

July 5th, 2015

To: OEF Chapter

From: Juniper, OEF

Report of the Co-Minister of OEF

I want to start by celebrating a series of wonderful events in OEF this year. The first is that five people will be professing at Chapter!! A second is that John Michael has completed a wonderful description of the ministries of many of the membership of OEF, and we will have this at Chapter. A third is that we are funding Chapter using the "Table of the Lord", asking each to give as they can and to come to Chapter. A fourth is that we are developing OEF fellowships in Japan, New Zealand and Northern Ireland. We also have a group of seventy ecumenical Franciscans in Eastern Europe who want to explore relationship with OEF (see separate report). A fifth is that we have professed our brother Keith Downey while he is fighting very serious cancer. I am continued to be amazed by the dedication, commitment and diversity of the membership of OEF. I celebrate the work that Dale has done in the last years to build the Order. She has worked very hard often in quite stressed situation. I am grateful to be a part of this community

In early December, Shoshanah and I met after the Northeast OEF Gathering in Hartford, and began to shape our work together. I committed to calling the professed members once each month, and set out to do so in January and February. Largely, I was able to talk with most professed members of OEF in the US and Canada.

With Dale, who remained the acting Interim Minister, we began to plan monthly Servant Team telephone conferences. We also planned a winter face-to-face gathering of the Servant Team in order to plan for Chapter in St. Louis. Things seemed to be developing well. In mid-January, Shoshanah and I went together to visit Nancy Menning and Alison Coluccio in Ithaca, NY. We were able to connect, to thank them for their work during Nancy's time as Minister, and to listen to Nancy's views on where OEF was. This trip provided Shoshanah and I with a lot of time together to build our working relationship.

In late February, Shoshanah, John Michael, Petra and I set off to Pittsburgh to meet CJ, Dale, and, we had hoped, Allegrezza, for the Servant Team Meeting. Sadly, weather made it impossible for Allegrezza to attend, so we hooked up a Skype link to have her present as much as possible. The group spent from Monday afternoon till Wednesday morning together. We agreed on an agenda which mostly focused on planning for Chapter. I had, by that time, talked to most of the professed at least twice. I thought I had some understanding of the concerns going into Chapter. I took the lead on facilitating these sessions. We worked hard and had some bumpy moments, but as we parted, overall the reports were that we accomplished a lot.

Upon reflection and working with my spiritual director, I came to see that I had a manic incident in Pittsburgh, and pushed too hard to get things done. I had manic incidents in my 20's and 30's, but recently I had not had one. I apologized for my failures, and offered to resign if members of the Servant Team felt that would be best. Members of the Servant Team, by and large, were very supportive and asked me to continue. Mostly things worked out, people's input was included, and the Team went on developing Chapter.

I am very aware that, in several ways, I have failed members of the Order. I commit myself to "listening, loving and praying" as my way to be in OEF. If it is your will, I will continue to try to serve you as your Co-Minister. I am very open that continuing as Co-Minister may not be best for the Order. But Shoshanah and others on the Servant Team and in the Order have asked me to continue.

If I am to continue as your Co-Minister, I will resume calling the professed monthly. I will continue to support the developments in Northern Ireland, and to develop the dialogue with the SFES in Eastern Europe. I will support the Servant Team in any way that I can, and I will pray, listen, and love the Order and its members. I will make efforts to reconcile with members that now feel estranged from me. And, as promised, I will support Shoshanah in her work as Minister of the Order.

Peace and all goodness, Juniper OEF