

Epiphany

January 6



Attribution: Adoration of the Magi by
[Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 1655-1660](#)



Attribution: [Nativity scene](#) - Pope Francis is asking that we leave the Nativity Scene up in our homes until February 2, the Presentation of the Lord. Pray for Peace in the Middle East.

The Cord

January, 2024

Newsletter of the San Luis Rey
Secular Franciscan Fraternity

Monthly Gatherings: 2nd Sundays

January Gathering:

January 14, Sunday:

12:00 noon Social Time in our Gathering Rm

1:00 to 2:40 pm General Monthly Gathering

2:40 pm Prayer in St. Clare Chapel

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Next Month General Gathering:

2nd Sunday

February 11, 2023

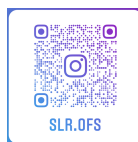
Login for All Zooms:

www.zoom.us Click on: **Join a Meeting**

Meeting ID: **760 726 2486** Password: **1798**

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

Mission San Luis Rey
4050 Mission Avenue
Oceanside, CA 92057



Minister's Note for January

At dusk on weekend night with no moon, our family was camping in the Anza Borrego desert at an astronomy 'star party.' My husband and I were rushing through our various tasks. He, along with many other enthusiasts, was setting up telescopes while I made dinner on the camp stove, fed the kids, and was quickly setting up the interior of the tent – unrolling five sleeping bags, ground pads, and organizing warm clothes for the cold desert night. Soon it would be dark, and at a gathering of amateur astronomers, once dark there was no artificial light allowed – any artificial light would significantly diminish your night vision and destroy any long exposure astrophotography.

My tasks complete, I unzipped the tent and stepped outside. **I gasped.** I had never seen so many stars and such a brilliant night sky. Even the darkness was *luminous*. It was stunning. My husband, who was accustomed to using star charts rather than a computerized telescope had to re-learn how to read the night sky – how can you get oriented to a starscape here in the desert where there were almost *too many* dazzling stars. There were like diamonds strewn across black velvet. I imagine the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12) traversing the desert under a sky like this. Under a thousand million dazzling stars, following the *one* that outshone them all in it's brilliance, leading them to one One that also outshines all.

The Magi had been asked by King Herod to return and to share the details they discovered about this 'New King.' After their encounter with the baby Jesus, however, these wisdom figures were *changed*. The sincerity of their worship of the newborn King of Kings was real and transformative. To protect the wonderful Child from a duplicitous Herod, the Magi did not retrace their original route, *but chose a new way*.



Image: from the Community in Mission block of the Archdiocese of Washington at <http://blog.adw.org/2017/12/star-guided-magi-natural-supernatural-occurrence/>

This Epiphany, we are invited to cross our own desert, under a night of a thousand million glittering stars, and remain focused on the *One* that matters most. We are invited to an encounter with Jesus – and like Jesus, to be as authentic and vulnerable as a newborn. We are invited to encounter Jesus as individuals, but also as part of a living community – just as the Magi were community to *each other* on their journey. We are even invited to be *transformed* by the encounter. To see our journey from a fresh and new perspective. Perhaps even to take a new path - and to chose a new way.

Pace e bene

Laura Chun, OFS
Minister, San Luis Rey Fraternity



The Mystery of the Hidden Tomb of St Francis of Assisi

Rediscovered December 12, 1820

St. Francis of Assisi is one of the most beloved and venerated saints in the history of the Church. So then how did his body get [lost](#) for hundreds of years – only to be rediscovered surrounded by a strange assortment of objects?

The holy founder of the Order of Friars Minor passed away in October of 1226, and less than two years later, Pope Gregory IX declared him a saint. The next day the same pope laid the foundation stone for the [Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi](#), still standing today.

This is where things start to get a bit hazy about his body. Some sources say that a friar in charge of the basilica's construction secretly sealed his body into a part of the church to protect it from possible Saracen invaders. Other sources say that Francis' body wasn't sealed away until the 15th century, in order to protect it from in-fighting among Italian families.

Either way, by the 19th century, no one was quite sure where the saint's body was – and no one had known for centuries.

In the early 1800s, Pope Pius VII gave local Catholics permission to search for the body. Fairly confident the body was somewhere in the basilica, the team removed part of the floor in the main church and found a series of iron bars, similar to what was common for protecting tombs in the 13th century. After the whole area was excavated, under a large amount of rock and through a tunnel they found the undisturbed remains of St. Francis.

The saint, however, wasn't alone. With his body were a few objects: 12 silver coins, 29 beads, a ring, a piece of iron, and a stone on which Francis' head was resting. It's not clear what these objects meant. One source says the coins were there to help date the tomb. Others take a more sinister interpretation, claiming that the friar who sealed Francis' tomb was an alchemist and that the objects were a part of some sort of ancient pagan ritual. The fact that some of these objects seem to have since disappeared encourages conspiratorial interpretations.

Either way, St. Francis' body was moved to a public tomb within the basilica and is now open to pilgrims for veneration.

St. Francis of Assisi, please pray for us!



*Sam DeSantis, OFS
Vice-Minister*



A picture of St. Francis' tomb today

*Information courtesy of ChurchPop.com and December Franciscan calendar
<https://franciscanmissionaries.com/mysterious-missing-tomb-st-francis/>*

The Divine Within Each Person

I have worked in the field of substance use disorders for many years, and my personal prayer mission is praying for people affected by addiction, including both addicts and their family members.

One of my coworkers and friends in the field was a psychiatrist I'll call Dr. Mandy. Dr. Mandy's primary area of practice was treating adults and adolescents suffering from addiction and "chronic relapse." She viewed her patients as valuable human beings, who, even when they were active in their addiction, even when they were exhibiting terrible behavior, held within them a shiny, pure diamond. Over the years, these patients had developed defenses and coping mechanisms that in time became harmful, or even antisocial, obscuring the diamond. Dr. Mandy would speak directly to that diamond, and the defensiveness would gradually melt.

Years later, I would be working at a treatment center whose primary clientele were people suffering from HIV, people who were homeless, and those in the LGBTQ communities. The trauma that life had inflicted on our residents was tremendous, and it was remarkable that they had made it into treatment at all. Dr. Mandy's model of "speaking to the diamond" came to the rescue, providing a spotlight to their inherent dignity and a path to hope.

The secular analogy of a pure diamond is one way of looking at the Light of Christ, or the Divine within each person. One of the many blessings of Franciscan life and formation is to be able to look for the Divine within, to bless it, and to celebrate the dignity of each person. Perhaps this is our own *Fiducia Supplicans*. At the very least, it gives us one way to honor Jesus's admonition, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Connie Collins.OFS
Secretary



English Wikipedia: ["Behind the cloud" style crepuscular rays](#) by Piccolo Namek Oct, 2005.

St. Marianne Cope



[Marianne Cope shortly before her departure for Hawaii \(1883\)](#)

I'm not sure why I'm always amazed to discover another Franciscan saint! This month my discovery is St Marianne Cope who was a Third Order Regular Franciscan. St Marianne emigrated from Germany to New York when she was a year old. It was 1839.

St Marianne's early life was unremarkable to all appearances. She attended the parish grade school through eighth grade and then went to work in a factory to help support her family due to her father's sickness. After her father died and her siblings were old enough to support the rest of the family, she pursued her religious vocation with the Third Order Regular part of our Franciscan family.

Again, her initial years in religious life were very ordinary. She taught school to immigrant children for many years. However, her vision and wisdom coupled with competence led her to open the first two Catholic hospitals in central New York. She and a small group of women saw a need and pursued it. They defied convention and purchased a saloon which they converted to a hospital.

Healthcare was provided with dignity and compassion. Somewhere in this process St Marianne became Superior General of her congregation. It was in that capacity that she received a letter that changed the course of her life.

King Kalakaua of Hawaii had made fifty requests and had received fifty denials. St Marianne was his first acceptance. He was looking for help in caring for leprosy patients and she gave a resounding 'Yes!' It was 1883.

Six sisters set sail for Hawaii. Just the thought of traveling from New York to Hawaii in the 1800's deserves accolades in my book! Once there they set about establishing a hospital in Maui and their dedication won them great respect and admiration

At some point Mother Marianne moved to Molokai where her most famous patient was St Damien de Veuster. After many years of working with the lepers, he had succumbed to the disease. She gave him love and care in his suffering. Mother Marianne cared not only for the lepers, but also for those affected by a loved one's leprosy. There were orphans and widows that needed assistance.

Despite her constant exposure to a highly contagious disease, St Marianne Cope never contracted leprosy. She continued to minister to others, even from her wheelchair. St Marianne Cope died at the age of eighty. Many miracles were attributed to her shortly after her death.

*Corinne Helena, OFS
Treasurer, San Luis Rey Fraternity*



News from the Fraternity Council

Fraternity News!

Our fraternity life is ever evolving, and I am delighted to share that we have been extraordinarily blessed with so many of our Fraternity members willing to give so much for the life of the Fraternity. We have been blessed with members attending our gatherings in person and on Zoom; in keeping us in their prayers, and in sharing both their joys and heartaches. We share a beautiful fraternal bond.



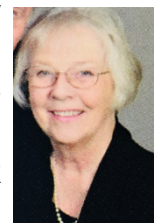
I ask that we all keep Pam Pert in your prayers that she be surrounded by love and concern as she navigates this time of grieving the loss of her beloved husband, Tim. Pam has been on the Fraternity Council and has determined that this is the time to step away from that role for the time being. Pam remains a beloved member of the fraternity – please keep Pam lovingly in your prayers.

It was time to appoint a Council member to fill in Pam's place. An appointed Council member is a part of all Council decision making but does not have the right to officially vote. After prayer, discernment, and discussion with Region, the Council asked Linda Gossett OFS, if she would take on the role of an appointed Council member until our next round of elections. Linda graciously agreed! Thank you, Linda!



Over the years, our Fraternity has also been extraordinarily blessed with the presence of Rock and Jan DeSpain. Both served at Region and in our Fraternity. Jan is currently the Director of Formation. Both Rock and Jan have been in our prayers as Jan journeys alongside Rock through hospice toward the gates of heaven. Please, please, continue to keep Rock, Jan, and their family in your prayers.

As a fraternity, we are also blessed with several people interested in formally beginning Formation. Eileen Costa has very graciously to become a Fraternity Formator. Eileen is a past Director of Formation and has a Master's degree in Theology from the Franciscan School of Theology. Jan DeSpain will remain our Director of Formation until the next round of elections. Formation for our new folks will begin in early 2024. Thank you so much, Eileen!!!



Karron Esmode has worn many hats over the years; she is a past Minister, our current JPIC Animator, and the fraternity Outreach Coordinator. Karron has asked that we find another wonderful person to take on the role of Outreach Coordinator so she can maintain focus on her JPIC work. Many, many thanks to Karron for all she has done for so long!!!

We are blessed that Carolyn Brock, who currently mails the Cord to our homebound each month, lovingly replied 'YES!' when asked to take on the role of the Fraternity Outreach Coordinator. At a previous Regional visitation, Br. John Kiesler, OFM was very impressed that we HAD this role as a Fraternity and that our homebound remained a part of fraternity life. Thank you so much Carolyn for taking on the Coordinator role. May each member of the fraternity respond lovingly and generously when you ask for their support in this wonderful outreach.



The January General Monthly Gathering will be on Sunday, January 14. Come directly to **our Gathering room at 12 noon**. Bring your lunch or something to share (sweet or savory, preferably finger foods - cookies, crackers, cheese, small bites) to our gathering.

We will have the **Chapel prayer** at the end of the meeting, starting around **2:40pm** in St. Clare Chapel, and will last 20 min.

The San Luis Rey Fraternity Council



Laura Chun, OFS
Minister



Sam DeSantis, OFS
Vice-Minister & Formator



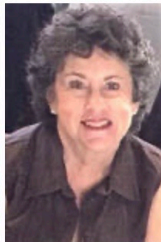
Jan DeSpain, OFS
Formation Director



Sr. Madeline Fitzgerald, OSC
Spiritual Assistant



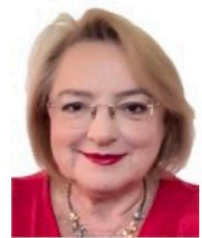
Connie Collins, OFS
Secretary



Corinne Helena, OFS
Treasurer



Pam Pert, OFS
Councilor



Marta Kassai, OFS
Councilor & Newsletter Editor

From our Treasurer



You can mail your OFS fraternity contributions to:

Corinne Helena, OFS
1048 Turnstone Way
Oceanside, CA 92057





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

- Click or Go to this [link](#) (full link is below):
- If prompted use: Meeting ID: 760 726 2486
- Then use Password: 1798

To join by landline or audio-only Phone (no video):

- Dial this number (it's in San Jose): 1-669-900-6833
- Meeting ID: 760 726 2486
- Then use Password: 1798

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7607262486?pwd=dmRBNVU5WFUxMTdzaUxGcy9ibGtwdz09>



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



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

- **January 20, 2017** **Timothy Corrigan, OFS**
- **January 26, 2004** **Armando Quarantiello, OFS**
- **January 29, 2016** **Michael Pollack, 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 all those who have been affected in the latest outbreak of various severe colds, covid or influenza that may recover their health fast.

❖ Marta has been battling a bad cold/bronchitis for almost four weeks. She is asking the Fraternity to keep her in prayer.

❖ Prayer for the Sick: Father of goodness and love, hear our prayers for the sick members of our community and for all who are in need. Amid mental and physical suffering may they find consolation in your healing presence. Show your mercy as you close wounds, cure illness, make broken bodies whole and free downcast spirits. May these special people find lasting health and deliverance, and so join us in thanking you for all your gifts. We ask this through the Lord Jesus who healed those who believed. Amen.

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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

Marta

Dr. Marta M. Kassai, OFS, Editor

