

*Divine Mercy  
Sunday  
April 7*



Attribution:

*Divine Mercy* Painting by [Eugeniusz Kazimirowski](#), 1934  
Divine Mercy Sanctuary in Vilnius.

# *The Cord*

*April, 2024*

*Newsletter of the San Luis Rey  
Secular Franciscan Fraternity*

*Monthly Gatherings: 2nd Sundays*

## *April Gathering:*

**April 14, Sunday:**

**12 noon** Social Time in our Gathering Rm

**12:30 pm** Adoration and Prayer in St. Clare Chapel

**1 to 3 pm** General Monthly Gathering

\* \* \*

*Next Month General Gathering:*

***2nd Sunday, Mother's Day***

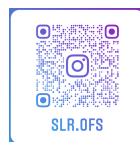
**May 12, 2023**

Login for April Zoom: **Note NEW Zoom ID & password**

[www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) Click on: **Join/Join a Meeting**

Meeting ID: **854 5132 2603** Password: **409116**

**For more detail go to last page**



Contact us via our website [Contact Page](#)

Mission San Luis Rey  
4050 Mission Avenue  
Oceanside, CA 92057

## *Minister's Note for April*

Dear sisters and brothers,

Happy Easter! He is risen! Alleluia!

We, the new council, are profoundly grateful to the previous councils for all they have done and for their continued support and guidance. We are especially grateful to our entire fraternity for offering us this opportunity to serve. The new council “hit the ground running” with Vice Minister Kelly working on connecting us with community service opportunities, Secretary Heidi diligently assembling notes and files, and Treasurer Carolyn working on changing over the accounts, as well as coordinating outreach and distributing hard copy issues of the Cord. Formation Director Corinne is prayerfully organizing formation and working with each of our new people. Liz and Linda G., our two new Councilors, have been writing articles and supporting the council. We have a wonderful council!

Our survival as a fraternity during the pandemic was nothing short of remarkable – we not only moved (seemingly) seamlessly onto Zoom, but we also were able to profess four people! God clearly put precisely the people we needed in place. We are eternally grateful to Laura and the councils for swiftly moving us into the virtual world!

Some of the emerging goals of the new council are to assist our members in returning to meetings, to actively serve our brothers and sisters in need, and to expand our outreach so that those who are called will easily find us! Please share any ideas you have!

Finally, each April we celebrate our Rule by renewing the commitment we made at our Profession, and we will be doing that this month. We also will be welcoming our new people into Inquiry. What a wonderful way to celebrate our way of life! What a beautiful way to celebrate Easter!

Peace and All Good,



*Connie Collins, OFS  
Minister, San Luis Rey Fraternity*

## Path To Profession

Thinking backwards & reflecting, the journey was embarked upon with childlike enthusiasm & wonder. I didn't have a real grasp of how long the Formation process would take & remember when getting closer to the end I was attached to that Profession date which our wave found out is not fixed.

It takes as long as it takes they say, yet the day does come & what a day it is !

There were 5 of us who studied together & were Professed in two groups of 3 & 2 due to life's circumstances: Connie Collins, Kelly Farnum, Sam DeSantis, Liz Mavis, and Joe Cannon.



One of us has gone on along their journey home to our dear Lord & is forever so very deeply missed.

The four of us left on this earth to work out our salvation share a bond unique to that of our other relationships with OFS brothers & sisters.

We grew especially close to one another during Formation by meeting before class out back in the pavilion area to pray the Office together.

That was when we met in person. The zoom which now inhabits our study together in this starting 2024 wave was born out of our worlds period of isolation.

SLR-OFS's Formation went on strong throughout that season and several of our members from that time are now serving on the Council.

I remember that throughout the periods of Orientation~Inquiry~Candidacy-being so interested in what was next in The Journey Book yet wish I'd have given more reflection time to really prayerfully ponder the questions rather than answering them so quickly.

It was a time of getting together things which needed addressing & processing in my personal life which freed my path to Profession. The time spent with my beloved Fr. Adrian in spiritual direction along the way was like balm to a wounded soul.

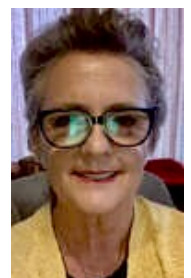
The time of mystagogia post Profession was also beautiful as a time to settle into the new identity & discover what areas of service would emerge personally & within the needs of our Chapter.

I utterly & completely am enraptured with being Franciscan officially & love being on the inside of the inside of Holy Mother Church.

I've yet to visit the many other Chapters in Southern California though we have that & international opportunities to do so!! We have family all over the world!

I've learned so much over these years & yet I'll not have time to get to all within Franciscanism, which keeps me always in formation.

*Kelly Farnum OFS,  
Vice Minister, San Luis Rey Fraternity*



## Servant of God Sr Thea Bowman, FSPA



[Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA](#)  
at St. Rose Convent, 1968

I love discovering new Franciscan saints, or as in the case of Thea Bowman, Franciscans on the path to canonization. I was first introduced to Sr Thea a few years ago when FST had an evening presentation about her life. What came across in that presentation was the passion and dedication and joy and determination of Sr Thea’s spirit. I’m hoping to introduce you to her with a brief overview and strong encouragement to get to know her better.

Sr Thea was born in rural Mississippi in 1937, the granddaughter of slaves. Her father was a doctor and her mother a teacher. They sent Thea to a local Catholic school as they valued education and the Catholic school seemed the better choice. At age nine, Thea decided that she wanted to be

a Catholic. That was only the beginning.

Sr Thea experienced the call to religious life, entered the convent at fifteen, and found herself the only African-American in the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. According to Robert Ellsberg in *Blessed Among Us*, she had no desire to ‘blend in’, but believed her identity was a special vocation.

Thea Bowman received several degrees, including a PhD from Catholic University of America. She taught at many levels, ending up as a professor at Viterbo College, Catholic University and Xavier University in New Orleans.

Sr Thea is said to have been a much in demand and spellbinding speaker, who often would burst into a powerful song in the middle of her presentations! Her joy in valuing cultural differences while proclaiming unity in Christ was spread far and wide. Sr Thea’s talk to the USCCB is available online if you would like to hear her speak. Also online are some of her songs. Wow – what a powerful voice!

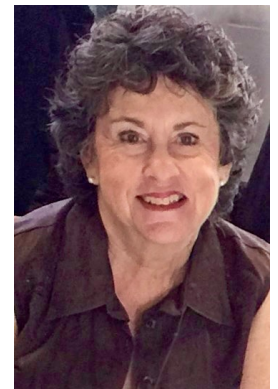


Sadly, Servant of God, Thea Bowman was diagnosed with an incurable cancer. She continued to travel and speak, even from her wheelchair until her death in 1990. Here are two quotes from her: “Remember who you are and whose you are”. “Part of my approach to my illness has been to say I want to choose life. I want to keep going. I want to live fully until I die.”

A highly recommended book on her life and work is *Thea’s Song* by Charlene Smith and John Feister. May we all be touched by her Franciscan Joy!

*Sister Thea Bowman,*  
[Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration](#)

*Corinne Helena, OFS  
Formation Director*



## *The Blessings of Servant Leadership*

Our San Luis Rey OFS fraternity held its council elections last month and I wanted to write about how happy I felt to be part of this process. The volume of fraternity members who stepped forward, accepting the possibility of being chosen for servant leadership, was inspiring. The Holy Spirit was very present, lifting hearts and banishing some of the self doubt which clouds the courage to simply raise one's hand and say "Yes, Lord". By this, I am humbled and grateful for having been given the opportunity to serve as council secretary for this term.

In my adult experience, leaders made the decisions and servants carried them out. As an educator, to be raised up from the level of your colleagues as a department chair was an honor to be aspired to. Competition, ambition, and superiority of intellect, marked a good leader, where the spirit of service was optional for doing the job well. This perceived mindset made accepting leadership positions difficult for me at times, pride always getting the best of me.

Fortunately, Saint Francis had a very practical purpose in choosing servant leaders. He knew that the need for time alone in contemplative prayer and growing spiritually could not be accomplished effectively alone. The brothers needed the physical and emotional support to dedicate, prayerfully, their time solely to God and life in Him. For this, Saint Francis gave the brothers a plan: for every one or two brothers, who required sustained solitude in prayer, two more brothers would act as "mother's", like a support team, to take responsibility for their physical needs. (Whoever has been camping probably understands the wisdom in this!)



*Mothers on the March, watercolor by Heidi Madden, OFS*

By this model, servant leaders are the ones elected to be “mother” in the fraternity for a time, so that the members can be supported in their spiritual growth. Time for prayer, serving the poor, visiting the imprisoned, whatever they, by their gifts, are called to do. Today, with all of our sources of distraction, active spiritual engagement and personal growth can be exhausting so we come together to be refreshed by the service of those whom we elect to lead us. Everyone of us will be called to become mother and will have different ways of approaching the tasks blessed to us. In this context, “doing the job well” requires us to empty the vessels of our human ambition continually, to allow the Holy Spirit to take charge in our efforts, and lead us all to Christ, the true source of our Franciscan lives.



Heidi Madden, OFS  
Secretary

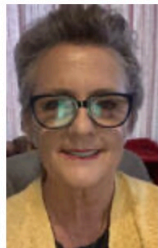
[News from the Fraternity Council](#)

*The Newly Elected Fraternity Council and Fraternity Support*

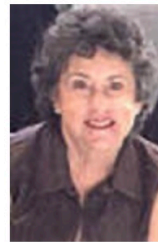
*The San Luis Rey Fraternity Council*



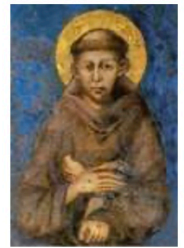
Connie Collins, OFS  
Minister



Kelly Farnum, OFS  
Vice Minister & Formator



Corinne Helena, OFS  
Formation Director



Spiritual Assistant



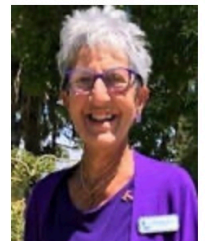
Heidi Madden, OFS  
Secretary



Carolyn Brock, OFS  
Treasurer & Outreach



Linda Gossett, OFS  
Councilor



Liz Mavis, OFS  
Councilor

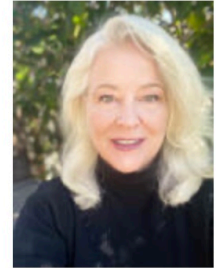
## Fraternity Support



Karron, OFS  
JPIC Animator



Marta Kassai, OFS  
Cord Newsletter Editor



Laura Chun, OFS  
Website Design & Support



**The newly elected San Luis Rey Fraternity Council**

## From our Treasurer

You can mail your OFS fraternity contributions to:



**Carolyn Brock, OFS**  
**P. O. Box 1839**  
**Poway, CA 92074**



## [Secular Franciscan Regional & National News](#)

### *Zoom Workshop for Secular Franciscans:*

#### **Francis of Assisi, 1224-1226: A Spirituality of Decline and True Joy**

**Three Saturdays: June 1, 8 and 15 at 8:30 a.m.-10 a.m. PST**

#### **No cost**

This workshop, presented on Zoom, will look at what are called Francis of Assisi's "years of decline" (1224-1226). It was a time of increasing pain and spiritual suffering. Francis, blind and suffering from malaria and leprosy, heads to La Verna for a time of contemplation and solace. The Stigmata and the Canticle of the Creatures are the products of the important year of 1224.

"Years of decline" are an ever-present context of our own lives. We experience the decline of parents and grandparents, friends and siblings, and, before long, signs of our own. What can Francis of Assisi's years of decline teach us?

Fr. Jack Rathschmidt and Fr. Dave Couturier, both Capuchins, will address these questions and more in these three Saturday Zoom sessions. There will be time given for Secular Franciscans to talk with one another in small discussion groups on this critically important topic.

#### **[Register Now](#)**



Franciscan School of Theology  
at the UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

#### **FRANCISCAN ZOOM LECTURE SERIES**

Once a month | 7 PM PST

Join us to learn more about the Franciscan Tradition from Scholars across the globe. All Lectures are done via Zoom.

For last month's lecture go to YouTube: <https://youtu.be/TcdmncBldY8?si=cfolDDImK8k-43Zd>



March 14, 2024 now on YouTube:

The Role of Franciscan Tradition in Francis de Sales's Reform of Militant Catholicism

By: Thomas Donlan, Ph.D.

Questions concerning your registrations contact [AbigailLuna@fst.edu](mailto:AbigailLuna@fst.edu)





To join by Computer, Laptop, Tablet, SmartPhone App:

- Click or Go to this [link](#) (full link is below):
- If prompted use: Meeting ID: 854 5132 2603
- Then use Password: 409116

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85451322603?pwd=R2VMUkFROGdvMmQ1L3dIZVRUOWI3dz09>



*Let us Pray for our brothers and sisters, especially: :*



❖ For those who died in the month of April ~~~✝

- April 2, 1999 **Cornelia Sussman, OFS**
- April 2, 2012 **Elane Smith, OFS**
- April 6, 2018 **Mary Behnke, OFS**
- April 17, 2003 **Nicholas Furticella, OFS**
- April 28, 2009 **Mary Gregush, OFS**

❖ For those who were professed in the month of April:

- April 10, 2005 **Winnie Baumer, OFS**
- April 22, 1961 **Sr. Madeline Fitzgerald, OSC**
- April 24, 1994 **Marta Kassai, OFS**

❖ For Rock DeSpain, OFS who has been placed on hospice care, and for Jan DeSpain, OFS to have the strength caring for him.

❖ For Gina Martinot's Sister Christine whose mental health has deteriorated and is now very fragile.

❖ For Joseph, Carol Imhoff's husband.

\*\*\*

**From the Editor:** Thank you all for your contributions to this month issue of The Cord. Due to change in our monthly general gathering date to second Sundays, please submit your articles, reports or adds by the 25th of the month to publish in next month issue. Send your Word or Pages files (font Arial 12 pt, if possible) and any photos (jpg or png) via email to: [mksfo@me.com](mailto:mksfo@me.com)

*Marta*

**Peace  
and  
All Good**



Dr. Marta M. Kassai, OFS, Editor

