

TAU-USA



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To Forgive, and Be Forgiven

William Wicks, SFO, National Minister

Many of you may recall that line from a movie, I believe it was "Love Story", in which one of the main characters says, "Love means never having to say you're sorry". Well, I never did buy into that great sounding line. There is only one Person that walked this earth to whom we could ascribe that freedom. The rest of us, at times, need to say we are sorry, and, at other times, need to hear those words. It is a key to reconciliation. It is so important, that it is a requisite for absolution, reconciliation to God - to be sorry for one's sins. We say, "Oh my God, I'm heartily sorry". It is an indication of a contrite heart. "It (Penance) is called the sacrament of Reconciliation, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: 'Be reconciled to God' (2 Corinthians 5:20). He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: 'Go; first be reconciled to your brother.' (Matthew 5:24)" (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1424). There are three calls to Reconciliation: Reconciliation to God, Reconciliation to our neighbor, and Reconciliation to ourselves. Reconciliation to God comes through periodic Confession, and almost daily prayerful repentance. Reconciliation to our "brother" is another thing. This grace arises from two ends of the spectrum: to forgive, and to be forgiven.



To Forgive

Forgiveness is not easy, especially when the hurt is deep. And, for me, the act Confession is easier than following that Scripture from Matthew (5:24). Father Alberic Smith, OFM, in his article on forgiveness written for the publication *The Way of Saint Francis*, quotes Professor Joanna North, who explains the dynamic of forgiveness in this way: "If we are to forgive, our resentment is to be overcome, not by denying ourselves the right to that resentment, but by trying to view the wrongdoer with compassion, benevolence, and love, while recognizing that he has willfully abandoned any right to them." This fine definition shows us the paradox of forgiveness. We freely forgive one who has no right to it because of what that person has done to us. An attitude of forgiveness comes with the living out of our Christian lives. The

*He who lives by
God's merciful love
is ready to respond
to the Lord's call.*

Eucharist, given at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, a constant reminder of the "Great Forgiving Act", provides the grace necessary for us to have a forgiving heart. Christ, in the midst of physical and spiritual abuse, cries, "Forgive them".

To Be Forgiven

Consider the task of asking for forgiveness, when we have hurt others. The Act of Contrition, a profound prayer, can be secularized to help us to ask forgiveness of our friend, loved one, fellow worker, or even our enemy. "Oh my friend, I am so sorry that I have hurt you. I really don't like the way that I treated you, not only because of what this hurtful act has caused in distancing me from my relationship with God, but also

because it has given you pain. I promise, with God's grace, to share with you my offense, and to attempt to make amends to you so that, if you accept my plea for forgiveness, we can reconcile and be friends again."

To Forgive Ourselves

But how do we forgive ourselves? We forgive ourselves with the knowledge that we are forgiven. We are constantly being forgiven. God who is love cannot help but forgive us. We have the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We have the gift of the power of prayer. And, we have the gift of each other for love and support. All of these are gifts from our wonderful Trinitarian God. However, we do have to realize that the road back to God is fraught with potholes and speed-bumps, and that none of us will get there unscathed; each of us has wounds that cry out for retribution. And, each of us has hurt others. However, the realization that we are made in the image and likeness of God, and that that God dwells within us, should bring us to an understanding that we really don't have to forgive ourselves. God has forgiven us for us. That is all that is necessary.

In the spirit of the Jubilee year, and in obedience to Matthew 5:24, I, in the name of the leaders of the SFO, ask your forgiveness for any hurts, intentional or unintentional, that we may have caused.

May God give you abundant compassion, benevolence, and love.

Bill

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



Letters to the Editors

All correspondence sent to the editors becomes the property of the editors, and may be published in TAU-USA. Please state in all correspondence whether you wish to have your name withheld.

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"[Christ] chose to appear despised, needy, and poor in this world, so that people who were in utter poverty might become rich in Him by possessing the Kingdom of heaven. Rejoice and be glad."

Saint Clare of Assisi

“And Forgive Us Our Debts As We Forgive Our Debtors”

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Can you name the three times during each day that the whole Church officially prays the prayer that Jesus gave his disciples as the model for all prayer, the *Our Father*? (See the end of this article to check your hunches). Although we are more accustomed to seeing and using the words, “And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” the form found in most translations of this passage from the Gospel according to Matthew (6:12) employs the words “debts” and “debtors” (cf. the New Revised Standard Version, the New American Bible, and the New Jerusalem Bible). United with the whole Church, we Franciscans are continuing our observance of the Great Jubilee Year 2000, the Holy Year celebrating the 2000th anniversary of the Incarnation and Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In this issue of *TAU-USA*, the National Commissions call us to focus our attention on the jubilee experience of the forgiveness of debts – of various kinds!

When we first encounter the notion of “forgiving debts”, our inclination may be to think solely of financial obligations owed by one party to another. To be sure, the issue of monetary debt reduction and the outright forgiveness of the debts of Third World countries to the “developed” nations of the world should be a significant concern for all of us. But we as individuals might be tempted to let ourselves off the hook too easily on this question simply by saying that, since no one owes us any great sum of money, we are under no obligation to forgive debts. Right? Wrong! As the *Our Father* makes us forcefully aware, there are debts other than financial ones which cry out for forgiveness, a forgiveness only we – aided by God’s grace – can give.

In the *Prayer Inspired by the Our Father*, a prayer attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, we read: “As we forgive those who trespass against us: and whatever we do not forgive perfectly, do you, Lord, enable us to forgive to the full, so that we may truly love (our) enemies and fervently intercede for them before You, returning no one evil for evil and striving to help everyone in You.” Forgiveness of debts of all types is at the very heart of what it means to be authentically Christian and Franciscan. The holding of grudges, the nursing of resentments, the planning of how to settle old scores, the plotting of ways to get even with those who have hurt us – all these efforts are surely contrary to the Lord’s Gospel of love which is our very way of life.

In their 1999 pastoral message entitled *Because God Loves You*, the Catholic Bishops of the United States have reminded us of a truth which is at the same time beautiful yet profound:

Because God loves you, you can go beyond yourself. You can forgive those who have hurt

you, however deeply. Even when you feel intense pain, the possibility of forgiveness lies within you. You can forgive others because God is always ready to forgive your sins. You can overlook wrongs because God empowers you to go beyond your own heartache. Because God loves you, you can ask forgiveness of those you have hurt. You can admit wrongs and ask forgiveness to make relationships right. His grace can heal you.



Isn't that what we Franciscans are supposed to be all about, the healing and making right of relationships? Are not right relationships foremost among those “worthy fruits of penance” to which our Seraphic Father Saint Francis calls us in his *Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* which serves as the Prologue to our *Rule of Life*? Is not this willingness to release those in debt to us by forgiving them a way to live out that aspect of our Franciscan way of life embodied in Article 12 of our *Rule*: “Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.” Elsewhere in our *Rule*, we are challenged to “seek out ways of unity and fraternal dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love **and pardon**” (cf. Article 19, emphasis added).

In his 1998 Papal Bull *Incarnationis Mysterium* (“Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000”), our Holy Father Pope John Paul II expresses his ardent hope with respect to the giving and seeking of forgiveness in these words: “Let no one in this Jubilee Year wish to exclude himself from the Father’s embrace. Let no one behave like the elder brother in the Gospel parable who refuses to enter the house to celebrate (cf. Luke 15: 25-30). **May the joy of forgiveness be stronger and greater than any resentment.**” (*Incarnationis Mysterium*, #11). Powerful words; a powerful summons to be more fully the people the Lord has called us to be!

May this reflection on debt forgiveness lead each and every one of us to ask ourselves this one fundamental question:

*“Whom in my life
do I need to forgive?”*

Our action in responding to this question has the potential of making this Jubilee Year one which will bear abundant fruit into eternity. Amen!

Brothers and Sisters, may God give you peace!

P.S. The Church officially prays the *Our Father* each day during the Mass and at both Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. How did you do?

Forgiveness is a Process, a Journey of the Heart

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This Jubilee Year is a time for forgiveness – forgiveness of debts and forgiveness of wrongs. We are called to forgive, and to ask for forgiveness.

There are about 1.3 billion people in the world who are living in abject poverty. They are mostly women and children who live in the poorest countries of the world. We, as Christians and Franciscans, are called upon to help feed, clothe, and give shelter to these least fortunate children of God, by showing our solidarity with Pope John Paul II who has asked the leaders of the wealthiest nations to forgive the debts of the developing countries. We should make everyone aware of the plight of the poor in the world.

Recently, people from all over the United States came to Washington, DC to march in support of the Jubilee 2000 Campaign led by the Franciscan friars and Seculars in support of "Forgiveness of Debt".

Our Holy Father, while celebrating Mass at Saint Peter's Basilica on March 12, 2000, the Day of Pardon, asked forgiveness for the sins of Catholics in seven areas of concern: sins in general, sins in the service of truth, sins against Christian unity, sins against the Jewish people, sins against "love, peace, and the rights of people and respect for cultures and

religions", sins against the dignity of the human race, and sins related to the fundamental rights of the person.

Following our Holy Father's example of reconciliation, we should ask for forgiveness for the wrongful acts we have committed against members of our own family, our relatives, friends, and neighbors. We should ask forgiveness for the hurt we have caused them, promising ourselves that we will love them as Jesus has loved us. At the same time we should forgive all those who have hurt us, and make a commitment to be more tolerant of their shortcomings. Jubilee is the right time for forgiveness, and we can be comforted by the realization that forgiveness is a grace, a wonderful Christian virtue.

Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap, in his *Catch Me a Rainbow*, tells us that "our profession as Franciscans call us to be the light of the world. We are asked not to hide our gifts from others. We are

commanded to forgive others. We are quickly aware that a gospel lifestyle requires a lifetime commitment. It requires an intimacy with Jesus which is our source of light and power".

So much of the pain in the world is because of unforgiven hurts. Often we bring more pain by our lack of forgiveness. We hold a grudge or resentment towards those who hurt us. But, holding a grudge binds us to the past. It usurps God's rightful role by taking the matter into our own hands. When we hold a grudge or when we do not forgive others, we are holding someone in debt to us, and we are also not receiving into our hearts the grace and the love that God wants to pour into us – the very things we need to heal our hurt. The pain does not go away. That is why forgiveness is so important. God calls us to forgive one another as God forgave us. "...Bearing with one another and forgiving one another... as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do." (Colossians, 3:13)

Many people need to forgive themselves. Our Franciscan lifestyle requires us to learn to accept people of all kinds. It teaches us to offer acceptance and forgiveness for whatever wrongdoing they have done. The divorced feel left out of life, the AIDS victims stay away from people for fear of not being accepted, the drug addicts and the alcoholics feel unworthy and have lost their sense of dignity. These are the people whom Franciscans should accept as they are. As the Father sees in every person his image, so Secular Franciscans should accept all people as brother and sister in God's image and likeness. In our brokenness, we become the instruments of peace and bearers of the sacrament of forgiveness in our families and our communities. Forgiveness is a process. Slowly, we let go of our bitterness. With patience and perseverance we can find the peace we seek. Forgiving is a journey of the heart. It is something you do for yourself, not for someone else. Begin to love someone you have forgiven. Real forgiveness comes from the heart, or it isn't really forgiveness.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why is the way of forgiveness a part of a Franciscan lifestyle?
2. Why do we say that the unforgiving person is the real loser? How does a lack of forgiveness affect my lifestyle as a gospel-person?
3. As Franciscans what can we do to become a reconciling face of God's forgiveness?



Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Forgive Our Debtors

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Pope John Paul II has identified the issue of international debt as a key priority for the Church and an important element of our efforts to apply the tradition of Jubilee to our day and time. In April it was announced that he plans to call a meeting of the world's major industrial nations in Assisi this fall, to secure promises for the reduction of Third World debt.

Assisi was chosen because it is where Saint Francis renounced his attachment to worldly goods. The Pope is expected to ask for a significant reduction of the international debt of poor countries. Several of the Western powers, including the United States and Britain, have already made such a pledge. The Holy Father first proposed this debt forgiveness in his 1994 apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, which declared the Jubilee Year.

We are all familiar with the story of Francis stripping himself in front of the Bishop, giving up claims to material wealth and status, and embracing the way of Lady Poverty. In the book *Saint Francis and the Foolishness of God*, authors Marie Dennis, SFO, Joe Nangle, OFM, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, and Stuart Taylor see this moment in front of the Bishop not as an end in itself. They state, "Francis did not pursue poverty as an ascetic ideal of self-denial. For Francis this relinquishment was a practical means of relocating himself in relationship to the poor."

It was also clear to Francis that everything we have belongs to God.

For Francis, so much of his behavior stemmed from his understanding that all people are children of the same God. It was

also clear to Francis that everything we have belongs to God. We have use of what we need as a gift from God. He maintained a healthy detachment from material things, because they could become distractions from the true task of loving God. Francis knew that we could express our love of God in the way we show our love for other persons, our sisters and brothers, children of our same Father in heaven. The poor are no different from the wealthy in this regard. When we focus on all persons as part of a global family, as Francis encourages us to do, then it becomes clear that we must take steps to help restore right relationships among all of God's children.

In asking the First World to reduce Third World debt, Pope John Paul II is acting in the spirit of the jubilee celebrations described in the book of Leviticus (Leviticus 25:9-10). During the time of jubilee, God calls us to redeem the land, release slaves, and forgive debts. God is setting before us what Joe Rozansky, OFM calls "an ideal of redistribution". He notes that "the basic premise

is that the wealth of the earth belongs to God; we are simply the stewards of that wealth. If over time some people come to be masters and other slaves, some come to control all the wealth while others are dispossessed, then there is to be a redistribution in the fiftieth, or Jubilee, year. Such a redistribution is a faith-filled acknowledgment of God's ultimate ownership of the earth's wealth, and a recognition of the right of all God's people to a share in that wealth" (*Jubilee, Debt Cancellation and Us* by Joe Rozansky, OFM)

If Saint Francis were alive today, surely his would be one of the loudest voices supporting the Holy Father in the call for debt forgiveness in the spirit of Jubilee. Wait a minute – Saint Francis is alive today, in the form of all of us who call ourselves Franciscans! What are we doing? Pope John Paul II makes it very clear what we **should** be doing: "It has been said that a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities, is a necessary condition for the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee. Thus, in the spirit of the Book of Leviticus, Christians will have to raise their voice on behalf of all the poor of the world, proposing the Jubilee as an appropriate time to give thought, among other things, to reducing substantially, if not canceling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations." (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why should debt relief be a concern of the Church? How does a position in favor of the poor become a position in favor of God's creation?
2. Do we forget that national debt is often created by corrupt leaders who amass their own fortune, and not by the people who end up suffering because of the actions of a few?
3. Are there persons or situations in my own life which call for debt forgiveness?



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The Best Preparation for the New Millennium

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In his 1994 apostolic letter in preparation for the Jubilee year, Pope John Paul II emphasized that "*the jubilee year was meant to restore equality among the children of Israel.*"

The Holy Father goes on to note that the foundations of this jubilee tradition are "strictly theological." God alone has Lordship over all Creation.

Therefore, *the riches of Creation were to be considered as a common good of the whole of humanity.* Those who possessed these goods as personal property were really only stewards, ministers charged with working in the name of God, Who remains the sole owner in the full sense, since it is God's will that created goods should serve everyone in a just way. *The jubilee year was meant to restore this social justice.*

(Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 13, emphasis in original)

It is in this context that, in his recent proclamation regarding the Jubilee, the Holy Father calls for reduction of debt as one of the several means that exist to restore equality in the distribution of Creation's bounty.

The human race is facing forms of slavery which are new and more subtle than those of the past; and for too many people freedom remains a word without meaning. Some nations, especially the poorer ones, are oppressed by a debt so huge that repayment is practically impossible. It is clear, therefore, that there can be no real progress without effective cooperation between the peoples of every language, race, nationality, and religion. The abuses of power which result in some dominating others must stop; such abuses are sinful and unjust. Whoever is concerned to accumulate treasure only on earth (cf. Matthew 16:19-31) "is not rich in the sight of God" (Luke 12:21).

There is also a need to create a new culture of international solidarity and cooperation, where all - particularly the wealthy nations and the private sector - accept responsibility for an economic model which serves everyone. There should be no more postponement of the time when the poor Lazarus can sit beside the rich man to share the same banquet, and be forced no more to long for the scraps that fall from the table (cf. Luke 16:19-31). Extreme poverty is a source of violence, bitterness, and scandal; and to eradicate it is to do the work of justice and, therefore, the work of peace.

The Jubilee is a further summons to conversion of heart through change of life. It is a reminder to all that we should give absolute importance neither to the goods of the earth, since these are not God; nor to man's domination or claim to domination, since the earth belongs to God and to Him alone: "the earth is mine and you are strangers and sojourners with me" (Leviticus 25:23).
(Incarnationis Mysterium, 12)

The Jubilee call for economic justice and equality has had a tremendously significant role in the history of the Church's

concern for workers and its reflections on the meaning of work.

The social doctrine of the Church, which has always been a part of Church teaching and which has developed greatly in the last century, particularly after the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, is rooted in the tradition of the jubilee year.



(Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 13)

Rerum Novarum or *On the Condition of the Working Class* is, of course, the famous encyclical by Pope Leo XIII, written in 1891, addressing the grievous plight of the workingman brought about by the forces of the industrial revolution. We hear echoes of the jubilee cry for equality and justice in the Pope's powerful words:

[S]ome opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class; for the ancient workingmen's guilds were abolished in the last century, and no other protective organization took their place. Public institutions and the laws set aside the ancient religion. Hence, by degrees it has come to pass that workingmen have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. The mischief has been increased by rapacious usury, which, although more than once condemned by the Church, is nevertheless, under a different guise, but with like injustice, still practiced by covetous and grasping men. To this must be added that the hiring of labor and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself.
(Rerum Novarum, 3)

Pope Leo XIII's primary cure for the social ills of his day was to encourage Catholic laypersons to join the Third Order Secular of Saint Francis! He approved a new Third Order Rule to make the Franciscan way of life accessible to the multitudes. Third Order Franciscans would, in Pope Leo's plan, become bearers of peace and agents of justice in nineteenth century society, helping to realize that ancient call for equality originating in the jubilee tradition. Much good was achieved by the Third Order in Pope Leo XIII's day, and we, the Secular Franciscans of today, are called upon to carry on the proud tradition by "individually and collectively being in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of [our] human lives and [our] courageous initiatives." (Article 15, SFO Rule)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you think that Pope Leo's words in the above quote still apply? Where?
2. What do you believe is the most important thing that Seculars Franciscans can do to help see that all men and women share equitably in the fruits of Our Lord's Creation?

Forgiving at a Tender Age

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Raising a family of young children is a sacred task. Hardly a day passes for parents in which they are not teaching behavioral standards. Probably the most common task is teaching them forgiveness in their quarrels with their siblings, and the importance of showing sorrow for wrong-doings. Countless are the times that good parents must step in to settle squabbles among their "tiny tots" and teenagers, insisting that they say "I'm sorry". Then, after a hug from Mom and Dad, they happily know that all is well again. Forgiveness should begin in the home.

Saint Maria Goretti is an excellent model for youth to study regarding purity and forgiveness. It was no small act on Maria's part when, at the age of twelve, she forgave nineteen year old Alessandro, who stabbed her many times because she would not give in to his lust. Though innocent, and dying from her knife wounds, she took the first step towards forgiving her attacker, saying to her priest, "Yes, for the love Jesus, I forgive him... and want him to be in paradise with me". She received the last Sacraments and died.

Alessandro was spared the death penalty because of his young age, and was sentenced to thirty years in prison. Eight years passed before he repented. Until that time, he had remained bitter, sullen, and silent, still hating Maria, the young martyr who had refused him. At last he repented, changed by a dream he had. He saw Maria with arms filled with lilies. At first, he shrank from her, but she smiled and gave him the flowers, which turned to pure white and consumed themselves.

On his release from prison, Alessandro went to Maria's mother to be forgiven. They knelt together to receive Communion near the shrine built in Saint Maria Goretti's honor. Later, Alessandro became Brother Stephano, a lay brother in the garden of the Capuchin Friars at Ascoli Piceno, Italy. Maria was canonized on June 24, 1947.

The Bible tells us that, without forgiveness, we suffer as the sinner David did, until he confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness (Psalm 32:3-5). In these verses we learn about David's repentance and forgiveness:

"As long as I would not speak,
my bones melted away
with my groaning all the day,
for day and night your hand
was heavy upon me,
My strength was dried up as
by the heat of summer.
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."

Questions for Discussion:

1. How soon should parents teach their children the act of forgiveness? Why?
2. Both Saint Maria Goretti and her mother forgave Alessandro. When have you found it most difficult to forgive?



"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son." But his father ordered his servants "...let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found."
Then the celebration began.

Luke 15:21-24

Father Matt Gaskin Celebrates Golden Jubilee

Ron Pihokker, SFO



Father Matthew Gaskin, OFM, Provincial Spiritual Assistant of Holy Name Province to the Secular Franciscan Order and former National Spiritual Assistant recently celebrated a major milestone in his priestly service. Along with the surviving members of his ordination class of 1950, Father Matthew celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his Ordination marking fifty years of priestly service. At a concelebrated Mass at Saint Anthony's Church in Butler, New Jersey on June 7th, led by Franciscan Provincial Father John Felice, OFM, Father Matt concelebrated with his brother friars of Holy Name Province. Remembered during the liturgy were those friars who were a part of the original ordination class of 1950 who have died. The actual ordination day was June 11th, 1950 with the ordaining prelate being Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII.

Joining Father Matt for the festivities was a delegation of several members of the Secular Franciscan Order, led by National Minister, Bill Wicks, SFO. Joining Bill were Our Lady of the Angels Regional Minister, Kevin Corbett, SFO, Regional Vice-Minister Marcia Stambouljian, SFO, Spirit and Life Team members Patricia Brandwein-Ball, SFO and Richard Morton, SFO, Page Taylor, SFO, St. Anthony (Butler, NJ) Fraternity Minister and his wife, and Ron and Jody Pihokker, SFO of Most Holy Name Fraternity. Bill Wicks and Marcia Stambouljian presented the gifts of bread and wine to principal celebrant Father Felice during the festive liturgy attended by many friars and a packed church of well-wishers. Following the Mass, the jubilarians and their guests retired to the parish hall where a gala reception and dinner followed

which included entertainment provided by several friars who sang played piano and shared stories. The hall was decorated with many pictures and memorabilia recounting the collective service of the jubilarians.

Father Matthew has a special place in the history of the SFO in the United States having been the inspiration for the development of the apostolic commissions drawn from the SFO rule by his intervention at a National Fraternity meeting some years ago at Colorado Springs, CO. Father Matt has also served as a member of the National Formation Commission and a member of the Peace and Justice Commission. In addition to his continuing work as Provincial Spiritual Assistant to the SFO, Father Matt is a weekend assistant at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Hewitt and resides at St. Anthony Friary, Butler, NJ.



From the left: Jody Pihokker, SFO; Ron Pihokker, SFO (slightly to the rear) Marcia Stambouljian, SFO, Patricia Brandwein-Ball, SFO, Father Matt Gaskin, OFM, Dick Morton, SFO (slightly to the rear) Bill Wicks, SFO, Kevin Corbett, SFO, and Page Taylor, SFO



National Archivist Needed

The National Executive Council invites qualified Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the position of National Fraternity Archivist. This is a volunteer position. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- provide a list of experiences as an archivist; and
- include a telephone number for a personal interview.

Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by December 31, 2000 to:

Mary Mazotti, SFO
P.O. Box 2571
Arnold, CA 95223-2571
Phone: 209-795-3809
E-mail: mkmaz@goldrush.com

Time Out with Jesus and Francis

Ralph Schlueter, SFO

Regional Formation Director, Holy Trinity Region

Repeatedly during His public life, Jesus took time out from His usual interaction with the crowds of people who searched Him out for their cure and His teaching. He went off by Himself, or with a few or all of the Apostles. Those times were times of prayer, temptation, encouragement, teaching, of renewal and strengthening Himself and the Apostles. All four evangelists attest to this. (Matthew 14, Mark 4, Luke 9, John 6)

Francis followed the example of Jesus. He spent many long days by himself in prayer, and he spent time away from the crowds who sought him to be with his friars.

Today, in following Jesus and Francis, we need frequent withdrawal from the routine of our lives, to spend time in special prayer by ourselves or with our Franciscan brothers and sisters.

Time out! Even in sports, when the going gets very tough and time seems to be running out for accomplishing a goal, time is taken for regrouping, recouping or just catching one's breath.

We need to sit back, look at how we are living, and catch our breath, while we prayerfully evaluate what we are doing to accomplish what we think God has in mind for us in our present circumstance.

Our Rule keeps encouraging us to be people of prayer (Article 8). "As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do".

Sometimes we need flesh and blood encouragement. That's when interacting with others of the Franciscan family is very important and effective.

Just as Jesus and Francis were called to be witnesses of the message of our redemption through activities of their public lives, so we are reminded of our role in this regard in Article 6 of our Rule: "...they should go forth as witnesses and instruments of her [Christ's Church] mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words." Article 7 teaches us of our need for daily conversion: "...let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls 'conversion'". Communal consideration of these and other aspects of our everyday Franciscan lives are the means of our regenerating our Franciscan spirit, our dynamo for carrying out the work that is ours to do.

Prayer, interaction with other Franciscans, and active discussion of problems we experience in living our Rule are the meat and potatoes of our fraternity meetings. They build up our Franciscan muscle to do our job in rebuilding the society in which we function.

Revitalizing any aspect of our Franciscan living sometimes needs special times out of the ordinary meetings or routines. That's where retreats or days of recollection come in very handy. Like "times away" for Jesus and Francis, they renew us for living the vocation that is ours.

Sharing Fraternal Life

Stephanie Sormane, SFO

Councilor for Fraternal Life, Mother Cabrini Region

I was recently encouraged to write an article about fasting for vocations. Feeling insecure about this, I asked my pastor for a quick theology course on fasting, and he explained simply that it was a form of prayer. To be sure all prayer, in any form, for vocations of all kinds, is a worthy endeavor, provided that we always seek the will of God.

In our Region, the suggestion was made that each fraternity choose one day a week when each of the brothers and sisters would fast from something of their choice (not necessarily food) as a prayer for vocations.

What vocations are we talking about? Priesthood and religious life? SFO? Perhaps it would help our prayer if we thought a little about why vocations, in whatever form, are not as prevalent as they once were. Let's focus on the SFO for starters. Back in Francis' day, the laity flocked to him. They wanted to follow Christ, as Francis did, because Francis was obviously so happy, so joyful in following Jesus. Are we joyful in our SFO vocations? Do others even know we are Secular Franciscans, or what a Secular Franciscan is? Perhaps prayer and fasting would help us to be more aware of who we are and who we are called to be, and to be more inviting to others who might be interested in joining us. My own fraternity is preparing to host an open house in August, and, just in the process of preparing, some new faces appeared at our last meeting. We are praying sincerely for the success of our open house, that we will be successful in getting the word out, so that interested people will hear about us, and come to learn more. We are also working very hard to help make that happen!

And then there's the priesthood and religious life. Some say that, since the empowerment of the laity by Vatican II, there's less interest in the priesthood and religious life; there are so many ways that the laity can now participate in the life of the Church, why would one want to become a priest or religious? The fact of the matter is, there are still those very much attracted to priesthood and religious life. I think there has been a big change, however, in the amount of encouragement, or lack thereof to be more precise, for those who might be considering such a vocation. And why is this? There are lots of reasons, mainly the way our society has changed. The family unit is on very shaky ground, to say the least. Priority is given to accumulating material wealth and position. How is encouragement for a religious vocation going to come out of that? Many Catholic schools have been closed, many Catholic children now attend public school (where prayer is not allowed). They receive their religious education from lay catechists, and they have very little contact with the parish priest or any religious.

So what can we do? Pray and fast for guidance, certainly, that we might find the right way to encourage vocations; witness to our way of life, what it means to us

...continued on page twenty-one

Graymoor Land in Jeopardy

Charlie Spencer, SFO

107 Jensen Circle, West Springfield, MA 01089-4451
413-737-7600; e-mail: cspencer@mail.map.com

Many of you may remember Father Paul Ojibway, SA, who spoke at our 1998 NAFRA gathering in Pittsburgh. It is his community which is the subject of the following letter.

Dear All:

The Appalachian Trail was allowed to pass through a remote area of Graymoor in 1923, with permission of Father Paul, the founder of Graymoor. In 1984, the National Park Service wanted to re-route the Trail, bringing it closer to the buildings at Graymoor. In a spirit of good will, the friars not only allowed the Trail to be moved, but agreed to a 58 acre easement for \$116,500 to buffer the Trail. Under that agreement, the land stayed in the hands of the friars, but they gave up development rights. All this was done pretty much on a "good faith" handshake agreement on the part of the friars.

Over the past fifteen years, the National Park Service has sought to increase the easement by about eighteen to twenty acres, claiming that the Trail needs more protection than the fifty feet in some areas. When the friars balked, the National Park Service, in May 2000, threatened to "take" the land by eminent domain, summoning in the United States Justice Department! The Park Service's claimed reason for getting the Justice Department involved is a sewage pumping station that serves the Saint Christopher Inn, one of the Graymoor apostolates. The Park Service claims the pump house is within the easement, violating their original agreement by a few feet. The friars didn't know it was within the easement, calling it "a miscalculation". No one complained before. The easement boundary lines, being erratic or abstract, are not uniform in distance from the Trail, and evidently are not marked. Although the sewer lines go under the Trail, neither the pumping station or pipes, according to the friars, has caused a problem with the Trail, environment, or hikers.

The issue has gained much media attention, with headlines such as "Holy Land Grab". The Associated Press has published a story, and NBC is scheduled to do a story. United States Representative Sue Kelly, Graymoor's Congresswoman joined Senator Charles Schumer, (D-New York), at Graymoor on Monday, August 7, to meet with Father Arthur Johnson, SA, Minister General. Both elected officials left the meeting voicing support for the friars. Now it depends on what action the National Park Service chooses to take.

The friars are most disturbed by the Park Service's harsh action of bringing in the Justice Department. The friars are open to two favored options. First, they may be willing to go back to the additional easement discussion. Otherwise, they may suggest that the Trail be moved back to its original location, pre 1984. Judy Brumback, Acquisition Division, National Park Service, is

scheduled to meet with Father Art Johnson, SA, on August 23.

Also, it is certainly important to note that Graymoor has long been a favorite stopping place for "through hikers" on the Appalachian Trail, as the friars provide complimentary meals, showers, and overnight accommodations. If the Trail is moved back to its pre-1984 location, it would be a little more out of the way for the hikers. However, for a "through hiker", that shouldn't be a problem.

I recommend checking out the web site, www.savegraymoor.org to become better informed. The website was set up by Anthony Selletti, SFO, on behalf of Blessed Katharine Drexel Region. It includes a petition, and other resources. I recommend that we sign the petition, and contact our Senators and Representatives, and do whatever else we can to help in this effort, including prayer and fasting.

As most of you know, the Graymoor Friars and Sisters have been a great help to the Ecology Commission of the SFO, providing outstanding accommodations for two National Ecology Apostolate Leadership Training Conferences, in 1994 and 1998. I cannot say enough about their warmth and gracious hospitality! They are family.

Peace always,
Charlie Spencer, SFO



Graymoor News Flash

On August 8, 2000, Senator Charles Schumer, Congresswoman Sue Kelly and Father Arthur Johnson, SA, Minister General, met with representatives of the National Park Service - Pam Underhill and Judy Bromback. The following agreements were reached:

1. The case will not proceed any further with the Department of Justice and if necessary other alternatives would be pursued before any lawsuit by the United States Department of Justice;
2. no attorneys will be involved at the next meeting on August 23;
3. the mutual interest and goal is to provide a haven or retreat for those who love nature and hike the trail and those who go to Graymoor for shelter, retreat or renewal;
4. there should be other ways than eminent domain proceedings to address the fear of the Park Service that the friars might sell the land;
5. the Park Service is willing to hear language from the friars which might address their concern that they would not be able to repair, maintain or construct what might be necessary for them to continue to live at Graymoor and provide the ministries they do;
6. a yearly meeting with the Park Service, the Appalachian Trail Conference, and the friars could prevent unnecessary misunderstandings; and
7. prior technical violations of the previous agreement need not be an obstacle to the negotiations.

Reflections on the Yosemite Nature Experience

Compiled by Frances Wicks, SFO

We were twenty-nine from all over the United States, spending a week together in the Valley of the Yosemite. Father Camillus MacRory, OFM Cap, Father William Brand, OFM, and Father Paul Juniet, OFM presided at daily liturgy in the small wooden chapel. All were blessed abundantly by the Liturgies. It was a joy to be with Ken and Carole Amaral, who hosted the first Franciscan Experience in Hawaii in 1994. Other Seculars in attendance were: Avelina Bataglia and her daughter Ava, from New Mexico; Bill McVernon, Theresa Brooks, Alice Giordano, Elaine Reilly and Rose Ruland from New York; Pauline Riendeau, Mary Carson, Diane Prior, Florence Torsell, Diane Halal, Bill and Frances Wicks and Anthony and Mary Mazotti from California; Sister Marie Louise Poelman, OSF, and Anita Biddleman from Ohio; Ann Corro from Virginia; Betty Dries from Kentucky; Christina Hassett from Illinois; Vanessa Pustek and Dolores Jakes from Washington; and Barbara Smith from Louisiana.

Anita Biddleman, SFO

Once the fog lifted on the first morning, we were blessed with sights too vast and beautiful to capture with a camera. I really did not count the numerous waterfalls. The mountains, rushing rivers and streams, dogwood trees in full bloom, mule deer outside the lodge rooms, the great Redwood trees, were just some of the gifts presented.

Father William Brand, OFM

Diane Halal is still talking about the day the momma deer came right up to me while we were eating on my patio and stood nose to nose. I invited her to understand that what we were eating was not the kind of food that her little ones should indulge in. With those mournful eyes she gave me a kind look, and proceeded on her way with her brood. For me the highlight of the week was the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the little Chapel in the dale. The simple grace of smallness added to the feeling of Franciscan joy we experienced there.

Sister Marie Louise Poelman OSF

I breathed the beauty of Yosemite, and found myself refreshed. The trees and plants breathed in my breath and allowed me to remain some tiny molecule in the giant Redwood. As an incarnational being, my God has privileged me to join in the ongoing creation and giftedness of this magnificent Franciscan experience.

Vinessa Pustek, SFO

It was the falls – the tremendous thunder and crash of the water as it cascaded down the rocks spoke to me of God's awesome might and power.

Elaine Reilly, SFO

The driver of the tour bus said that in Yosemite Valley, it is natural for a variety of trees to grow together. This

reminded me of community life in which a variety of personalities can grow together in complementarity.

Father Paul Juniet, OFM

The Yosemite Falls are made of rushing water, joined in an adventure of life reaching to the unknown cliff. As the water shoots out, it separates into fingers only to be brought back together in the crashing Fall. We, the Franciscan community, are pushed together in Profession. We all have different dreams and journeys as we leap out in faith. But, as our lives mold together, we become the crashing, exciting presence of God in the world. Let the water of our lives shout out the love of God.

Barbara Smith, SFO

The different shades of green on the trees and in the meadows were magnificent. The sound of the waterfalls roaring, and the sight of the huge rock formations gave a sense of strength and power which was awe-inspiring, as the water cascaded down from them. Yet, the Lord's tenderness was seen in a delicate, blue butterfly that was no larger than a thumb nail. The sight, sound, and smell of the Lord's creation has nourished my soul deeply. I feel that I have been on sacred ground and in touch with my (Native American) ancestors.



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

Currently Blessed Katharine Drexel Region is involved with assisting the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement in their defense against the National Parks Service land grab. Please see the article on page ten.

Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO has established the Region's first Formation Commission. The members are Mrs. Outhwaite (Chair); Antony Outhwaite, SFO; Barbara and Anthony Selletti, SFO; Sharon DeSipio, SFO; and Louise Coco, SFO. The first project for the new Regional Formation Commission will be planning a Regional Candidates' Retreat for Spring 2001.

Blessed Katharine Drexel Region is also looking forward to celebrating the canonization of their patron on October 1, 2000.

The Region is a sponsor of Peacefest 2000, on October 7, 2000, at the Marian Shrine in West Haverstraw, NY. The theme for this event is "Proclaiming a Culture of Peace for the Third Millennium". The event will be festive, educational, and ecumenical, with workshops, arts, music, food, games, exhibits, ritual, and prayer.

Holy Trinity Region

On August 19, the Region will sponsor a Day of *Recollection at Good Shepherd Parish in Montgomery, OH*. Father Loren Connell, OFM will speak on aspects of forgiveness in Scripture; Father Maurice Hayes, OFM Conv will speak on aspects of forgiveness from the lives of Saints Francis and Clare; and Martha Kerns, SFO, Mary Perty, SFO, and Barbara Sonnenberg, SFO will speak on aspects of forgiveness for personal balance and growth.

On October 28 the Region will hold its Regional Council Meeting.

The region is currently producing pocket-sized bookmark-style publicity cards, featuring the Franciscan Peace Prayer on one side, and information for contacting a Secular Franciscan on the other.

Lady Poverty Region

Father Robert Stewart, OFM will be the main speaker at the Region's first annual prayer-filled retreat on October 6-8, 2000 at Villa Maria Retreat Center. "No budget hearings, no Ministers' meeting, only prayer and spirit-filled talks!"

Lady Poverty Region's annual Regional Meeting will be held May 18-20, 2001 at Gilmory Diocesan Center in Pittsburgh. This will be an election year for the Region.

Mother Cabrini Region

The Region held its annual Chapter of Ministers at Mayslake Village in Oak Brook, IL on May 15. This year's workshop was expanded to include not only Ministers and Formation Directors, but also Secretaries and Treasurers as well. Fifty-one Seculars participated. Marie Amore, SFO, National Vice-Minister was the keynote speaker, and presented a talk on leadership in the new millennium. She noted that a leader's qualities include washing feet. A true leader would sacrifice life if necessary. She noted the great need of fraternities for spirit and life, and stated that Ministers should insist on ongoing formation in their fraternities.

The Region held a Millennium Franciscan Celebration on August 5, with Mass, community prayer, food, fellowship, and no business! Father Benet Fonck, OFM was the guest speaker.

The Region will hold its Chapter of Elections in December.

Our Lady of Indiana Region

During the weekend of June 9-11, Bill Wicks, SFO and Father Loren Connell, OFM performed the Region's fraternal and pastoral visitations.

On August 12, the Region will host its annual Unity Day at Saint Joan of Arc Parish in Kokomo. Regional resources will be available as well as uniquely Franciscan books, rosaries, videos and other supplies.

The Region has a web-site at <http://www.olisfo.cqc.com>.

Our Lady of the Angels Region

The Manhattan cluster celebrated the Feast of our Holy Mother Saint Clare with a festive Eucharistic Liturgy on August 11, at Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan. The guest speaker was Sister Mary Motte, FMM, Provincial, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

Queen of Peace Region

On July 9, 2000, the Region celebrated the canonical establishment of San Damiano Fraternity in Marshalltown, IA.

The newly forming group in Marshall, MN began the Inquiry stage of the formation program at the end of July. Please keep them in your prayers as they start their Franciscan journey.

On August 20, the Region will celebrate the canonical establishment of San Damiano Fraternity in Elk River, MN.

The Nebraska Chapter of Mats gathering will be held August 27. The guest speaker will be Sister Joan Mueller, OSF, who will be available to sign her book, *Francis, the Saint of Assisi*.

The Region will celebrate the jubilee year with a weekend retreat September 29 - October 1, 2000 at Christ the King Retreat House. Sister Ramona Miller, OSF will be the presenter. The weekend will be spent singing, celebrating, socializing, and reflecting on

"Gospel Living in the Spirit of Saint Francis in the Third Millennium".

The date of the Iowa Fall Retreat has been changed to October 8, 2000.

Saint Clare Region

The Region celebrated the Feast of Saint Anthony of Padua at Saint Anthony of Padua Church in Saint Louis, MO on June 13. As Secular Franciscans, they were given the privilege of helping to distribute lilies and Saint Antony bread to the almost 1000 people in attendance.

On July 22, 2000, the Region sponsored a Commissions Workshop. Mary Ellen Herrmann, SFO, Regional Minister reported, "as Father Benet (Fonck, OFM) put it so aptly, 'the Commissions are not something we might decide to do, they are the Commissions our Order received from the Pope.' All Orders have Commissions to do. Let us do ours, even if we are the prayer-power behind the work-power, everyone counts, everyone is called, everyone is sent, we must answer this call."

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Region

On April 14, 2000 the Region celebrated its Chapter of Elections. National Minister Bill Wicks, SFO presided. National Spiritual Assistant Brother Jim Boyle, TOR served as Friar Witness. Pat Brandwein-Ball, SFO, from Maine, is the newly elected Regional Minister.

The Region's annual retreat was held June 9-11, 2000 under the direction of Father John D. Bavaro, OFM at the Franciscan Center in Andover, MA. The theme of the retreat was Pilgrimage. Participants were invited to visit the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption, as well as the challenge of Evangelization as the focus was on Bethlehem and Greccio, Calvary and La Verna, and Galilee and Umbria.

The Region has a web-site at <http://www.gis.net/~jrjenks/>. John Jenks, SFO of Saint Francis of the Cape Fraternity is the webmaster.



"Forgiveness demonstrates the presence in the world of the love which is more powerful than sin. Forgiveness is also the fundamental condition for reconciliation, not only in the relationship of God with man, but also in relationships between people."

Pope John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*

Our Father

Geraldine Armstrong SFO
Councilor, Our Lady of the Angels Region

When I first began to work on this paper, I asked myself "Am I being too presumptuous?" How do I explain or embellish perfection to seasoned Franciscans?

Here is my humble offering....

Humanly, fathers come in all shapes and sizes, races, colors, and creeds. They have different temperaments, abilities, and physical attributes. Some are good providers, are good-looking and have a good humor. *Some do not.* But fathers are fathers. The majority are responsible, caring (though not always outwardly); and most are relieved when the offspring resemble Mom more than they resemble themselves. Some fathers are congenial and helpful by nature. Saint Francis did not have one like this.

We all know the story, and can envision even now the scene when Francis declared that Pietro Bernadone was no longer his father. Celano, in his "Second Life", quotes: "From now on I can freely say, 'Our Father who art in Heaven', not Pietro Bernadone to whom, behold, I give not only the money, but all my clothes, too. I will therefore go naked to the Lord." As History states... thus he did.

Francis turned to his Heavenly Father, to Jesus' Father, to our Father.

God, Our Father, the creator of all creatures, of you and of me. The Father who watches us misbehave and forgives us when we say we are sorry and repent, time and again. The Father who is so very pleased with us when we do His holy will. I do not believe the words the Father spoke on the occasion of Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan were meant solely for Him, but that they were intended for all God's children throughout the generations, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

The Lord's Prayer, the "Pater Noster", the "Our Father", as we all know, are one and the same. The Lord's Prayer is a catechism on prayer. It teaches us attitudes that we should cultivate in our relationship with God, and illuminates images of God. It served as a teaching tool of Jesus with the disciples, teaching them to pray to His Father.

The Lord's Prayer consists of fifty-four words, and an Amen. When recited reverently, it takes about thirty seconds to pray. It contains words of praise, supplication, and thanksgiving. It is a perfect prayer given to us by Christ Himself. At the time the Lord's Prayer was presented on the mountain, the Hebrews used very formal words when referring to or addressing God. Jesus called His Father "Abba". This is like a little child calling his father "Daddy" or "Papa". Jesus taught us to do the same.



Meeting of the SFO International Presidency

Via Di Monte Cucco 25, Rome

February 19-26, 2000

Marianne Powell, OFS

CIOFS Councilor to English-speaking Nations

Evaluation of the Chapter

There was a general feeling that the Chapter had been well prepared, both from the practical point of view and as far as the work was concerned. We thanked Father Ben [Brevoort, OFM Cap] for the enormous amount of work he had put in to preparing the "booklet" we used to work on the revisions of the Constitutions. It made the work so much easier than it would otherwise have been. Also the voting with electronic means made the process a lot easier, faster, and safer. It seemed that one or two international councilors were not terribly well prepared for the process, but in general the work of the Chapter went very smoothly, and according to a logical plan. The Spanish OFM friar, who took part in the Chapter in his capacity as canonist, said, at the end of the Chapter, that it had been "the most mature and serious chapter" he had ever attended. The Spanish language group experienced some problems, since, for the first time, they had found that they did not always present a united front in the meeting hall. As Presidency, we did not consider this a problem, since we do not expect the language groups to present a united front. Language groups are set up to facilitate discussion, but not to iron out differences of opinion.

The Approval of the Revised General Constitutions

Father Ben has produced another booklet with all of the revisions clearly indicated, which has been sent to the Ministers General for their approval. The Conference of the four Ministers General will subsequently present the revised Constitutions to the Congregation for final approval. The Ministers General will not make the study of the revisions of the Constitutions in person, but will set up a Commission to do it. At the time of the meeting of the Presidency, the OFM and the OFM Cap. had not yet appointed their member for the Commission. Father Nils [Francis Thompson, OFM] informed us that a commission had been set up within his Order to study the revisions, and in particular to study the question of the *altius moderamen*, the interpretation of which the Ministers Provincial of Italy want to contest (see next point on the agenda). Fr Nils had not been consulted on this nor given any information.

The Situation of the SFO in Italy

Three of the commissions set up at the Congress held in June in Rome to facilitate unification of the SFO in Italy have worked well, and have made some notable steps forward. While the Seculars work with enthusiasm and conviction, the friars in general are holding back a little.

In particular, neither the Seculars nor the friars of the OFM contingent take part at all in the unification process. On the contrary, they work against the process, and the situation is extremely difficult and dangerous for the SFO. As our Minister General has already communicated to the SFO National Councils, the Ministers Provincial OFM of Italy want to interpret the *altius moderamen* in such a way that the SFO worldwide is deprived of the autonomy which the new *Rule* has given us.

Chapter Conclusions

a) International Statutes

The Chapter has given the Presidency the mandate to update the International Statutes in line with the approved amendments to the Constitutions. We agreed to ask Doug Clorey, OFS, Canada, and Tibor Kauser, OFS, Hungary, collaborating with Marianne Powell, OFS as anchor person in the Presidency, to write a draft for the revised Statutes. The two International Councilors in question have subsequently accepted the task.

b) Formation

The Presidency agreed to ask Emerenziana [Rossato, OFS], together with Father Valentin [Redondo, OFM Conv] to re-read the guidelines for formation sent out by the Presidency in 1992, to make the necessary revisions; the Presidency will then send them out again. These guidelines already contain the necessary information requested by the Chapter in conclusion 3a.

c) Profile of the SFO

To conduct a demographic analysis of the International Fraternity, the Presidency decided to ask Doug Clorey [OFS, Canada] (who made the suggestion in the Chapter) to produce a form that could be used for such an analysis. Doug has subsequently accepted this task.

d) Leadership Formation

The United States manual for leadership, which the Presidency has decided to use as a model for the SFO in the world at large, should be translated into the official languages of the Order, but so far translators have not been found for the task. The handbook was contained in the gift parcel sent by the United States National Fraternity to a number of English speaking countries, so these countries already have the book and can start to apply it.

e) Justice and Peace

As you may know, I withdrew from the International Inter-Franciscan Justice and Peace Commission a year ago due to having too much work, and also because it seemed better to appoint a member to the Commission who resides in Italy, since the meetings are now more frequent, and last only half a day. With the person appointed to substitute me, however, things have not gone so well, since it turned out he did not know any English, which is the language of this Commission. We

The United States manual for leadership, which the Presidency has decided to use as a model for the SFO in the world at large, should be translated into the official languages of the Order....

discussed other candidates, and hope to have the problem solved soon.

It will be the task of the new appointee to work out solutions to the Chapter conclusions in this area. A system for urgent action alerts has already been set up by the Commission, and it will be a question for the SFOs eventually to log onto this system.

Seminar in Lithuania

A seminar for the SFO in the Baltic countries and Russia will take place in May this year. Wilhelmina Visser, OFS, the German language Councillor of the Presidency is in charge of the organization. Besides Wilhelmina, Emanuela [De Nunzio, OFS, Minister General] and I will go, with three of the General Spiritual Assistants.

Formation on various central and basic topics will be given. The main object of the seminar, like that of the seminars already held in Poland for Eastern Europe and in the Ukraine, will be animating and updating the SFO in these countries.

Seminar in Cuba

A seminar similar to the one held last year in Nicaragua for Seculars and Spiritual Assistants will be held in Cuba, April 26 to May 3, 2000. Father Ben and Father Valentin will conduct the Seminar.

Pastoral and Fraternal Visits

It appears that many nations have not yet understood the purpose of these visits, as expressed in the Rule and the Constitutions. The visit is defined as a visit to the National Council, and it is important that the visitors are given time to talk to the Council and discuss general questions, as well as specific problems with the members of the Council. Time should also be allowed for individual members of the Council to talk to the visitor if they wish. These things should be given first priority, and only if there is time should the visit include other aspects.

Commissions

We discussed in detail how we could encourage the SFO National Fraternities to focus on apostolic work, as we are expected to do according to our *Rule*, and we decided to present a model for this work involving commissions for each area of apostolic activity. The SFO in the United States works along these lines; and we have asked them to share their experiences. We decided to ask Carol Gentile, SFO, who has recently retired as Chair of the Family Commission for the United States National Fraternity [and who is currently the Apostolic Commissions Coordinator], to write an article sharing her insights.

Recognition of New National Fraternities

Various fraternities have asked for recognition, or for help in starting the process of recognition.

- Cuba - Father Ben and Father Valentin are going to Cuba to conduct a seminar there, and they will help to sort out the question of National Statutes.
- Chad will be recognized.

- Malaysia: the SFO has an old story in this area, but the widely spread fraternities have little or no contact, and the Spiritual Assistants likewise. The country is divided in two as far as orientation is concerned. Father Ben will examine the possibility of organizing a week of formation there, preferably for both parts of the country.

Finances and Annual report

We discussed how we could put the motions of the General Chapter into practice, and, in connection with this, how we could encourage the National Councils to send in the annual report which they are obliged to send, but which at present arrives from only one nation. To make it easier for the National Councils, we decided to create a form.

The financial situation of the SFO is unchanged. There are still countries who do not send their [per capita contribution]. [Countries should evaluate how much they are able to contribute, and please send it to CIOFS.] An Order cannot exist without the financial support of its members. Please check the Chapter decisions of October 31, 1999 and act accordingly.

Youth Day

In the same way as for the Youth Day in Paris, Franciscan Youth will organize a programme for the Youth Day in Rome August 16-17 2000. Daniele Greco is in charge of the programme. Please note that the Franciscan Youth assisted by the OFM friars of Italy are organizing their own programme. The problems which the former leadership of the OFM-assisted section of the SFO in Italy has created, together with the OFM Ministers Provincial, have spread to the GIFRA [(Franciscan Youth in Italy)], which earlier had a fine collaboration across obediential lines. The former National Minister of the [OFM]-assisted section of the SFO in Italy presents herself as "National Minister SFO Italy", and forbids "her" members, including those of Franciscan Youth, "under obedience", to have anything to do with the members of the other three obediences, who are now working towards unification. Information about the official SFO Franciscan Youth programme was given out to International Councilors at the Chapter in Madrid.

Day of the Franciscan Family

The project which started out with grand designs and marvelous plans has more or less collapsed. There will be a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi on April 7, and a Mass in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran on April 9, but nothing has been made of publishing these events to the rest of the world. It could be that people have had enough of millennium celebrations, and, in any case, who could afford to go to Rome for a day to attend a Mass?

Pastoral visit

The Presidency received its statutory pastoral visit during the session. The visitor was Father Bonaventure Midili, Minister General, TOR. Father Bonaventure gave a brief talk as introduction, and then opened a

...continued on page seventeen

Heavenly Healing

Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO

In the midst of the "Y2K Panic", when many people were stockpiling food for the predicted disasters, I had the most peaceful knowledge that God would take care of us. I even told someone that if there were a shortage of food, I believed that God would provide manna on our front lawn. Well, the doom-sayers were wrong and we experienced nothing of the catastrophes warned. And yet, this Spring, Our Lord provided food for us – our front lawn was golden with dandelions! I was giddy with joy as I exclaimed to my Husband, "This must be God's Y2K version of manna!"

We harvested the dandelion blossoms to make wine; we picked the fresh leaves for a delicious salad every evening for many days (dandelion is known as "poor man's endive"!); and we are judiciously digging and drying some roots for the winter (a dandelion root decoction is widely respected as a diuretic and liver tonic; the ground root is also popular as a substitute for coffee).

Currently, I am studying herbology and aromatherapy, and I am discovering something new about God's care for us, His children. The plants He has given us have been providing healing for centuries. Traditional Chinese medicine, Indian Ayurveda, and Native American healing have used plants long before our Western medicine produced chemical drugs. Even today, a number of modern medicines are derived from plants, for example, *digitalis* is derived from foxglove, and how many of us keep an aloe vera plant in our homes, for use on minor burns? It is widely recognised that the Rain Forest is a treasure haven for medicinal plants which are, as yet, undiscovered.

The opportunity arose this February to help my father with such alternative remedies: When my dad was recently hospitalized, he developed a bed sore. Rated on the hospital's "one to five" scale (with five being the worst), it was a "four, quickly becoming a five". After two months of the hospital's treatment, we saw no improvement; and their wound care nurse told us that it would take another six months or more to heal. I obtained permission from Dad's doctor to treat the wound myself. After consulting with my herbalist, I used a combination of herbs and essential oils, and the wound healed naturally in just five weeks.

In speaking with the doctors, I was encouraged to note that some of them were responsive and open to complementary therapies. One doctor said that he believed that God made a perfect body which is capable of healing itself, when supported by proper diet and assisted occasionally by medicinal plants.

My interest in the use of natural remedies began in the autumn of 1998, when Antony and I went on a cruise.

One of the planned activities, a talk on "Aromatherapy", sounded intriguing. During the presentation, the manager of the health club mentioned that most essential oils have healing properties, including relieving the symptoms of asthma.

*Holy, Holy, Holy
is the Lord of
hosts! All the
earth is filled
with His glory.*

Isaiah 6:3

I have suffered from asthma since I was a little girl. It seemed to get worse every year, as I built up a tolerance to all the inhalers and other prescription medications. I also suffered side effects from these medications, for which doctors would prescribe further medications. By the time we went on this cruise, it was very difficult for me to be physically active, or even to be outside an air-conditioned room. I truly believed that I was dying.

We purchased two essential oils and I found that they gave me some relief from the asthma symptoms. It was then that I began my own research and contacted a herbalist to see if she could recommend any specific herbs that would help me further. In the summer of 1999 I started using a formula which she developed specifically for me, and I stopped taking all prescription medications, and have not needed them since. The asthma is much less severe and attacks are less frequent. I no longer experience the dangerous and irritating side effects of the medications. I feel healthier now than I have felt all my life! I am now enrolled in a correspondence course, pursuing a diploma in herbology.

The title of this article, "Heavenly Healing", may have led some of you to believe that this article was about miraculous cures. I would suggest that it is indeed about exactly that. The miracles of God's healing love are no less "miraculous" when they are "ordinary" than when they are "extraordinary". Every healing, every sick person who gets well, does so by and through the love of God. "All who are cured are cured by Him, not merely in the sense that His providence provides them with medical assistance and wholesome environments, but also in the sense that their very tissues are repaired by the far-descended energy which, flowing from Him, energises the whole system of nature." (C: S. Lewis)

Because of my daily use of herbs and essential oils, I have another reason each day to give thanks to God and marvel at His goodness in providing every little thing we need. It reminds me of His graces, which occur super-abundantly: We have great need for them, and He is constantly scattering them about for us. We have only to go out and gather them!

This article is not intended to provide medical advice. It is merely an essay of the author's experiences with complementary therapies. Readers are strongly cautioned to consult their physician before undertaking any alternative treatment.



Family Matters

Ideas for Families

Sonia and Jaime Bernardo, SFO
Chairs, National Family Commission
11704 Veirs Mill Road, Silver Springs, MD 20902
301-933-2487; e-mail: jsbernardo@aol.com

Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others and share their burdens. Each one must show concern, not only for his or her own life, but also for the lives of the other members of the family: their needs, their hopes, their ideals.

Pope John Paul II

Creating a family mission statement (Goal Setting)

Corporations, associations, organizations, including our Order, have mission statements to guide them in achieving their goals. Families can follow their examples. Gather members of your family and discuss your concerns, worries, or problems confronting your family. What do you want as a family? What worries or problems concern you? Perhaps better communication, finances, health, etc. What is important to you as a family? What are the rules or principles you want the members of the family to follow? What gifts and talents do your family members have? How can your family become a better Christian family? What do you want to accomplish in the next six months, or twelve months? Each member of the family should discuss his or her vision of the family, and how these goals can be accomplished. Every member will feel important when each one takes part in developing the "Family Mission Statement".



Family Time

When our three sons were teenagers, we noticed that if they were allowed, they would fill the days of the week with activities with friends and classmates. So we made a policy that one day of the week would be spent with the family, we called this "family time". This meant that no one would schedule activities on that day, except with the family. So, at the beginning of the week we would already look for places to go, things to see, people to visit, museums to see, and activities that we could do

together as a family – things that would enrich us in many ways. Sometimes we just hopped into the car and drove and drove, but we were together. This togetherness drew us very close to each other as a family. It was a time for nurturing, caring, and loving each other, but at the same time we had fun together. To this day, the children remember those Sundays with loving memories. Family time is a great time to nurture your children's spirituality, to teach values, good manners, and right conduct (GMRC).

With two-income families now common, spending time with children truly requires creativity and resourcefulness.

One on One

One on one time together with a family member – a son, a daughter, or a spouse – is quality time that can make a big difference in everyone's life. Have lunch with a daughter or son once a week, or twice a month. Sit together, listen to music, or take a walk for a half hour or so. Having quality time with one person develops deep bonding, provides the opportunity to give oneself freely to the other, to be really present to one another. This is where each strengthens the other, this is where loving and nurturing take place, this is where deep sharing can develop unconditional love.

Whatever your own familial situation, one thing is certain: successful family life doesn't "just happen".

These ideas can lead to a successful family life. Whatever your own familial situation, one thing is certain: successful family life doesn't "just happen". It is something for which every family member – from the youngest to the oldest – has to work. Yes, it is work, but it is joyful, fulfilling work. With love, a sense of commitment, and a spirit of forgiveness, we can overcome every adversity as family members find strength in one another.



Meeting of the SFO International Presidency *continued from page fifteen*

discussion with the whole Presidency. Later, he received individual members who wanted to speak to him privately. In his introduction, Father Bonaventure emphasized the unity of the Franciscan family: "Together we express more fully the Franciscan charism". For the SFO, he said, it is important to stress its unity, its secularity, and its autonomy. We discussed the problem of the divided SFO in Italy in much detail.

Joy: Beatification of a Secular Franciscan

Just to remind you: Pope John XXIII, who is to be beatified on September 3, 2000, was a Secular Franciscan. His writings and letters show that he never lost his attachment to Franciscan spirituality. Celebrate the event in your fraternities!

Franciscan Youth at World Youth Day

Paris 1997

Natalie L. Villarreal
Franciscan Youth

San Francisco de Asis Fraternity, El Paso, Texas

Have you ever visited a place that made you feel completely alive? Have you ever experienced something so wonderful that it completely changed the way you think? Well, for me that particular experience occurred in the summer of 1997 at World Youth Day. I was sixteen at the time. My best friend and I traveled to Europe, and I had some of the most memorable moments of my life that summer. My friend and I were a part of a youth group in our church, and we decided to go on a trip that united youths from around the world. This trip was sort of a pilgrimage to honor Pope John Paul II. I know that some people might think, "How dull, going on a trip with all these religious fanatics. How fun can that be?" Well, that was exactly what I was thinking.

At first, I wanted to go because this was a trip to Europe and I was going with my friend. I did not pay much attention to the religious significance of the trip. My parents have been devoted Catholics for as long as I can remember, and they have always tried to pass on that religious faith to me. I never really took to my faith the way my parents wanted; I would always question things, and I had always felt that the Catholic faith was boring and unreasonable.

It was mid-August when we left for Europe. The first city we arrived in was Rome. It was love at first sight. The city was rich with culture and filled with ancient buildings, structures, and tons of museums that contained priceless artwork. Never in my life had I been bombarded by such beauty. We stayed in Rome for about a week and a half, visiting historical sites, and I was truly in awe of all I had seen. However, the second half of the trip was to be quite different: we would travel to Paris where we would not do so much sightseeing, but focus on the whole religious aspect of the trip.

In Paris we were to meet with youth from around the world, and discuss issues that pertained to us, go to prayer meetings, and attend Mass. I was reluctant to express my faith in this way, maybe because I felt I did not have any. Once I arrived in Paris, all my anxiety about meeting different people and talking about my faith disappeared. Immediately after arriving, I felt as if everyone embraced me. I met people from all over the world, and we all connected. In many ways the trip suddenly wasn't so much about religion, but about connecting, understanding, and learning about other individuals, and mostly about myself. I met some unforgettable friends, and realized that this is exactly the purpose of religion, to unite people. I truly feel that this experience awakened me to the beauty of having and belonging to a strong religious foundation.

On the last day, hundreds of thousands of youth
...continued bottom of next column

Back in the Saddle Again!

Father Benet Fonck, OFM announces that as of July 1, 2000, he has left Saint Anthony of Padua Parish, and has returned to full-time work with the Secular Franciscan Order. Father Benet's ministry will have five parts:

- Writing and translating books for the Secular Franciscans in conjunction with the Franciscan Press at Quincy University in Quincy, IL;
- Re-assuming his role as Executive Secretary for the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants to the Secular Franciscan Order, as consultant for NAFRA, and as "information central" for SFO fraternities;
- Giving retreats, workshops, and seminars to Secular Franciscan groups upon request, after January 1, 2001;
- Working with the Franciscan Pilgrimage Office in Milwaukee, WI, as a part time staff member for study-pilgrimages to Assisi and Rome; and
- Providing spiritual direction.

Father Benet can be contacted at:

Father Benet Fonck, OFM
Saint Francis of Assisi Friary
4556 Telegraph Road
Saint Louis, MO 63129

Phone: 314-352-9159

Fax: 314-894-3668

E-mail: fonckbenet@aol.com

Father Benet says: "I look forward to this opportunity to go back to the kind of ministry to which I am best suited. Though I enjoyed the parish experience very much, found much satisfaction and challenge in that ministry, and have come to know the importance of parish work, it is this ministry with and for my secular brothers and sisters in the Franciscan family that 'fits' me the best, and uses my talents more thoroughly and effectively."



**Truly, matters in the world are
in a bad state; but if you and I
begin in earnest to reform
ourselves, a really good beginning
will have been made.**

Saint Peter of Alcantara



attended Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II, and it was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life. Being a part of something so grand in scale, I don't feel that I have been the same. I can honestly say that I enjoy attending Mass, and have a better understanding of myself because of my strong connection to my faith.

The Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life

Anne Mulqueen, SFO
Member, ICFL Advisory Board

It's never too late to try something new!

Have you ever said, "I wish I could go back to school to learn more about my Franciscan vocation?" If you have, this article is intended for you. Although returning to school may be an impossible dream, I assure you there is an **alternative** other than neglecting your responsibilities. The **alternative** is called the *Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life* ("ICFL"). ICFL provides Secular Franciscans excellent resources and person-to-person communication relating to Franciscan spirituality, traditions, and history without having to leave the comfort of home.

ICFL History

ICFL was established in 1991 at Saint Francis College of Pennsylvania. Its program structure facilitates independent adult learning through **correspondence** study. The courses available are designed to increase Secular Franciscan knowledge and formation in areas of history, spirituality, and application of the Franciscan way of life. These courses are intended primarily for Secular Franciscans; however, anyone interested in learning more about Catholic Franciscan values and their influence on contemporary society is welcome to enroll.

The Coordinator of the Institute is Father Michael J. Higgins, TOR. Father Michael has a Doctorate in Sacred Theology with a concentration in Franciscan Spirituality. He is intensely committed to the spread of lay ministry and leadership in the local church and in the Secular Franciscan Order.

ICFL is governed by an Advisory Board consisting of representatives of Saint Francis College as well as each branch of the Franciscan Family. The Advisory Board makes decisions concerning the curriculum, policy, requirements, etc. A *Certificate in Contemporary Franciscan Life*, a post-baccalaureate award, is available to those who qualify to pursue it. For those who do not pursue the Certificate, courses may be taken on a non-certificate basis.

ICFL courses are self-paced. Each course includes practical elements that are to be applied to the lives of the adult learners. Courses are offered for credit or noncredit. For either option, adult learners are exhorted to apply the Gospel insights acquired to their lives and then examine their lifestyles in the light of the Gospel.

What ICFL Offers

You will become familiar with the writings of Francis and Clare and **about** Francis and Clare which are used extensively in each course. You will be given information regarding current Catholic Franciscan theological, philosophical and spiritual thinking. You will be able to apply these resources to fulfill your commitment to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Four courses are presently available through ICFL:

- (1) *Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World*, authored by Sisters Margaret Pirkel, OSF, Ramona Miller, OSF, and Ingrid Peterson, OSF, is considered a core course and offers theological and spiritual foundations for Franciscan Gospel living, Scripture, and Franciscan tradition. It also highlights the relevance of Christian Franciscan values in contemporary society.
- (2) *The Franciscans: A Family History*, authored by Father Maurice Carmody, OFM, offers a historical perspective of the three Franciscan Orders. The period surveyed extends from the time of Saint Francis and Saint Clare until the present.
- (3) *Franciscan Spirituality*, authored by Brother Keith Warner, OFM, concerns itself with the study of conversion and the Gospel form of life followed by Saint Francis and his early companions.
- (4) *Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership*, authored by Dr. Thérèse Ream, SFO, provides its participants with a systematic, reflective study of the Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership

ICFL courses are developed collaboratively by Franciscans of the First, Second, and Third Orders whenever possible. If you wish more detailed course information, please request a brochure from the Institute.

The tuition for each course, credit or noncredit, is \$275, which includes the study guides and articles, but not text books and shipping. A limited amount of scholarship money is available to qualifying members of the Secular Franciscan Order.

What ICFL Expects

You will need a high degree of motivation and discipline to be a successful distance learner. You must be self-directed and mature. Your ability to integrate the knowledge acquired into your personal life experiences is essential. You will be asked to share feedback concerning course structure, materials and assignments, study guides, etc. You will be an active part of the entire learning process.

Like the early tertiaries who could not abandon their secular obligations, we, too, want a **way** to follow Saint Francis in spirit and ministry without neglecting our secular obligations. The same Spirit that inspired Francis and Clare has blessed us with gifted authors, reader/instructors, and advisory board members who give unselfishly of their time in true servant leadership. The resources developed by the *Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life* for the Secular Franciscan Order provide a **way** to discern how to follow Saint Francis in spirit and life without neglecting secular obligations.

For more information, please contact:

Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life
Saint Francis College
P.O. Box 600
Loretto, PA 15940-0600
Phone: 814-472-3219
E-mail: ICFL@SFCPA.EDU

Some Resources on the Topic of Jubilee and Debt Forgiveness

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

There are many resources on the general theme of Jubilee for this year. Some good ones for the specific topic of Debt Forgiveness that may be useful for fraternity discussion and reflection include:

Jubilee, Debt Cancellation . . . and Us

by Joe Rozansky, OFM

Available from Holy Name Provincialate

126 West 32nd Street

New York NY 10001

Phone: 212-967-6300

Fax: 212-967-6344

E-mail: hnp@hnp.org

Jubilee 2000/USA Education Packet

This education packet includes a wide range of educational resources on the issue of international debt.

Available from Jubilee 2000/USA

222 East Capitol St NE

Washington DC 20003-1036

Phone: 202-783-3566

Fax: 202-546-4468

Web site: www.j2000usa.org

Relieving Third World Debt: A Call for Co-responsibility, Justice, and Solidarity

The United States Bishops consider the impact of Third World debt on the poor. From the United States Bishops' Administrative Board.

Available from Unites States Catholic Conference

3211 Fourth Street NE

Washington DC 20017-1194

Phone: 800-235-8722

Fax: 202-541-3322

Web site: www.nccbuscc.org

Putting Life Before Debt

Produced in cooperation with the United States Catholic Conference, the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE), and Caritas Internationalis, this statement offers an analysis of international debt from the perspective of Catholic social teaching.

Available from Catholic Relief Services

209 West Fayette Street

Baltimore MD 21201-3443

Phone: 410-250-2220

Fax: 410-685-1635

Web site: www.catholicrelief.org



Applications Sought for National Formation Commission Chair

The National Executive Council invites qualified Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the position of **Chair** of the **National Formation Commission**. An applicant is expected to:

- be an active professed Secular Franciscan (a copy of Profession Certificate is required);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and Goals of the National Formation Commission;
- possess a broad-based understanding of the formation process as envisioned in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and in the Rule and General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order;
- have excellent written and oral communication skills;
- have extensive experience with initial and ongoing formation at the local, regional, and/or national levels of fraternity;
- be available and willing to travel to required meetings and workshops;
- be committed to working collaboratively with the National Executive Council, the National Fraternity Council, the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, the members of the National Formation Commission and other National Commissions, and the Regional Formation Directors.

An applicant wishing to obtain a complete job description of this position should feel free to contact Carol Gentile, SFO, the National Commissions' Coordinator.

The current plan calls for the appointment of a Chair-Elect for the Commission by October 2001, to work with the current Chairs until October 2002 when the appointment as Chair becomes effective. Interested Secular Franciscans should submit resumés by **March 1, 2001** to:

Carol Gentile, SFO
National Commissions Coordinator
136 Woods Avenue
Monaca, PA 15061
Phone 724-775-4248
E-mail: gentsfo@icubed.com



*"Let them also follow the poor
and crucified Christ, witness to
Him even in difficulties and
persecutions."*

SFO Rule, Article 10

In the Trenches

Mary Zablocki, SFO

Co-chair, National Work Commission

360 Beard Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14214

716-838-4178; e-mail: zablocki@acsu.buffalo.edu

website: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~zablocki>

I just received the Summer issue of the TAU-USA and read many different views on pilgrimage. There was no article from either Ed or myself for this issue, because we were on a journey ourselves, not unlike a pilgrimage. As many of you know, Ed's Dad was ill for the last several months, and was called home to heaven June 13, 2000, the feast of Saint Anthony. What a journey his last days took us on!

My father-in-law was a man who enjoyed life. He was generous and humor-filled, and as likely to dress up as a woman for Halloween as to make prank phone calls on April Fools Day. He was a man who was proud of his work, his home, his wife, and his family. He was remarkably strong and healthy for eighty-eight years, but extremely ill for six months. He was impatient, traditional, and was always in the driver's seat. There were times when his Polish butted heads with my Irish, and sparks flew, but we always managed to smooth things out. He taught me much about life, about ignoring rain clouds, about sharing, about good food.

The last months of his life were months of deep pain and suffering for him and for us. All our love, translated into many efforts to help him cope with his sudden and thorough loss of control over his life, seemed to fall far short of meeting his needs. He was a man who simply did not know how to need. He had never, at least as a married man, needed anything he was not able to procure for himself. And therein lies the reason this pilgrimage was so hard for all of us.

We may think, on the surface, that not needing is a very good thing. It served him well for over sixty-four years, as he provided Ed's Mom with everything she needed. In his mind, he did everything for everyone else. He took care of his widowed sister's children; he took care of his widowed sister-in-law's children; then, when he became a father himself, he took care of Ed. Even when he should have long since relinquished the role of *paterfamilias*, he still ran the show. He loved fiercely, though he would never have admitted to being sentimental. He thought he was open minded, but he guarded his loved ones jealously, and was very proud of anyone who succeeded in making a lot of money, or a big name for themselves. He never wanted for money, and gave it away generously. I never knew him to be particularly attached to things, or fashions, or property, but he barricaded himself behind a shield of self-sufficiency and pride that held fast until the end.

It was the loss of this shield that grieved him more deeply than he could express. He tolerated severe physical pain far longer than most men could, before he finally found relief. He kept his mind, and never lost interest in our lives. What he fought was the loss of control, not of his body, but of his affairs. He had

business to take care of right up until the end. In his last conversation with Ed and me, he was still trying to provide what he thought was best for Ed's mother. It was a very hard journey for us. There was no going to the light, or sightings of angels. There was just pain, and shortness of breath, and sorrow. As I write these words now, I realize how deeply that saddens me.

He received the sacraments; and four priests concelebrated his funeral Mass. His wake was a celebration of the living, and of the life of this wonderful man. The long journey was over, we had brought dear Grampa to the place where he finally learned how to need. We could not teach him this – we are still learning this ourselves. Only God, our loving Father, can teach us how to need. All we could do was accompany him on the journey, to make the pilgrimage with him. Stripped of every familiar role he had played for eighty-eight years, he approached death as we all will – a stranger, a pilgrim, a child who more than anything needs a father to show him the way. We were not with him when his Father came to take him home. Ed had visited him and found him sleeping. After Ed left, he simply slipped away. In the end, despite our loving desire to accompany him all the way to the end of his journey, he needed only his Heavenly Father to show him the way home. In the end, when all is said and done, this is the ultimate need, what we all need, what is ours for the having, if we are willing to let the Giver of all gifts show us how to need.



Sharing Fraternal Life

continued from page nine

to be SFOs, and the joy and happiness it brings to us; if we meet someone who seems to be considering religious life or the priesthood, encourage them to investigate! If it's not for them, they'll find out soon enough.

I'm sure there are lots of other ideas out there. At least think about it. You never know - just a little encouragement from you might make the difference for someone thinking about the SFO or a religious vocation.



**“GIVE TO EVERYONE THAT
ASKS THEE, AND DO NOT
REFUSE, FOR THE
FATHER’S WILL IS THAT WE
GIVE TO ALL FROM THE
GIFTS WE HAVE
RECEIVED.”**

The Didache

Commission Chairs Needed

The National Executive Council invites Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the positions of **National Ecology Commission Chair** and **National Work Commission Chair**. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the applicable national commission;
- be willing to communicate your passion and desire to promote the Commission to others;
- provide on-going Formation articles for TAU-USA;
- provide a summary of some of your ideas to promote the Commission; and
- be able to attend at least two four-day national meetings yearly.

Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by September 1, 2000 to:

Carol Gentile, SFO
National Commissions Coordinator
136 Woods Avenue
Monaca, PA 15061
Phone 724-775-4248
E-mail: gentcsfo@icubed.com



National Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair Needed

The National Executive Council invites Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the position of **National Secular Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair**. Recommended requirements are:

- active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- familiarity with the Mission Statement and Goals of Youth/Young Adult Commission;
- knowledge of Articles 96 and 97 of the SFO General Constitutions regarding Franciscan Youth;
- experience working with youth, either in the area of Franciscan Youth Groups, Parish Youth Groups, or CCD Programs, etc.;
- ability and willingness to provide quarterly on-going formation articles for the TAU- USA;
- ability to attend at least two four-day national meetings each year.

Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by March 1, 2001 to:

Carol Gentile, SFO
National Commissions Coordinator
136 Woods Avenue
Monaca, PA 15061
Phone 724-775-4248
E-mail: gentcsfo@icubed.com

National Public Relations Director Needed

The National Executive Council invites qualified Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the position of **National SFO Public Relations Director**. Recommended requirements are:

- active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- knowledge of Secular Franciscan matters, including structure, and role in the Church;
- experience with creating interesting and newsworthy press releases for Catholic newspapers, radio, television, and web-sites (sample releases required);
- experience in interviewing and accurate reporting;
- experience in video recording;
- ability to communicate effectively with editors, and meet their requirements and deadlines;
- basic clerical skills; and
- experiences or education which would enable the applicant to effectively report on and promote the Secular Franciscan Order.

Interested Seculars should mail resumés and samples by September 1, 2000 to:

Bill Wicks, SFO
3307 Quail Meadows Drive
Santa Maria, CA 93455.



Youth Commission Members Needed

The National Youth/Young Adult Commission invites Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for membership on the **National Youth Commission**. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the Youth Commission;
- have some experience in working with youth as a leader (for example, Franciscan youth groups, parish youth groups, CCD, Scouts, etc.);
- be able to work with, and share ideas on starting and animating Franciscan Youth groups; and
- be able to attend one National Commission weekend meeting annually.

The Commission encourages multi-cultural candidates to apply. Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by August 31, 2000 to:

Anthony and Mary Mazotti, SFO
Co-Chairs, National Youth/Young Adult Commission
P.O. Box 2571
Arnold, CA 95223-2571
Phone: 209-795-3809
E-mail: mkmaz@goldrush.com

Franciscan Formation Materials

Made Available by the National Formation Commission

Catch Me A Rainbow Too! Ideal for Initial and Ongoing Formation! NEW SPIRAL-BOUND FORMAT!

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).

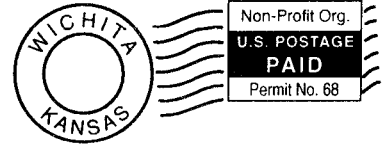
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