary that night in Bethlehem is the Son of God; His coming into this world was the greatest event that ever happened. And it is this event we recall again on Christmas Day.

The Saints sought God alone and found Him easily in Bethlehem. Look how St. Francis, at Greccio, shared his vision of Christ's birth by re-creating the setting of His birth. He gathered farm animals and a few local people together and staged the first creche scene. There is a story that St. Clare rose from her sickbed, drawn to the chapel on Christmas Eve, where she experienced a vision of the Baby Jesus.

On Christmas Day, as you stand before the manger in your parish church, may you know peace, love, and joy, which only He can give.

On behalf of our Regional Executive Council, I wish you all a very Blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with special graces and blessings as well, for you and your families.



December 12<sup>th</sup> was the fourth time a 'New Council Training' was given and it was for the Portiuncula Fraternity in Franklin, WI. It was a wonderful event, well received and beneficial. The session lasted about 4 hours and was about the duties and responsibilities of the elected council about animating and guiding the fraternity.

As a reminder, and in accordance with our Regional Guidelines, all newly elected councils are required to request this 'class' very soon after their election.

For more information, contact Bob Henning, OFS, [bmjhsfo@aol.com](mailto:bmjhsfo@aol.com) or call (906) 458-7607.

Pictured are L-R, Michael Nowak OFS, Leslie Cooper OFS, Michael Cooper OFS, Ray Boisvenue OFS & Carol Nelson OFS

Upcoming Saints feast days;

Jan 1 – Solemnity of Mary



Jan 31- St John Bosco



Feb 6-St Paul Miki & Companions



Mar 6 – St Collette of Corbie



Mar 9 – St Frances of Rome



Mar 25 – The Annunciation



We are hoping to receive articles from fraternities and members about anything Franciscan. Let us know what is going on in your area. Tell us about your successes and accomplishments. Let us know about professions and send pictures. We are a family so let us share what is going on in our different areas.

[Compiled by Deacon Dave & Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., Revised July 2017]

## **History of the Crèche**

The earliest representation of the Nativity can be seen in a fresco found in the catacombs of St. Priscilla, 2nd century A.D., portraying the Mother and Child, the Three Wise Men and St. Joseph or perhaps the prophet Isaiah, and above, a star with eight points. The Nativity of Jesus has been a major subject of Christian art since the 4th Century. The artistic depictions of the Nativity or birth of Jesus, celebrated at Christmas, are based on the narratives in the Bible, in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and further elaborated by written, oral and artistic tradition. Christian art includes a great many representations of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. Such works are generally referred to as the “Madonna and Child” or “Virgin and Child.” They are not usually representations of the Nativity specifically, but are often devotional objects representing a particular aspect or attribute of the Virgin Mary, or Jesus. Nativity pictures, on the other hand, are specifically illustrative, and include many narrative details; they are a normal component of the sequences illustrating both the Life of Christ and the Life of the Virgin.

In later centuries, until about the 5th Century more frescoes of the Epiphany were painted in different catacombs. A fresco found in the catacomb of St. Sebastian shows a sort of manger with the ass and the ox, but Mary and Joseph are not seen.

Later in the 4th and 5th Century in bas-relief work on marble sarcophagi the figures of shepherds began to appear and gradually the Nativity Scene came to resemble the present day form with all the figures, the Child, Mary and Joseph, the ass, the ox, the Three Wise Men and the Shepherds. The Nativity has been depicted in many different media, both pictorial and sculptural. Pictorial forms include murals, panel paintings, manuscript illuminations, stained glass windows and oil paintings. The subject of the Nativity is often used for altarpieces, many of these combining both painted and sculptural elements. Other sculptural representations of the Nativity include ivory miniatures, carved stone sarcophagi, architectural features such as capitals and door lintels, and free standing sculptures.

In this sense, scholars agree that the oldest Nativity Scene in Italy is in marble attributed to Arnolfo di Cambio around 1289. Although some of the figures were broken or lost, this Nativity Scene can still be seen today in the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome. Up to 1870, many Popes came here to celebrate Christmas Mass.

Tradition attributes to Saint Francis the merit of introducing the Nativity Scene to the vast cycle of Christmas customs, when, at Christmas 1223 in the village of Greccio near Assisi, as we are told by St. Bonaventure, he took a manger and filled it with hay, tied an ass and an ox near it and with a crowd of people from all over the neighboring countryside attended the celebration of Mass in front of the crib. The Christ Child in the manger and other pictures of the story of Bethlehem have been used in church services from the first centuries. But the crib in its present form and its use outside the church originated with St. Francis of Assisi. Through his famous celebration at Greccio, Italy, on Christmas Eve 1223, with a Bethlehem scene including live animals, he made the crib popular. Since then, it has been a familiar sight in Christian homes all over the world.

Finance report

La Verna Regional Fraternity OFS STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSE FOR PERIODS ENDED DEC 31, 2025 and 2024					Approved 2025 Budget 29 Jun 2024	Approved Amended 2025 Budget 28 Jun 2025
	T H I S Y E A R Y. T. D. 2 0 2 5	Budget	Budget	Last Year		
		12 months period 2 0 2 5	Variance Favorable	Actual 2 0 2 4		
<b>BEGINNING BALANCES:</b>			(Unfavorable)			
REGULAR CHECKING -----	25,532.67			27,276.48		
RETREAT SUBSIDY FUND -----	5,699.15			4,957.10		
EDUCATION/TRAINING FUND -----	7,153.52			6,411.47		
RETREAT/EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FD ---	25,000.00			25,000.00		
CUSTODIAL FUND -----	25,547.00			25,547.00		
CASH ON HAND -----	0.00			0.00		
FAIR SHARE FUND -----	620.00			620.00		
<b>TOTAL CASH ON HAND &amp; IN BANKS -</b>	<b>89,552.34</b>			<b>89,812.05</b>		
<b>REVENUE:</b>						
DONATIONS -----	2,015.88	2,749.04	(733.16)	2,906.11	5,000.00	2,749.04
FAIR SHARE FUND -----	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
INT. RETREAT ENDOWMENT FUND	771.00	771.00	0.00	742.05	800.00	771.00
INTEREST EDUCATION FUND	771.00	771.00	0.00	742.05	800.00	771.00
SPECIAL MEMORIALS -----	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CHAPTER -----	1,234.00	555.00	679.00	1,486.00	1,111.00	555.00
FAIR SHARE -- 303 + 11 @ 80-40	21,880.00	23,920.00	(2,040.00)	22,959.00	24,440.00	23,920.00
SA WRKSP -----	160.00	160.00	0.00	0.00	750.00	160.00
INTEREST CUSTODIAL FUND -----	1,593.56	1,593.56	0.00	1,533.71	1,600.00	1,593.56
MISC & FORMATION WS INCOME -----	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE -----</b>	<b>28,925.44</b>	<b>30,519.60</b>	<b>(1,594.16)</b>	<b>30,368.92</b>	<b>34,501.00</b>	<b>30,519.60</b>
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS -----</b>	<b>118,477.78</b>			<b>120,180.97</b>		
<b>EXPENSES:</b>			Favorable (Unfavorable)			
STIPENDS & EXPENSES -----	1,350.00	1,800.00	450.00	1,800.00	3,600.00	1,800.00
RENT INCLUDING EQUIPMENT -----	0.00	530.00	530.00	0.00	530.00	530.00
MATERIALS & SUPPLIES -----	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
EDUCATION/TRAINING -----	3,095.98	1,200.00	(1,895.98)	1,350.97	3,585.00	1,200.00
MEETING ROOM & FACILITIES -----	1,700.68	100.00	(1,600.68)	0.00	200.00	100.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES -----	0.00	250.00	250.00	179.12	500.00	250.00
DONATIONS -----	250.00	250.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	250.00
ADMINISTRATIVE & WEB EXP -----	481.00	700.00	219.00	933.45	1,416.00	700.00
NEWSLETTER -& MARYWOOD-----	0.00	300.00	300.00	2,715.22	600.00	300.00
TRAVEL EXP & EXPENSES -----	3,386.35	4,416.00	1,029.65	4,832.41	7,760.00	4,416.00
FAIR SHARE TO OFS-USA ---320@17---	6,666.00	6,666.00	0.00	7,838.00	6,864.00	6,666.00
ANNUAL CHAPTER -----	7,130.47	6,225.00	(905.47)	8,852.22	7,390.00	6,225.00
VISITATION / ELECTION -----	2,763.61	2,000.00	(763.61)	1,148.75	0.00	2,000.00
RETREAT SUBSIDY -----	150.00	230.00	80.00	150.00	262.50	230.00
FAIR SHARE FUND	0.00	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SA WRKSP -----	1,478.22	1,310.62	(167.60)	688.49	990.00	1,310.62
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE -----	0.00	125.00	125.00	80.00	125.00	125.00
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS -----</b>	<b>28,452.31</b>	<b>2,179.39</b>	<b>(2,299.69)</b>	<b>30,568.63</b>	<b>34,372.50</b>	<b>26,152.62</b>
<b>GAIN OR (LOSS) FOR PERIOD ---</b>	<b>473.13</b>	<b>28,340.21</b>	<b>(3,893.85)</b>	<b>(199.71)</b>	<b>128.50</b>	<b>\$ 4,366.98</b>
<b>ENDING BALANCE -----</b>	<b>90,025.47</b>			<b>89,612.34</b>		
<b>CURRENT BALANCES:</b>						
REGULAR CHECKING -----	23,043.80	38,978.47		25,532.67		
RETREAT SUBSIDY FUND -----	6,470.15			5,699.15		
EDUCATION/TRAINING FUND -----	7,924.52			7,153.52		
RETREAT / EDUCATION CATHOLIC FUND *--	25,000.00			25,000.00		
CUSTODIAL FUND INVESTMENT (JC) -----	25,547.00			25,547.00		
CASH ON HAND -----	920.00	186%		(0.00)		
St Joseph reactivation fund	500.00					
FAIR SHARE FUND -----	620.00			620.00		
<b>TOTAL CASH ON HAND &amp; IN BANKS --</b>	<b>90,025.47</b>			<b>89,612.34</b>		
CUSTODIAL FUND(5283)-JC bequest + St Pascal Baylon gift as of 11/30/25, last 12 mo = 9.90% <b>Gain / (loss)</b>	33,994.24 8,447.24	5% \$	1,699.71	31,871.12 6,324.12		
CATHOLIC FOUNDATION FUND (5205) as of 11/30/23	32,894.53	5% \$	1,644.73	30,840.08		
* St Francis of Assisi + Anonymous + REC as of 11/30/25 Last 12 mo 9.90% <b>Gain / (Loss)</b>	7,894.53			5,840.08		
Bob Henning, OFS, TREASURER 12/21/25				02/22/25		
					Outstanding Checks 988.97	

**OFS-USA**  
**2026**  
 29 July - 02 August ☀ Lexington, KY

**SAVE THE DATE**

**21<sup>st</sup> Quinquennial**  
 of the Secular Franciscan Order  
 of the USA

**SCAN ME**

Registration begins Aug. 15th.

Use QR code above  
 or  
 green button below.

Read Registration Information first.

**REGISTER HERE**

**Q Registration Cost:**

**“Early bird” \* \$ 550 August 15 - Dec. 31, 2025**

Regular \* \$ 650 January 01 - May 31, 2026

“Late Owl” \* \$ 725 June 1 - June 15, 2026

One-day-only \*\* \$ 160 January 01 - June 15, 2026

\* Includes meal plan: 4 dinners, 3 breakfasts and 3 lunches, beginning with dinner on Wed. July 29. Meals on your own Sunday, August 02.

Please note: Penitential meals will be offered on Friday

\*\* Includes 1 lunch and 1 dinner

Registration closes June 15, 2026