



## June 2026 Newsletter

by Brady Young / June 11, 2026

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Friends and Members,

This past week, I had the privilege of accompanying 74 faculty from Catholic colleges and universities across North America in a program called Collegium.

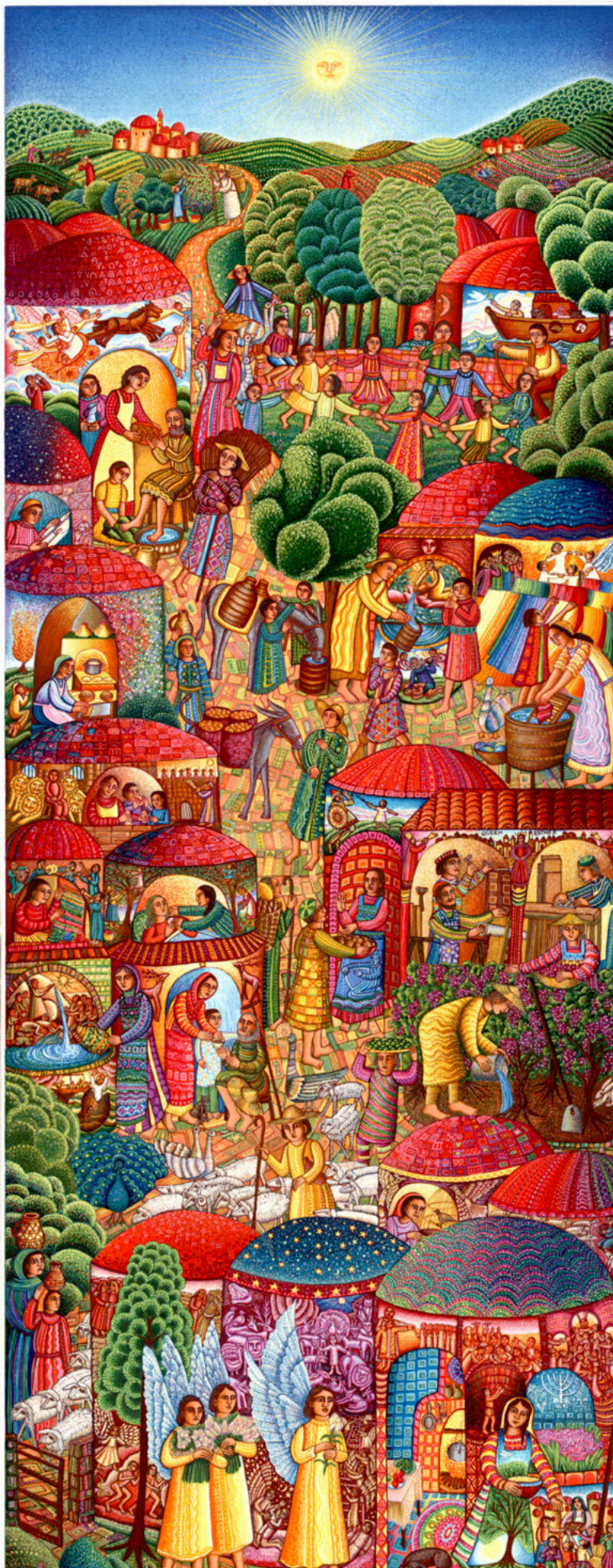
Collegium is a long-standing tradition in Catholic higher education where faculty from all disciplines come together for a week to learn about the Catholic intellectual tradition, to pray together, to eat together, and to live in community.

This year, I served as chaplain, weaving the Franciscan spirit into our prayer and working with a small group of faculty to introduce them to the Rule of Clare. The week was invigorating, and as I travel home today, I find myself reflecting on the miracle of community.

A little over a week ago, these 74 people arrived as strangers with intention and purpose. Over eight days, strangers became lifelong friends, colleagues reconnected and renewed friendships, and we all deepened our relationships to each other and to God. We came from many walks of life and diverse faith traditions, but

for a brief time, we were an intentional community, manifesting a small glimpse of the Kingdom of God on earth.

I am holding this “miracle of community” in mind because this is a significant week for the Franciscan Federation...





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On June 16, we will launch our new online community, ***the Piazza***. Our hope is that through the Piazza, Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted people will find a place to connect with one another, collaborate with friends and colleagues, and grow together in the Franciscan charism. This space is for anyone seeking to go deeper into the Franciscan way of life.

Our intention in creating this community is to provide a place for those longing for connection, a place to share the joys and sorrows of life and to know you are a little less alone in the world. I encourage you to explore ***the Piazza***. If you are unable to attend the launch event, you can simply sign up, and we will help you get started.

*Peace and all good,*

*Julianne Wallace*

*Executive Director, Franciscan Federation*

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## **Meet Our New Team Member: Alexis Serio**

Since the moment I stepped foot on St. Bonaventure University's campus, I have felt connected to the Franciscan way of life.

Shortly before my first year at SBU, I participated in an overnight retreat at Mt. Irenaeus in Friendship, NY, where I fell in love with the idea of communal living. After a year of engaging with the Franciscan tradition, I made a commitment to live at Mt. Irenaeus for a summer and I found myself more deeply engaged with what I loved so much about the Franciscan way of life.



Through this experience, I felt a greater sense of groundedness in my connection to all living things. I began to care more deeply about my impact on the world around me, both in the natural world and in the way I interact with other people. I found my footing in this and concluded one way I could continue this beyond my time living in community was to begin working as a communications intern for Mt. Irenaeus.

In the past year, I have begun to contemplate where I see myself post-undergrad, and I came across the opportunity to work as the Member Engagement and Communications intern for the Franciscan Federation. I immediately jumped at this opportunity to further open my circle to the Franciscan family. This position, for me, is exciting because I am able to be creative in the ways I create posts that are engaging for all ages. This opportunity allows me to get to know Franciscan spirituality from a different lens.

In addition to my position with the Federation, I



am also working as a summer intern for Franciscan Action Network (FAN), which has further enriched my desire to grow deeper in my understanding of the Franciscan way of life through peacemaking. Previous to this summer, I participated in FAN's Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference in 2023-2025. This experience led me to realize my passion for faith-based advocacy and has helped me to understand where my heart is calling me.

I feel deeply connected to the Franciscan way of life and have felt called to share myself through these positions. In knowing I am made in the image and likeness of God, I am able to remind others of the unique gifts they offer the Franciscan family. My ultimate goal is to promote understanding and deep compassion between people, honoring challenging beliefs, and exploring how each person is a valuable member of the greater body.

I experience a deep sense of gratitude for each Franciscan-hearted person I encounter, and I feel not only welcomed in, but I know I belong everywhere I find myself, unconditionally. Love is not conditional and not transactional, as Br Kevin Kriso always reminds me. Franciscan love is boundless and calls us all to honor one another's personhood in an effort to foster the best in all people.

I am blessed to call myself Franciscan-hearted and I'm looking forward to getting to know more of the Franciscan family through this internship!

¡Paz y bien!

*Alexis Serio*

*Member Engagement & Communications Intern*

**Francis — Richard Danielpour**  
An oratorio in nine scenes for soprano, baritone, narrator, chorus, and orchestra

**WORLD PREMIERE**  
Sat Oct 10, 2026, 7:30pm  
Sun Oct 11, 2026, 2:30pm  
Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo NY

Created for the 800th Jubilee Year of St. Francis Death (1226-2026)

A monumental new musical work honoring the life, spirit and enduring legacy of St. Francis—his call to peace, care for creation, solidarity with the poor, and reverence for all life.

**A GRAMMY®-Winning Creative Team**  
The same core collaborators behind *The Passion of Yeshua*—recipient of the GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance and three additional GRAMMY® nominations—now unite to create *FRANCIS*.

 Composer: Richard Danielpour	 Librettist: Sister Margaret Carney, OSF, STD	 Conductor: John Vulliamy	 Narrator: Claudia Christian	 Soprano: Anna Schubert	 Baritone: Edward Nelson	 Bass: James Sarrish	 UCLA Chorus Director: James Bass
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**A Work for Our Time**  
Created for the 800th Jubilee Year of St. Francis Death (1226-2026), *FRANCIS* is a monumental new dramatic oratorio honoring the life, spirit, and enduring legacy of one of history's most transformative moral voices. Through music, voice, and light, the work reflects Francis' call to peace, care for creation, solidarity with the poor, reverence across faiths and cultures, and the recognition of women as vital spiritual leaders. Conceived in Latin and English, *FRANCIS* speaks powerfully to our own time—inviting believers and non-believers alike into a shared experience of reflection, hope, and renewal.

**CALL (716) 885-5000 OR VISIT BPO.ORG**

*Francis: An Oratorio* is a new artistic work by composer Richard Danielpour with a libretto by Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, created to mark the 800th anniversary of the passing of St. Francis of Assisi.

This 70-minute staged oratorio highlights pivotal moments in Francis's life—his love of creation, his commitment to peace, his solidarity with the poor, and his reverence for all people. **The world premiere will take place in Buffalo, NY on October 10–11, 2026, in conjunction with the Franciscan Federation and AFCU's [WNY Franciscan Day](#).** Below, Sr. Margaret offers a brief update on the project's recent developments.

“On June 2, the first full presentation of the oratorio took place at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Los Angeles by the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. The 120-voice chorus was conducted by Dr. James Bass. Three friars were in attendance. One of them, Fr. Ed McKenzie, OFM, had contributed valuable research on the experience of Francis in war and as a prisoner of war.

Many UCLA faculty members were present. Their excitement and applause were something to experience. One of the most touching aspects of the night was hearing from the students in the chorus how much they loved singing the texts, which focus on peace, the planet, and the poor—central themes of St. Francis and Pope Francis. For many, it seemed to offer a release from the noise of division and violence so prevalent in our society right now.

Dr. Richard Danielpour and I attended a three-hour rehearsal the night before the concert. The hours dedicated to this project by these UCLA groups were truly an inspiration.

The next stage is preparation for the Buffalo premiere performance, which will also be the site for the Naxos recording. Keep that red circle around the dates: October 10 and 11, 2026.

Please keep actor Claudia Christian in your prayers. She will be the angelic narrator in Buffalo. Recent surgery forced her to cancel her participation in the UCLA concert. She is receiving cancer treatment at present and will be grateful for prayers.

Pax et Bonum!"

*Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF*

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## Where Hospitality Meets Mission: The FRC in Pittsburgh

The Franciscan Resource Center (FRC), a sponsored ministry of the School Sisters of St. Francis United States Province is located in West View Shopping Plaza, West View Drive in Pittsburgh, PA. The mission of the FRC, which is rooted in Gospel living, is to journey with people in their daily lives and to offer a Franciscan perspective following the example of St. Francis of Assisi.



On April 16, 2023 the FRC opened its doors where “all are welcome” and in a few short years, has already impacted the local community and beyond. It has been a collaborative effort! Being located in West View Shopping Plaza, the sisters found themselves literally in the marketplace and transformed a former GNC building space into the new home of the Franciscan Resource Center. Imagine the shelving that a GNC store had for all its products now filled with books, artifacts of the history of the School Sisters of St. Francis and a map showing the different countries where they serve around the world.

The primary focus of the FRC is to invite people to journey together while living the Gospel life in meaningful ways, and seeking to explore our realities in society and the Church in order to gain an understanding of God’s call to live in harmony and peace with all of humanity. Together, and utilizing the synodal process initiated by the late Pope Francis, presentations are offered, questions shared, discussed and reflected upon in the following areas and are not limited to these:

Care for Creation – Laudato Si (survival of the planet), Justice and Peace, Immigration Reform, passive and active forms of violence, the need for building relationships with all our neighbors locally and globally (Fratelli Tutti), Scripture, Franciscan spirituality, sacraments, Church history, liturgy, LCWR Transforming Grace, seasonal reflection days, CRS, etc. etc.

Outreach to all God's people is another important component of the mission. The FRC and the local community are very generous and involved in this aspect. Various drives are held by the FRC to address the needs of the community. Spiritual direction is available for those who seek it as there are three Spiritual Directors available who hold spiritual direction certificates. The FRC offers a space where the gifts of many can assist in the needs of others.

A lending library is part of the environment of the FRC and all are welcome to come in sit a bit, enjoy refreshments and choose a book to read, check out and return. Many come in just for the quiet space, a request for prayer, and to engage in conversation. It is truly a place for all and all are welcome.

To live fully and humanly can be a struggle, but it is the ultimate goal of our lives. The FRC can assist all on this Franciscan pilgrimage to a life of peace, simplicity, humility and joy as we journey together.

Peace and all good!

*Sr. Adelina Garcia, OSF*

[\*\*garcia.adelina@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:garcia.adelina@gmail.com)

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## **Still on the Journey: Why I Said Yes to the Federation Again**

A few decades ago my General Leader asked me if I would be willing to serve on a new committee for the Franciscan Federation. It was called "Freeing the Fire". The focus was on creative ways of sharing the Franciscan way of life. It was a very positive experience. To this day I have friends that I met during at the time.



t was my first introduction to the inner workings of the Federation and its mission. As the years passed, there were other committees and two terms on the National Board, all filled with many more Franciscans that I could claim as friends. Although the work was intense at times, the relationships were blessing. Needless to say, I was surprised when invited once more onto the National Board.

As I reflected on the invitation, I wondered what would cause me to say yes. The answer brought back many memories. My reflection caused me to very impressed with the journey of the Federation over the past decades. I saw an organization that was truly value driven. Lots of things were changing through the years, but never the focus on conversion, poverty, contemplation and minority.

I also saw an organization willing to struggle through the changing times together and adjust as needed. “Freeing the Fire” wanted to spread Franciscanism — to share the good news of our charism. There have been many steps along the way and we are still on the journey. That is the key! We are still on the journey sharing our charism!

I am excited to join a board who was inspired to create the Piazza, who believes our charism is crucial for the world today, who has an eye for tomorrow and is willing to move forward. Plus, I look forward to discovering a few more Franciscans to call “friend”.

*Sr. Joyce Shanabarger, OSF*

***[joyce.shanabarger@fssh.net](mailto:joyce.shanabarger@fssh.net)***

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# Who Will Tell Our Story? The Work of the Franciscan Central Archive

The Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Frankfort (FSSH), Illinois, are celebrating “150 Years of Grace: Journeys Ventured, Hearts of Hope.” Summer marks a time for Jubilee celebrations. The FSSH sisters will celebrate sister Jubilarians on June 13.

Here in Denver on June 3, the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, Sacred Heart Province will celebrate five sister Jubilarians marking 25 to 65 years of “simplicity and service into the world, living in a spirit of penance and love.”



I would be remiss not to note that this year is the 800th anniversary of St. Francis’ passing. Brady Young, Franciscan Federation Manager of Member Engagement & Communications reminded me of St. Francis’ last words, “I have done what was mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours.”

I came to Denver in 2019 to serve as Provincial Archivist. At the time, I was asked to be part of a working group, founded in 2017 by then Franciscan Federation President, Kathie Uhler, OSF, to discuss the future of the Third Order Franciscan archives. Those meetings led to the formation of the **Franciscan Central Archive** (FCA).

Today the FCA is doing what is ours to do, with respect for the charism and legacy of those that have come before us. Together with our partners who walk alongside us we are working to create an archive center that can share the history and stories of our partners, respecting the charism and legacy of those who have come before us.

At the invitation of St. Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF, General Community Leader for the FSSH, the FCA visited the property in early 2025. This began our relationship with them. On their website they describe their property as, “The woods, a sanctuary of beauty and stillness, a landscape of whispering trees, shifting light, and quiet

spaces that invite reflection.” I immediately recognized it was — and by August, our partner community leaders agreed this would be our future home.

Entering the property from the village road you are immediately met with green grass and scattered trees that become denser as you go further onto the property. The website notes the presence of a butterfly garden outside the Port, “Where nothing is rushed. Tiny seeds become blossoms. Caterpillars disappear into stillness. And what looks like an ending, becomes a beginning. And suddenly delicate wings unfold, where once there was only waiting. Here is something quietly sacred, reminding us that growth often happens unseen. That patience is a part of becoming. That stillness can hold transformation. It is a living parable of hope-beauty rising from hidden change.”

The Franciscan Central Archive’s portion of land is located just north of the Port. In moving forward with new construction there is responsibility to our Sister Mother Earth. We must consider water retention and detention, the replacement of trees lost due to construction, and the safeguarding of bat habitat. Discussions have begun about native plant species and responsibly sourced building materials. All this contributes to the building design to be ready before winter.

With expected groundbreaking in 2027, we aim to be open by or before 2030. Updates on our progress will be posted on our expanded website, in the newsletter, on social media, and with the Franciscan Federation. We currently have 14 partner communities and are aware of 3 interested parties making final decisions. Any congregations interested in joining the FCA for its primary phase of construction must reach out immediately.

Sr. Mary Navarre, OP, archivist for the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, has spoken of women religious being part of the fabric of this country. Her emails end with a quote from Sheila Flynn, “The story is not ended; the cloth is still on the loom.” To me this speaks of her journey, the journey of women religious, and their ministries. Each ministry, life of service, lived experience, and story bring us to the present. It is our reason for being and part of what guides us into the future.

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I weave back to Sr. Mary Navarre, OP, and our first presentation together. Her eloquent words closed by referencing lines from the musical Hamilton and she offered, “Who will tell our story?” For the FCA, through preservation and responsible access, may we not only share stories, but also be inspired by them. May you consider the stories, mentors, and spiritual ministers that have impacted your life. How have they inspired you to do what is yours to do?

Holly Fiedler

FCA Board President

[hollyf@franciscanway.org](mailto:hollyf@franciscanway.org)

(303) 458-6270 x112

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## Upcoming Events

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### The Piazza Public Launch — June 16



Many of you have heard us talk about *The Piazza* recently, and we're happy to share that it's finally ready to open to the wider Franciscan family. The Piazza is a new online gathering place for Franciscans and anyone drawn to the Franciscan way of life.

We'll be opening *The Piazza* together at a public launch gathering on Tuesday, June 16 at 9am PT / 12pm ET, and we'd love for you to join us.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Inside the Piazza you'll find:

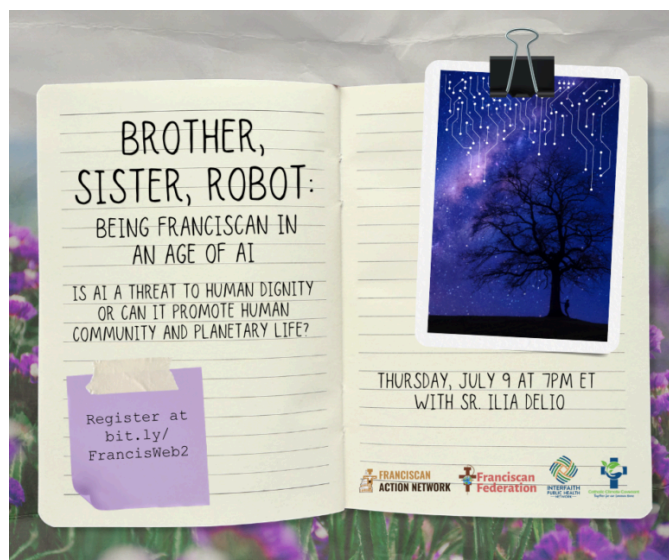
- regular live gatherings and contemplative practices
- collaborative networks for ministry and JPIC work
- places for prayer, support, and shared intentions
- simple formation offerings
- inspiration and storytelling
- 1:1 connections across the Franciscan world
- ongoing conversation between events and gatherings

If this sounds like something you or someone in your network would appreciate, please help us spread the word — all are welcome!

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## **IEJSN Webinar Series — Part Two**

### **Presented by Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, PhD**



**Brother, Sister, Robot: Being Franciscan in an  
Age of AI**

**July 9 • 4:00pm PT / 7:00pm ET**

[Click Here to Register](#)

Join us for the second session in our four-part series, Franciscan Eco-Spirituality: Renewing Our Vision in a Jubilee Year, hosted by the Intergenerational Eco-Justice & Spirituality Network (IEJSN) in collaboration with Catholic Climate Covenant, Franciscan Action Network, and Interfaith Public Health Network.

We welcome Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, PhD, a leading theologian in science and religion, for a timely reflection on what it means to live a Franciscan life in an age shaped by artificial intelligence. With Pope Leo's new encyclical raising fresh questions about AI, human dignity, and the future of community, Sr. Ilia will explore how the Franciscan values of poverty, minority, and community can guide us through this rapidly changing landscape.

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## Virtual Pilgrimage to Assisi: Journey with Francis and Clare



**July 19-23 • 7:00-9:00pm ET each evening**  
**Members \$80 • Non-members \$120 • Groups**  
**\$175**

[Click Here to Register](#)

Experience the spirit of Assisi from home. Over five evenings, pilgrimage leaders Jean Francois Godet-Calogeras and Debi Haug will guide pilgrims through the places that shaped Francis and Clare, with virtual site visits, prayer, reflection, and small-group sharing. Session themes include: La Maddalena, San Damiano, the Portiuncula, Greccio, and La Verna.

Spaces are limited to support a meaningful, interactive experience.

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**Franciscan Connection Circles**



**Monday, July 13th**  
**4:00pm PT / 7:00pm EST**

We'll begin with prayer and meditation, followed by a reading to guide our reflection and group discussion. Connection Circles offer a simple, welcoming space to be with fellow Franciscans, to listen and share, and to root ourselves again in the values that ground us. All are welcome.

[Click Here to Register](#)

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## **St. Francis of Assisi: Birds, Wolves, Bulls and Bears (Oh My!)**



**Wednesday, July 15**  
**7:30–9:00pm ET**

[Click Here to Register](#)

Join Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF for the third session in a four-part virtual series commemorating the 800th anniversary of the Easter of St. Francis. This lively and insightful presentation explores how Francis and the early friars navigated the emerging economic realities of their time, and what their experience might offer to those of us living within today's capitalist systems.

Many of us know the familiar stories of Francis and the birds of the wolf of Gubbio. But what wisdom might Francis have for the "bulls and bears" of Wall Street? How can modern Franciscans engage economic life with

integrity, creativity, and compassion? Sr. Margaret will help us reflect on these questions with her characteristic clarity, humor, and depth.

We hope you'll join us again on October 7 for the final session, *The Cosmic Community of Creation* with Dan Horan, OFM. [Click here to register](#).

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