

# FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 127

Post Chapter 2018



## OEF AT “**FAMILIES BELONG TOGETHER**” RALLY – TROY, MISSOURI

By Gerry Clark, new OEF postulant

On June 30, 2018 two groups from the OEF Chapter went to the “Families Belong Together” Rallies, one group to the downtown St. Louis rally and the other to the Clinton County Missouri incarceration facility which is now being used by ICE. Others who were at risk because of the heat or had mobility issues provided backup prayer support at the retreat center. The rallies were part of a nationwide protest over the separation of children from their families at the Mexico/US border by the Trump “regime.”

I was in the ICE detention center OEF protester group. After listening to a former police officer talk about the political patronage involved in the placement of ICE detainees in detention centers in remote locations, an organizer asked for volunteers to go a few hundred yards to Missouri Rte 61, a 4-lane highway, with our signs and chants. I was among the first dozen, but we were soon joined by about 100 more protesters. With that many people, the organizer soon began yelling “Shut it Down!,” referring to Rte 61. As the crowd began to block the roadway, I told the organizer that when the police arrived, I would kneel in the roadway and pray. I showed him my Crown Rosary and we laughed that the Rosary probably had superstitious intimidation power even, and maybe especially, in Clinton County Missouri.

When two Clinton County Sheriff Deputies walked past toward the main body of the protesters blocking the highway, I put my sign on the pavement and knelt down and began to pray the 7 decades of the Franciscan Crown Rosary out loud. I was soon joined by a Sister of Mercy and a Mercy Associate. A large transport truck stopped, blocking the lane next to the median, and the driver got out and was speaking supportively to the protesters. As we started the fourth decade of the rosary, the Missouri Troopers began to arrive. I counted 27 Trooper cars. We were a few hundred feet from the main body of the protesters, but there seemed to be somewhat of a circus as the Troopers tried to find the truck driver in the middle of the crowd of protesters.

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## OEF at "Families Belong Together" Rally, continued...

They were finally successful and the truck left. As we were praying the last decade of the Rosary, we were greeted with cheers and air horns from the trucker.

The Deputies and Troopers were polite and professional, no nightsticks, no arrests. I guess these officers don't like being associated with children in cages. They allowed enough time for many pictures. The Sister of Mercy and I were photographed many times, even by the Missouri State Police! The protesters were dispersing peacefully as I put my Rosary away and picked up my sign.

Even in 2018, in Troy, Missouri, a little bit of Franciscan prayerful foolishness expressing the hope in the foolishness of God, was given respectful notice.



Br. Stephan & Br. Neal --  
Brothers for a Cause!



Sr. Shoshana and Br. Jacoba  
at Troy, MO



A Cloud of Activists: L-r: Br. Ron, Br. Just Plain John, Diane, Br. Reg, Br. David D., Br. Bruce James, Sr. Katie, Br. Juniper, Sr. Karen, Br. Ed, Br. Neal, Br. Owusu, Br. Stephan, Sr. Shoshana



Br. David Delacroix -  
Activist!!





# Invitation to the Absent



*\*The following request was sent to the OEF e-mail list pre-Chapter by Nancy Menning, OEF. Responses follow.*

Siblings and friends,

The folks gathering this week in St Louis for Chapter/Convocation will be blessed with the ability to match names to faces, meet new people, connect with old friends, and thrive from the blessing that it is to be together with one another, face-to-face. Those of us who are professed or novice members of the OEF and who are NOT present this week in St Louis have one clear obligation (according to our bylaws): *Find some way to renew your vows (Novice or Professed) for another year.* Beyond that, I invite everyone who is NOT attending Chapter/Convocation this week in St. Louis to share something with the community through the OEF-Chat. It will help our virtual presence be drawn into that enfleshed gathering at the Pallottine Renewal Center and will give us some sense of the connectedness that being at Chapter provides.

Let me set an example;

**1. Matching a face to a name.** See attached photo. I'm the camera-shy one holding the dog. (Right, I get that this hardly let's you match a "face" with a name, but humor me on this one. The photo does reveal something of my character.)



Sr. Nancy & Friend

**2. Standard info to help pigeon-hole me in the religious world.** Raised UCC (United Church of Christ). Still in love with that denomination. Professed with OEF in 2003. I also have a PhD in Religious Studies (a.k.a. the academic study of religion, not to be confused with actually having any faith of one's own) and taught for over a decade in a handful of colleges.

**3. Best thing I'm doing to nurture my faith right now.** I'm two retreats into a three-retreat sequence this year at a retreat center on an island off the coast of Maine (the Alcyon Center on Mount Desert Island); the third retreat will be in December. Participating in this set of retreats this year will fulfill the prerequisites for a program in contemplative spiritual direction at Alcyon next year, which will give me an excuse to

drive up to Maine three times next year as well. How smart is that!

**4. What little thing am I doing that is particularly interesting?** It is a slow process, but I do spend a lot of time thinking about how to re-write the "Noah's Ark" story for the 21st Century, imagining us on the pre-flood side of the story, looking into a future of devastating species extinctions and human tragedy as climate change plays itself out.

**5. What do I need prayers for (a.k.a. why am I not with the good people gathered in St Louis this weekend?)** As I continue my transition out of academia and into the nonprofit realm of doing good in the world, I am working three-quarters time as a nonprofit bookkeeper while going to school three-quarters time (fully online) for a Certificate in Accounting. Pray that I still, somehow, find time to sit on the porch in the evenings, sipping red wine, and reading novels.

Peace and All Good,  
Nancy Menning, OEF

\* \* \*

**1. Matching a face to a name.** See above photo. With Br. Mark Molter, n/OLF at the Rally to End Racism in Washington, D.C.



L-r: Br. John Michael, Br. Mark

**2. Standard info to help pigeon-hole me in the religious world.** Raised Roman Catholic, very much at peace in the mystical-liturgical end of the swimming pool. Went on adventures as an interfaith organizer. Sat for meditation with Tibetan Buddhist nuns. Found the Lutheran church and have made my home there ever since.

**3. Best thing I'm doing to nurture my faith right now.** I am going to the Order of Lutheran Franciscans Annual Chapter this summer to bring love from us to them. Looking for opportunities to deepen my times of silence in the garden and in the forest this summer.

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## Invitation to the Absent, continued...

**4. What little thing am I doing that is particularly interesting?** I do weekly ministry on the street with people in my city. Some are homeless, others are looking for work, others are out for a walk. Holy interactions every time!

**5. What do I need prayers for (a.k.a. why am I not with the good people gathered in St Louis this weekend?)** Taking 6 youth to Louisville, KY for a week of service learning through Youthworks.

Peace and All Good,  
John Michael, OEF

\* \* \* \*

**1. Matching a face to a name.** See below. A few years ago, but not much has changed. PS: I was not Franciscan enough to actually *buy* the top hat.

**2. Standard info to help pigeon-hole me in the religious world.** I describe myself as a Mennonite Franciscan contemplative (in any order). Raised Mennonite and currently Mennonite, I've worshiped in other congregations over my life, and have learned so much from Thomas Merton and other Roman Catholic and Eastern Christian contemplatives.

**3. Best thing I'm doing to nurture my faith right now.** Maintaining a consistent practice of 20 minutes of centering prayer every morning. Very rarely a second 20 minutes; but trying to take the lessons of this practice into my day more consistently also. The more "seriously" I take this, the more good it does.

**4. What little thing am I doing that is particularly interesting.** Hmm. Slowly turning 70 (six months to go.)

**5. What do I need prayers for (a.k.a. why am I not with the good people gathered in St Louis this weekend?)** (A) We are doing a lot of traveling so Sharon can oversee the care of her aunt, who is in a nursing home in Indiana. These trips eat up a lot of time and money. Please pray for Klara's continued well-being; she is remarkably well for 97, especially after some medical disasters last year. (B) Please pray for a clear inner path for me to return to a long-delayed editing and translating project and complete it



David Rensberger

this summer, so that I can move forward to other good work as well.

Peace and blessing,  
David Rensberger  
Associate of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans

\* \* \* \*

**1. Matching a face to a name.** See attached photo. I was in Costa Rica with one of our partnership churches having a very welcomed cold smoothie.

**2. Standard info to help pigeon-hole me in the religious world.** Currently work for the Episcopal Church, am also an Independent Catholic priest, and a Religious Studies Major.

**3. Best thing I'm doing to nurture my faith right now.** Retreat at a Franciscan Monastery in Las Cruces next month, periodic one day retreats, meet with a spiritual director, and will go to Blue Mountain Meditation Center in Tomales, CA in October. I follow a fairly disciplined routine of meditation and prayer daily.

**4. What little thing am I doing that is particularly interesting?** I am doing a lot of advocacy work for Episcopal Migration Ministries and the Anti-Racism network that keeps me on my toes. I was at the border while you all were meeting and appreciated the prayers. I've learned a lot this past year and will continue as I navigate a divisive area of ministry and seek healing and wholeness for all.

**5. What do I need prayers for (a.k.a. why am I not with the good people gathered in St Louis this weekend?)** Prayers for discernment as I seek to enter the Episcopal priesthood. Prayers for hope in ministry that feels incredibly heavy right now.

Sr. Magdalena Stebbing, OEF



Sr. Magdalena



## 2018 Juniper Cup Competition



As usual, the Juniper Cup Competition was a rollicking good time! You may recall, the assignment was to write a blues song ("a song, a song, we have to write a song?") extolling the vicissitudes of Franciscan life. There were many creative submissions, and fabulous performances! The judges did not have an easy task!

We had Sr. Dale and granddaughter Ruby performing this song to the tune of "House of the Rising Sun:"

*There is a place called Pallotine,  
Franciscan, here and now.  
We share hot winds of compostable souls  
And offer all to the Lord.*

Then there was Br. Michael and new postulant Sara performing to the tune of "Song Sung Blue:"

*Franciscans know blues  
All of us can name one (or 2, or 3)  
We live our blues  
Because they tend to hang on.  
Vicissitudes are attitudes to stuff goin' on.  
But when you turn them into a song,  
The Spirit moves again .....  
And we're alive again.*

*I'll sing my blues,  
Knowing you will sing yours.  
Francis had blues  
And Clare could also sing hers.  
We all feel 'cause the world is real,  
They come now and then,  
But when you turn them into a song,  
The Spirit moves again.....  
And we can love again.*

*So sing your blues,  
They're prayers that we can offer;  
Our blues form words  
For those we see who suffer.  
So there we are, twixt the Earth and stars  
With the blues now and then,  
But if we turn them into a song,  
We can see again.....  
We can love again.*



Fabulous! Then we had Brer Bruce James with a

rendition of "Summertime, and The Livin' is Easy:"



*Summertime in St. Louis*

*Summertime---and the friars are fryin'!  
Temps are jumpin'---and the humidity's high.  
But our A/C's rich---and our fans are good workin'!  
So hush, little sibling---don't you cry!*

*Every morning---you been risin' up sweatin'!  
You spread your arms---and stink to the sky.  
But until the morning---ain't no heat gonna harm you.  
Not with A/C and fanworks runnin' high!*

Next, yours truly got into the act with a song to the tune of "Mining for Gold," by the Cowboy Junkies:

*Mining for Souls*

*We're Franciscans--poor Franciscans  
To our calling we must heed.*

*San Damiano--Cross weighs heavy.  
It reminds us of who we are.*

*In the shelters--on the soup lines,  
Fill the bowls and stand in line*

*'Til there's no more--mouths to feed here,  
And then we can have some soup.*

*Can you feel the Love down in your soul?  
It will lead you to places you never would go.  
Two years and the Simple Life will take hold.  
And the Franciscan Life becomes mining for souls.  
Yes, the Franciscan Life becomes mining for souls.*

So, there was talent galore! But there were three clear winners. In third place, with the privilege of hosting Little Sister Kiwi for a year, was Br. Fred J:

*Formation Blues (tune - Folsom Prison Blues)*

*I heard the Spirit calling --  
it knocked me on my head.  
And I ain't been the driver --  
Since I just don't know when,  
I'm striving in Formation,  
and time keeps sailing on,  
But changes are not easy,  
those ones that are of God!*

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## 2018 Juniper Cup Competition...continued

*Before I was a Novice,  
My siblings told me, Son  
Be holy in affections --- and pure in all desires,  
And I know that Man in Scripture--  
and (know) how He died.  
When I hear my old self howling,  
I bow my head and pray. (Sweet Jesus!)*



*They say I am not selfish--  
but I lust of my own heart.  
There's no escaping the Vi ciss i tudes of life...  
Well you had it coming, but I know we can be free  
As we feed and tend His she-ep.  
And that's what pleases God!*

*The Lord frees me from (sin's) prison,  
Sadly, each and every day.  
I embrace all Joys and Sorrows in my life,  
As ways to follow Him--in that little way...  
And I'll let that perfect Joy--blow my blues away!*

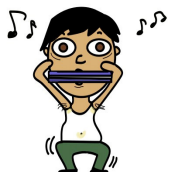
Our second place winner, taking home good ol'  
Brother Rat, was Br. Stephan:

### *Franciscan Boy Blues*

*He said follow me the little way,  
and in time you'll understand  
There is truly nothing better  
than this impoverished little band.  
Your brother's name is Francis  
And he'll show you what to do,  
'Cause from this day goin' forward  
there ain't no goin' it alone.*

*You got them Franciscan boy blues  
A way deep down you got them Franciscan boy  
blues!*

*He said, "Come a little closer son,  
so I can set you free.  
Knowin' that you're not the only one  
Is just the beginning of you and me.  
So give me your faults and foibles,  
And pray for all the rest,  
Because today, my little Franciscan,  
I am putting you to the test."*



*You got them Franciscan boy blues  
A way deep down you got them  
Franciscan boy blues!*

*It's been a little while since I last heard His voice,  
But deep down in my heart,  
I know I made the right choice.  
I was born to choose the little way  
'Cause nothing else would do,  
And now here we are a-singin' in our sandals  
'Bout them Franciscan boy blues  
A way deep down I got them Franciscan boy blues!*



And finally (drum roll, please!) our first  
place winner, taking home the coveted  
habit of St. James-the-Least, Br. David  
Delacroix:

### *Chapertime (tune: "Summertime")*

*Chapertime! And the livin' is cheesy.  
Humidity's climbin'," and the skeeters hungry!  
But we still come, 'cause the fellowship's lovely,  
So sing all my siblings, laugh and just be.*

*Francis and Clare, lookin' on with amazement.  
"What's goin' on?" they say to each other.  
"People in love with their Heavenly Lover!  
Embrace what God's doin', sister and brother!*

*The world's goin' crazy, injustice is rulin'  
Children are cryin', locked up in their cages!  
But God's children are risin',  
Won't take no for an answer!  
God's light shinin' brighter for all the ages!*

*Amen.*

Yes, amen! And congratulations, Brother! So, to  
Br. DD goes the dubious honor of designing next  
year's competition! Here is his proposal:

"After giving it a little more thought, I think it will be  
fun to expand the OEF hagiography by creating  
new saints and their stories. So Next Chapter we  
will have a story time. Dream up a new saint in the  
manner of Franciscan vicissitudes and tell us who  
they are, what they did, and why they should be  
beatified. Relics created as evidence will give the  
story more veracity! (i.e. earn you brownie points  
with the judges). The story can be brief, can be told  
in song or poem or paragraph or 2. No one will  
judge the historicity, only the veracity! Fire up your  
imaginations now!"

David D.





## Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity



Since its inception in February of 2004, the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity has believed:

“For the sake of creation, we are called to bear witness to the essential unity of the church, the Body of Christ, by working towards Franciscan Unity in all of its expressions. We will achieve this through dialogue and collaboration among the Orders which follow Christ in the tradition of Francis and Clare.”

Mini conferences are held every year centering around current issues such as inclusivity among religions and cultures, Pope Francis’ encyclical “Laudato si” on how we are called as Franciscans to respond to our environments in healthier ways, and this year’s theme “Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear” addressing nonviolent ways to address the violent and insensitive times we live in.

The Joint Committee consists of two members from each participating Order, of which includes TSSF, OFS, OEF, and OLF.

In August of last year, the Joint Committee gathered for our annual meeting in Manhattan, NY. The highlights of our time together were:

1. The Lutheran Franciscans (OLF) coming on board with us.
2. Brs. Louis and Elijah became the Co-Covenanters of the Joint Committee since OEF was the next in line for leading.
3. We completed a video production centered on religious formation and the work of the Joint Committee. The music was gifted to us by our illustrious Br. Louis who was

unable to join us at that time. If you have not seen the video I wish to share it with you. (Contact Br. Elijah for a link to the video.)

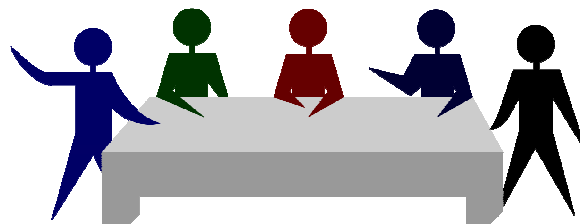
4. This past May, the Joint Committee held their annual mini conference at the Roslyn Center in Richmond VA, as Sr. Markie mentioned to us at Chapter. The title was “Agents of Peace in a Time of Fear” and was facilitated by Rev. Masud, TSSF and his presenting partner Rhett Engulfing from OFS.

5. The Committee is slated once again to meet this August for our annual meeting in Detroit, MI to decide what our next step(s) shall be.

The Committee wishes to thank you deeply for your continued support and we continue to pray and serve our respective Orders and the strength of Franciscan light throughout the world.

In Christ's Enduring Love,

Brs. Elijah & Louis, OEF  
Co-Covenanters for the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity



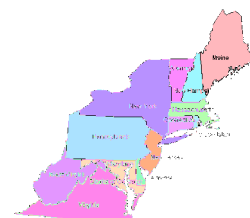


## Fellowship News

As a Franciscan Order we need as much face-to-face and spirit-to-spirit contact as we can get. Each of us is a gift to every other Member of the Order. Each of us carries the Imprint of God and the Spirit of Jesus & Francis & Clare in our own unique way. We urge you to share what God has given you to share, and to receive what God pours through other Members of the OEF that might touch and grow and deepen your walk with Francis and Clare and this little Order.



**OEF Northeast New England Retreat.** November 2-4 at Mercy Farm in Benson, VT. More details to follow!







## Fiddlesticks Book Review

*\*A new regular column by Br. David Delacroix, OEF*



*I am proposing a new regular column for the newsletter, a book review in which folks write a brief description of a book and share why it is meaningful/helpful to the writer. I'm kicking things off with a brief review of **Open Mind, Open Heart** - by Father Thomas Keating.*

This small paperback (190 pages) was first published in 1986, then a 20th anniversary edition came out in 2006. It is published by Bloomsbury Press ([www.bloomsbury.com](http://www.bloomsbury.com)) and available at most popular book sources like Amazon and Barnes & Noble. In it, Father Keating outlines the fundamental principles of what he describes as Centering Prayer, the usual initial step into more contemplative prayer styles. He opens the volume with a "Prayer to the Holy Spirit", a paraphrase of the ancient Latin hymn. Each chapter that follows takes the reader step by step into the practice of Centering Prayer, the style of prayer focused on learning the first language of God: Silence. He bases the teaching on understanding Jesus' teaching about prayer as recorded in Matthew 6:6- "If you want to pray, go into your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

This style of prayer is all about entering into the presence of the Spirit and resting there, to be silent and simply allow God to act in us. It is similar to Zen meditation but is not about emptying the mind in order to experience nothingness. It is about listening, about simply *being with* our Heavenly Father. It is an avenue for discovery. There is good psychology behind this way of praying as well. As one practices this way, things do start to happen. I have found this way revolutionizing on many levels. Self-awareness, healing, self-forgiveness, nurturing of the characteristics of Christ (or the 'fruit' of the Holy Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22,23) and more and more a sense of union with Christ.

I encourage folks to read and practice Centering Prayer. Attend a workshop with other interested folks. Meet with a Centering Prayer group. The book contains contacts and resources for one to

learn and practice this life-changing prayer. I have

never felt a deeper sense of God's love that heals, liberates and transforms my life, unifying it all in God's love.

*\*And speaking of books:*

So, dear Sisters and Brothers, how many of us knew Brother Pacificus has written "an action thriller" that centers on the role of belief with a Professor of World Religions at the center of the action? He and his family are safe amidst floods and landslides in western Japan, and from an earthquake just off the eastern coast.

Peace to all! (the quest of the protagonist Dr. Robin Fox and of the author!)

michael v.

### **Mind Virus - by Charles Kowalski.**

#### **NO ONE WHO BELIEVES IS SAFE**

Robin Fox, peace-loving professor of world religions, wants only to leave his dark past as a military interrogator behind him. But when an unknown suspect tries to disperse a deadly virus in downtown Washington, Fox is unwillingly drawn back into the shadowy world of intelligence.

The FBI and CIA automatically suspect Islamic terrorists, but Fox digs deeper to discover the far more frightening truth: a global conspiracy to eradicate all religion from the face of the earth.

From Washington to Jerusalem, from Rome to London, Fox must use all his wits in a perilous race to stop a psychopathic mastermind from unleashing worldwide devastation.

\* \* \* \*

#### **WINNER**

Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers Colorado Gold Award

#### **FINALIST**

Clive Cussler Grandmaster Award

Killer Nashville Claymore Award

Pacific Northwest Writers Association Literary Award

(Continued on page 10)

## Book Reviews, continued

## Reviews of Mind Virus

"Charles Kowalski takes a frightening idea to its logical (and terrifying) conclusion. The kind of pulse-pounding adrenaline-pumping adventure tale that I associate with the best of Clive Cussler, Frederick Forsyth, and Ken Follett. If this book doesn't have you flipping pages long into the night, see your doctor. You may already be dead." —Jeff Edwards, bestselling author of **SEA OF SHADOWS** and **STEEL WIND RISING**

"A fast-paced thriller that will keep you breathless and wanting more. Robin Fox is one of the best heroes to come along in quite a while." —Leo Maloney, author of **TERMINATION ORDERS** and **ARCH ENEMY**

"A fiendishly clever stew of mind games, bioterror, and a new breed of extremist malice. **Mind Virus** is one heck of a ride." - Barry Lancet, awardwinning author of **THE SPY ACROSS THE TAB**.

## OEF History Project

For those who haven't heard, we (Sr. Dale, Br. Ron, Sr. Markie, and I) are working on a history of the Order. As we move forward, it would be helpful to me to receive from anyone who has them copies of pictures, notes, meeting records, and the like to help fill out the content of the book, especially anything that reflects not only "business" decisions but personal takes on the order at any given moment in time.

Thanks,  
Betty Lou



## Greetings from Brother Rat

*\*As is tradition, Br. Rat has gone home with the Second-Place winner of the Juniper Cup competition held at Chapter. A report on Juniper Cup is elsewhere in this publication.*

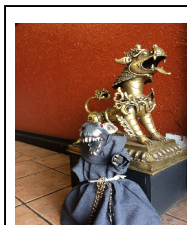
First off I'd like to give a big shout out to my travel companions, Muriel, Stephan, Ron & Betty for helping me to navigate broken airplanes and negotiate new travel plans. As we landed a day later than anticipated we had to go directly from the airport to Annapurna where I began what will be a year long study of East Indian and Tibetan Hospitality and Religion. The emphasis will be on the cuisine of course as I am trying to get to a place where I no longer have to struggle so hard with my compulsion to gnaw on things indiscriminately. Of course I am equally excited to learn about different faith expressions and am hoping that this course of study will help me to grow in my ability to see the benefits of being in community with others (particularly cats) who live out of a different set of cultural and religious values.

As always know that you are all in my prayers and that I greatly appreciate your willingness to help me along on my Franciscan journey. I will send info on my assigned ministry as soon as my paperwork for the Rhododendron Recovery Program has been accepted.

Peace & Blessings, Br. Rat



l-r: Muriel, Br. Rat, Br. Stephan



Br. Rat & dragon



Br. Rat



# Listening Deep, Rising Up, Embracing Hope



So, we have another successful Chapter under our belts! For those not present, here are a few highlights:

Thursday evening once again brought happy reunions and meeting new faces, including Sr. Dale's young granddaughter, Ruby, who was a delight all weekend! The worship service that evening spent some time honoring those who have left us over the years to join with God. And yours truly delivered her first sermon ever! How's that for rising up?



Yoseph, David & Elijah

We approved seven members for profession, including Kathleen D., who could not be present for health reasons. The Chapter showed compassion by approving her for profession at the Great Lakes Regional gathering in October.



Profession!

In addition, Br. Bob Blattner was welcomed home with open arms, having been previously released from vows to join another order, which has since dissolved. (We didn't want our brother to remain "homeless!")

We also welcomed three new novices and three new postulants! Sadly, two siblings were considered for release of

vows at their request. One was released with love, and the other will be encouraged to walk with us for one more year.

A great many of us traveled to St. Louis to join the "Families Belong Together Rallies" happening there.

We celebrated the 25th wedding anniversary of our sisters



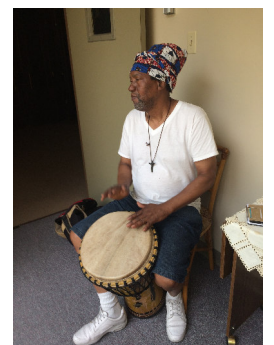
Happy Anniversary!

Karen & Kathy Lawler!

We listened to an early morning drum performance by our brother Owusu.

We listened deeply to our Sister Petra, who spoke about her life transition experience.

We had a rousing good time with our annual Juniper Cup competition,  
(Continued on page 12)



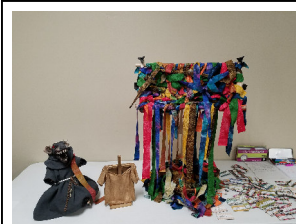
Br. Owusu & Drum



Saying goodbye

We watched a film: "The Sultan and the Saint," and listened deeply to the message there. Discussion centered around how to accept others different from ourselves.

We spent a meaningful hour in worship in a basement shelter while a dangerous storm raged outside. Sisters Karen and Kathy led us in an exercise of weaving ourselves together.



Woven together

As usual, mealtimes were a wonderful time of mixing and mingling, with young Ruby taking on the task of bus girl, and doing it very well!



Fred, Br. John, Br. Neal

We experienced a beautiful concert prepared by Br. Louis and performed by his friend, Jim Hughes. Br. Louis

experienced a death in his family, and could not join us for Chapter. He was held up in prayer throughout the weekend.



Jim Hughes in Concert



## Listening Deep, continued...

in which participants wrote (or re-wrote) Franciscan Blues songs!

And finally, we participated in an exercise placing marbles on a large map of the world laid out in the sanctuary. The marbles represented places in the world where our prayers and caring lie. At the end, we followed Ruby's lead by scattering the remaining marbles all over the world!

Most of these events are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this publication. Just wanted to highlight some of our goings on!

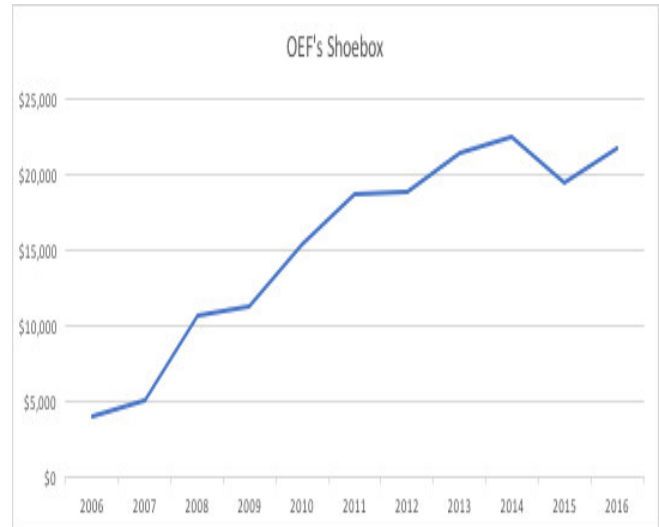
Peace,  
Sister Chris



Sr. Petra

## OEF in a Shoebox - Treasurer's Report

At the end of 2006, OEF's financial records consisted of \$4,055 in the bank and a shoebox full of receipts. In the succeeding years, faithful giving and careful stewardship have enhanced the financial sustainability of our little Order. By the end of 2016, we had \$21,648 in the bank. (And we retired the shoebox of receipts in favor of actual accounting software.)



How much is enough? We probably should have enough in the bank to pay for a full year's Chapter/Convocation, without chapter registrations. Why? Because if we ever had to cancel our annual gathering (for political or other reasons), we would still be liable for the contract we'd signed. Other than that, continued financial health will allow us to keep registration fees stable for our annual gatherings.



Placing Marbles on the World

## An Important Reminder

**Reminder! Nancy Menning is the OEF Treasurer. Contributions can be made by sending a check (made out to "Order of Ecumenical Franciscans") to Nancy at:**

**Order of Ecumenical Franciscans  
Nancy Menning, Treasurer  
521 N Aurora St  
Ithaca, NY 14850**



Sr. Dale &amp; Ruby



Pallotine cross



# Formation Station



## Rites of Passage

Once again, the Formation Team were delighted to see a solid group of Novices taking their life-time vows as they professed at Chapter 2018 at The Pallotine Retreat Centre in St Louis. Those professing were Br. Stephan Gerhardt, Sr. Kathy Lawler, Sr. Karen Lawler, Br. Ed Holm, Br. Jacoba (David) Ketchum and Br. Reg Weeks. Each one coming to this point in their own unique journey yet each one part of us all by virtue of their Franciscan calling to the OEF. Welcome to our newly Professed Members

Kathleen Dlugosz was also elected to Profession. She has been ready to profess for three years but her complicated health issues have thwarted her attempts to attend Chapter all three years. The assembled Professed Members at Chapter voted for her Profession to proceed and the Great Lakes Fellowship has been charged with making this happen, hopefully at their upcoming Regional Fellowship.

We welcomed Mark Scott and Debra Snider-Scott as Novices by transfer and they made Novice Vows alongside Stephen Kirk Bowman who was a Postulant. Welcome also to these novices. We expect to see two more Novicings in the coming months. So, watch this space.

The new Postulants present at Chapter were Julie Baker, Sara Holliday and Gerry Clark. We formally welcomed them and hope to see more of them as they work their way through Formation and discern their fit with OEF.

Br. Bob Blattner who was formerly Professed with the OEF asked to be accepted back, again. Those of the Formation Team present at Chapter thought he should be welcomed back. The Council agreed to take the matter to the Professed and they agreed we should welcome Bob back. He was reinstated during the Rites of Passage Service. **Welcome back Bob!**



As a result of the general feeling at Chapter, we are now referring to those who work with our Postulants and Novices as Formation Companions. This better describes the work we do and also avoids people confusing us with professional counselors

Sr. Kiwi put in a plug for the updated "Formation Handbook" and "Counselors Handbook." These are on the website and available to all Novices and Professed. We ask people to make use of them. Formation Companions should ensure the people they are companioning have copies of the "Formation Handbook," as they contain much useful information.

The question of Associates came up and was deferred for discussion during the year and discernment in 2019.

Anjelika, Kiwi, and Sophie  
Elisa (and in absentia, John)



## Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Submissions for the Thanksgiving/Christmas\* 2018 issue of "Fiddlesticks" will be accepted immediately.

**Deadline for submissions is October 20, 2018.**

Send submissions to Sister Chris at  
capoef@solarus.biz

or snail-mail to:

Christine Petersen, OEF  
853 Norwich Ct.  
Nekoosa, WI 54457



**Thank you!**

**\*Note: to make article deadlines a little easier, "Fiddlesticks" will now be distributed in February, May, August and November.**



*Fiddlesticks*  
*c/o Christine Petersen, OEF*  
*853 Norwich Ct.*  
*Nekoosa, WI 54457*  
*U.S.A.*



## The Starfish



A young boy was walking down a deserted beach just before dawn. In the distance, he saw a frail old woman. As he approached the old woman, he saw that she was picking up stranded starfish to toss them back into the sea. The boy gazed in wonder as the old woman again and again leaned over with great effort, picking up the starfish and helping them find the safety of the sea. "Why do you spend so much energy doing what seems to be a waste of time?" asked the boy. The woman paused from her work. "These stranded starfish will die if left in the morning sun." "But there are thousands of beaches and millions of starfish along the coastline," explained the boy. "Even if you work all day, it won't really make a difference!" The woman smiled, bent down to retrieve another lucky starfish and said as she tossed it into the surf, "Well, it makes a difference to this one!"

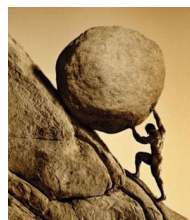


## A Quote Worth Noting

We accomplish in our lifetime  
 only a tiny fraction of the miraculous  
 enterprise that is God's work.

We cannot do everything,  
 and there is liberation in realizing that.  
 It enables us to do something small  
 and try to do that well.

It may be incomplete,  
 but it is a beginning,  
 a step along the way,  
 an opportunity for God's grace  
 to enter and do the rest.



- *Bishop Oscar Romero,*  
*South America*