

TAU-USA



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Secular Franciscan Order in the United States

Autumn 1999

Being/Doing - A Connection?

William Wicks, SFO, National Minister

To be, or not to be? That is still the question. To do, or not to do? That is another question. A more encompassing question is: what is the relationship between these two entities? Are they connected, or separate? Some might even understand the being/doing verbs as dualistic. Is there a dichotomy between who we are and what we do? Does what we do affect who we are? Does who we are affect what we do? As Christians, and especially as Franciscans, we must give an emphatic "yes" to those last two questions. Our Rule calls us to go from Gospel (being) to life (doing), and from life back to Gospel. The crux of the dilemma is not whether it is better to be than to do, or vice versa, but in balancing the being and the doing. Even the word "balancing" seems out of place in usage because the two are apparently so integrated. There seems to be a symbiotic relationship between the being and the doing.

Some of us are drawn to honor one of these entities more than the other. There have been times when we have spent too much time becoming. There have been times when we have kept doing, doing, doing. I recall when Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was first promulgated, evangelization committees began to crop up in parishes. I was a member of the Parish Council then, and I opted to chair the Evangelization Committee. One of the priests of the parish warned us, "Before you can evangelize others, you must evangelize yourself." We spent all of our sessions evangelizing ourselves; we never did get to evangelizing others. We spent all of our time becoming. Then, there are those of us who spend all of our time doing (things) and take no time to pray, to meditate on Scripture, to study: to become.



In viewing this being/doing relationship symbiotically, doesn't the "which came first" symbolism vanish? Did Saint Francis get off his horse (doing) to embrace the leper because of who he was (being)? Or, in getting off the horse, did he become? And, because he embraced the leper (doing), did his being change? There is an interplay here – an almost seamless garment with the stitching showing. It is really impossible for Franciscans to separate the two completely. However, there still remains a perceived duality. Part of our misconception

comes from the misinformation that, to attain holiness, one has to separate oneself from the world, from the doing. A prevailing thought in the past, and perhaps also to a certain degree today, was that those who spend all of their time praying are holier than those who live in the world, those who do. To some, the epitome of holiness is the holy monk spending all of his time in prayer. However, this attitude is clearly contradicted throughout Scripture, and in the writings of the Second Vatican Council.

Our call from Gospel to life and life back to Gospel implies that we become by immersing ourselves in the Gospel. To quote Saint Paul, "I live, not I, but Christ lives in me." We learn to try to see with the eyes of Christ, and the doing will spring from the being. Then in the doing (living), we return to the Gospel.

Bolstered by Gospel values, we are able to see what needs to be done. Acknowledging this interplay between the being and the doing brings us to a better understanding of our call to daily conversion.

The Internet is a wonderful community-builder. I see community happening with the postings on the electronic discussion group, "Dignitas". Those who attended the Work Commission track at the recent All Commissions Conference at Saint Bonaventure form the mainstream of this Internet community. A theme that was presented for discussion is the apparent being/doing dilemma. A phrase submitted by Sophia Kalapaca touched my heart. It read, "Every act of love is a prayer ... the act; is it doing or being?" The response from Teresa Redder was, "I think it is both". Teresa concluded, "For myself, I find 'being' and 'action' inseparable in a Christian context." There is a quote by Henry David Thoreau: "There must be the generating force of love behind every effort destined to be successful."

The being, the loving – transformed into action. The doing – recreating our being. These are what we are about as Christians, as Franciscans. In the doing, and the being, and the doing, and so on *ad infinitum*, we are becoming who we are, until, in the final being/doing, we embrace Sister Death.

May God bless who you are and what you do. Bill.



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Guidelines for Submission of Articles

Due to the overwhelming number of submissions for the national newsletter, we cannot possibly include all submissions. Therefore, to increase the likelihood of your submission being printed, we offer the following guidelines:

- Please ensure that articles do not exceed 500 words;
- Please understand that articles may be edited for length and clarity;
- Submissions received after the deadline for a particular issue will be given consideration for the following issue.



For your convenience (and ours), and in the Franciscan interest in ecology, please try to send submissions in electronic format (e-mail or floppy disc), instead of on paper.

A Note from the Editors

May the Lord give you His Peace!

On pages 11-18 of this issue, we are excited to feature a comprehensive report on the recent All Commissions Conference, including two pages of "Scrapbook" photos.

Please note that our e-mail address has changed: we can now be reached at tauusa@netzero.net. All other contact information remains the same. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in Saint Francis,
the Outhwaites



A Note from Brother Jim

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A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with several friends whom I had not seen for years. So, as we got together to talk about the "good old days", and what we had accomplished since we were last together (or maybe in some respects, what we still hoped to accomplish), one of my friends asked me a question. What he wanted to know was why I became a Franciscan. As I sat and thought for a moment, the answer began to formulate in my mind. I realized that my friend wanted more than the usual standard answer. I responded that, while searching for a religious community, I had found something very special about the person of Francis of Assisi. During the years since, through reading, studying, praying, I have come to discover that Francis was a person who loved deeply the Gospels, his God, and creation. Francis certainly speaks volumes to us about his love of God and shows us that God is lovable.

We as human beings are lovable as well. This was shown in the very well known story of Francis and the leper. Initially the leper was someone who was to be avoided, but once Francis went through his conversion experience he embraced the leper because he recognized one of God's children. As a child of God, the leper deserved the respect accorded to all human beings.

We who are followers of Francis should take a cue from his life. Once he went through his conversion experience, something changed within him. To be in touch with him, we also must change our own lives, embrace what frightens us as a partner on our life's journey. If we accept these things as partners, then they can be a help to us as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

I mentioned to my friend that Francis was a real person. He lived the Gospels. He loved Christ, and showed us that if we really put our minds to it, it is really possible to do these things also.

Peace and Good!

“ Holding Fast to Christ ” on the “Road to Renewal...”

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As this Year of the Father continues to unfold in our countdown to the Great Jubilee Year 2000, the National Commissions continue our commitment to recognize our Order's solidarity with the Church, and in particular with Pope John Paul II, by focusing the Ongoing Formation section of *TAU-USA* on one of the themes for 1999 which the Pope presented in his 1994 Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (“On the Coming of the Third Millennium”). Of special interest to us in this issue of *TAU-USA* is the sacramental focus which the Pope has asked us to highlight this year, the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation.

The Holy Father has told us in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*:

In this third year, the sense of being on a ‘journey to the Father’ should encourage everyone to undertake, by holding fast to Christ the Redeemer of man, a journey of authentic *conversion*. This includes both a ‘negative’ aspect, that of liberation from sin, and a ‘positive’ aspect, that of choosing good, accepting the ethical values expressed in the natural law, which is confirmed and deepened by the Gospel. This is the proper context for a renewed appreciation and more intense celebration of the *Sacrament of Penance* in its most profound meaning. The call to conversion as an indispensable condition of Christian love is particularly important in contemporary society, where the very foundations of an ethically correct vision of human existence often seem to have been lost.

Although these words are intended for the whole Church and, indeed, the whole world, how personally and deeply relevant they are to all Franciscans, especially to us Secular Franciscans who, along with our Third Order



Regular sisters and brothers, have been gifted in a special way with the responsibility of incarnating that part of the Franciscan charism of ongoing conversion. Article 7 of our *Rule of Life* even refers to us by our earliest name, the “brothers and sisters of penance.” Our conversion to the Lord in the Biblical sense of *metanoia* is an ongoing process. If we are truly open to the impulses and the “holy action” of God's Spirit, we will be able to perceive more clearly those areas of our lives which are not yet fully conformed to Christ. We will then be able to name our sin, and with God's help, to turn

more and more completely away from our sin and turn more fully toward the Lord. This life of ongoing conversion begins at our Baptism, develops throughout our sacramental lives, deepens in our Franciscan Profession, and does not end until we are embraced by Sister Death as we pass from this life to eternal life. A thumbnail synopsis of the conversion process is found in the words said to us each Ash Wednesday as the blessed ashes are placed on our foreheads: “Turn away from sin, and be faithful to the Gospel!”

Our *Rule* challenges Secular Franciscans to “conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls ‘conversion’” (Article 7). The same Article also addresses the ongoing process aspect of this conversion experience by reminding us that “Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.”

As Catholics, and especially as Franciscans, we appreciate the truth that our relationship with the Lord is never an exclusively private matter. We are part of a community of believers who together form a portion of the Mystical Body of Christ. Neither is our conversion process something solely between us and the Lord. Our conversion affects the whole community; so, too, does our lack of conversion.

How vital it is, then, that we make use of the special vehicle of grace that the Lord has given us in the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. How sad it is that, during the past few decades, this sacrament has fallen into such relative disuse among so many of our brothers and sisters! We Franciscans, and especially we Secular Franciscans, ought to be in the forefront of spearheading a major return to the Sacrament of Penance. Again, our *Rule* reminds us that “On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace” (Article 7). For example, our fraternities, or we as individuals, can approach our pastors with the offer to help sponsor communal penance services in our local parishes. We can offer the example of our own personal participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. In these ways we give concrete witness to our belief that this sacrament is, indeed, “the privileged sign of the Father's mercy.” In these ways we can help foster the “renewed appreciation and more intense celebration of the Sacrament of Penance” to which our Holy Father has called us.

*How vital it is,
then, that we
make use of...
the Sacrament
of Penance or
Reconciliation.*

Sisters and brothers, God give you peace!

~ three ~



Sorrow

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We read in Scripture that "all creation groans with pain" (Romans 8:22). Thus, we are to believe that sorrow abounds. As Oscar Wilde, the Irish poet, once wrote, "where there is sorrow, there is holy ground." As "the

*It is sorrow
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grow....*

Franciscan concept of universal kinship" (Rule, Article 18) grows and becomes more pronounced, we become more reverent in our approach to everything. It is sorrow from which love and compassion grow, and from which grievances and injustices are addressed. To have sorrow without faith is to

experience loss without hope. It is through resultant acts of caring and forgiveness that we have become a penitential movement, through which we transfer the weight of the world to the weight of the cross. As we begin to perceive common ground as holy ground, cases of exploitation, desecration, illness, loss, and resultant suffering become more pronounced. We recognize the divine in every product and aspect of daily life. It is from this witness that acts of charity and love originate. "Happy are they who mourn, God will comfort them." (Matthew 5:4)

As the Lord reconciles all creation unto Himself, every square inch above, upon, and below the earth is made holy. In this context, He challenges us to look deeper, and beyond what appears to be, including the basis for which our passions and concerns are formed, decisions evaluated, and choices made. It is to realize that who we are today is not exactly who we were yesterday, and what was once commonplace has been met with conversion. "They may look and look, yet not see, and may listen and listen, yet not understand." (Mark 4:12) As awareness and reasons for grieving increase, we find ourselves more and more alone. Norwegian poet Henrik Ibsen once wrote, "the strongest man in the world is he who is most alone". German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote, "where there is a great deal of light, the shadows are deeper". In these quotes we find the price and identity of discipleship.

Sorrow gives birth to forgiveness, reconciliation, and the pursuit of peace. It is the cue by which we look more closely at ourselves, our habits, fears, misgivings, shallowness, and general approach to life, while seeking to be less judgmental of others. Otherwise, we run the



risk of becoming resentful, and nothing consumes one more than resentment.

"Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34). The Lord tells us to "be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). It is to become

detached, without expectation, in whatever we do always allowing the Lord the last word.

Certainly there can be no reparation, reconciliation, or forgiveness without first coming to know sorrow. It is the door through which needs are fulfilled, and by which peace is brought to troubled situations. Having reason to mourn and to be merciful is the means by which holy ground is transformed, and through which expressions of reverence become more plentiful. In this way Francis came to walk gently over rocks, embrace the leper, and tame the wolf.

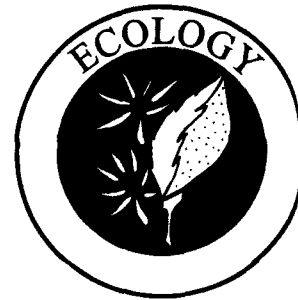
Questions for Discussion:

1. What feelings of sorrow have developed in response to your relationship to creation?
2. Describe how you converted feelings of sorrow into works of faith.
3. How might individuals and fraternities continue to become reconciled to creation?



It is the laity's specific vocation and mission to express the Gospel in their lives, and thereby to insert the Gospel as a leaven into the reality of the world in which they live and work. The greatest forces which shape the world - politics, the mass media, science, technology, culture, education, industry, and work - are precisely the areas where lay people are especially competent to exercise their mission. If these forces are guided by people who are true disciples of Christ, and who are, at the same time, fully competent in the relevant secular knowledge and skill, then indeed will the world be transformed from within by Christ's redeeming power.

Pope John Paul II



Family Commission

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As the new millennium approaches, we ponder Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* ("On the Coming of the Third Millennium"), seeing the Church as a pilgrim on a journey, who has not yet arrived, but is continually moving ahead to reach the destination.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to move along on our journey. It not only helps us to correct our course, but it calls us to continue.

The Pope's theme for 1999 is our journey to the Father. As pilgrims who have set out on a long journey, we need to stop now and then to see how far we have traveled. Are we on the right path? It is always possible that we are heading in the wrong direction. After asking someone, we are told to "turn around". If speaking in Greek, he would say "metanoieite", meaning "turn around". In English it means to "convert", "repent", or "do penance". In the year 1999, the Pope encourages us to do penance, to undertake "a journey of authentic conversion". In simple words, we will find it necessary to turn ourselves around in a new direction and change our lives. Conversion primarily means putting our minds to Jesus, and conforming our thoughts and actions to those of Christ, so that when others see us, they see a reflection of Christ.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to move along on our journey. It not only helps us to correct our course, but it calls us to continue. Francis said, "This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance."

The "Letter to All the Faithful", written by Saint Francis, and included as the prologue to the 1978 Rule, has a great impact on new members of the Secular Franciscan Order. It has two sections: "Concerning those who do penance" and "Concerning those who do not do penance". The purpose of this letter to all the faithful is to bring about a change of heart. Saint Francis called his Franciscan Third Order the Order of Penance. As

Francis emphasized in his letter, we should love the Lord and our neighbor, center our lives on the Eucharist, remove the distractions that prevent us from seeing God as we should, and



fulfill God's will.

As Secular Franciscans, we can turn away from sin and turn ourselves towards God. Sin, or worldliness, turned Francis toward himself, but God's grace helped him, and he became totally turned towards God. This is conversion also called reconciliation, transformation, or change.

We must recall that, when we were professed, we promised to follow the Gospel after the example of Saint Francis. In this Franciscan tradition "gospel living means knowing and experiencing the Lord intimately, seeking His presence intensely, and sharing his mission in the Church thoroughly."

So, a life of penance is a life turned towards God, maintaining that dynamic rhythm that allows us to go "from gospel to life, from life to the gospel" so that we are united with Him, and His life becomes our own.

But we are weak human beings, and this change of heart or conversion or penance seems to be difficult to reach. It demands a radical interior change, from a life of sin to a life of perfect charity, from being self-centered to becoming an all-loving person. As Franciscans, our lives must be directed towards this destination - lives with Franciscan accent, filled with Francis' charism.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How do we set up for ourselves a program of spiritual renewal to achieve this goal of conformity to Christ through radical interior change?
2. What does "penance" mean to you personally?
3. On your personal journey or renewal, what place does the Sacrament of Reconciliation hold?



Without these words, "Father, I have sinned," man cannot truly enter into the Mystery and the Resurrection of Christ, so as to obtain the fruits of Redemption and Grace from them. Those are key words. They, above all, show man's great interior openness to God: "Father, I have sinned against You" (Luke 15:18). If it is true that sin, in a certain sense shuts man off from God, it is likewise true that remorse for sins opens up all the greatness and majesty of God, His Fatherhood above all, to man's conscience. Being converted to Christ, finding the interior power of His Cross and His Resurrection, finding the full truth of human existence in Him is possible only with the form of these words: "Father, I have sinned". And only at the cost of them.

Pope John Paul II

Penance, Reconciliation, and Jubilee

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When we were children, the Sacrament of Penance meant Confession, and that was always a "monster sacrament" because we had to think up what things we had done that might have offended God. The default position was to ask the priest in the dark confessional, where you were sure he recognized your voice, for suggestions. He usually made general comments, that were really meant for older kids, and left us even more confused. What we learned from this was that the general penance for nearly anything was usually five Our Fathers and three Hail Marys.

As we grew older, our sins became more adult, and slowly we began to form an appreciation of "penance", but it was still incomplete. This was a problem of formula versus understanding. In school, and by and large by our parents also, we were taught formula. But it is so easy for adults to miss the point, because they are adults, and as such listen to the letter of the law rather than to the Law. Our Lord told us that unless we become as little children, there is much we cannot understand because we have become "adults". Consider how a loving parent deals with a contentious child: our concern as parents when two of our children are squabbling is that they resolve their difficulty, and not get us involved. How interesting it is to realize that the role we want our God to play is the opposite of this! We want God to settle all our problems with justice.

Because the priest said "For your Penance..." we tended to equate that with "For your Punishment..." and didn't quite consider the notion of reconciliation.

Historically, the notion of Penance has evolved over the centuries. Saint Francis was strongly influenced by the Penitential movement, which had existed for centuries prior to his birth. At the time, penance imposed on sinners was severe, so the wealthy would hire Penitents to carry their burden for them. The Penitents viewed their role as mirroring the suffering Christ, but it overlooked the need for the offender or sinner to be reconciled with their actions and with their Creator. Somehow the original idea of reconciliation, which came from the Jewish tradition, had become distorted. Yom

Kippur, the Day of Atonement, was the day by which people had to have atoned for all their sins in order to be right with God. They could atone to God only for their sins against God; they also had to atone to people they had offended, and only those people could forgive them.

This is one of those dangerously radical ideas that Jesus put before us, which we too often try to ignore.

Jesus echoes this when He tells us, "If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has

anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24.) We tend to want to atone to God for all our sins. We forget that we have not been given true Reconciliation unless we've made things right with the people we've hurt.



This is one of those dangerously radical ideas that Jesus put before us, which we too often try to ignore. In our times, we see the major world powers taking advantage of the third world countries, sparingly trading needed goods for "cheap labor" which results in huge profits for corporations and only slightly improves the lot of the poor in those countries. All too often, the major world powers can say, and even feel, that they are helping out the poor rather than exploiting them. But it is not likely to occur to them to ask for forgiveness for what has been done. The notion of the Old Testament "Year of Jubilee" has again echoed in our times and in our Church as a way of helping to restore justice in a world once again missing the point of God's love for all of us. Pope John Paul II has declared 2000 a Holy Year of Jubilee.

The "year of the Lord's favor", or jubilee, was a time to proclaim "liberty in the land for all" (Leviticus 25:10), to "bring good news to the poor" and "let the oppressed go free" (Isaiah 61). It was a time to restore freedom and justice among people, to re-establish relationships of equality, remedy the conditions that kept people oppressed, and to cancel debts (Deuteronomy 15). The jubilee year was an invitation for people to see their lives from a divine perspective: all that they were and all that they did should be in accord with God's will for building a community of justice, mercy, love, and peace.

Pope John Paul II is calling us today to make the coming Jubilee Year a time to renew our commitment to practice charity, pursue justice, welcome the stranger, and make every effort to restore right relationships among our brothers and sisters. Then, and only then, will we truly be reconciled with God.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do we tend to reconcile our offenses with the offended or just with God?
2. When we buy inexpensive items, do we consider where they are made, and should we?
3. Does our country need to be reconciled with the third world? How would we do this?



*When the afflicted called out, the Lord heard,
and from all his distress He saved him.*

Psalm 34:7

Work for Others – The Path of Penance and Reconciliation

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To consider our work as a means of penance/reconciliation, we must begin by considering the object of our efforts. That is, for what purpose are we working? Are we working for ourselves alone, for our own gratification and advancement, or do we understand our work to be somehow also for the benefit of others? In *Evangelizing American Culture: A Franciscan Approach*, Fr. Dan McClellan, OFM uses the stark language of Francis to make the importance of this distinction clear:

The very nature of work as "grace" means that its fulfillment is only possible when it is exercised for the many. When work becomes solely the measure of personal success, one is unable to plug oneself into the social matrix. Individual energy is turned inward and the result is confusion, isolation and alienation. Religious people call that sin.

...we should be doing work that makes us "poor"....

If "doing penance" involves a turning away from sin, then doing "holy" work, as opposed to "sinful" work, involves recognizing that we work not only for ourselves but also,

and more importantly, in service of others. Our work in service of others usually occurs within the boundaries of our everyday lives – in our families, parishes, neighborhoods, and workplaces. This mindfulness of meeting the "other's needs" is God-like in its self-emptying. Work must be a way of helping us to be poor, so that we can be like God, and thus faithful to that image in which we are made. God's poverty is a self-emptying on our behalf. Our work is service for others the way God serves us. As God, who was rich, made Himself poor for us, likewise we should be doing work that makes us "poor", as God is for others.

Some of our work as Franciscans should involve a special sensitivity to serving the needs of the least among us, the *minores*. It may be the youngest or the middle child in a family, the one who is most in need of attention; or the co-worker who ends up being the office's social outcast; or the countless needy members of our society. These *minores* call forth special efforts on our part that embody the redemptive aspect of work mentioned in Article 16 of our Rule.

Redemption is the restoration of freedom, and Francis worked for and with those who were un-free because of their own or someone else's sin. The exercise of our



capacity to work is never complete unless that exercise somehow includes such service. The ministry of the early Franciscans was eye-catching in its presence to daily and ordinary life. In our "therapeutic culture", the work that Franciscans do, because it is imbued with the spirit of the Incarnation, ought to be equally eye-catching by its attentiveness to the claims of society's marginal and cast-out.

We need to do our work with a keen sense that in doing so we represent the needs of the least among us. The underprivileged or handicapped student, the welfare mother, the underemployed father, the confusing "bag lady," and the rich young man who has no sense of the meaning of life, all have a privileged claim on our work. Our schools, hospitals, parishes, and seminaries need to be recognizable for the special attention given to these people. Once again, it is the example of the Incarnation, God's self-gift to us when we were alienated, that is our guide. When people are most disabled by their own sin, or the sin of the world, an attentiveness born of the unique quality of work-as-grace rescues them from hopelessness.

Our work, then, can be a means of "doing penance" by bringing about reconciliation. It becomes redemptive, grace-filled work that helps to bring our broken world more deeply into accord with God's plan – fixing what has been damaged or broken. This involves working in the power of the Spirit to free all of creation from its bondage: individuals, social structures and systems, and the natural world as well. Redemptive work restores right relationships. It does so by putting the needs of the other first. In doing so, work becomes, for us, a path to holiness.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Reflect on some of the "others" that you serve through your work. Who is the poorest among these?



In its subjective dimension, work is always a personal action, actus personae. It follows that the whole man, body and spirit, partakes of it, independently of whether it be manual or intellectual labor. The Word of the Living God, the evangelical message of salvation, is also directed to the whole man, for we find that many of the contents of that message are concerned with human work; they are like special lights shining upon it. Now, adequate assimilation of those contents is necessary.

Pope John Paul II

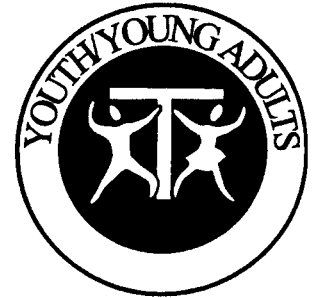
Steps to Reconciliation with God

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Questions for Discussion:

1. Why is it so important for Youth, and ourselves, to understand all five steps to reconciliation with God?
2. Why is Scripture reference so important?



Nurturing Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Leaders

Anthony and Mary Mazotti, SFO

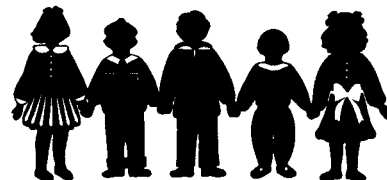
Since its establishment three years ago, the National Secular Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission has been steadily developing an energy of its own. For the first time, the Commission members tried their wings as team presenters at the national All Commissions Conference in Saint Bonaventure, NY. Valuable groundwork information about Franciscan Youth was given as handouts. Though sharing time was limited, the Commission was inspired by the work participants had already begun in their regions with Youth.

As the Commission looks hopefully to the future, and to its mission and goals, it realizes clearly that we have only just begun. There is no specific model of what a Franciscan Youth Group should resemble. Each fraternity, each culture, each geographic area, will discern, preferably as a team, the composition of their Youth Group.

What is most needed in the early stages of developing Franciscan Youth Groups is local and regional fraternity support, along with a small team of dedicated Seculars, and lots of patience for the tedious ground work that is a **must**. It has been determined by those who understand Youth Ministry that three years are usually needed to establish an effective Youth Group. Also, developing a support group takes time, but the results are worth the investment.

The Commission highly recommends a resource book for Franciscan Youth Leaders that offers hope, encouragement, insights, and prayerful strategies. Youth Leaders should not begin without it. Please send for it:

"Survival In Youth Ministry," by Robert J. McCarty, National Executive Director for the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry. Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publication, Winona, MN. The cost is \$6.95.



Udeniable is the joy that comes from true repentance and reconciliation with God. The emotional wounds of estrangement are healed and forgotten as He embraces us, in our contrition, with His love.

"Happy is he whose fault is taken away, whose sin is covered." Psalm 32:1

God has a required way for us to seek and receive His forgiveness:

1. A person must acknowledge his sin:
"Then I acknowledged my sin to You, my guilt I covered not. I said, 'I confess my faults to the Lord,' and You took away the guilt of my sin." *Psalm 32:5*
2. A person must recognize that his sin is an offense against God:
"If we say, 'We are free of the guilt of sin,' we deceive ourselves; the truth is not to be found in us. But if we acknowledge our sins, He who is just can be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrong." *1 John 1:8-9*
3. A person must have a deep, heartfelt sorrow for the wrong done, and have a determination to turn from such course or practice:
"Your sadness led to repentance. Indeed, sorrow for God's sake produces a repentance without regrets, leading to salvation...and holy zeal." *2 Corinthians 7:8-11*
4. A person must do what he can to right the wrong or repair the damage done:
"If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift." *Matthew 5:23-24*
5. Then he must pray to God, asking for forgiveness on the basis of Christ's redemptive sacrifice:
"It is in Christ and through His blood that we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven, so immeasurably generous is God's favor to us." *Ephesians 1:7*

Finances and Fraternity

Fr. Ben Brevoort OFM Cap

This article will be published in installments. This is part 1 of 4. Future installments will address the concepts of Solidarity, Transparency and Control, Autonomy, and How to Increase Income.

1. Introduction

It seems contradictory to speak about finances and fraternity. Too often, finances cause divisions in the fraternity, give rise to problems, and foment discord. If the fraternity does not have sufficient financial means, the life of the fraternity languishes and many initiatives die without fruit for lack of economic and financial support. On the other hand, if the fraternity has ample financial means, or possesses substantial assets, the problems of managing the funds or assets can overshadow the task of animating and guiding the fraternity. In spite of all this, the Rule (Article 25), establishes that "all the brothers and sisters should offer a contribution ... for the expenses ... of the fraternity".

During visits, when stressing the responsibility of the fraternities to contribute to the needs of the councils at the higher level (Rule, Article 25), it is often said: "Our fraternities are poor, they can hardly maintain their own life; they cannot contribute to the other councils". Or: "We never speak about money; we give a generous service to the fraternities without asking to be paid and we expect the councils at the higher level to do the same". Others on the contrary say: "After we started to contribute to the expenses of the councils at the higher level, we received a much better and dedicated service". Or: "After our local fraternities started to contribute to our expenses, they are much more interested in the life of the Order on the national and international levels".

2. Who pays, owns

Every fraternity needs financial means for its life, for its service and for "the needs of worship, of the apostolate, and of charity" (Rule, Article 25). In the same way, every council needs economic and financial means to be able to give its service and to animate and guide the fraternity. Today, there exists no fraternity at whatever level or in whatever country which can live without some person paying some money.

It is important for the life of the fraternity to know who spends, but it is still more important to know who pays, i.e. from whom or from where the money comes. It is good to remember a fundamental economic fact: "Who pays, owns".

A fraternity which lives from the contributions of all the brothers and sisters (Rule, Article 25), is owned by all its members and all will feel themselves involved and co-responsible. A fraternity which counts on other contributions, sooner or later will need to respond to the person or persons who provide the financial means to survive. There are many and quite different situations, but in the end it always remains true: "Who pays, owns".

There are fraternities, at all levels, where the minister or the council members take care of the expenses of the

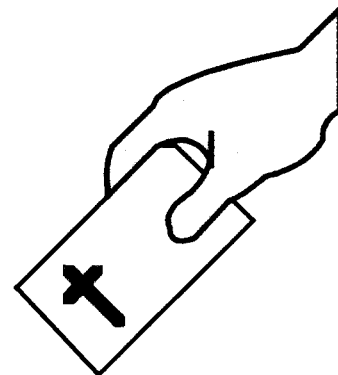
council or of the fraternity. They are often very generous people, who do this out of the best of intentions. They do not want to hear about reimbursement of expenses or about "accounts of giving and receiving" (Philippians 4:15). They do the work, like the Apostle Paul, "without any expenses, without using the rights" connected to the service (1 Corinthians 9:18). The fraternity in fact is often quite happy to have found such a minister or such council members.

Other fraternities lean upon the religious who give spiritual assistance, or on their Spiritual Assistant for a good part of the expenses to be met. The fraternity is a guest in the convent or the parish, uses its premises for the meetings, with light and water, takes advantage of the means of communication, or of transport of the religious, all this without any "accounts of giving and receiving". Often enough, both parties are happy: the religious because they know that they can count on the fraternity for their activities, and the fraternity because it has found a sure and protected place to live.

Other fraternities, finally, have a patrimony, or assets accumulated in the past, or receive extraordinary financial contributions, e.g. inheritances, legacies or gifts, coming from inside or outside the fraternity. They think themselves fortunate to be able to provide for their needs without having to ask each member to make the effort to meet the financial needs of the works of the fraternity.

However, it remains always true: "Who pays, owns". It might be the minister or the members of the council, the Spiritual Assistant or the religious, the manager or the board who determines the life of the fraternity. The elections and the "concrete and courageous choices, appropriate for the situation of the fraternity" (Constitutions, Article 50) will always be made in reference to the concrete situation of the fraternity. If the life of the fraternity depends on the contributions, financial or otherwise, of one single person or of a small group of persons, it will be impossible not to be very attentive to their wishes.

Only in the case that the fraternity, for its life, depends on the "contributions, according to their means" of all its members, will the fraternity be free to choose on the basis of its own life and of the needs of all its members. Only in this case "all pay" and therefore "all own".



The Logo

as envisioned by Kathy Taormina, SFO

Designer of the All Commissions Conference logo

A circle with no beginning and no end holds within it six smaller circles representing the individual Commissions. Each Commission's circle, complete on its own, ever so slightly overlaps the other circles to show its inter-connectedness with the other Commissions.

Formation

(the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order)

The anchor of our Commissions. From learning and conversion, we build a better Order. The Word of the Lord, broken open for all to share, is alive with the flame of knowledge.

Work

(Article 16)

The open hands, the hands of Christ which bless us with work, and our hands which bless others by our work, are coupled with lines representing the movement and life of our works.

Youth/Young Adults

(Article 24)

The openness, vitality, and joy of youth are represented by open and up-stretched arms, spirit-filled bodies in motion for the Lord.

Peace and Justice

(Articles 15 and 19)

The age-old Biblical symbol of the dove clutching the olive branch of peace. To quote Pope Paul VI, "If you want peace, work for justice!"

Ecology

(Article 18)

The milkweed plant, only a weed to some, opens and releases its beautiful seeds to float throughout the world to spread its life. We, as Franciscans, are called to emerge from the safety of our "pods" to enter and change our world.

Family

(Article 17)

Whatever our family consists of, there we find our home of support and love, thus the heart within a home. But true love and support does not selfishly bind us, but encourages us to go out into the world, opening the love of our family to be shared with others.

Encompassing the Commissions are the unending questions: Does Conversion come about from our daily living and working our Commissions? Or, do our Commissions emerge from the on-going conversions, personal and fraternal, that we experience as Franciscans?

Conversion leads us to Commission which leads us to Conversion which leads us....



All Commissions Conference

June 24 – 27, 1999

For four days in late June, Secular Franciscans from all over the United States gathered in Saint Bonaventure, NY, for the much anticipated All Commissions Conference. The gathering focused on in depth "track" sessions for the six commissions, but, as with all good Franciscan family gatherings, there was no shortage of time for prayer, fellowship, and informal discussion of each day's events.



Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Participants register in Saint Francis Hall

Many of the Conference participants arrived at the tranquil campus of Saint Bonaventure University on a hot Thursday afternoon, June 24. After registration and dinner, everyone gathered in the beautiful Franciscan chapel in Doyle Hall. The chapel is dominated by a striking mural of Saint Francis receiving the stigmata from Christ, while an awed Saint Bonaventure looks on.

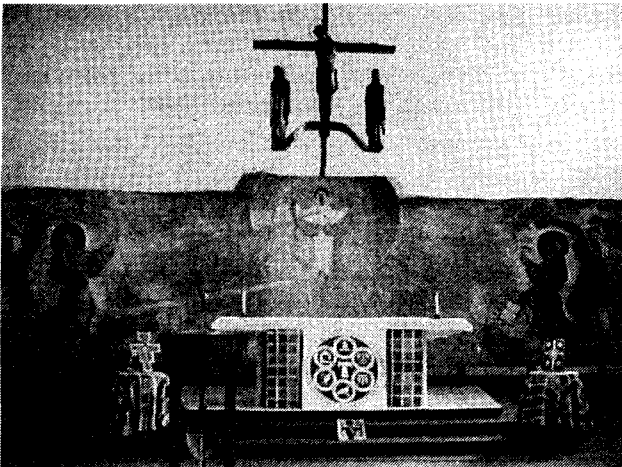


Photo by Anthony Outhwaite, SFO

The Sanctuary in the Chapel at Doyle Hall

Before Mass, National Minister Bill Wicks, SFO, enthusiastically welcomed everyone present and congratulated the National Commission Chairs, stating "This is your finest hour; this is going to be a great event." Mary Mazotti, SFO, Coordinator of the Apostolic Commissions, introduced the National Commission members.

Let Us Pray...

Such a great endeavor as the All Commissions Conference must of course begin with prayer; Father Matt Gaskin, OFM offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to celebrate the Solemnity of Saint John the Baptist. For his homily, Father Matt shared with us his memories of his first National Fraternity Meeting in 1982, and his role in prompting the National Fraternity on the first steps along the road that eventually led us to the All Commissions Conference.

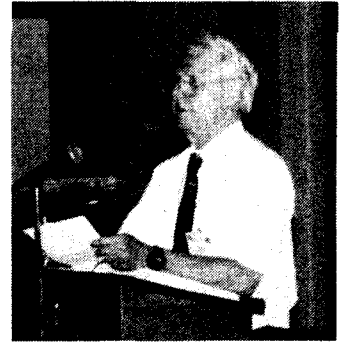


Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Bill Wicks was right on the money when he said "This is going to be a great event!"



Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Father Matt Gaskin, OFM shares his memories

Father Matt recalled his years of searching for a viable lay spirituality. "If it moved, I joined it!" he said as he referred to his experiences with the Transactional Movement, and the Charismatic Movement, among others. Father said that he finally found what he was looking

for in the 1978 Rule of the SFO. "I was impressed with the difference between the Leonine Rule, which made no mention of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, the Gospel, or even Saint Francis, and the Pauline Rule, which seemed to contain a deep spiritual synthesis, and the marrow of the Gospel."

Father Matt had arrived at that 1982 meeting excited to be newly involved with the Secular Franciscan Order, and was inspired by the gospel simplicity and apostolic challenges of our newly approved Rule. Disappointed to find the National Fraternity stuck in a "log jam" of administrative issues, Father Matt requested time to address the assembly. He said that he saw himself as a prophetic catalyst, even then: "We are responsible for the health of the national body," he challenged. In the final minutes of the meeting, Father Matt's suggestion to found the Apostolic Commissions was unanimously approved. The meeting was closed with a prayer and a song, "and because you are here today, the song lingers on."

*"...the Commissions...
This is where our prophetic voice is."*

Ron Pihokker, SFO

Following Mass, Father Matt was presented with a proclamation from the National Fraternity, thanking him for his role. National Vice Minister Marie Amore, SFO made the presentation, recalling Father Matt's long ago inquiry "Where are the visionaries?", and replying "Father Matt, *you* are the visionary". As Father Matt pointed out "it doesn't always pay to keep your mouth shut."



Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Bill Wicks, Marie Amore, and Sister Margaret Carney, OSF congratulate Father Matt

A second proclamation was presented to Ron Pihokker, SFO for his indispensable role in saving the Commissions from being budgeted into insignificance. When the NAFRA budget ran short some years ago, a plan was put forward to drastically cut the Commissions' budgets. Ron stood up "with fire in his eyes", and stated "If you are going to cut the Commissions, we might as well all go home. This is where our prophetic voice is." The budget remained untouched.



Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Mary Mazotti and Sister Margaret Carney congratulate Ron Pihokker

The evening was spent at the first of the nightly socials. As well as good food and fellowship, these events afforded everyone a leisurely chance to look over the books and materials available for purchase from the National Commissions and other vendors. The social get-together broke up at eleven o'clock, but Secular Franciscans gathered at "unofficial" socials, sharing stories and singing songs late into the night – and, in some cases, through breakfast (you know who you are!).

Taste the Sweetness

On Friday morning, Father Bob Stewart, OFM got the day off to a rousing start with his truly inspiring keynote address. He held the whole auditorium spellbound as he passionately urged all present to live out our mission as members of the Mystical Body of Christ.



Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Father Bob gives his keynote address

Father Bob used the nautical metaphor of "range markers" to exhort us not to lose sight of either long range or short range concerns. We must focus on our ultimate encounter with God, but also on what is here for us to do. He quoted Carl Schaefer, OFM, National Spiritual Assistant to Oceania, as saying that it is "difficult to convince SFOs to take up the active apostolate; they want to pray and even take an active part in the Liturgy, but getting them to see the importance of actively living the Gospel is the *most* difficult thing." He said that so often people seem to live contradictions, because they lose perspective on their own beliefs. (Those range markers again.)

Father then pondered why it is that we sometimes seem to need a crisis before we can grow and change, and how much better it would be if we could be at our best, even during the easier times of our lives. He explained that conversion requires a repeating cycle of four stages: attending, understanding, judging, and acting, (similar to information, formation, and transformation). This often requires us to do something that makes us uncomfortable or vulnerable. But if we can push ourselves past this barrier, as Francis did when he embraced and kissed the leper, then "we taste the sweetness of intimacy with God." This is the blessing of penance. "Why would you not choose that?"

Father used an image of the Crucified Christ, made up of smaller images of peoples' faces, to illustrate the meaning of our call to be members of the Mystical Body of Christ. (Read more about this mediation on page eighteen.)

Down to Business

With renewed zeal, the participants joined one of six groups, and attended the first session of the Commission "tracks". These tracks were the heart of the Conference, and provided a wealth of practical knowledge and in-depth discussion. Participants benefited from ideas and experiences of the National Commission members and from one other. It was immediately apparent that the National Commissioners expended a great deal of effort to prepare for the presentations and discussions.

This is the blessing of penance

Formation

The Formation track began each session by singing John Michael Talbot's version of Francis' Prayer Before the Crucifix. The sessions were held in such a way that they not only discussed formation techniques, but modeled them at the same time. Therefore, since formation begins with getting to know the candidate, the participants began by sharing a bit of personal information. Many people brought an object from home that symbolized something important about themselves. Dave Ream, SFO, National Formation Co-Chair, explained that the track would be more concerned with discussing the process of formation, rather than the content. As one of the participants noted, "formation is not about learning something, it is about becoming something". Thérèse Ream, SFO, National Formation Co-Chair, was pleased to note that, during the course of the sessions, people were taking notes on what each other was saying, instead of relying solely on the "experts". Much time was spent discussing issues in small groups, and going over materials contained in the resource kit. The plan for the sessions changed as the Conference went on, responding to the needs of the previous sessions, modeling the importance of having a "flexible agenda" in formation situations.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of discernment in the Formation process. The important question should be "How can I help this person reach God?", not "How can I help this person become a Secular Franciscan". As Dave Ream pointed out, "we are Franciscans not primarily for ourselves, but for the Church and for the world."

Ecology

In the ecology track Charlie Spencer, SFO, National Ecology Chair, pointed out that as Christians our reverence for creation stems from our belief in the

"the seeds that we plant do not germinate and sprout overnight"

Incarnation, in which God entered into the world that He made, making it holy. "We have to have a love for life. It's this love that brings out an annoyance at injustice." The question then becomes, "What do I do?"

Charlie has found that the two most effective tools we have as activists are the pen and the telephone (or, nowadays, e-mail). He cautioned against making an issue personal by making attacks on individuals. He encouraged everyone to act like professionals and, most importantly, to "see the Christ in everyone".

Charlie stressed that "the first job of a Regional Commissioner is to organize the apostolate within the region. ... We need to be committed, we need to be persistent" because "the seeds that we plant do not germinate and sprout overnight, as much as we might will them to."

Family

In the Family track Carol Gentile, SFO, National Family Chair, stated "Prayer in action is love and love in action is service." The regional family commissioners shared

many experiences and suggestions for living out their commission, such as: painting houses for the poor; visiting the pediatric section of hospitals and reading to the children; helping out at crisis pregnancy centers; promoting a "turn-off TV day" once a week; White Ribbon Against Pornography; encouraging people to write wills; and more.

The key is to become aware of the problems within the local community and to find a solution.

Peace and Justice



Photo by Anthony Outhwaite, SFO

The Peace and Justice track engages in small group discussion

The Peace and Justice track spent a great deal of time discussing ideas and experiences with one another. As Dan Mulholland, SFO, National Peace and Justice Co-Chair, said, "We are modeling what National would like to see in all the regions."

A presentation by Michelle Balek, OFS gave everyone an insight into the history and workings of Franciscans International, the Franciscan Family's presence at the United Nations.

Work



Photo by Anthony Outhwaite, SFO

Mary Zablocki addresses the Work Commission track

Participants in the Work track explored the spirituality behind our daily labors. Mary Zablocki, SFO, National Work Co-Chair, pointed out "In working to perfect the world I am working to perfect myself." She encouraged everyone to "take the extra step" because "it is Jesus for Whom we work, and Jesus to Whom we report."

ACC Scrapbook



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

Plenty of information and materials were available at the display tables in Doyle Hall.

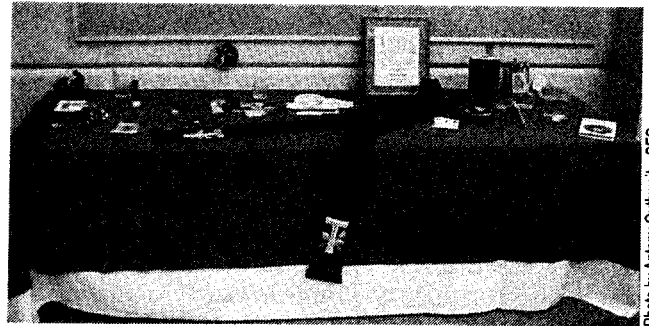


Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

Participants in the Formation track brought with them items from home which symbolized their identity as Franciscans



Photo by Al Kathi, SFO

Kathy Taormina and Barb Bender peddling their wares



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

Deacon Bob Campbell prepares to proclaim the Gospel



Sister Margaret Carney, OSF, who became a Secular Franciscan forty year ago as a teenager, declares that her first public act as Director of the Franciscan Institute is to welcome the participants of the All Commissions Conference. "This is an enormous joy for me!"

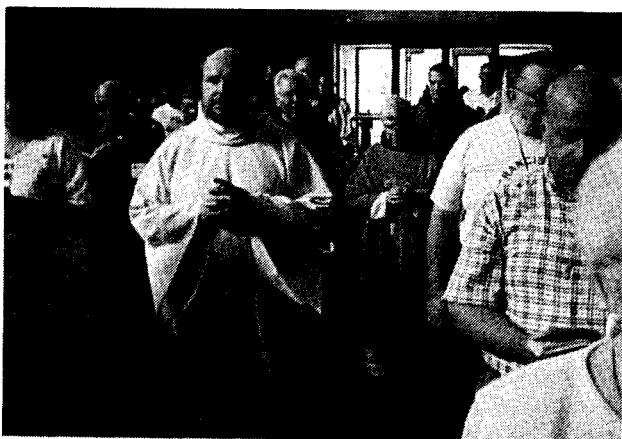


Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

The Entrance Procession for Mass on Saturday night



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

At the end of the track sessions, members of the Formation track bless one another with the blessing of Saint Clare



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

We were blessed during the Conference to have a talented music ministry to lead us in liturgical song: (l-r) Chris Marks, Gary Britain, Deborah Kubeck, Mike Salterelli (Not pictured: Sue Ann Salterelli)

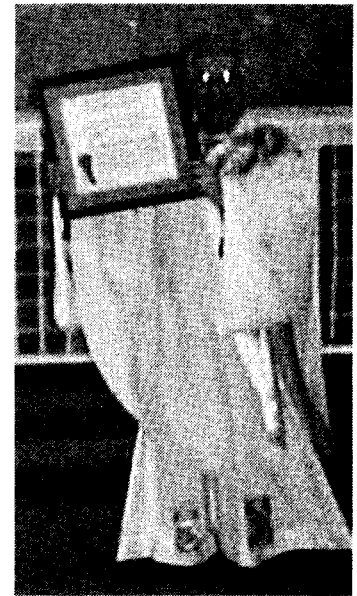


Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

A joyful Father Matt shows off his award for the camera



Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Richard Beal, Kathy Taormina, and Deacon Oscar Perez



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

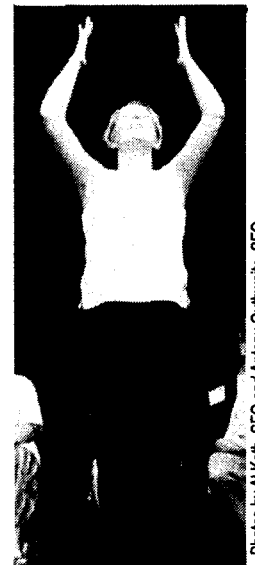
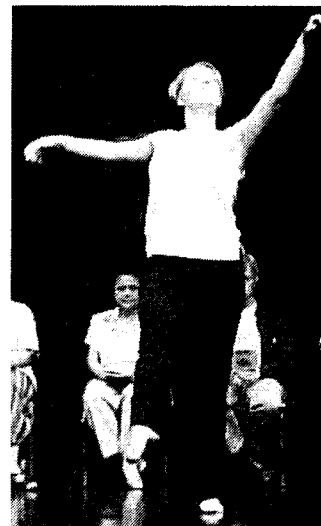
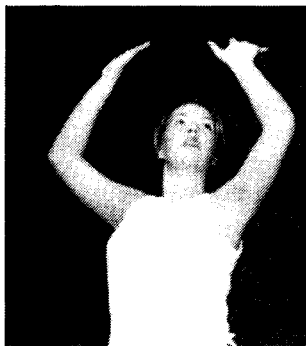
The congregation raises a joyful noise unto the Lord!



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

Dan Mulholland and Michele Balek, OSF of Franciscans International enjoy Friday's social

**Music
and
Dance**



Melissa Fink performs a liturgical dance at the Commissioning Service

Photos by Al Kath, SFO and Antony Outhwaite, SFO

Youth

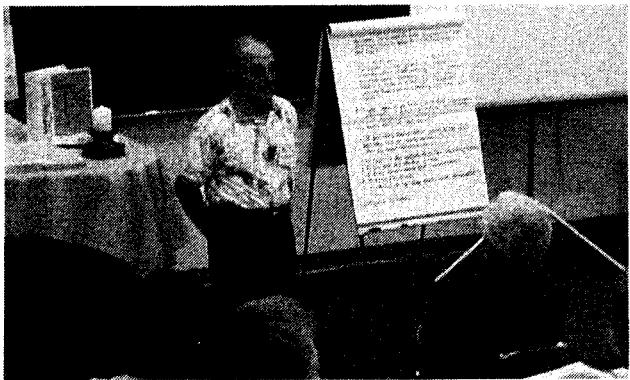


Photo by Anthony Outhwaite, SFO

Anthony Mazotti points out the importance of setting goals

Anthony Mazotti, SFO, National Youth / Young Adult Co-Chair, pointed out the importance of having a mission statement and a set of goals, saying, "Francis had a profound sense of mission."

Further presentations discussed the varied ways in which regional commissioners can minister to youth and young adults.

Kathy Taormina, SFO showed that, in ministering to youth, we are fulfilling all the apostolic commissions. "Youth are not the future of the Church, they are the Church of today." She reminded us that Francis was only twenty-three years old when God spoke to him at San Damiano and Clare was only sixteen when she gave up everything to follow him. "They were young adults."

Mass with the Bishop

Another highlight of the All Commissions Conference was Mass offered by Most Reverend Henry Mansell, Bishop of Buffalo. During his homily, Bishop Mansell recalled his childhood vacations at the beach. When the Angelus bells rang, everybody on the beach would stop what they were doing to pray. The Bishop observed that the Angelus, Stations, and other popular devotions are Franciscan influences. He recalled medical and technological advances, also violence, war, and the culture of death, saying, "We need to reaffirm life." Bishop Mansell asked, "How does the culture of death happen; what influences it?"

Answering his own question he said, "Music, TV, and other violent amusements. We have to warn our young people of the negative influence of their amusements." He said that fundamentally we are spiritual people, and applauded the SFO for its commitment to action, expressed in the



Photo by Al Keith, SFO

Bishop Henry Mansell

Commissions. "The Secular Franciscan Order brings new life to the Church and the world by following your call to 'rebuild', which is conversion. What is needed today is 'theology on our knees': a sense of awe and

wonder before God. You have so much to offer in the concrete ways to which the example of Francis calls you, in your response to God's call of the beatitudes. We give thanks for the way you live out your call, your initial consecration in baptism, and the message you bring to the world."

The Bishop's final prayer for us was Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 3:16-21.

Saturday Evening Mass

On Saturday evening, Father Anthony Carozzo, OFM offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He opened his homily with the story of the novel Chocolate. It seems that a chocolate shop opened next door to a church on Ash Wednesday. The congregation was torn between the preaching of the priest calling them to penance, and the tempting smells emanating from the chocolate shop. Saint Paul tells us that, in order to live in Christ, we must die to ourselves. Jesus said "I have come to give you life and to give it abundantly."

Father pointed out that Francis and Clare were ascetical, not for the sake of asceticism, but for love of Christ. The world does not need to hear about death from us; they can hear that on the news. They need to hear the story of the life we have found in Jesus. This should give us great joy, and so we



Photo by Anthony Outhwaite, SFO

Father Anthony Carozzo welcomes the congregation

should share it, indeed be eager to share it! Some people aren't going to like our message, but it is not our goal to be liked. If we share this message with them, won't they be happy? Isn't that what the Lord is saying to you and me?

Wrapping It Up



Photo by Anthony Outhwaite, SFO

Ed Zablocki introduces the National Commission Chairs

Towards the end of the Conference, everyone gathered in the auditorium once more, to sum up and share what had been learned. Each National Commission Chair addressed the assembly, to give a brief synthesis of the results of the track sessions.

Dave and Thérèse Ream, SFO presented large sheets of paper, on which representatives of the Formation track had written a synopsis of the experiences and insights shared by the Formation participants, including:

good formation involves the whole person, not just the brain; there is great value in singing and praying together; we can always improve; it is important that we all take ownership of the Formation process, and not merely be observers; ongoing Formation is essential; we are all co-responsible for our fraternity, our Order, and the whole Franciscan family. The participants were highly impressed with the model of the Formation track – its order and purpose.

Charlie Spencer, SFO stated that the All Commissions Conference was an “awesome experience”, and thanked everyone present. The next step, said Charlie, is how to apply all that we have absorbed. “Like a seed in the wind, we do not know where the Creator may bring us... We may even become fodder for the other, martyrs for the cause.... The possibilities are endless, like creation itself.” Charlie then recited his poem written in 1976, “The Land of Steen”, found on page xxx.



Photo by Al Kath, SFO

Sarah and Dan Mulholland sum up the Peace and Justice track

Carol Gentile, SFO introduced Sonia Bernardo, SFO, incoming Chair of the National Family Commission, who gave a summary of the Family track. Sonia stated that the participants were so engrossed in the work they were doing that they didn't even notice when it was time for a break. Sonia and Richard Fetkovich, SFO shared the results of the survey that concluded the Family track. The participants recognized the importance of networking and sharing information, saying that nothing is impossible because so much help is available within the Order. As a means to strengthen community, they believe that it is important to set a goal, to dialogue and brainstorm, and they intend to share this information in workshops at the regional level. They felt that the well-informed presenters supplied them with the practical “nuts and bolts” of setting up a family commission. One respondent summed it up by saying “I feel I have the tools now to do the job”.

Sarah Mulholland, SFO, National Peace and Justice Co-Chair, said “The incredible sharing [in the Peace and Justice track] was valuable for all, including the presenters”. She noted that there were many different levels of involvement, and everyone learned from each other that no one is alone. This is a journey, and we have support from the Franciscan family at all stages. The participants were very eager to return home to present local workshops with the important realization that there is amazing strength in asking local fraternities what they need rather than telling them information. Dan Mulholland, SFO noted that communication is essential; it is important to be able to network quickly, because

Peace and Justice issues, by their nature, are often time sensitive. E-mail and computers are extraordinarily useful in this regard. He added that this conference should be a model for the Regional Commissions.

Ed Zablocki, SFO, National Work Commission Co-Chair, said that the participants in the Work track were an amazing group of people, who were very tuned in to the fact that work is a gift. He observed a high level of willingness to take responsibility at the regional level. “These people are ready to go!” Mary Zablocki, SFO added that “people are leaving with a new perspective and a lot of hope.”

Mary Mazotti, SFO reminded us that Youth/Young Adult is the youngest of the Commissions in the USA, being only three years old, while the others have been in existence for twelve to fourteen years. The presenters found it important to begin by laying a foundation, since the commission is so young. The Mission Statement has recently been completed, and it was necessary to show Youth/Young Adult as a component of the commission structure. Mary said that each of the thirty-four surveys they received in response to their presentation will receive a personal response from her and Anthony. Anthony Mazotti, SFO sincerely thanked all participants in the track for their sharing and interaction.

“Go, Rebuild the Church”

The presentations were followed by a Commissioning Service, during which Father Matt Gaskin, OFM offered a reflection. He stated, “We are empowered by our baptism, commissioned by Jesus, to go out into the culture of death, and preach what we have learned from each other here”. Father told us, “There should be something wonderfully different about us”, and encouraged us, like the original disciples, to proclaim the Good News in all regions. Cautioning us to be people of words and deeds, not only spreading the news of eternity, but also addressing the needs of the world, Father said, “I hope you are never so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good.”



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO

Ed and Mary Zablocki commission two attendees to rebuild the Church. The service concluded with each conference participant coming forward to receive from their National Commission the mandate to go forth from this conference and, with God's help, to make a difference in the Church and in the world. Upon receiving the San Damiano Crucifix, each participant was told, “Go, rebuild the Church, the Body of Christ; bring forth the Kingdom of God.”

The Body of Christ

A highlight of the keynote address given by Father Bob Stewart, OFM at the All Commissions Conference was a meditation which he led while the assembly viewed a videotape. On the tape, blurred images resolved into faces: Pope Paul VI, Pope John XXIII, Ghandi, and the faces of many other people. When, eventually, the whole image was visible, it became clear that the smaller images composed one larger image of the face of Jesus. Below is Father's meditation:

All Franciscans are called to participate in the symphony we call "Gospel life".

Each of us playing our particular notes -
Each of us doing penance, ministering in the apostolate.

Notes and melodies blending together -
Fraternities and regions, sections of strings or brass.

All of the different notes, melodies, harmonies -
Building together the Gospel song and Franciscan life.

But every person, fraternity, and region
needs to play their part -
In building the symphony of the
Kingdom of God.

Each one of us is called to follow the Lord,
"To do what is ours to do" within the great canvas of life.

All of us, members of the body of Christ -
All of us called to form that Body, to be that Light.

Each of us, as it were, splashes of color -
Hues and strokes barely defined....

But as each one of us slowly embraces the Leper,
As each of us paints with our own crooked lines,
As each one chooses the colors of love and service,
As each one paints a life of penance,

From our lines are formed faces,
From our lives emerge figures,

Bringing forth the Kingdom of God,
Forming together the Body of Christ.

Each one of us has a part to play in
building the Kingdom.

Without our notes the symphony is incomplete.

Each one of us is a member of the Body of Christ -
Without our love and service the Body is incomplete.

Each one of us must "do what is ours to do",
And then, together we can be:
the Body of Christ.

All of us together must "do what is ours to do",
And then we can bring forth:
the Kingdom of God.

When each of us embraces our call,
then all of us together are...

Playing the symphony of the Kingdom of God -
Painting with our lives -
the Body of Christ.

Building with Francis - the Kingdom of God.
Forming for the world - the Body of Christ.

With all creation - the Kingdom of God.
Serving out of love - the Body of Christ.

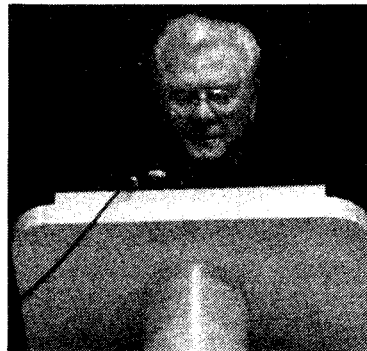
In peace, with Justice - the Kingdom of God.
With Love for all - the Body of Christ.



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What Did He Mean by That?!



During his reflection for the Commissioning Service, Father Matt Gaskin, OFM said that if there is a weakness in the SFO, it is that we are not a scriptural people. Having been asked "What did he mean by that?", we caught up with Father later

in the day to ask him to expand upon his views. Father Matt recalled his earlier involvement with the Secular Franciscan Order, a time, he said, when meetings were dominated by the Franciscan Crown and other non-liturgical devotions, leaving little room for apostolic work. Now, Father said, the Order is fulfilling its apostolic mission, but has not fully embraced the Gospel as the inspiration and center of its life (see Rule, Article 4). Father reminded us that our Constitutions mandate our leaders to help members study, know, live, and share the Gospels. Our direction is the heart of the Gospel. "This is our legacy from Francis."

An Evening of Music



On Saturday evening at the All Commissions Conference, everyone took a break from work to enjoy an evening of Celtic and spiritual music, performed by the husband and wife duo, Kindred. The audience enthusiastically sang along to many well known favorites, such as "Danny Boy", and the "Prayer of Saint Francis" as well as joining in the chorus to several lesser known songs, which the duo was good enough to teach us. The crowd listened in silent appreciation, however, to a beautiful rendition of "Our Lady of Knock". The audience did not allow the duo to leave the stage before pressing them to two *encores*.

Saturday night's "Surprise Social" was an extravaganza of chocolate desserts. The chocolate covered strawberries, especially, were a big hit!



Yosemite Nature Experience - 2000

There are still both lodge rooms and cabins available for the Franciscan Family Nature Experience to be held at Yosemite National Park during the second week of May, 2000. The cabins and the lodge hotel rooms can accommodate up to four, so you may wish to get together with some SFO friends to share a cabin or a room. This sharing will reduce your cost. The lodge hotel rooms and cabins are very comfortable and have full bath facilities. If you are interested, please send for more information by letter to Frances Wicks, SFO, 3307 Quail Meadows Drive, Santa Maria, 93455, or you may e-mail sfofrances@aol.com. If you have never been to Yosemite, you are in for a spectacular nature experience. There will be daily Mass in the Yosemite Chapel, spiritual talks, and much interfacing with God's beautiful creation. Come and experience the joy of being with other brothers and sisters in this most beautiful place.

National Public Relations Director Appointed

Allan R. Kath, SFO was appointed to the position of National Public Relations Director for the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, USA, in April 1999.

Al is currently Vice President of Fraternal Communications, at Western Catholic Union, a fraternal life insurance society founded in Quincy, IL in 1877. He is responsible for motivation and coordination of the WCU's fraternal volunteer effort in service to churches, schools, communities, and its membership of more than 21,000 people nationwide. He also serves as President of the Advisory Committee for the Quincy Catholic Charities, during a time that saw the agency launch its most ambitious building campaign, that culminated at the end of July this year, raising nearly \$150,000 in a three-month period.

He has also served as chairman of the Quincy Area Habitat for Humanity, and has been very active in community concerns all of his adult life. A Lutheran at birth, Al became a Catholic in 1975. He was professed as a member of the Secular Franciscan Order in 1993 and served as a member of the council for Saint Elizabeth Fraternity in Quincy. He also served for three years as an editor of the fraternity newsletter, and continues to be as active as his other duties allow. He and his wife, Sandi, are Co-chairs of the Family Commission in the Franciscans of the Prairie Region, where Sandi serves as Regional Minister. Al is also the editor and publisher of the Region's quarterly publication.

During his career, Al has served as Director of Public Relations at Heidelberg College (Tiffin, OH) and at Quincy University (Quincy, IL), and has served as a police and court, and special investigative reporter for newspapers in Wisconsin.

A graduate of Wisconsin-Oshkosh with a bachelor's degree in communications, Al has also completed some graduate course work at the University of Illinois at Springfield.



Al and Sandi Kath, SFO

Closing Statement (Report)

Charles Spencer, SFO
Chair, National Ecology Commission
107 Jensen Circle, West Springfield MA 01089-4451
413-737-7600; e-mail: cspencer@mail.map.com

Charlie gave the following address at the close of the recent All Commissions Conference.

I am thankful for this blessing, and feel you feel the same.

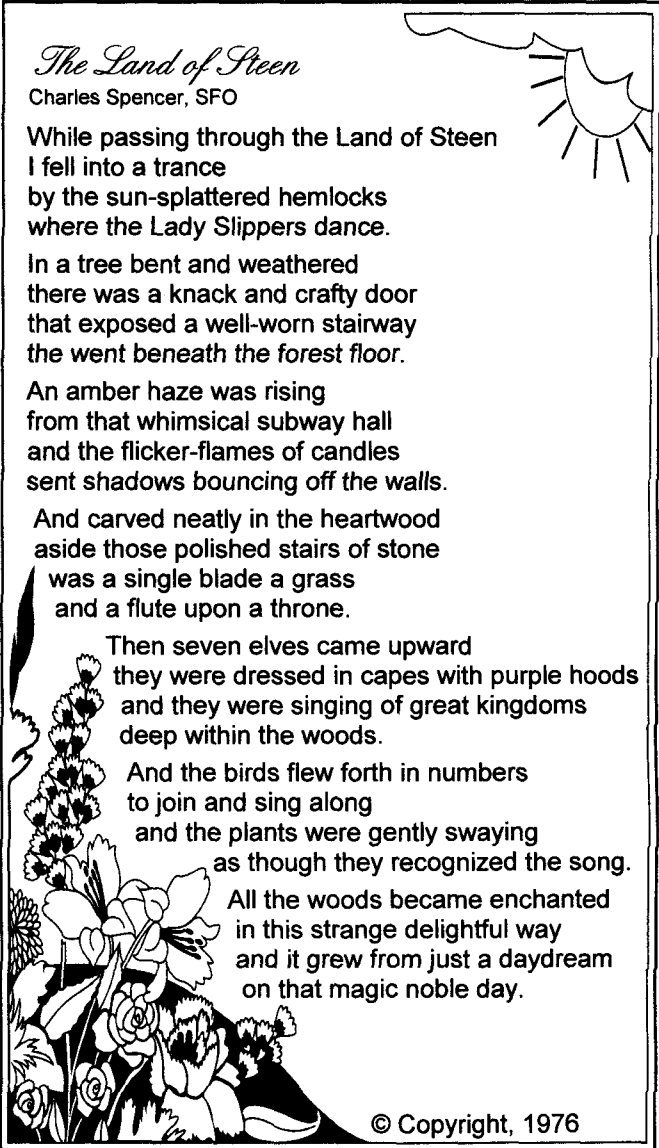
We who have been a part of the Ecology Commission tracks, like those of the other Commissions, are wondering how we are going to apply all that we have absorbed. But seeds that have been sown do not germinate and sprout overnight, regardless of the power within to do so.

We leave here like the milkweed seed leaving the pod, as the Ecology Commission logo depicts. We do not know whether we will drift forever, or whether we will land on fertile ground and produce in abundance, as we would hope. Or maybe, as we dread, we will become like seed that falls upon rocky ground and never takes root, to paraphrase the Lord.

Like seed in the wind, we do not really know where the Creator will bring us, if we ourselves believe that we, too, are a brush stroke of creation. We may even become fodder for the other -- martyrs to the cause, so-to-speak.

Regardless of the possibilities, it is only through faith, dependent upon trust and patience in all circumstances, that we hope to find ourselves at the "forefront" (remember our Profession?), realizing that the possibilities are endless, no less than creation itself.

So we take time to discern, to pray, and to imagine the kingdoms yet to be discovered, as my poem "The Land of Steen" depicts. ("Steen," in case you're curious, is a name I came up with to reference a small section of wilderness in southwestern Nova Scotia.)



The Land of Steen
Charles Spencer, SFO

While passing through the Land of Steen
I fell into a trance
by the sun-splattered hemlocks
where the Lady Slippers dance.

In a tree bent and weathered
there was a knack and crafty door
that exposed a well-worn stairway
the went beneath the forest floor.

An amber haze was rising
from that whimsical subway hall
and the flicker-flames of candles
sent shadows bouncing off the walls.

And carved neatly in the heartwood
aside those polished stairs of stone
was a single blade a grass
and a flute upon a throne.

Then seven elves came upward
they were dressed in capes with purple hoods
and they were singing of great kingdoms
deep within the woods.

And the birds flew forth in numbers
to join and sing along
and the plants were gently swaying
as though they recognized the song.

All the woods became enchanted
in this strange delightful way
and it grew from just a daydream
on that magic noble day.

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Our Jobs...

How to Evangelize Our Bosses

Sally Haddad, SFO, Work Commission Chair
Father Solanus Casey Region

How many of you are responding to the title of this column with, "Yeah, right!", "Not!", "I don't think so", etc.? Believe it or not, evangelizing our bosses is not entirely out of the question.

First of all, and most importantly, you **must** be in right relationship with your boss. If your supervisor considers you to be insubordinate or incompetent, they are not going to be open to anything you might have to say. On the other hand, even if you do have a good relationship, this does not mean that you can hog-tie them and then recite the message of Salvation! In gentleness and humility, you speak about the Lord only when the Holy Spirit provides the opportunity.

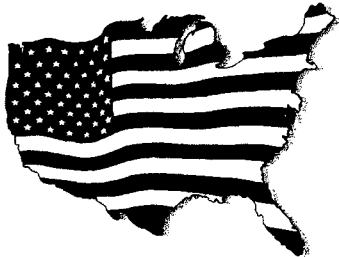
For example, one day I was chatting with my boss, with whom I had a good relationship. He was telling me

about his Catholic upbringing. As soon as he was Confirmed, his parents allowed him to make his own decision whether or not to practice the Faith. He chose not to practice it. Suddenly, I had an inspiration to say, "It's no disgrace to use a crutch if you have a broken leg." After I spoke these words, his mouth dropped. I thought he was going to fall off his seat. Apparently, I said something that convicted him.

My husband has a good relationship with his supervisor. Many times she has approached him with prayer requests for various needs in her family. I also have a friend who tells me that her boss is her best friend. She says that they have many discussions about religion. Such discussions, I am sure, would not take place if a right relationship did not exist between them.

In conclusion, it is necessary to be in a right relationship with your boss before you can speak about the Lord. Remember, too, to be patient and wait upon the Holy Spirit to provide the opportunity.

Regional Roundup



Please be sure to add us to the mailing list for your regional newsletter:

*Mr and Mrs Antony Outhwaite, SFO, Editors, TAU-USA
6 Light Street, Nuangola, PA 18637*

Blessed Katharine Drexel Region

Blessed Katharine Drexel Region will conduct a Novena of Preparation for the Jubilee Year from December 16 to 24, 1999, followed by a Novena of Sharing from December 25, 1999 to January 2, 2000. Each of these will be novenas of continuous prayer of the Franciscan Crown rosary, and will involve ninety-six participants per day, for nine days, praying at fifteen minute intervals.

Regional Minister Terri Leone, SFO discussed this idea with a number of other Regional Ministers at the All Commissions Conference. Due to the great deal of interest, Terri would like to invite all members of the Franciscan Family to participate in these novenas. For further information, please contact her. Theresa Leone, SFO, 887 North 22nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130. Phone: 215-978-6147.

Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region

Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region held their quarterly Regional Meeting May 21-22, 1999.

Eastern Churches Region – Exaltation of the Holy Cross

The Eastern Churches Region held their Regional Meeting April 24-25 at Holy Dormition Monastery, in Sybertsville, PA. They will hold their Regional Celebration in Cleveland, OH, September 17-19, 1999. The theme will be "God is With Us." Holy Protection Fraternity in Parma, OH will be the host fraternity.

Five Franciscan Martyrs Region

Five Franciscan Martyrs Region held their Chapter of Election on May 29, 1999. Deacon Richard Nagle, SFO was re-elected as Regional Minister.

The Little Flowers of Saint Francis Fraternity in Daytona, FL has a web-site. The URL (internet address) is <http://franciscan.simplenet.com>

Lady Poverty Region

Father Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR, Mary Lou Brown, SFO, Richard Fetkovich, SFO, Mary Lou Kreider, SFO, and Vivan Weaver, SFO will present two weekend retreats at the Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, Whitehall, PA. On September 24-26, 1999, the theme will be "Rediscovering the Charism: Sharing Our Gifts"; on April 28-30, 2000, the theme will be "Rediscovering the Charism: Seeking our Vision".

Queen of Peace Region

Queen of Peace Region will hold their Regional Fall gathering on Saturday September 25, 1999, at the Church of Saint Jerome in Maplewood, MN. The theme will be "Fraternal Cooperation". The fraternities of Mary, Queen of Peace (Saint Paul) and Saint Anthony of Padua (Minneapolis) will host the gathering. Regional Spiritual Assistant Father Valerius Messerich, OFM will offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; Richard Morton, SFO, and Father Patrick Quinn, TOR will be featured speakers. Archbishop Harry Flynn will celebrate Benediction.

The Region is planning a special celebration for Jubilee 2000, September 29 - October 1, 2000 at Christ the King Retreat Center in Buffalo, MN. The weekend of celebration and reflection on "Gospel Living in the Spirit of Saint Francis in the Third Millennium" will be presented by Sister Ramona Miller, OSF.

Saint Margaret of Cortona Region

Saint Margaret of Cortona Region will hold their Regional Retreat October 8-10, 1999.

Northwestern United States

Northwest Franciscans and their families will gather at the First Annual All-Franciscan Campout, August 20-22, 1999 at Mossyrock Park in Washington.



All Commissions Conference Videotapes Available

Three videotapes from the All Commissions Conference are available. The cost is \$10.00 per tape, or \$25.00 for the set of three. Orders should be directed to: All Commissions Conference Videotapes, 360 Beard Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14214. Please make checks payable to: NAFRA (the National Fraternity of the SFO).



News Flash!

Father Matt Gaskin, OFM, having served two terms (six years) as National Spiritual Assistant to the Secular Franciscan Order, has declined a third term. The English-speaking Conference of Friars Minor, USA will announce his successor in September.

"It's been fun!" Father exclaimed, laughing, when asked about his experiences with the SFO. Father described these past six years as a "wonderful experience", that has really widened his horizons. He has had the opportunity to meet many terrific friars and Secular Franciscans. During his terms, the Handbook for Spiritual Assistants has been published, and the Course for Life-Giving Union has been established. Father said that it was a privilege to be a part of so many great developments within the Secular Franciscan Order.

National Multicultural Committee Seeks Members

We are seeking qualified, enthusiastic, and joyful Secular Franciscans who are interested in serving the National Fraternity. The National Multicultural Committee is seeking members in order to respond more effectively to the needs of the National Fraternity. The Committee will be composed of the following groups: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, and White, but not limited to these. Members of the Committee will be expected to:

- be prayerful, active Secular Franciscans, able to go from "Gospel to life and life to the Gospel";
- share the vision of Church expressed by the Second Vatican Council and Post-Conciliar Documents;
- work collaboratively with other members of the Committee;
- provide suggestions and feedback on diverse topics concerning culture and ethnicity;
- support multicultural-related initiatives as they develop;
- accept responsibility for particular projects that may arise from collaborative decision making;
- offer multicultural-related presentations, workshops and/or retreats when requested;
- be in regular contact with Multicultural Coordinators in a designated geographic section of the country to solicit their input, needs, and concerns;
- act as representatives for their specific cultural / ethnic group, and be resource persons for that group;
- be willing and able to travel at least once a year to different parts of the United States for meetings of the Multicultural Committee; and
- be available to attend the National Conference of Catholic Bishops / United States Catholic Conference Encuentro 2000—**Many Faces in God's House: A Catholic Vision for the Third Millennium**, to be held in Los Angeles, CA, July 6-9, 2000.

The appointment to serve on the Multicultural Committee will be for a period of one year, with possibility of annual reappointment. If the prospect of being a servant leader on the National Multicultural Committee excites you, and if you believe that you have qualities and abilities to fulfill this role, please send your SFO related resumé (include your experience in working with multicultural/ethnic groups), a copy of your Certificate of Profession, and one letter of reference (from a person serving on your local or Regional SFO Council) to: Juan F. Lezcano, SFO, Multicultural Coordinator of the National Multicultural Committee, 1216 SW 353rd Street, Federal Way, WA 98023. The application deadline is September 30. The establishment of this Committee is dependent upon the approval of the National Fraternity Council at the October meeting.

Comité Multicultural Nacional Busca Miembros

Buscamos Franciscanos Seglares que tienen las calificaciones, son entusiástico y jubiloso, y están interesados en servir la Fraternidad Nacional. El Comité Multicultural Nacional busca miembros para responder más efectivamente a las necesidades de la Fraternidad Nacional. El Comité Multicultural será compuesto de los grupos siguientes, Asiático, Negro, Hispano, Americano Nativo, Isleño Pacífico, y Blanco, pero no limitado a estos. Como miembro del Comité se esperará que:

- es un Franciscano Secular activo, que ora, y que va del "Evangelio a la vida y de la vida al Evangelio";
- comparte la visión de la Iglesia expresada en el Segundo Concilio Vaticano y los Documentos Pos-Concilio;
- trabaja en colaboración con los otros miembros del Comité;
- provee sugerencias y regeneración en tópicos diversos acerca de cultura;
- apoya iniciativas multicultural cuando desarrollan;
- acepta la responsabilidad de proyectos de la decisión que viene de la colaboración del Comité;
- ofrece presentaciones multiculturales, talleres y retiros cuando son necesario;
- está en contacto regular con coordinadores Multiculturales en una sección designada geográfica del país, solicitado sus ideas, necesidades, y preocupaciones;
- actúa como representante por su específica cultura o grupo étnico y es una persona de recurso para ese grupo;
- que puede viajar por lo menos una vez al año a partes diferentes de los Estados Unidos para reuniones del Comité Multicultural; y
- es disponible atender a la Conferencia Nacional de Obispos Católicos/Conferencia Católica de los Estados Unidos Encuentro 2000—**Muchos Rostros en la Casa de Dios: Una Vision Católica para el Tercer Milenio**, Los Angeles, California, Julio 6-9, 2000.

La cita para servir en el Comité Multicultural será por un período de un año con la posibilidad de ser nombrado anual. Si la perspectiva de ser sirviente en el Comité Nacional Multicultural lo excita y si cree que tiene las calidades y habilidades, favor de enviar su resumé o vita (incluye su experiencia en funcionamiento con grupos multiculturales y étnicos), una copia de su Certificado de Profesión, y una carta de referencia (de una persona que sirve en su Concilio local o Regional) a: Juan F. Lezcano, SFO, Coordinador Multicultural del Comité Nacional Multicultural, 1216 SW 353rd Street, Federal Way, WA 98023. Fecha tope de la aplicación es el 30 de septiembre. El establecimiento del Comité Multicultural es dependiente de la aprobación del Concilio de la Fraternidad Nacional en Octubre.

Multicultural Committee Forming

The Hague Appeal for Peace

Dan and Sarah Mulholland, SFO
Chairs, National Peace and Justice Commission
855 N Jefferson Street, Arlington VA 22205
703-524-6017; e-mail dannymai@aol.com

The following is as reported in the newsletter of the Franciscan Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office, Saint John the Baptist Province (OFM) in Cincinnati, OH. Submitted to TAU-USA by Dan and Sarah Mulholland, SFO.

Netherlands

Many Franciscans, including Kathie Uler, OSF, of Franciscans International, Kevin Queally, TOR, and Francisco O'Connaire, OFM, were part of the Hague Appeal for Peace held in the Netherlands, May 11-15, 1999. Marking the 100th anniversary of the First International Peace Conference at the Hague, the international community launched a "new century of peace" at this historic international gathering. Kathie writes with tremendous enthusiasm as she describes it. "What a conference! There were 8-10,000 [people] in attendance, including at least 1500 youth from over 100 countries, from 800 NGOs, with 220 media representatives covering the action. The Core Program consisted of 250 panels, workshops, etc., with the informal Forum holding as many events again."

The major document from the conference is the *Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century*, which Kathie describes as "a people's agenda to abolish war **and** put concrete, nonviolent alternative mechanisms in its place." The themes discussed at the conference and detailed in the Agenda were summarized into four "strands", each of which includes many areas for consideration and action. These themes are: Root Causes of War/Culture of Peace; International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law and Institutions; Prevention, Resolution and Transformation of Violent Conflict; and Disarmament and Human Security. Specific actions promoted to address the themes are many and varied, including a global campaign for peace education, various aspects of arms control, and ending the use of child soldiers. The Agenda and other conference information are on the website at <http://www.hagueappeal.org>.

The Franciscan Family prepared the following statement for the Hague Appeal:

The Franciscan Call for a Global Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century

In recorded history since 3600 BC, over 14,500 major wars have killed close to four billion people, two-thirds of the current world population. In armed conflicts since 1945, 90% of casualties have been civilians, compared to 50% in the Second World War, and 10% in the First

World War. More than 300,000 child soldiers are currently participating in armed conflicts.

The violation of human rights is one of the root causes of war. These violations include the denial of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as political and civil rights. Since the end of the Cold War, civil society has launched campaigns aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons, eradicating landmines, reducing the traffic in small arms, alleviating the debt of the poor countries, ending violence against women and children, building an independent International Criminal Court, etc. These campaigns have generated solidarity and cohesion, and give hope.

Inspired by Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, we wish:

- To collaborate with others: to develop mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution; to promote new diplomacy methods of settling disputes and conflicts; to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, curb the arms trade, reduce military budgets in order to shift the resources toward Human Security and Environmental Protection Programs; to replace the Law of Force with the Force of Law;
- To globalise Gospel values of peace, nonviolence, justice, reconciliation, sharing and solidarity in our present world of neo-liberal globalisation;
- To proclaim anew that all rights are for all peoples, and we want to do so peacefully and in active nonviolence.

Like Saints Francis and Clare, we, too, want to be instruments of peace and active nonviolence! With all peace-loving people we, too, shout: no more war! No more killing! Peace through justice! Let us join hands together, we, the civil society, we can create a culture of peace in the 21st century!

The Franciscan Family, Hague, May 1999



**WE ALL KNOW WELL THAT
THE AREAS OF MISERY AND
HUNGER ON OUR GLOBE
COULD HAVE BEEN MADE
FERTILE IN A SHORT TIME, IF
THE GIGANTIC INVESTMENTS
FOR ARMAMENTS AT THE
SERVICE OF WAR AND
DESTRUCTION HAD BEEN
CHANGED INTO INVESTMENTS
FOR FOOD AT THE
SERVICE OF LIFE.**

Pope John Paul II

Family Matters

Carol Gentile, SFO
Chair, National Family Commission
136 Wood Avenue, Monaca, PA 15601
724-775-4248; e-mail: gentilecsfo@hotmail.com

The Paradox of Our Time

"Seek first kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides." Matthew 6:33

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but we have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgement; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; We've added years to life, not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor.

We've conquered outer space, but not inner space.

We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul;

We've split the atom, but not our prejudice;

We write more, but learn less;

We plan more, but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait;

We have higher incomes, but lower morals;

We have more food, but less appeasement;

We build more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication;

We've become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion;

tall men, and short character,

steep profits, and shallow relationships.

These are the days of two incomes, but more divorce;

of fancier houses, but broken homes.

These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers,

throw away morality, one-night stands,

overweight bodies,

and pills that do everything from cheer to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom;

a time when technology can bring this letter to you, and

a time when you can choose either to make a difference, or to just hit delete...

Author Unknown

According to Fr. John Bertolucci, SFO, "We are not supposed to be men and women who are letting history happen to us. We are supposed to be happening to history." God wants to equip us and lead us forth in mighty ways that will actually make history happen. We are not to wake up in the morning and allow life to just occur to us. We are to be aggressive, outgoing and assertive in desiring to change things in accord with the principles we have learned in the Word of God. Fr. John Bertolucci continues to encourage us by saying "You and I as disciples have a very special mission to be men and women of influence. God wants us to exert influence not only in our churches but also in our society and in our government, in recreation, in medicine and law and other important professions. Wherever we happen to be as disciples of the Lord, we are to have influence."

We can make a difference by coming together in the grace of the Holy Spirit, to be guided and directed to **form the Body of Christ and bring forth the Kingdom of God.**

We must.



***Every family discovers and finds
an irrepressible call in itself.
This call defines at once its
dignity and responsibility.
Family, "become" what you "are"!***

Pope John Paul II

Franciscan Committee for the Jubilee

The National Fraternity has received the following communication from the Franciscan Committee for the Jubilee:

The Presidential Council of the Conference of the Franciscan Family, composed of the Ministers General of the First Order, of the Third Order Regular (TOR), of the President of the CFI-TOR (International Regular Third Order Franciscan Conference) and of the Minister General of the SFO have established a Franciscan Committee for the Jubilee.

Purpose

The Committee has the following assignment: "To undertake various initiatives regarding the Jubilee which concern the whole Franciscan world and verify their feasibility and with them to initiate programming."

General Principles

- 1) With due regard to the purely religious character of the Jubilee, the various initiatives are to be directed so as to favor the finality of the Holy Year: conversion, reconciliation, communion, and announcement of the Gospel;
- 2) those extended to all members should not be too numerous in order to favor broader participation in the initiatives of the universal and local Church;
- 3) every initiative, lastly, should be characterized by the Franciscan style of minority.

Initiatives

- 1) Jubilee of the Franciscans. It will be divided into two moments: one penitential in Assisi, April 8, 2000, another the jubilean celebration in Rome the following day, April 9 in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran. Detailed programs will be made known as soon as possible.
- 2) Cultural initiatives. The Universities, the Pontifical Faculties and the various Franciscan cultural centers will organize particular manifestations with the purpose of emphasizing the contribution made to culture and art by the Franciscan movement.
- 3) Courses of spiritual exercises. These courses will be international in character and will be organized and given in the more renowned Franciscan places.
- 4) The Jubilee will be celebrated locally, if possible, on the feast of the Solemnity of Saint Francis with the local bishop.
- 5) Calendar of the initiatives:
 - the initiatives of the Church which concern us more closely as Franciscans;
 - the proposals of the Committee;
 - other initiatives of particular Franciscan members for a sharing of experiences; For this purpose all Franciscan members are invited to send to the Committee their particular initiatives to be inserted in the projected calendar.



Refounding Task Force

Rekindling the Fire

Marie Amore, SFO, National Vice Minister
Refounding Task Force Facilitator

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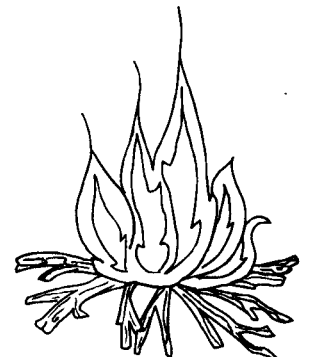
In 1997, with the theme of "The Time is Now, the Kingdom is at Hand", Secular Franciscans of the United States came together at the Quinquennial Congress, and gathered into small groups to discuss the concept of Refounding. We took a realistic look at ourselves and our fraternities, and recognized that some things need to be changed to bring back the fire and passion that moved Francis and Clare, as well as those who followed them. Regional ministers along with brothers and sisters from around the country returned home excited and energized from being exposed to the flame that was ignited by the Holy Spirit at that gathering.

Has that excitement continued? Is the fire still burning? Did the Congress make a difference? What happens now? To respond to those questions, at its meeting in March of this year, the National Executive Council approved a Refounding Task Force to include Friar Steve Gross, Pat Brandwein-Ball, Anne Mulqueen, Richard Morton, and Marie Amore. The task force was not to find a "quick fix", but it is challenged to gather, pray, study, envision, discern, and propose possibilities so that the concept of refounding could be adapted to the SFO in the United States.

The group met at the Franciscan Retreat House in Prior Lake, Minnesota during the weekend of May 28-31. At the onset, it became evident that the task force needed to simplify language and terms. Many times the Holy Spirit surprised us by the direction our dialogue took. Basic questions needed to be answered. We continued to pray. Some ideas emerged. These need to be developed and refined. There is much more to do; much more listening and waiting for the Spirit to lead and direct us.

At the NAFRA annual meeting in October, we expect to present to the Regional Ministers some thoughts and ideas for their consideration. In return, we will be seeking their advice and their direction as we venture into the future.

Brothers and sisters, pray and sacrifice with us, so that we will be open to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Who gives to each of us both the desire for continuing conversion and the grace to make it possible. Let's pray that the sparks that were ignited at the Congress will burn into a brighter flame; that the flame will be fed by the Spirit, until every sister and brother, along with every fraternity, is ablaze!



Franciscan Formation Materials Made Available by the National Formation Commission

Catch Me A Rainbow Too! Ideal for Initial and Ongoing Formation! NOW HERE!

Bach, Lester, OFM Cap. (1999). \$16.00 per copy, plus \$4.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.50 for 2, \$7.00 for 3. 10 or more copies is \$12.80 per copy, plus P&H.

Gospel Living Every Day of Our Lives: A Formation Guide To The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Baker, Teresa V., SFO. (1994). 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 131 pages. \$10.00 per copy, plus \$4.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.50 for 2, \$7.00 for 3; 10 or more copies is \$8.00 per copy plus P&H.

Elements Of Formation: A Reflection on the Formation Process. (1995). 8 1/2" x 11", 38 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies is \$4.00 per copy plus P&H.

Formation Resource List. (1997). 8 1/2"x 11", 3 hole drilled, 66 pages. \$7.50 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, \$6.50 for 3; 10 or more copies \$6.00 per copy, plus P&H.

Guia Para la Formación Inicial en la Orden Franciscana Seglar de Los Estados Unidos. (1987). 8 1/2" x 11", 41 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies is \$4.00 per copy plus P&H.

A Guide For Franciscan Youth / Young Adult Ministry. (1998). 8 1/2" x 11", 84 pages. \$8.50 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, \$6.50 for 3; 10 or more copies is \$6.80 per copy, plus P&H.

Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. (1986). 8 1/2"x 11", 38 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies is \$4.00 per copy, plus P&H.

Handbook For Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership. (1998). 8 1/2" X 11", 3 hole drilled, 137 pages plus Formation Resource List as a 58 page appendix. \$22.50 per copy, plus \$4.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.50 for 2, \$7.00 for 3; 10 or more copies is \$18.00 per copy, plus P&H.

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. (1997). 5" x 3" red presentation edition, 40 pages. 10 books for only \$18.40 (includes P&H).

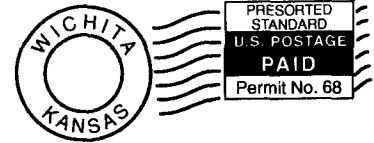
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