

Sharing The Vision

News from the National Executive Council

by Jan Parker and Mary Bittner

Jubilee Year – Living Your Vocation

In June, we kicked off the Jubilee Celebration (40th Anniversary) of the New Rule. Our General Minister gave us a beautiful gift with his June 24, 2018 letter. CIOFS issued nine “Celebrating the Rule” cards with messages and questions to help us reflect on how well we are living the Rule. Many regional and local fraternities have been celebrating with retreats, gatherings, special liturgies, special prayer cards and gifts of the Little Red Rule Book. The following formation resources can be downloaded from our website.

Direct Link: <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/ministers-message-june-2018-our-jubilee-begins/>

OFS Holy Half Hours on the Rule

Kathy Taormina, OFS

Formation on the Rule/Gospel to Life

Mary Bittner, OFS

Being Franciscan Today! Sharing Your Dream: Communal Visioning

LaVerna Region

Ongoing Formation on the Rule

Lady Poverty Region

The Words of Our OFS Rule

Kathy Taormina, OFS

The OFS Rule – We Hold a Treasure

Troubadours of Peace Region

National Executive Council Election Slate

The Secular Franciscan Order in the United States will elect a new Executive Council on Saturday, October 13, 2018, during the annual Chapter in St. Louis, Missouri. The new Council will serve the Order from 2018-2021. The slate of nominees is:

Minister:

Jan Parker, OFS

Vice Minister:

Mary Bittner, OFS; Jane DeRose Bamman, OFS;
Donna Hollis, OFS

Secretary:

Jane DeRose Bamman, OFS; Francine Gikow, OFS; Kate Kleinert, OFS

Treasurer:

Claudia Kauzlarich, OFS; Richard Spana, OFS

International Councilor:

Mary Frances Charsky, OFS; Awilda Guadalupe, OFS; Mary Stronach, OFS

Councilor(s) at Large:

Justin Carisio, OFS; Mary Frances Charsky, OFS; Awilda Guadalupe, OFS; Donna Hollis, OFS; Kate Kleinert, OFS; Josh Molidor, OFS; Carmen Montanez, OFS; Frank Scotto, OFS

Novena Prayer for the National Chapter of Elections

Most High Glorious God, we praise You for Your presence in the world and for the tremendous gift of our Franciscan vocation. We beseech You to inspire every brother and sister of The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of the United States as we prepare for our National Chapter of Elections in October, 2018. Grant each of us the necessary wisdom to elect those You want to animate and guide our National Fraternity. Guide and direct us so that we may follow the Gospel and our Rule more closely and be coworkers with You in the rebuilding of the Church and the World. We ask this through Christ our Lord and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis, St. Clare, and our holy patrons St. Elizabeth and St. Louis. Amen.

JPIC – Together on the Journey of Hope/ Justice for Immigrants

This past July, Carolyn Townes, National JPIC Chair, emailed all Regional Ministers asking in what ways local OFS members were engaged in outreach to immigrants or in assisting to reunite separated families. The response was amazing. Our brothers and sisters are working individually, and as fraternities in conjunction with their parishes, Franciscan Friars and Sisters, civic organizations and other faith groups, reaching out in numerous ways – providing meals and shelter, legal assistance, transportation to reunite families, teaching English as a second language, advocacy, donations of money and supplies, prayer rallies, and immigrant support groups. All this is

consistent with the Bishops' pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, and the subsequent *Justice for Immigrants Campaign*.

Regional Spiritual Assistant Workshop and Formation Visioning Workshop

Two important National Workshops were held consecutively from August 29-September 1 at the Savior Pastoral Center in Kansas City, Kansas. The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants met with the Regional Spiritual Assistants for ongoing formation and to provide answers to the many questions that arise on a day-to-day basis. The National Executive Council members and National Formation Team met with the Regional Formation Directors and Regional Spiritual Assistants for a Formation Visioning Workshop with the purpose of seeking God's direction for our Order in the area of formation. A full report will be included in the next issue of *TAU-USA*.

Secular Franciscan USA Website

The "Contact Us" feature of our new website receives numerous inquiries – *an average of eight weekly* – with the most frequent request being how to join the Order. These requests are forwarded to regional OFS contacts. A good number of our OFS documents will be moved to the new site as they are updated, but are still available on the old website. If you have questions or need resources, you are welcome to submit an inquiry on the new site. <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/send-us-a-message/> Your

response will come from our email address: ncc.ofs.usa@gmail.com

What's in a name? NAFRA vs. OFS-USA

The acronym "NAFRA" has been used for years to refer to the National Fraternity. However, it isn't unique to the United States. So to provide certainty we are shifting to the use of "OFS-USA." You'll see email addresses, the website, our Facebook page address, and Twitter account change to the OFS-USA. Of course, we will still use the term "National Fraternity" in speaking of all OFS in the United States but we will limit the use of "NAFRA." Remember that all of us belong to four fraternities: local, regional, national and international. (Someday we need a list of acronyms listed on the website!)

OFS-USA Statement on the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandal

With sadness, hope for healing, and the pursuit of accountability for the abusers and those in authority who allowed it to continue, the National Executive Council (NEC) issued a statement calling us to double our efforts to live our Rule by helping to rebuild the Church. Most especially, the NEC requests prayers for healing, forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation. For the full statement view: <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/2018/08/26/a-message-to-secular-franciscans-regarding-the-recent-scandal-in-the-churches-of-pennsylvania/>