



OFS: Secular Franciscan Order (& YouFra)

The Third Order of St. Francis in Ireland.

National Newsletter February 2026

“To follow Jesus in the footsteps of St. Francis”

Website: ofsireland.org



**800 years
1226-2026**

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Joyful YouFra News

What a wonderful celebration for the Franciscan family in Ireland!

On Saturday evening January 24th eight young people from YouFra (the youth wing of the OFS Franciscan Youth fraternity in Galway) made promises for a year to live the charism of Saint Francis more deeply within the Church, serving others as intentional disciples. Please keep these young people in your prayers throughout the year, that they may be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit and the joy of living out this call with all their brothers and sisters.

by Br Ronan Sharpley Spiritual Assistant OFS Galway



Leon, Aisling, Mila, Domenico, Roisin, Rosah, Ross, Roni.

Radio Maria: OFS Podcast now on the Internet

Maurice O’Brien, OFS Cork Fraternity President was interviewed recently by Fr. Peter George Flynn OFM Conv, on Radio Maria. Congratulations to Maurice on this inspiring presentation about our Order in Ireland. You can listen to the podcast by clicking on this link: [The Franciscan Hour – 3rd Order \(Secular\) Franciscans. - Radio Maria](#)

OFS Ennis are Preserving our History

During the past year the OFS Ennis Fraternity was faced with question as to where best to house their registers, which date back to 1881. Mary Tunney OFS took on the task and after a lot of dialogue with Co Clare Library Archives it was agreed that they would scan the Registers. The records are now stored on two USB sticks, a copy of which the fraternity holds, the other held by the county library. The original registers are now housed in a controlled environment to preserve them. There was a lot of issues to be worked through to get it to the stage where both the Ennis OFS and the Clare County Archives were in agreement. A Deposit Agreement has been signed by the Minister Liam Murphy and by the Executive Librarian. Mary’s hard work was very much appreciated by the OFS Ennis Council. *Perhaps this story will be helpful to other Fraternities in Ireland who have precious registers of the OFS and its members and are wondering how to preserve our history.*

Pope Leo’s Catechesis Series on Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council has unfortunately been misinterpreted by some since the Holy Synod was convoked nearly seventy years ago. This varies from those who reject it (publicly or privately) and those who promote their own “innovations” that were not in the documents of the Council. Pope Leo has started a catechesis on the Council and encourages all members of the Church to read the documents carefully. He leaves no doubt about the importance of Vatican II. He says: **“It is the Magisterium [of the Second Vatican Council] that still constitutes the guiding star of the Church’s journey today.”** (see page 2 for his first catechesis)



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The OFS Great Bake-off for Mutemwa

Last year, our General Minister, **Tibor Kauser** was in Zimbabwe. While there, he visited the **John Bradbourne Leprosy Center**. The Servant of God, John Bradbourne (1921-1979) was a Secular Franciscan brother of ours, whose cause for canonization is proceeding. Around 50 people are living in the center, under very simple, poor conditions. All the robes, bedsheets and other linen are being washed by hand, because the washing machine has broken down. Tibor made an appeal to the OFS worldwide to contribute to buying an expensive industrial grade washing machine. **Aisling O'Rourke** who is a member of YouFra, and recently received into the OFS, was inspired by the story. She organized a Bake Sale with other OFS members outside the Abbey Church in Galway. The project raised €1,600 for the **Mutemwa Care Centre** in Zimbabwe. Thanks to every cake sold, every table manned, and every smile shared, this generous amount will directly support the vital work at the centre—continuing **John Bradbourne's** inspiring legacy of compassionate care for those in need. **Mutemwa** (meaning "outcast" in Shona) is a leprosy care centre in Mutoko, Zimbabwe, home to residents facing leprosy, physical and mental disabilities, and other challenges like destitution. It provides medical treatment, nursing care, food, shelter, psychological support, and community outreach (including outpatient services), while striving for self-sufficiency through farming, livestock, and vegetable gardens. The money is being sent to Mutemwa via the Franciscan Missionary Union in Dublin.



Breda Walsh, Bridget Kearney and Aisling at the Bake Sale

Pope Leo: Vatican Council II through its Documents. Introductory catechesis

Summary of the Holy Father's words

Dear brothers and sisters, we begin today a new series of catechesis dedicated to the Second Vatican Council and to reflecting on its documents. The work of the Council Fathers paved the way for a new ecclesial season, placing at its center the mystery of salvation and the unity between God and his people. At the same time, it opened the Church to seek dialogue with the people of good will for a more just and fraternal world. We see that the documents have lost none of their relevance and are pertinent to the demands and challenges of today. Closely studying the Council documents will help us to be attentive interpreters of the signs of the times, and to proclaim the Gospel to all. As we make our journey of rediscovering the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, let us welcome the past with its rich tradition; let us consider the present with its joys and sorrows; and let's look towards the future with an urgent appeal for greater justice, love and peace. *The complete catechesis is available from this link : [General Audience of 7 January 2026 - Catechesis. Vatican Council II through its Documents. Introductory catechesis](#)*

Fraternities might consider including the Pope's catechesis in their ongoing formation this year.

Contributions to running the OFS

The subject of money is always a delicate Franciscan topic. However, we need funds to run the Order: locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Fraternities should consider sending their yearly donation to the National Council, which needs the money for a number of expenses such as maintaining a national office, and being represented at international chapters. Fraternities and members are asked to contribute according to their means. Of course, this does not apply to those unable to pay due to their circumstances.

Thanks to all contributors. Items ideally 50 to 100 words. Feedback welcome. Send items to irelandofs@gmail.com