



*January 31, 2019 –
Report from the National Executive Council (NEC)
Secular Franciscan Order -USA*

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1. 40th Anniversary of the Rule – Our Jubilee Year Continues!

Our national goal is that every local fraternity dedicate at least one formation session to the OFS Rule between now and June 24, 2019. Ready-made presentations on the Rule can be found on our OFS-USA website (secularfranciscansusa.org) under “Resources.” Our International Council (CIOFS) has requested photos of the ways that Local and Regional Fraternities have celebrated the Rule. *Please send photos, event details, date and location, to Bob Stronach by February 15, 2019.*

2. 2018 Elective Chapter – Interpretation of OFS-USA National Statutes

During the elections at our October 2018 Chapter, two candidates who were term-limited (running for a 3rd term on the Executive Council) were on the ballot for the International Councilor position. One had served two terms as International Councilor; the other had served two terms as National Councilor. On the first ballot for the International Councilor position, neither of those candidates received the required 2/3 majority vote. At that point the Ecclesial Witness advised the Presider that those candidates should not be on the ballot for the remaining Councilor positions. After consultation, the Presider and the Ecclesial Witness agreed that the Councilor positions (the three (3) National Councilors and the International Councilor) should be considered as the same

position, and those candidates running for a third term were removed from subsequent ballots. This was the first time in our experience that Article 13.2 had been interpreted in this manner.

Interpretation and clarification of National Statute 13.2 is an NEC agenda item for 2019. We will consult with CIOFS to determine our next steps, and then proceed to revise our National Statutes, a process that will need input and approval from the full National Council.

How does this affect Regional / Local Elections?

Prior to an election at the Regional or local level, the presider should be apprised of any applicable guidelines, and consult with the respective Council to clarify the procedure to be followed in the case of someone running for a third consecutive term. If Regions have specific Councilor positions (area Councilors or Councilor-JPIC), these should be specified in the Regional guidelines. Pastoral decisions may be necessary in the case of small fraternities.

3. Franciscan Action Network (FAN)

David Seitz was appointed to represent us on the FAN Board in August of 2018. At that time, he was provided with documents related to FAN's origin ten years ago. These documents state the principles that are to guide FAN's mission, purpose, method, etc. Dave often refers to these documents in his work with FAN.

Dave immediately went to work and has been actively engaged with FAN's Board of Directors and Staff over the past months. Since our 2018 Chapter in October, Dave has been to Washington DC twice - once for a "getting to know you" meeting with the FAN Staff, and once to participate in the FAN Board of Directors meeting.

The NEC is in ongoing communication with Dave, and we receive frequent reports. There are many issues on the table, e.g. FAN's use of social media. We have benefited greatly from our discussions with Dave, and from regular NEC conference calls to determine the best way forward. Our dialogue with FAN's Board of Directors is active and ongoing.

Reminders

4. Annual Report to NAFRA

The deadline for the demographics and Spiritual Assistance sections of the Annual Report to NAFRA is March 1, 2019. The remaining sections are due April 1, 2019.

5. OFS-USA Website Project: Fraternity Locator Map

We are currently collecting information in order to create a map which will show the meeting location of every Local Fraternity in the USA. Please refer to the January 11th email, fill out the attached spreadsheet and update your database. Deadline is March 1, please. *Your help is vital for the success of this project.*

6. FY/YA Commission – Important Request

Kathleen Molaro, our Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission Chair (FY/YA) sent an email to all Regional Ministers on Dec. 3, 2018 requesting help in identifying a FY/YA Animator for each

region. If our youth outreach is to be successful, we need someone from each Region who is willing to serve in this capacity. *Please pray, discern and invite someone you know to fill this position.* For more information contact Kathleen at kmmolaro@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

7. Formation “Visioning Initiatives” Workshop

The NFC and the NEC agree that we must move forward with our vision for formation in the United States. To accomplish this work, the NFC in collaboration with the NEC, has invited a number of qualified professed members to a Formation “Visioning Initiatives” Workshop. Our purpose will be to brainstorm on how to implement the vision and develop 5-6 task force groups, each focusing on a particular aspect of formation. This workshop will be held April 4-7, 2019. We will keep you posted on the outcome of this workshop.

8. National Gathering of Regional Spiritual Assistants

The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) will facilitate a National Gathering of Regional Spiritual Assistants, August 26-29, 2019 to be held at Mercy Retreat and Conference Center in St. Louis, MO. The keynote will be presented by Fr. Michael Higgins, T.O.R., President of Franciscan School of Theology, Oceanside, CA. Fr. Michael is a former T.O.R. General Minister who has worked with Secular Franciscans for twenty years. The following will be addressed:

- Guidelines for training suitable and competent Seculars for their role as Spiritual Assistants.
- Interpretation of Canon Law in appointing and delegating Spiritual Assistants with respect to the *Altius Moderamen*.
- Communication between CNSA and RSA
- Pastoral issues: “the signs of the times”; how to reach out by listening and dialoging; finding the road to mercy within the Rule in dealing with hate speech, incivility in discourse, same-sex orientation, etc.
- How to maintain relationships while facing decreasing numbers of friars and increasing numbers of non-friar Spiritual Assistants

9. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) – National Gathering

Carolyn Townes, JPIC Commission Chair will soon be announcing details of a JPIC gathering to be held in St. Louis, MO, from Thursday evening, Aug 29, through Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019. (The following Monday is Labor Day). *Please share this news and save the date!*

10. Summer Seminar at St. Francis University in Loretto, PA

"Clare of God: A Spirituality for Our Time."

Join us for our 10th Summer Seminar for Secular Franciscans - July 11-14, 2019. The topic is "Clare of God: A Spirituality for Our Time." Our presenters are Sr. Loretta Schaff, OSF and Fr. John Petrikovic, OFM Cap. Registration information coming soon.

11. OFS Conference at St. Bonaventure University in New York

“Enduring Presence: Franciscan Laity, Their Relevance Today”

July 12-14, 2019 - Led by Darleen Pryds, Ph.D., associate professor of spirituality and history, Franciscan School of Theology, Oceanside, CA. Conference Fee: \$400. This workshop/retreat

examines the unique roles of lay women and lay men in the early years of Franciscan life and explores their relevance for lay practitioners today.

Announcements

12. Date and Location of 2019 NAFRA Chapter

Our 2019 National Fraternity Chapter (NAFRA 2019) will be held October 15-20, 2019 at Pax Christi Liturgical Retreat Center, Corpus Christi, Texas.

13. OFS-USA Facebook Page

Our new team of OFS-USA Facebook editors are: Jane DeRose-Bamman, Diane Menditto, Lee Potts and Cherryle Fruge. Randy Heinz continues as the administrator. The purpose of our OFS-USA Facebook page is to share inspirational messages and the good news of our Order. *Please send photos of your local and regional fraternity happenings to Jane DeRose-Bamman at ofsusasecretary@gmail.com*

14. Smoky Valley Printing

Due to a change in policy, payment must now accompany orders from Smoky Valley Printing. Please be prepared to send a check with your order. We talked with Smoky Valley about setting up a credit card payment option, but this would result in increased costs.

We do not want this policy to cause any hardship. If necessary, pre-payment on bulk orders may be waived. For special arrangements, or any questions, please consult National Treasurer Claudia Kauzlarich. Claudia's email is claudiakauz.sfo@gmail.com

15. New CNSA Appointment – Fr. Giles Gilbert, OFM Conventual

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Fr. Giles Gilbert, OFM Conventual to the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA.) Welcome, Fr. Giles! Fr. Giles is humbled and grateful for the privilege and responsibility of ministry as a National Spiritual Assistant. He is happy to be at the service of the Order and is very grateful for the many ways in which Secular Franciscans have shaped his vocation and ministry as a friar and priest.

16. New Email Addresses for NEC

Please note the following new email addresses:

National Minister, Jan Parker, OFS - ofsusaminister@gmail.com

National Secretary, Jane DeRose-Bamman, OFS - ofsusasecretary@gmail.com

17. Thank you!

We want you to know that we have received many notes of thanks for the Charitable Contributions made by NAFRA at our 2018 Chapter. We are blessed to be able to give so generously!