

Sharing **T**he Vision

News from the National Executive Council

by Jan Parker and Mary Bittner

Newly Elected Council Called to Servant Leadership

The newly elected National Executive Council members had their first meeting on October 21. Knowing that prayer is the best “first agenda item” for any council and we joined together to pray and share our reflections on the following readings. We offer ourselves that God may work through our weaknesses. Please pray for us, that we might serve you, our national family, with love and dedication.



“Blessed is that servant who does not place himself in a high position of his own will and always desires to be under the feet of others.”

Admonitions XIX

“There is probably no culture in which people are so unabashedly encouraged to seek power as ours. From the moment we set out on our climb to the top we make ourselves believe that striving for power and wanting to be of service are, for all practical purposes, the same thing. This fallacy is so deeply ingrained in our whole way of living that we do not hesitate to strive for influential positions in the conviction that we do so for the good of the Reign of God....But the mystery of our ministry is that we are called to serve not with our

power but with our powerlessness. It is through powerlessness that we can enter into solidarity with our fellow human beings, form a community with the weak, and thus reveal the healing, guiding, and sustaining mercy of God.”

Henri Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ*, pp. 61, 64.

“Some people, who cannot see what nourishment they could be bringing, do not realize that they can become bread for others. They have no confidence that their word, their smile, their being or their prayer could nourish others and help them rediscover trust. Jesus calls us to give our lives for those we love. If we eat the bread transformed into the Body of Christ, it is so that we become bread for others.

Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, rev. ed., p. 194.

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

40th Anniversary of the Rule Our Jubilee Year Continues!

How well do you know the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order? Have you celebrated the Rule during this Jubilee Year? Our national goal is that every local fraternity dedicate at least one formation session to the Rule between now and June 24. Ready-made presentations on the Rule can be found on our OFS-USA website (secularfranciscansusa.org) under “Resources.” Most importantly during this Jubilee Year, all OFS are urged to read the June 24, 2018 letter from Tibor Kauser, our Minister General, which can be found in the last issue of TAU-USA, and also on the website.

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. A brief biography of his journey to the Franciscan life follows:

Friar Giles Michael Gilbert, OFM Conv. was born in Chicago, IL. As a young adult, he became a member of the Militia of the Immaculata (MI), founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe. After college, he worked as a Dispatcher for Mundelein Police Department, where he also served as a Spanish/English interpreter and translator. He then entered the Little Brothers of St. Francis, a small contemplative community of Franciscan brothers following the Rule of the Third Order Regular and living among the poor in Boston, MA. The Secular Franciscans of St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity met regularly at his friary and introduced him to the Secular Franciscan way of life.

Following his Profession, Friar Giles discerned a call to enter the First Order. In 2009, he entered the St. Bonaventure Province of Conventual Franciscans. He finished his studies in Philosophy at Loyola University Chicago and graduated with an M.Div. from Mundelein Seminary. After his ordination in 2016, Friar Giles became Parochial Vicar at Holy Family Parish in Peoria, IL and the Local Spiritual Assistant to Sacred Heart Fraternity of Secular Franciscans. In 2018, he was appointed as a Regional Spiritual Assistant to serve the Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Fraternity. His interests include: Byzantine Iconography and Theology; Early Franciscan History; Chess; Literature and the Humanities; Camping; Kayaking; Snowmobiling; Traveling; and Animals.

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

What is a Franciscan response to the lack of civility in public discourse? What is a Franciscan prophetic voice when it comes to social justice? These questions were explored at our 2018 Chapter, as well as in the special JPIC Section found in the Fall 2018 TAU-USA, Issue 95. We encourage local fraternities to read the five articles in this special section and reflect on the questions provided. One of the organizations highlighted in that section is Franciscans International (FI.) At the 2018 Chapter the National Fraternity Council voted to support FI by way of a line item in the 2019 budget.

OFS-USA Website Project A Map of Every Local Fraternity

Through the OFS-USA website we receive many inquiries of “where is the nearest local fraternity?” We are currently collecting information in order to create a map which will show the meeting location of every Local Fraternity in the USA. Local fraternity location and contact information will soon be just a click away on our website!

COMPUTER COMMITTEE * HELP NEEDED *

The Computer committee needs help upgrading/fixing the National Database.

They are looking for people with experience in ASP (the current language) and PHP (the language we are moving to) and relational database. The system runs on MS SQL, but experience with any relational database will be useful.

The committee meets by telephone each month to discuss progress and exchange emails as often as needed. They have developed a plan to move forward, but need help getting there.

If you are interested in helping, please contact William Mussatto, OFS Computer Committee Chair, at mussatto@acm.org. He can give you more information and introduce you to the existing team.