



Clarion

NEWSLETTER

SAINT CLARE REGION

Lent, Love & Francis!

Most High, Glorious God,
bring light to the darkness of my heart,
give me right faith, certain hope, and
perfect charity.

Lord, give me insight and wisdom
so I might always discern
your holy and true will.
Amen.



I love Lent. For me, it is perfectly timed in the rhythms of my life. It comes towards the end of winter, at a time when I am in most need of a fresh start, a reset, a time to pause and step back and clear out the stuff that has accumulated and 'gotten in the way' of my true focus on Jesus.

Francis' Prayer Before the San Damiano Crucifix echoes his eternal love of Lent throughout the entire year. It's been said that he celebrated Five Lents throughout the year (see page 6). How does that not surprise me? Of course he did. He was on a faithful journey of daily, hourly constant conversion.

This very simple Prayer is what Lent is all about to me – it prays my daily conversion, my willingness and eagerness to surrender my will to God's. It helps to bring the light of Lent to the darkness of my sins, and settles in me to always be accepting of the perfect charity of God's love for me.

Peace & All Good, Always,

Chris Blood, OFS

FEBRUARY

2024

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The Secular Franciscan Order was established by St. Francis of Assisi more than 800 years ago. Our purpose is to bring the Gospel to life where we live and where we work. We look for ways to embrace the Gospel in our lives and try to help others to do likewise.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL PROFESSIONS



Ken Livingston, OFS, Minister of the Followers of Francis Fraternity in Springfield, MO received the Profession of Neil Adams, OFS on Saturday, January 6, 2024 at Sacred Heart Parish in Springfield, MO. Fr. Ray Smith confirms his profession for the Church.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL IN A NEW FRATERNITY!

SERVANT OF GOD THEA BOWMAN EMERGING FRATERNITY

Front Row (L-R): Stephanie Dickenson (Inquirer), Karen Rothery; OFS; Suzee Irwin, OFS (Treasurer), Darina Sergent, OFS

Second Row (L-R): Padraic McGrath, OFS (Secretary); Tom Brinkmann, OFS (Minister); Adrian Stillman (Inquirer); Joe Scalise OFS (Vice-Minister/Formation Director); Deacon Tim Dolan (Inquirer); Bobbie Ruiz OFS; Chris Blood OFS (Councilor)

The fraternity meets at the Tau Center in Kirkwood, MO.

FEBRUARY 28, 2024



**2024 Regional
Formation
Seasonal
Retreat**

Saturday, March 8

9am-12pm

Via Zoom Meeting

[FULL AGENDA](#)

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL IN FORMATION

2024 Regional Formation Virtual Retreat

All Are Welcome!!!

**Join us for our Regional Formation Seasonal
Spiritual Lenten Retreat!**

March 9th, 2024

9am-12pm

**“Passion of Christ & Secular Franciscan
Way of Life”**

**Formation Team: Regional Formation,
SOG Thea Fraternity, & St. Joan of Arc Fraternity**

Retreat Speaker:



Retreat Speaker: Deacon Steve Schisler, OFS

Venue: Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84431207675>

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL IN COMMUNITY!

REGIONAL WEEKEND RETREAT

FRIDAY, APRIL 5 - SUNDAY, APRIL 7

LIMITED TO 20

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

COST IS \$90 / PERSON (INCLUDES FOOD)

SIGN UP NOW— CALL CONNIE SHANKS 573-776-3434

CONNIESHANKS@GMAIL.COM

**SPRING
IN-PERSON
REGIONAL
RETREAT—
IL RITIRO
FRANCIS-
CAN
RENEWAL
CENTER**



The Five Lents of Francis

A Lent to prepare for Easter and for Christmas

For 40 days before Easter, Francis observed the “Great Lent,” what we know as Lent today. Francis also observed a similar period of 40 days of fasting and prayer in preparation for Christmas, beginning after the Feast of All Saints on November 1. It was at the end of a Lent preparing for Christmas that Francis arranged for the display of the Nativity scene at Greccio. Both Lents were observed by his brothers as well (*Later Rule*, Chapter 3).

A fast like Jesus’ in the desert

Francis also recommended a fast of 40 days after the Epiphany, January 6. On this day in Francis’ time, the Church celebrated the Baptism of the Lord (as well as the visit of the Three Kings), so Francis reasoned that Jesus began his fasting of 40 days in the desert on January 7.

A Lent in summer

In some years Francis also observed a Lent in summer, from the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, June 29, patrons of the Church of Rome, until the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (whom Francis calls “the virgin made church”), which occurs on August 15.

A Lent to honor Saint Michael

Finally, Francis observed out of personal devotion a Lent in honor of Saint Michael after the Assumption until September 29. It was during such a “Lent of Saint Michael” that Francis received the vision of the Seraph on the mountain of La Verna, followed by the appearance of the stigmata on his body.

During the Lent of Saint Michael at La Verna in the fall of 1224, Francis was accompanied by Brother Leo, with whom he prayed the Office, while spending most of the time in prayer alone.



Anxious to know the will of the Lord

Basically, Francis was creating the space and time to step apart and reflect on how God was asking him to deepen his commitment in terms of the ever-changing situation of his life. “When blessed Francis stayed constantly in a place to pray, he was always anxious to know the will of the Lord, about how he could please him better” (*Assisi Compilation*, 118).

By Fr. William J. Short, OFM

Professor, Franciscan School of Theology & Director of the Collegium S. Bonaventurae—Fratelli Editori di Quaracchi

Upcoming St. Clare Region Events 2024

*March 8
Seasonal Virtual Retreat*

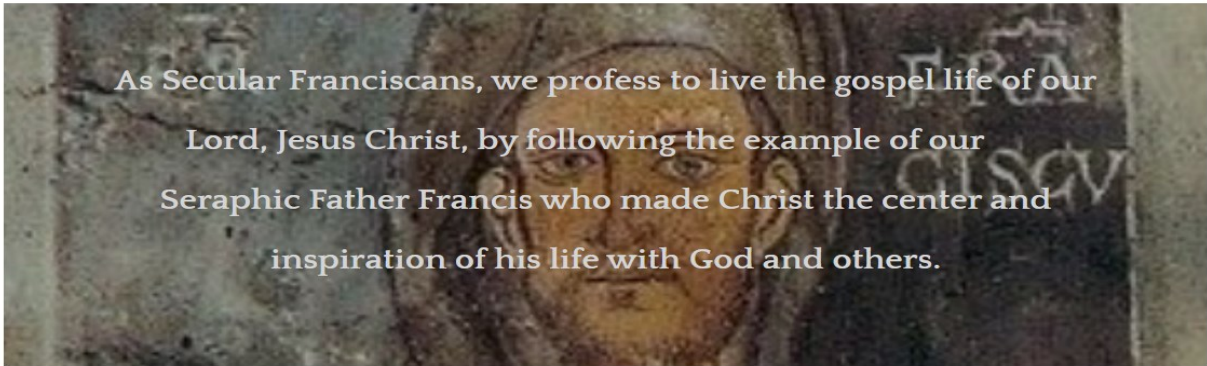
*April 5-7
Regional Retreat*

*June 8
Regional Elections*

Fall 2024, Regional Chapter

ST CLARE REGION SECULAR
FRANCISCAN ORDER USA

WELCOME OUR FRATERNITIES FORMATION CLARION NEWSLETTERS



As Secular Franciscans, we profess to live the gospel life of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by following the example of our Seraphic Father Francis who made Christ the center and inspiration of his life with God and others.

Welcome to the
St. Clare Region
of the Secular
Franciscan Order USA!

St Clare Region Website: www.stclareregionofs.org

Our Region's Website!

On our website we have information on all of our fraternities, our regional formation workshops and resources, our archived newsletters, and more!

As we continue to add and build the site, please email us to add more information on your fraternity, your formation suggestions, your newsletters...

The website is designed to be a repository for ALL of our fraternities. Let's build this together!

Followers of Francis Fraternity

Minister: Ken Livingston OFS
1852 E Stoneridge Dr
Springfield, MO 65803
417-368-0316
kenlivingstonofs@gmail.com

Joyful Servants Fraternity

Minister: Connie Shanks OFS
922 Brookside Ln
Rolla, MO 65401
573-776-3434
connieshanks@gmail.com

Monte La Verna Fraternity

Minister: Christine Domagalski OFS
6133 Old Alton Rd
Granite City, IL 62040
618-304-2575
justintimetaxes@gmail.com

San Damiano Fraternity

Minister: Stan Kiger OFS
444 Forsheer Dr.
Chesterfield, MO 63017
636-399-8384
slks5@aol.com

St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity

Minister: Ronald Sansone OFS
137 W St. Louis St
Pacific, MO 63069
314-575-1771
charlene@ronsansone.com

St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity

Minister: Patrick Smith OFS
1530 Liguori Drive
Barnhart, MO 63012
673-310-3472
pat.smith.barnhart@gmail.com

St. Joan of Arc Fraternity

Minister: Kim Hoffman-Neal OFS
1536 Michael St
Memphis TN 38111
816-550-9614
horselover.2050@yahoo.com

St. Padre Pio Emerging Fraternity

Acting Minister: Shawn Asmus OFS
3230 Ridge Rd
Jackson, MO 63755
573 204-7688
shawnasmus@hotmail.com

St. Peter Fraternity

Minister: Roger Mueller OFS
1830 Raab Avenue
Belleville, IL 62226
618-277-5147
dmrlmueller@sbcglobal.net

Servant of God Thea Bowman Emerging Fraternity

Acting Minister: Tom Brinkmann OFS
4142 Castleman Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63110
314-488-5089
tbrnkmnn@gmail.com

St. Clare Regional Council

Minister:

Christine Blood, OFS
11726 Fawnridge Dr
St. Louis, MO 63131
314-973-9195

christinebloodofs@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Pat Smith, OFS
1530 Liguori Dr.
Barnhart, MO 63012
573-310-3472

pat.smith.barnhart@gmail.com

Councilor:

Tom Brinkmann, OFS
4142 Castleman Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63110
314-488-5089

tbrnkmnn@gmail.com

Vice-Minister:

Robert Prior, OFS
107 Fox Terrace Cir
Nixa, MO 65714
417-234-7803

rm_prior@yahoo.com

Formation Director:

Annapoorna Mary, OFS
1528 Mount Moriah Rd
Memphis, TN38117
901-405-1571

maryannapoorna@yahoo.com

Councilor:

Gloria Smith, OFS
1530 Liguori Dr.
Barnhart, MO 63012
573-310-3103

canterbury609@earthlink.net

Secretary:

Maureen Gray OFS
4051 S Parkhill Ct
Springfield, Mo 65807
660-537-0421

mgraysfo@gmail.com

Councilor:

Connie Shanks, OFS
922 Brookside Ln
Rolla MO 65401
573-776-3434

connieshanks@gmail.com

Spiritual Assistant:

Fr. Pio Jackson, OFM
P.O. Box 278
7992 St. Francis Lane
Dittmer, MO 63024
314 620-3354

pio.ofm@juno.com

