

What's happening in the OFS?

Overview of the National Chapter meeting from 4th Sept 21

Kathy opened the meeting with prayer and an excerpt from the book 'The Journey & The Dream' a Franciscan book by Murray Bodo about our journey with Christ. The focus being from the part where it says 'When the light of the spirit was dying out this little man (Francis) enkindled the flame'



Items discussed included Archives, Communication, Elections, Finance, Formation and the Handbook.

Archives

The idea of keeping Archives is to try and build a history of the OFS. Archives are currently stored at the National Seat in Arkley, where the Archive team had been collating and filing relative documents. Since the lockdown in February 2020 this hasn't been possible but we are hoping to be able to start it up again soon.

Archives will be scanned or photographed and they hope to start a listening project where elderly members who wish to be interviewed will have their history recorded on tape for posterity.

Volunteers urgently needed to join the Archive team! Please tell your Regional Minister if you're interested.

Communication

It has been decided that there is a need for more effective communication between National, Regions and Fraternities. Therefore a short update on the Chapter Meetings (like this one) will be published on the Web site and on OFS Facebook Accounts. Regions or Fraternities can then print and post the updates or include them in their newsletters for those members who do not have a computer or are not in the least bit computer literate.

Elections

We welcome Thelma & Philomena our new Regional Ministers for the South West & Wales and Southern region!

Elections were held in Southern, South East, South Wales and South West. Newly elected Ministers: Philomena (Southern) South East (Kathy) South Wales and South West (Thelma)

Practical Guidance has now been issued to Newly Elected Ministers and they will be issued with a list of Email addresses for National Council and Regional Ministers. Dianne will be responsible for this

Midlands Elective Chapter failed to have a quorum and Betsy helped the Region to develop an Action Plan to try again in February.

North West are having an Elective Chapter on October 9 (postponed since June) and have already indicated that they may be unable to have a quorum. If this happens then they too will be helped by Betsy to develop their own Action Plan to retry in April 2022

London have indicated that they would like an extension until March when they too will hold their elective chapter and hopefully will be able to have a quorum.

Finance

Unfortunately there has been a decrease in the contributions from Regions so new guidance on Donation amounts will be discussed in December of this year. Therefore it's impossible to forecast an accurate 3yr budget due to the number of uncertainties.

Financial Accounts have been audited and approved.

Formation

There is a need for Formation training to be given to Formation Teams. At the next National Council a Training (hopefully face to face) to be delivered on a Region by Region basis will be discussed and dates allocated to individual Regions. Good Formation Training will give Confidence, Knowledge and Develop existing skills. It will give a basis for Understanding Statutes and the need for longer Formation to develop not just knowledge but discernment of a Vocation. **Terry** will lead this Team.

Handbook

Feedback has been sought on the content of a new Handbook and what the Handbook represents to members. A Zoom meeting has been set up for 13 September with members who wish to be involved in the development of a new handbook. **Kathy** will chair this meeting and **Dianne** will minute.

If you or someone you know from your Fraternity would like to join this meeting please tell your Regional Minister who will contact Kathy directly so she can include you!

Next National Council Meeting

Will take place on Zoom on 2nd October 2021 at 10am.

Next National Chapter Meeting

Will take place on Zoom on 4th December 2021 at 10am.

If you would like to contribute please send your ideas to your Regional Minister who will pass them on.

Please pray for **Kathy and Betsy** who will be representing OFSGB at the International Elective Chapter in Rome from November 13 - 22

JPIC!

And finallyAs some of you might know the COP26 conference is due in Glasgow from 31st October until 12th November. It's going to be where world leaders will gather to discuss steps to achieve a zero carbon future by 2050.

It has been described by some as humanity's last hope of avoiding catastrophe from climate change. As Franciscans we are duty bound to pray for and take care of humanity and creation around us. We can do this in our own small ways by recycling and up cycling and remembering to pray for the conversion of mankind. To pray for hearts of stone to turn to hearts of flesh.

Sean, one of our OFS members who is involved with JPIC has done an 'Examination of Conscience' which some of you might like to use for yourselves or your fraternities. It is based on daily reflections. I hope you will enjoy it.

Please see below.



Divine Creator, how astounded we are to know how carefully and creatively you have fashioned us. Your patient tending began so long ago and continues in this very moment. Truly we are blessed. Help us to grow in awareness of how we are part of the Body of Creation, how we are connected to all that has been, all that is, and all that will be. Help us to be conscious of life, to understand how significant our role is, and to participate in your work by becoming co-creators with you. May we make choices that reflect care for our home in the universe, allowing your love to be expressed everywhere and to all. Amen.

Judy Cannato: "Radical Amazement".

Franciscan Ecological Examination of Conscience

(from *Care for Creation* p. 99-101, by
Illia Delio, Keith
Warner, Pamela Wood)

Sunday:

Is my whole life centred on God's overflowing love in my life, revealed through Jesus and through all of creation? Do I respond wholeheartedly to the call of this Spirit in my life?

Monday:

Do I accept with a grateful heart the gifts of God's goodness and diversity in creation? Do I respond, as Francis did, by building bonds of love, care, concern and companionship with all living beings? Do I value creation not as mine alone but first and foremost as God's home?

Tuesday:

Am I willing to accept Francis' invitation to live as a "lesser brother or sister" within the kinship of creation? Do I pray for the forgiveness of sins between humans and the created world, and for the healing and reconciliation of our broken relationship with creation?

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Wednesday:

Am I caring toward my larger family of creation? Have I shown fidelity, humility, reverence and love to my Sister Mother Earth and all my brother and sis-

ter species? Have I used my God-given gifts to honour and protect the diverse, interdependent, fragile nature of all life and to preserve it for all future beings?

Thursday:

Have I lived in a state of unrelatedness, over and against creation? Have I used my God-given gifts to honour and protect the diverse, interdependent, fragile nature of all life and to preserve it for all future beings?

Friday:

Do I seek to eliminate from the world whatever keeps all creatures in their full development intended by their Creator: pollution, greed, overconsumption, loss of

habitat, disease, war, extinction of species, oppressive laws and structures? Do I support organizations that work for ecological improvement on a systemic scale, restoration of habitat and preservation of open spaces?

Saturday:

Have I committed myself to follow Francis' example of ecological conversion? Have I encouraged others to take care for creation seriously? Have I been

judgmental or mean-spirited toward myself or others when we live imperfectly in our journey to heal our relationship with creation?

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After spending time with your question of the day, hold in your mind and heart the ways in which you have lived in disharmony with creation. Ask the earth and the Creator for forgiveness for your transgressions. Offer these mistakes up to God and ask for the strength and the wisdom to learn to live with integrity within the web of creation. Resolve to amend your life in the spirit of penance and love for our world. Name one action you intend to take today to work for care for creation.

