

Oh Breath of God, Unite Us in Action



The Holy Spirit unites us in action!

Fraternities from around the country share stories of how the Holy Spirit is uniting them in action to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, console the sorrowful, help the poor, reach out to the lonely, or care for the earth.

Serving With Joy



Members of the St. John the Beloved Apostle Fraternity serving with joy at the Diocese of Arlington's Christ House Food Pantry, Alexandria, VA.

JPIC Groups - Outreach Programs



by Pat Serotkin, OFS

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Frankfort

Our 44 active fraternity members are in seven JPIC groups and currently actively involved in the following outreach projects:

- Donations and prayers for Dr. Tom Catena's medical efforts in Sudan
- Through Catholic Charities, providing gift cards for refugees to the U.S.
- Supportive letters to the incarcerated
- Diaper collection and monetary donations for Waterleaf
- Donations to Ronald McDonald House
- Correspondence with detained immigrants at Kenosha County Detention Center
- Personal hygiene contributions to Robbins, Illinois
- Prayer blankets to comfort those in need
- Cards sent to the incarcerated Franciscan Associates
- Collectively meeting for an adoration hour in support of specific ministerial needs
- Collection and proper disposal of prescription and non-prescription drugs
- Selection and packaging of items for distribution to the homeless

As a whole fraternity, we sponsor Christian Help in Kermit, WV, Franciscan Outreach, Port Ministries, Mercy

Home; through Unbound, we are sponsoring an adult woman.



Franciscan Bags of Love



by Kathy Ramsey, OFS

Our Lady Poverty Fraternity, in the Five Franciscan Martyrs Region, prepares Franciscan Bags of Love which contain food, hygiene items, and eating utensils for those who reveal St. Francis to us in the homeless and the poor. Included also is a postcard with a picture of St. Francis and on the back it has a listing of community resources.

Each person takes a bag to carry with them in their car and to provide to Jesus as he is revealed to us in the poor. Each bag is given with love – respecting the dignity of the person by introducing themselves, asking their name, touching their hands, and small conversation. The fraternity has also bought and distributed \$5 gift cards for low budget eateries giving the individual the dignity of selecting their own food.



OH BREATH OF GOD, COME FILL THIS PLACE

by Patrick J. Chalmers,, OFS

Timber Ridge Rehabilitation and Nursing Center of Ocala, Florida values relationships.

They host our Queen of Peace OFS Fraternity Eucharistic Service on a bi-monthly schedule. Queen of Peace Parish Pastor, Father Patrick Joseph Francis O'Doherty, provides authorized Eucharistic Ministers for delivering Holy Communion to residents. Our Fraternity delivers prayer, hymns (songs) with piano accompaniment, and Sunday Mass Readings (per USCCB schedule for the week of the service).

Usually, our Service brings approximately 30 residents into unity with us, our parish, and thus the Universal Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. And, with the Staff of Timber Ridge Rehabilitation and Nursing Center who tell us that this Communion means so much to the residents ... true joy and tears of gratitude often show on resident faces.

The real presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ unites us overwhelmingly in the Holy Spirit filling us with the Fire of His Love in Unity with the Holy Trinity and our Holy Church.



Butterfly Garden

by Jean B. Waters OFS

As a volunteer, I plan, plant, and maintain a native plant butterfly garden in a public park. I belong to St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity in Tampa, Florida. The garden is located at Hillsborough River State Park near Tampa. It contains over 25 varieties of plants native to the area. Most of there are butterfly hosts and nectar plants, especially for the Gulf Friillary and Monarch caterpillars and butterflies. However, it is also great to see hummingbirds when they also are attracted to the flowers.



Socks and Suds

by Diane Creedon, OFS

Our Lady of Angels Fraternity, Burlingame, CA, would like to share with you photos of our annual collection of socks and suds for the homeless that we deliver to the Homeless Help Center of SVDP Society in South San Francisco. The Fraternity gathers for a Christmas Party with their families and the Capuchin Franciscan Friars and work together filling the socks with soap and shampoo. The parish has taken the idea on as well, and work to bring the prepared socks to where the homeless can take showers.

Franciscan Bags



Franciscans Joe and Joan Harclerode from St Clare Fraternity in Punxsutawney PA have been doing this rewarding and loving ministry since 2011. They provide a meal of soup and bread to those recuperating from surgery or illness.

Blessing Bags



by Janice and Mike Novello, OFS

Our members purchase toothbrushes, toothpaste, washcloths, soap and insert them in a quart size plastic bag. Enclosed is a holy picture and a message that states “Thank you for your service – The Portiuncula Fraternity of the Secular Franciscans.” Before sealing each one, we pray for the person who will open it and use the contents. We call these “Blessing Bags.” We bring them to the Veterans Voluntary Service office at Bay Pines VA Hospital in St. Petersburg where the staff distributes the bags to homeless veterans.



Visiting the sick and bringing them Holy Communion

by France Staudenmann, OFS

St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity, Shrine of St. Anthony, Ellicott City, Maryland

I have been serving as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at the Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital in Rockville for the past eight years. My model is Mary at the Visitation, carrying Jesus to her cousin Elizabeth, her heart overflowing with joy and gratitude, then caring for her elderly cousin while remaining in constant adoration of her Son.

The patients I visit have undergone life-changing events such as head traumas, heart or back surgeries, strokes or amputations.

I visit up to 15 patients twice a week: on Sunday and Thursday

On the way from our church to the hospital, I ask Jesus to fill my heart with his love and compassion, and to let me smile, as he would, when I enter each room. I also ask the Holy Spirit to put his words in my mouth, especially when I enter the room of a new patient. Most patients welcome me.

On occasions, patients refuse my visit. I say a prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, slowly, all the while imploring God to soften their heart. I end the prayer by saying the words, “O Lord, touch gently this life which you have created

Safe Haven Box



Stigmata of St. Francis Fraternity members are working on a very special project – raising money for a *Safe Haven Box* in the Akron area. Under Ohio law, an unwanted infant, or one whose parents are unable to care for the child, can be left anonymously. There are restrictions but this is a good start to save these children. These boxes are built into doors or walls of buildings, such police and stations, hospital, et cetera. The cost can be up to \$2700.00, but the fraternity members want to work to obtain the funds for a Box. The editor has not learned of any other fraternity in the Region working on a project like this.

Prison Ministry

by Mike Coleman, OFS

I am a Member of Sacred Heart Fraternity, in Virginia Beach, Virginia and a member of St. Mark's Prison Ministry, a program that visits the Deerfield Correctional Center in Capron, Virginia. We visit, we pray, and conduct a communion service, and we just hang out. If Father is with us, he will celebrate mass and hear confessions, The men all want to talk. I think they expect us to judge them and when we don't they are relieved.

Over time, I've come to see these men as just those guys, humans, not inmates. Men I've come to know, to enjoy spending time with, to enjoy praying and celebrating mass. Last year I had the pleasure of being at Deerfield for both a Baptism and a Confirmation. To see the other inmates celebrate this was awesome.

The most significant outcome of volunteering is the relationships formed with the inmates. Although I didn't expect it, it did happen, I've come to care for them and to more clearly see them as brothers.



Red Door Ministry

by Patricia Serotkin, OFS

Lady Poverty Region has several outreach apostolates sponsored by various fraternities. A list of them is available at: <http://www.ladypovertyregion.org/ministries>

The one that I will highlight is The Red Door Ministry. Several of our Pittsburgh-area fraternities participate in this apostolate. The program is based at Saint Mary of Mercy Church, located in downtown Pittsburgh. The project began during the Great Depression. The program provides a bag lunch, Monday through Saturday, to more than 100 people daily. Our fraternities have the privilege of making and distributing lunches at The Red Door on the 1st and 4th Saturday of each month. For additional information about this program see: <http://www.ladypovertyregion.org/the-red-door>

The patron saint of the homeless is St. Benedict Joseph Labre – a third order Franciscan.



Immigration Action

by Donna Hollis, OFS, Our of Guadalupe Region



The photograph is of an immigrant family in the retreat center dining room. A volunteer is holding an infant that was born just two weeks before arriving at the center.

Earlier this year, large numbers of immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia crossed the border near El Paso, Texas. In Las Cruces, local families and the Holy Cross Franciscan Retreat Center helped the immigrants by feeding them, providing clean clothes, medical assistance, and warm beds. The goal was to ultimately unite them with family or friends throughout the United States.

Secular Franciscans in the Las Cruces and El Paso Fraternities helped support the immigrants by working at the Holy Cross Retreat Center. The immigrant families who did not know each other before their journey, began to bond with one another. They shared stories of being threatened and mistreated, of leaving all behind, and hope of finding a better life for their children and themselves.

The Secular Franciscans in both Las Cruces and El Paso will continue to be part of this effort to support and aid the immigrants. It is our ministry to give sanctuary to those in need.

Dorothy Day Place

St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity, Rockville, Md.
by Genie Dutton, OFS



Dorothy Day Place is a shelter for men and women administered by Catholic Charities in Washington, D.C.

Once a month, ten members our fraternity provide a meal for twenty female residents. We feed the hungry and homeless, a gratifying work of mercy that is most welcome by the recipients.

Other fraternity projects include: monetary donations to Amazon Relief to help relieve poverty and disease deep in the Amazon jungle, the Franciscan Missionary Union, and Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration.

Members also participate in the Gabriel Project for pregnancy assistance for the families and babies through volunteer Angel Friends who befriend and interact with the families on a personal basis, arranging for Baptism for Catholics and providing necessary items for babies. Some parishes have baby showers for Gabriel Project.