



MY FRANCISCAN LIFE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I can't believe I have been a Secular Franciscan for 50 years. While reading our roster, my dear sister, Isela Sanchez, noticed that it had been 50 years. She mentioned the date I professed, which was March 1969, at our meeting and even had a beautiful card for me that everybody signed. That was a beautiful feeling.

My parents were Secular Franciscan all their lives. They met at their fraternity meetings. Later they got married. In their wedding pictures, they are wearing their brown scapular and their white cord.

I remember they used to take us to their fraternity meetings at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Juarez, Mexico, when we were little. I joined the Nifra, which they used to call "Jardin Seráfico" or The Seraphic Garden for Children. I remember our teachers were very sweet to all of us.

Later, I joined Youthfra. It was the most memorable part of my youth. There I received my formation to become a Secular Franciscan. I was 17 years old when I professed. That took place at Senecu in Juárez, México.

We moved to El Paso when I was 20 years old. We joined The Saint Luis Rey fraternity. While we were at this fraternity, I served as minister twice, as vice-minister, and as a councilor, and at the regional level, I served as an Area Rep. Recently, I joined the Mary Immaculate fraternity, because it is much closer to my house. My mom passed away eight years ago, and my dad is no longer attending our meetings. I have been in this fraternity for about six years. At this time, I'm serving as an Area Rep for three fraternities.

I can say I have been a Secular Franciscan all my life, and it has been such a wonderful blessing. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to visit Assisi. It was an indescribable feeling to be there. Our Father Francis has been with me all this time and he won't let me go. I can't imagine my life without being a Franciscan.

It is an honor for me to share my life story as a Franciscan with you, my brothers and sisters. I anticipate seeing the wonderful blessings our Father Saint Francis has gained for all of us.

Thank you!

María Soledad Batista OFS

