

# Joy of Francis

*Secular Franciscan Order — St. Francis Region #52 — Southern California  
Summer Edition — 2021*

## *St. Francis Region News!*

On Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> the members of St. Francis Region gathered together at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, along with National Councilor Donna Hollis, OFS, Presider and CNSA President-in-Turn Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM, Church Witness for their Elective Chapter.

The newly elected and installed members of St. Francis Region for the next 3 years are:



Regional Minister: Caroline Yandell, OFS (*Immaculate Conception*)

Vice Minister:	David York, OFS	( <i>San Luis Rey</i> )
Secretary:	Terri Foster, OFS	( <i>St. Francis of Assisi</i> )
Treasurer:	Amelia Sandoval, OFS	( <i>Holy Spirit</i> )
Councilor:	Peter Song, OFS	( <i>Saint Diego [K]</i> )
Councilor:	Janet Serros, OFS	( <i>Saint Padre Pio</i> )
Councilor:	Frank Miller, OFS	( <i>St Mary of the Angels</i> )
Councilor:	Tinh Van Le, OFS	( <i>Saint Claire [V]</i> )



St. Francis Regional Fraternity with Presider Donna Hollis and Ecclesiastical Witness Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM



New St. Francis Regional Council with Presider and Church Witness: Councilor Tinh Van Le; Secretary Terri Foster; Regional Minister Caroline Yandell; Councilor Janet Serros; Treasurer Amelia Sandoval; Councilor Frank Miller; Church Witness Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM.  
Back row: Presider Donna Hollis, Vice Minister: David York, Councilor Peter Song



Installation of new St. Francis Regional Council

*God's Continued Blessings on those who faithfully served on the outgoing Council: Judith Mussatto, Jai Chan Lee, Randy Rohrer, and Lucy Ibarra. Thank you!*

A Special Thanks to Caroline, Frank, Peter and David  
for your continued service on the new REC!

*Photographs by Anthony Tuan Cao, OFS*

# *Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants*

My Dear Sisters and Brothers:

I hope you have been able to read about how some people have been responding to our COVID situation over the past year.

I have read of someone who, while taking a stroll outside, discovered a dish on the ground that was full of stones painted with motivational phrases like "let it be" and "you're braver than you think." Next to the dish was a note recommending that passersby take one for themselves or a friend who might need some encouragement.

A man decided to use his savings to pay for gas for nurses heading to work at the DMC Hospital in Detroit. and another person in Atlanta paid for the groceries of dozens of senior citizens.

A couple who had to cancel their wedding donated the food to a hospital's emergency room, and the flowers to their patients.

There has been so much lost, and yet something else gained in this difficult year.

I suppose this past year felt like a long Lent for me, a path that was not planned, to an unknown destination. It was like Jesus calling us to drink at the well, offering us to grow in intimacy with him. As we drink, we still don't know where we are headed, but we realize we are given the chance to revisit how we are called to show others the love and compassion of God.

As Franciscans I am sure we all treasure how Jesus was humble enough to accept his own fragility.

- He needed his mother to open her heart and throughout her life to say "yes" so that he might be conceived, to encourage him at the wedding feast at Cana, and to stand in support at the foot of the Cross.
- He needed the disciples to profess the small mustard seed of their faith.
- He needed the mute and the blind to cry out to Him.
- He needed the travelling women to provide sustenance.
- He needed the outsider, the Canaanite woman, to open the horizon of His mission by demanding that He recognize her faith.
- He needed the small boy providing the five loaves and fishes to feed the five thousand.
- He needed the repentant woman who washed His feet with extravagant love.
- He needed the family in Bethany to provide a place to rest.

Above all, He needed his Father provide for Him. If we are to flourish in our "new normal," our strength needs to be our dependence on the providence of God the Father, following the example of Jesus who taught us to accept our own human fragility and need for others, and the love that has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

As we move from a long Lent, into a new Easter and new Pentecost, I hope and pray that the "life from death" that we commemorate and celebrate is also embodied in our own lives in a tangible way this year!

Let us help each other emerge to be a yeast of thanksgiving wherever we find ourselves!

Peace and Good!

Chris Thiel, OFM Cap,

Conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants

# *SPIRITUAL DIRECTION DURING DIFFICULT TIMES*

## **LOS ANGELES RETREAT CENTER COMMUNITY PROMOTES SPIRITUAL DIRECTION DURING DIFFICULT TIMES**

Los Angeles (February 25, 2021) – It seems the need for solace, peace and understanding has never been higher as the area wrestles with the effects of the pandemic, economic conditions, and a seemingly unending divisiveness in the nation. We are beyond the need for a "mental health break," many have reached a state of emotional and spiritual exhaustion in their lives. In recent meetings with the Retreat center directors and their staff in the LARCC (Los Angeles Retreat Center Community), the concern is real and unabating.

While most centers are currently closed for visitors due to the pandemic's critical status in the area, we are still offering a service that is increasing in demand: Spiritual Direction. "Spiritual Direction" are often misunderstood words. So, what is Spiritual Direction, and who delivers it?

Spiritual Direction is often compared to counseling or therapy, which it is not. It is often "taught" by those who have not traditionally trained. This is not the case with LARCC centers. Becoming a Spiritual Director can take up to two years to complete, and not every candidate becomes a director.

In simple terms, Spiritual Direction is a means for an individual (the directee) to meet with a qualified Spiritual Director on their spiritual journey. So, it is more of an accompaniment with another than purely giving advice. Compassionate listening is often a crucial part of the service, and those receiving Spiritual Direction share their spiritual journey in life, covering all aspects which affect their relationship with God. Ultimately, the goal is to deepen our relationship with God and find the increasing inner peace which all seek in these difficult times.

Meetings typically occur once a month for around an hour; these days these meetings can happen on the phone or via Zoom or similar service. Each of the retreat centers in LARCC has several spiritual directors on their staff and offers the service regularly.

Here are some effects of what those who have received Spiritual Direction has been on their lives:

*"Spiritual Direction is something people don't talk about. Many think it's only for really holy people. In my very ordinary life as a very busy working mom struggling with schedules, meals, commitments, and all the world throws at us- I discovered Spiritual Direction. Perhaps it's more accurate that the Holy Spirit stopped me and whispered gently into my ear- I Love You, just as you are, here and now, come out of your storm and rest. Through Spiritual Direction my life with the Holy Trinity has been transformed. My only regret is not having started Spiritual Direction much earlier in my life." AK, Los Angeles*

*"For four years Spiritual Direction has been a part of my monthly 'Hermitage Experience,' a journey to the quiet place within where one encounters God. As a Secular Franciscan, Spiritual Direction has helped me to explore the questions that St. Francis of Assisi has posed to us – 'Who are You, O God; Who am I?'" I recommend Spiritual Direction to help you build your trust in the presence of Christ within." SF, Malibu*

*“Spiritual Direction found me during a time when my life and spirit were broken, at my absolute lowest, angry with God for having seemingly abandoned me. As my Spiritual Director and I began to open and “investigate” these conditions, I came to understand that I was living a life of unnatural constraint and that the culmination of events, although deeply painful, were freeing me of bonds that had suffocated my very identity. I had emerged and arrived “at the liminal,” a regular theme in my spiritual direction. I began to realize that God was liberating me, not hurting me, and opening the way to a joyful and purposeful life particular to my unique desires and gifts.” “Attempting to understand how God is working in my life often makes me impatient and frustrated! Spiritual Direction sustains me in navigating changes and unknowns, facing fear, and moving forward in complete trust of God’s love for me, with my Spiritual Director as my journey guide.” “I know every bird in the mountains and the creatures of the field are mine,” and so God provided with the grace of Spiritual Direction. Spiritual Direction found me.” Several voices from Encino. In Spiritual Direction sessions, I share my blessings as well as my challenges with my Director. I am grateful that she gives me a comfortable space where I am able to let down my guard, and I know it is OK to reveal my foibles as well as my gifts. I feel safe to open myself to the whisperings of the Spirit and find more meaning in my everyday life.” GS, Mary & Joseph Retreat Center*

The Los Angeles Retreat Center Community offers spiritual Direction to those looking for a deeper relationship with God. These are just a few experiences from individuals receiving Spiritual Direction from the retreat centers in the community.

The following are the current members of LARCC, offering a choice of locations, facilities, and programs to Los Angeles area residents that are convenient wherever they live and whatever their particular faith expression: (See **Resources** page for contact information for each of them.)

- Holy Spirit Retreat Center (Encino) <https://www.hsrcenter.com>
- Mary and Joseph Retreat Center (Rancho Palos Verdes) <https://maryjoseph.org>
- Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center (Sierra Madre) <https://materdolorosa.org>
- Sacred Heart Retreat Center (Alhambra) <https://sacredheartretreathouse.com>
- Serra Retreat (Malibu) <https://serraretreat.com>

Many of the retreat centers are offering online retreats. The online programs can be conducted at the location of your choice, making it simple to enjoy one of these retreats wherever you are situated.



LARCC

Peace and Tranquility

# *JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION*

## *Regional J.P.I.C. Animator Patricia Grace, OFS*

### **Our God Who Reveals Himself**

We are blessed. Our Loving Lord reveals Himself to us. He does not hide. He does not have us guessing about His holy will. He reveals Himself. We only are asked to engage in the spiritual practices that sharpen our eyes, attune our ears, and open our hearts to His holy words. Grace is given to us. We must open to receive.

How, one may ask, does our Lord reveal Himself? In endless ways. He reveals Himself in nature. I am certain on your morning walk you see hundreds of different kinds of flowers, a myriad of birds and, if you live near the ocean as I do, hundreds of sea animals and their shells lining the beach. Our Creative God did not make “flower,” or “bird,” or “shell.” He made each flower, each bird, each shell and, through the teachings of St. Bonaventure we know that each one bears the imprint or trace of the Most High. Our Lord reveals Himself to us in scripture. The Hebrew text tells us of a Lord who parts the Red Sea, who creates and saves His people through a flood, who foretells us of His coming. The Gospels and the words of our Lord found there, teach us forgiveness, presence, and grace. The letters of St. Paul and the other apostles open our hearts and minds to teach us how to live and build communities of love, and how to live in hope. Our Lord also reveals Himself in the faces of all we meet, teaching us to honor that we are all made in the image and likeness of Him.

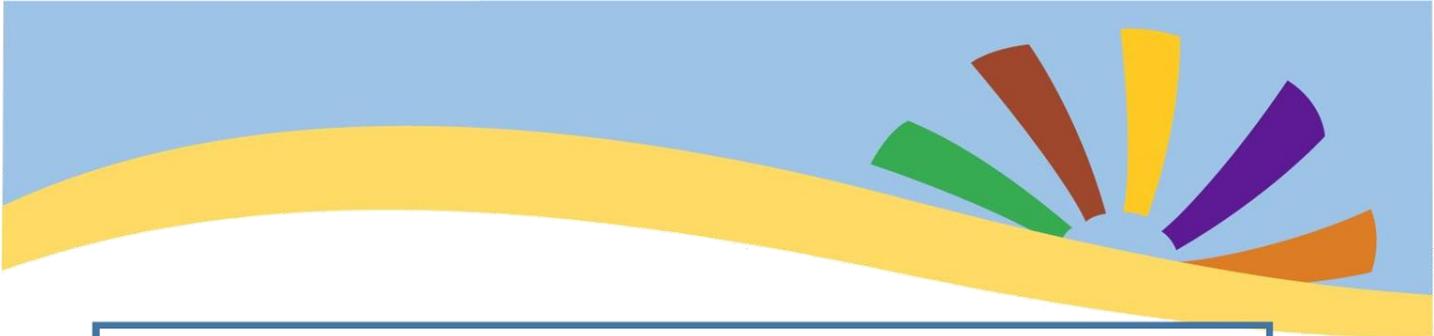
Our Lord revealed Himself to St. Francis, leading him away from war to the way of peace, from a community of riches to a life of Holy poverty, from a life of privilege to the privileged life of service to others. And, once more, dear brothers and sisters, we are blessed by our Beloved Saint. He revealed to us God’s revelation to him, giving us a Rule of life and teaching us how to walk in the path of the Lord.

Let us then encourage and support each other as we structure our lives in keeping with the Holy Scripture and our Rule, organizing our days from gospel to life and life to gospel (Article 4), nurtured by Eucharist and inviting it to be the inspiration and pattern of our lives (Article 5). Let us begin each day on our knees in prayer and contemplation, ending our days back on our knees in gratitude for the day given (Article 8). In our prayers, our Lord will open our ears and eyes so that we can receive all the people we meet in our day as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ (Article 13). May we engage mindfully in a Christian spirit of service (Article 14) and dedicate our work as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community (Article 16). May we seek to find with others creative initiatives for justice (Article 15), and honor that we are in universal kinship with all of God’s creatures, animate and inanimate, all of which bear the imprint of our Lord (Article 18).

Let us join together, sisters and brothers, and follow our patron saint, the saint of ecology, as the new directives from the Vatican to care for creation are published. Let us follow our patron saint of peace and be peacemakers as our Lord taught us (the Beatitudes). Let us follow the directives of Matthew 25 to feed, cloth, and serve all of His people and create conditions of life that honor their dignity and honor their Creator.

Let us be obedient guardians and doers of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation.

Peace and All Good,  
Patricia Grace, JPIC Animator



**JPIC**  
**LET'S TALK ABOUT IMMIGRATION**

**Who Can Immigrate?**

**What is Asylum?**

**What Protections Exist for Victims of Trafficking and Other Crimes?**

**Who are "The Dreamers?"**

**What is the Legal Process to Immigrate?**

**What is Our Holy Catholic Church's Position on Immigration?**

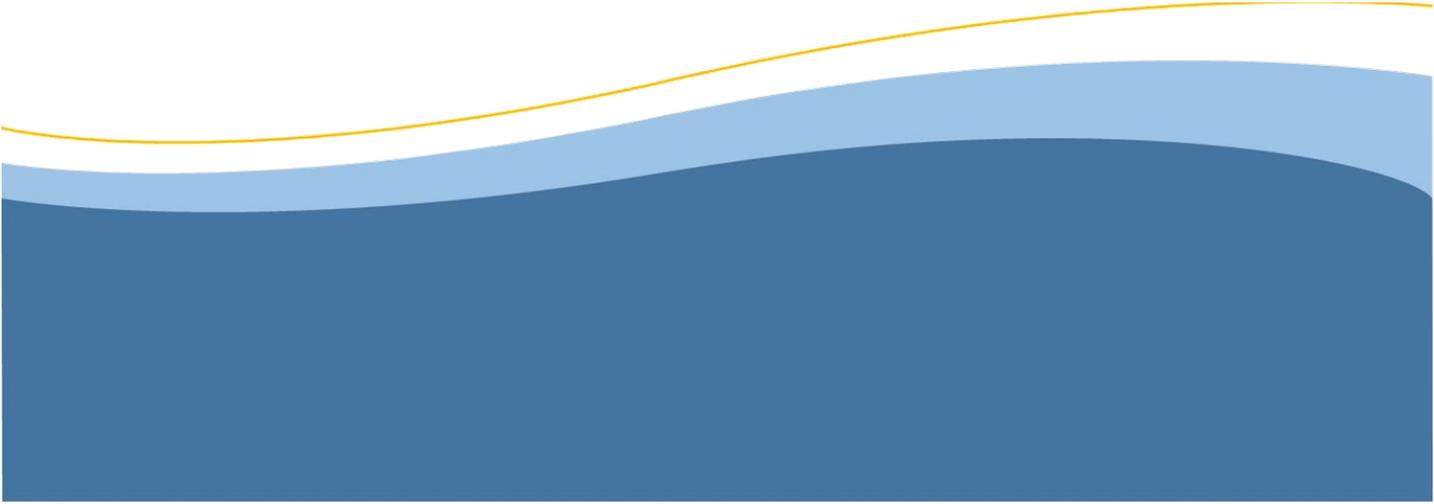
**Let's join together for learning, reflection, and prayer.**

**June 19, 2021**

**1:00 to 3:00 Pacific Time**

**By ZOOM**

**RSVP: [patriciaelizabethgrace7@gmail.com](mailto:patriciaelizabethgrace7@gmail.com)**



# Care of Creation Team

Karron Esmonde OFS, Animator

## A Missionary Sending: Laudato Si' Week

**Laudato Si Week heralded the work of the faithful worldwide in their struggle to preserve the health of the planet.**

In May, a week of Webinars brought together activists, educators, indigenous people and religious to share their progress and process in fulfilling the goals of *Laudato Si'*. The last in the series, Pentecost / Laudato Si' Special Anniversary Year Closing & Missionary Sending concludes with an inspiring talk by Fr. Michael Perry, OFM, Minister General of Friars Minor, on "Fraternity & Mission" Check it out here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9A6ESD4CDmY>

*Laudato Si* has forwarded the cause of the Earth and shown us the consequences of its neglect and abuse: global warming, drought, hunger, extinctions, water and soil pollution – the list goes on.

The week ending with Pentecost marked the anniversary of the encyclical's publication, lauded our progress, and announced a multi-faceted Laudato Si' Action Plan. The Plan will be launched this year on the Feast of St. Francis. Come October, we hope to have live meetings once again as we support, encourage, and learn from one another.

This healing work is just beginning, and everyone has a role to play and gifts to offer. When we act in ways pleasing to God by protecting, helping, and loving the life around us – human and nonhuman – the Lord furthers and blesses our cause, and further inspires us in the care for Creation.

Each of us is called to stretch a little – to go out of our way, to risk being a little less comfortable and to help one another. There is nothing of greater value or more worthwhile than this, nothing of greater importance than preserving and defending life on this planet.

The cornerstone of our work for creation is prayer. Because we are aligned in our intention to heal the Earth, we can come together in small groups – within families, or with prayer partners on the phone, or Skype, or Facetime – and pray for the planet, for the preservation of its trees and animals, of songbirds and sea creatures. Pray individually and pray together in small groups. This prayer is powerful, and we know that there is nothing God will not give us if we but ask.

In closing, I offer one more recorded session from *Laudato Si' Week*, containing some lovely prayers for the planet. Use these or create your own – whatever inspires you.

[Sowing Hope for the Planet: Creation Care Prayer Network.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqgcZ6ISK08)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqgcZ6ISK08>

Peace and all Good,  
Karron Esmonde OFS  
Animator, Care of Creation Team

# FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FORMATION

## LUCY IBARRA

Blessings my Brothers and Sisters!

As my time as your Formation Director comes to an end, I would like to reflect on the six new Beatitudes the Pope gave us in November 2016.

The Pope then went on to list six new Beatitudes “to confront the troubles and anxieties of our age with the spirit and love of Jesus.” He listed them as:

- Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others and forgive them from their heart.
- Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalized and show them their closeness.
- Blessed are those who see God in every person and strive to make others also discover Him.
- Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home.
- Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others.
- Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians.

He closed by saying that “the call to holiness is directed to everyone and must be received from the Lord in a spirit of faith.” The saints “spur us on by their lives and their intercession before God,” he added and “we ourselves need one another if we are to become saints.”

As I reflect on my past six years it was particularly challenging for me as a person who has a difficult time talking in front of a group of people. But somehow the power of the Holy Spirit took over. For those in our family that in some way I might have let you down or did not step up to the plate I ask your understanding and forgiveness. For those of you who came up to me and expressed what an inspiration and aid I have been to you, I say all of it has been our God and I take no credit. My YES was all His doing not mine.

Now as for the six Beatitudes:

- \* I will always try to **remain faithful** to my calling and I ask you to do the same, it's your YES that makes the kingdom of God and our fraternity family to grow in wisdom and understanding.
- \* I will try to **look into the eyes** of the homeless and see the Christ in them.
- \* I will try to see God in every person I encounter and **pray they see Him in me**.
- \* I will try as a Secular Franciscan **to protect and defend** the goodness God has put on this earth.
- \* I will put my Yes first at all times **for the happiness of other**.
- \* **I am a saint in the making, who makes mistakes and falls down, but watch out when I get up.**

Love you all!

Blessings,

Lucy Ibarra, Formation Director

# *Riverside/San Bernardino*

## *William Mussatto, OFS, District Liaison*

### 2021 Summer San Bernardino/Riverside District Report

Immaculata Fraternity will begin in-person fraternity meetings at St. Matthew's Catholic Church in Corona. Their meetings in April and May were virtual. Formation continues to be held virtually with a session once a week with their Inquirer and another session with their Candidate.

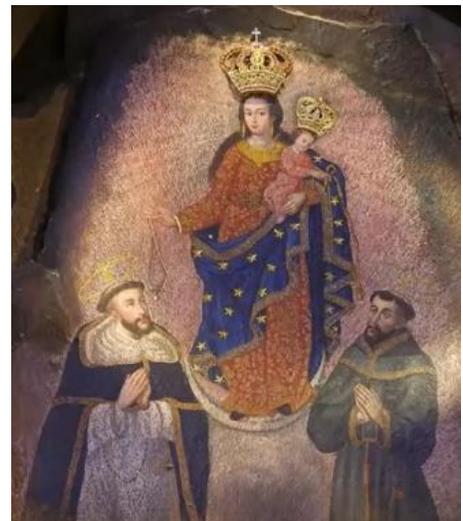
Holy Spirit Fraternity continues to meet virtually with an informal gathering in addition to the regular fraternity meeting. In May they had their annual Marian Celebration with members talking about Marian devotions from their cultures. Three members completed their Post Profession



*Holy Spirit's Marian Celebration*

Classes. Three formation classes are being held each month, two for our candidate and one for a new person in Orientation. In-person meeting will resume when permitted.

Padre Pio Fraternity continues to have initial formation combining in-person and virtual classes to meet the needs of those in formation. Jane Wurzel, OFS, is the new minister, as Janet Serros, OFS, has become Regional Councilor. In-person council and fraternity meetings will begin in June at a fraternity member's home.



*Mary blessing the Dominican Rosary and Franciscan Crown*

# Resources

## LOS ANGELES RETREAT CENTER COMMUNITY Contacts for SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

For further information please contact the center below which is most convenient to you.

Chris Machado, SSS  
**Holy Spirit Retreat Center**  
4316 Lanai Rd.  
Encino, CA 91436  
Phone: 818-784-4515  
E-mail: [chris\\_testver@yahoo.com](mailto:chris_testver@yahoo.com)  
<https://www.hsrcenter.com>

Paul Craig  
Director of Business Operations  
**Mary & Joseph Retreat Center**  
5300 Crest Road  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275  
Direct: 310-541-0758  
Email: [pcraig@maryjoseph.org](mailto:pcraig@maryjoseph.org)  
<https://maryjoseph.org>

Michael J. Cunningham O.F.S.  
Retreat Center Director  
**Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center**  
700 N. Sunnyside Avenue  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024  
626-355-7188 x106  
Email: [mcunningham@materdolorosa.org](mailto:mcunningham@materdolorosa.org)  
[www.materdolorosa.org](http://www.materdolorosa.org)

Sister Marie Andre, O.C.D.  
Retreat Directress  
**Sacred Heart Retreat House**  
920 East Alhambra Road  
Alhambra, California 91801  
626-289-1353  
[retreatdirectress@carmelitesistersocd.com](mailto:retreatdirectress@carmelitesistersocd.com)  
[www.sacredheartretreathouse.com](http://www.sacredheartretreathouse.com)

Tom Anderson  
Executive Director  
**Serra Retreat**  
Malibu, CA 90265  
310-456-6631 x 16  
Email: [tanderson@serraretreat.com](mailto:tanderson@serraretreat.com)  
<https://serraretreat.com>



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# Important Announcements

## Scully Fund Requirements

The Scully Fund has been set up to encourage fraternities in the St. Francis Region to participate in charitable activities.

When members of a fraternity take an active role in an apostolic activity and use fraternity funds to purchase materials or supplies for the activity, the fraternity may request to be reimbursed by the Scully Fund for half of those expenses by supplying the following:

- A letter detailing the activity, the date it occurred, the number of fraternity members involved, and the amount of expenses incurred.
- Receipts for the purchases or a copy of the check(s) used to pay for the items.
- A request for reimbursement of half of the expenses.

Send the above information to either the Minister or Treasurer of the St. Francis Region.



THE ADDRESS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION IS:  
10185 Pinetree Dr.  
San Diego, CA 92131-1218



## Last Will and Testament

Each of us can play an important role in preserving and extending our Secular Franciscan way of life, in our own fraternity, and at the regional level.

This can be accomplished in many ways, including a bequest in your will.

Suggested beneficiaries:

- Your FRATERNITY
- Your REGION

Suggested wording for your bequests:

1. A BEQUEST FOR GENERAL PURPOSES:

*"I give and bequeath the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_% of my disposable estate) to: (name and address of fraternity, or region).*

2. A RESIDUARY BEQUEST OF INDEFINITE AMOUNT:

*"After payment of expenses, debts and specific bequests, I direct that the residue of my estate be given to: (name and address)*

or

*"I bequeath to (name and address) any part of my estate that other beneficiaries are unable to receive because of death or other reasons."*