



## Dear Brothers & Sisters

Secular Franciscan Fraternity

We gather at **7:30 p.m** on the **second Monday** of each month at:

**St. Joseph's Home**  
80 W. Northwest Hwy.  
Palatine, IL

### Council Members

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*Councilor-at-Large*  
Kay, OFS

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Our Evening of Reflection in July centered on the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*. 'Rejoice and be Glad' is the call of Pope Francis to *all* Christians, a call that our Father Francis makes to us through our Rule and the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscans. One of the definitions of *rule* and *constitution* is "principle". This is the definition which guided the writers of our Rule and General Constitutions. Both are composed of *principles* which guide us in loving our brothers and sisters and all creation. As Father Richard Rohr, OFM, states "like skeleton and muscles, the two are meant to work together." The Rule and General Constitutions are the skeleton which protects and upholds the heart muscle – how we live our lives as Secular Franciscans.

As an addendum to this lovely evening, our Spiritual Assistant, Jerry, OFS, writes:

The day after my presentation I received some feedback about it. Candid and sincere comments were very informative and perhaps show where I may have needed to place more emphasis. Let me do that now.

A week or so before the evening of reflection I sent questions for discussion to everyone through the newsletter with instructions to look through the rule and the constitution and be prepared to discuss where the rule or constitution calls us to an aspect of holiness. Everyone was to have completed this prior to our gathering. Why do this? Why spend time looking through our documents? That can be boring work as was pointed out. Some did not want to include discussion of the rule or constitution or it could be boring or limit the conversation. If everyone had completed the assignment, though, there would have been time to discuss everything in the pope's exhortation in light of our vocation as Secular Franciscans, and not only as Christians. Had that work been completed beforehand as suggested, there might have been a very rich discussion. Why add the rule and constitution to the evening? *It is our path to holiness as seculars.*

As Tibor, our Minister General points out, and I shared that evening, "Before all, the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order is a treasure, a gift of God, that shows how much God and the Church  
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love the Secular Franciscan Order. Our Rule is not only a normative or legislative text, but also (and mostly) a spiritual text. It is to be read often not only because we have to keep some norms or do some pre-written prayers, but also and mostly because it is our treasure that helps us to fulfill our vocation. It has to inspire us! We, Secular Franciscans, have everything in our rule that can give us enough inspiration to walk along the way of our vocational journey.”

Our rule and constitution are not lists of do’s and don’ts. They are a path to holiness. This was the point of the entire evening. The Pope in his exhortation gave the church a path to holiness. This path is also all throughout our rule and constitutions, a point that Sister Sue made with her group. The hope of the exercise was that all could find this path in our rule which, as Tibor points out, is a treasure, a gift from God. We do need to look at our rule often as we are called to do.

Our rule is a guide to our vocation as Secular Franciscans. If we are not familiar with our rule and constitutions, how will we understand our charism? What makes us Franciscan, if not our rule and constitutions?

The goals of the National Executive Council illustrate further the call to our rule. The priorities for the next three years, “The call to Fraternity Life”, that I mentioned in the presentation, are based on our Constitution. Three articles: 28.1, 3.3, 100.3 form the basis for the goals listed for the next three years. We all need to be familiar with these articles as they give life to these national priorities.

*Our vocation is based on the guidelines proposed in our rule and constitution. To repeat, these are not lists of do’s and don’ts. They should not imprison our spirit but free it.*

I am glad that I could offer additional information to our discussion at the evening of reflection. I hope it is of value. We are in this together. Our documents are important and need to be reviewed often. They can also be discussed among all in our fraternity, especially our candidates who are just beginning to explore their calling.

Peace,  
Jerry

## Our Monthly Gathering

On Monday, August 12, 2019, we will gather at 7:00 p.m. in the chapel for the joyful profession of our Candidate, Gail. Please arrive before 7:00 p.m. and sit in the pews marked “Reserved”. The Mass of Profession will be followed by a reception in the auditorium for Gail and her family and friends. ☒

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## Anniversaries

There are no anniversaries of profession in August.

As our Candidate Gail readies for her profession on August 12<sup>th</sup>, let all of us who are professed renew the promise we made on the day of our profession:

***Therefore, in my secular state, I promise to live all the days of my life the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order by observing its Rule of life.***

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## Portiuncula Gathering Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>

The Annual Celebration of the Feast of the Portiuncula will be held at Mayslake on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is a regional celebration that all fraternity members are expected to attend.

This year the guest speaker will be **Sister Madge, SSJ-TOSF**, who inspired us with her words of wisdom and humor at our evening of reflection last year.

A copy of the information on the gathering was included with the July newsletter ☒

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## Common Fund – July 2019

Beginning balance	\$2722.44
Deposits	249.00
Expenses	85.00
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$2886.44</b>

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## And So We Pray...

### PAPAL INTENTIONS FOR AUGUST

#### **Evangelization: Families, Schools of Human Development**

That families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly “schools of true human development”.

#### **Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.***

For all teachers of students at all levels from preschool to postgraduate studies, that they may always speak the truth to their students,

For all students, that they may use the gift of learning that God has given them to the best of their ability,

For all parents of students, that they will support their children in their academic endeavors and encourage their dreams and aspirations,

### **WE PRAY FOR THOSE NEAR AND DEAR**

For our **Brother Tom, OFS**, and especially for his wife, **Grace**, who sustained injuries in an auto accident, that they experience full healing, we pray to the Lord,

For the health concerns of **Sister Bonnie, OFS**, we pray to the Lord,

For the sister-in-law of our **Sister Kay, OFS**, as she fights cancer, we pray to the Lord,

For our **Sister Cyndy, OFS**, that she will be successful in her job search, we pray to the Lord,

For our **Sister Eddie, OFS**, who suffered a stroke last month, that she be healed of her infirmities, we pray to the Lord,

For all of our **shut-in sisters**, that the health issues that keep them separated from us will be attended to with compassion and love, we pray to the Lord,

For all the **residents of St. Joseph’s Home** and for the **Little Sisters of the Poor**, who lovingly welcome us into their home each month, we pray to the Lord,

For our **homeless brothers and sisters** who are served by Franciscan Outreach, we pray to the Lord,



## **Our Call to be a Secular Franciscan**

*This month we continue our stories of the path that led us to recognizing our call to become secular Franciscans. This is the story of our Sister Stephanie.*

All through my school years, I never thought about any other vocation than religious life. As a young teenager, I cleaned the apartment of my bachelor uncle. After I was finished, we would sit and talk. When he would ask me what I wanted to do after I graduated high school, I told him I was going to enter religious life. He would laugh and say, “Honey, that’s the last thing you’ll do.” My teenaged self would secretly say, “Hah! What does he know?”

However, tight family finances nudged me toward a full time job to help my younger siblings. I enjoyed my work and night school but it was not where I wanted to be.

One morning driving to the Loop on Lake Shore Drive, I hit an oil slick and I could not control my car. It spun across four lanes of rush hour traffic. When it stopped, I was in the far right lane facing traffic with cars stopped in all the lanes. I will never forget the horrified look on the face of the driver whose car was a few feet

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in front of me when mine stopped. I should have been killed. I wasn't. The car was untouched.

I knew then that God had other plans for me. It wasn't what I wanted, but what He wanted. I gave my life to Him. Not mine, but Thine.

When Jack proposed after three dates, I knew without a doubt this was the path God wanted me to follow. I embraced marriage fully.

Over the years, however, I would sometimes wonder about that deep desire. Was it a vocation? Or the flight of a young girl's fancy? I knew I was where God wanted me to be. Still...

Twenty-two years ago, memories of my uncle gave me a new insight. Maybe he was smarter than my teenaged self had thought. Maybe entering religious life was the last thing I would do...or at least one of the last things. I decided to pray about it to my patron saint, St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death in 1997, I was asking her if I truly had a vocation when a strong scent of roses occurred. I asked Jack, who had a keen nose, if he smelled anything. He did not. There were no roses anywhere near us. I accepted it as a sign that my lifelong desire would be granted. Just not right away.

Nine years later, at Mass, the thought occurred that now that I was a widow, I could pursue my desire of becoming a secular Franciscan. I could use the internet to locate a nearby fraternity.

After Mass, my usual path through the narthex was crowded. While taking a different way, I passed a bulletin board that I had never seen before. I stopped. There was a letter announcing an open house at St. Joseph's Home hosted by the Northwest Franciscan Community of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In Palatine. Could the Holy Spirit be more obvious?

On the night of the open house, arriving on the second floor, I saw people – whoever they were – talking and laughing in the library.

I entered the chapel and knelt to pray. Seventy-three came and went. I wondered if I was in the right place. Soon the people from the library began to enter the chapel. Brother Tom slid into the pew in front of me, turned and gave me a huge smile and a warm welcome. I was HOME. Sister Stephanie, OFS

## 2019 Calendar

Unless otherwise noted, all events are at St. Joseph's Home.

### January

~~14: Monthly Gathering (Communion Service)~~

### February

~~11: Monthly Gathering (Liturgy of the Hours)~~

~~25: Council meeting, Sue Gribbon's home~~

### March

~~11: Monthly Gathering (Stations of the Cross)~~

### April

~~08: Monthly Gathering (Communion Service)~~

~~22: Council Meeting, Stephanie's home~~

### May

~~13: Monthly Gathering (Crown Rosary)~~

~~21: Council Meeting, Stephanie's home~~

### June

~~10: Monthly Gathering (Communion Service)~~

~~24: Council Meeting, Stephanie's home~~

### July

~~08: Fraternity Evening of Recollection~~

~~— Please note change of venue. We will~~

~~gather at St. Joseph's in the Library as~~

~~usual (Communion Service)~~

### August

12: Profession Mass at St. Joseph's

26: Council Meeting, Stephanie's home

### September

09: Monthly Gathering (Liturgy of the Hours)

### October

03: Transitus of our Holy Father Francis

14: Monthly Gathering (Communion Service)

28: Council Meeting, Stephanie's home

### November

11: Monthly Gathering (Mass – with Rite of Remembrance)

### December

09: Monthly Gathering (Communion Service)

TBD: Council Meeting, Stephanie's home