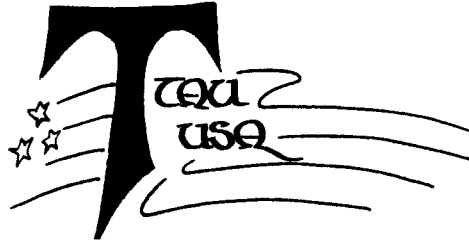


TAU-USA THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER



Issue Number 11

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY

Spring, 1996

Introduction to Prayer for Quinquennial Congress

The Prayer for the 1997 Quinquennial Congress in this issue of TAU-USA is the first in a series of prayers that will appear in the National Newsletter from now until the close of the Congress.

We believe that prayer is our power source, the "Oxygen" of our Secular Franciscan body and our point of contact with the Divine. Therefore, the Congress planning team asks all secular Franciscans to make a commitment to pray both individually and collectively that God's purpose for this Congress will be accomplished.

We also encourage you to reproduce this prayer in your local and regional newsletters so that as one body, we will be united in prayer for the discernment of God's will and direction for our Order. (See Quinquennial Congress Prayer I, page 5.)

Called and Gifted in the Third Millennium

*by Richard Morton, SFO
National Minister*

I want to call your attention to a document recently published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops entitled "Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium." This document should be serious reading by every member of our Order and every member of the Church in the United States. Written by the Committee on the Laity, it focuses on the role of the laity in the Church and society as we begin the third thousand years of Christianity. It is extremely Franciscan in nature and I recommend it for use as on-going formation material.

The document opens with the following prayer:

A PRAYER

*God of love and mercy,
you call us to be your people,
you gift us with your abundant grace.
Make us a holy people, radiating the fullness of your love.
Form us into a community, a people who care,
expressing your compassion.*

*Remind us day after day of our baptismal call
to serve with joy and courage.*

*Teach us how to grow in wisdom and grace and joy
in your presence.*

Through Jesus and in your Spirit, we make this prayer.



(continued on page 3)

READ - CHECK - AND PASS TAU-USA ALONG:

<input type="checkbox"/> Minister	<input type="checkbox"/> Vice Minister
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer
<input type="checkbox"/> Formation	<input type="checkbox"/> Councillors
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Work
<input type="checkbox"/> Ecology	<input type="checkbox"/> Peace & Justice

In this issue:

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++The Lampstand	+TAU Serves the Community
+For the Good of the Order	+Does Francis Make a Difference?
+Prayer for the Congress	+Thoughts for the Shower



TAU members of St. Anthony's High School visit residents of Birchwood Nursing Home

TAU Serves the Community

by Antonia Santangelo, TAU

St. Anthony's High School, South Huntington, NY, has a special group of students involved in the TAU fraternity. Members learn about St. Francis and work to bring his spirit into society. TAU, led by Brother Vincent Adams, OSF, and Brother Richard Contino, OSF, consists of about 200 students who meet once a month. Meetings are devoted to giving members inspiration and encouragement to involve themselves in corporal works of mercy and to strengthen their prayer lives.

Throughout the year TAU runs many activities to serve the community. At Thanksgiving a food drive provides Long Island's neediest families with baskets of food. The Christmas season brings with it TAU's special collection of gifts for needy teenagers, a drive for children's books and an offering of basic items for prisoners. During Lent, Soup and Fast Day is led by TAU to give students an opportunity to purchase a cup of soup for lunch and donate money to the Interfaith Nutrition Network. TAU also raises money for the American Cancer Society in the spring through the annual Daffodil Drive.

Members of TAU are involved in weekly volunteer work: visiting Birchwood Nursing Home and tutoring poor children. Members work with Habitat for Humanity, providing housing for the needy.

St. Anthony's TAU fraternity is a spiritual, social and service group which devotes a great deal of time and energy to preserving, protecting and helping God's creations.

SFO NATIONAL FRANCISCAN YOUTH COMMISSION

Yes, I am interested in starting a Franciscan Youth Group. Please send me a packet of ideas.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Region _____

Mail to: Anthony and Mary Mazotti, SFO, Co-Chairs
National Franciscan Youth Commission
P. O. Box 2571, Arnold, CA 95223-2571

Congratulations!

*The Secular Franciscans of
St. Stephen the Martyr Fraternity
announce their Canonical Establishment
Sunday, May 5, 1996
St. Anthony Church
Sterling, Colorado*

Humanitarian Award to SFO Members

Stan and Doris Michalek of St. Frances Cabrini Fraternity, Tacoma, WA, were recent finalists for the Archbishop Hunthausen Humanitarian Award. Their fraternity is proud to have such members who live the Gospel life in Franciscan fashion.

(from Cabrini Herald)

The Life of Manuela Mattioli



A new book is available for those fortunate enough to be able to read Spanish. Vida Y Pensamientos de Manuela Mattioli by Rev. Avelino Martin de Cedillo, OFM Cap, is a work as the title indicates revolving around the life and thoughts of Manuela Mattioli, the first General Minister of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Cost of the book is \$10. For information on ordering contact: Rev. Ulric Buening, OFM Cap, 327 W. Brown St., Milwaukee, WI 53212; phone, 414/374-5750; fax, 414/374-5553.

THOUGHTS FOR THE SHOWER...

*From Joan Faltynski, SFO candidate
St. Ann Fraternity*

The SFO I envision for the future---

In a world ravaged by war...

We need an SFO whose members make a personal and communal vow to give peace a chance in their homes, their parishes, their workplaces and the streets of their city.

When abuse raises its nasty head in the form of spouse battering, neglect and insensitivity to the elderly, or in sexual exploitation of children...

We need SFO membership ready and willing to extend prayerful support, a listening ear, and a voice to the powers that be in the name of those whose cries for help go unheard.

As the eyes of the homeless and hungry in our midst plead for a place to stay and a bit to eat...

We need an SFO whose members roll up their sleeves to prepare a meal for residents of area shelters; or who spearhead a project to provide blankets, clothing and other of life's necessities.

In a society where eternal youth and beautiful bodies are portrayed as ultimate goals to be reached...

We need an SFO which by word and action brings a message of respect for all of life and dignity to the aging process.

In a society when TV is the morning and night prayer of the masses; and talking together is considered an interruption to TV's wisdom...

We need an SFO which combats this societal attitude by publishing materials and sponsoring programs that promote family values and relationships.

When gangs and government threaten to replace Gospel values...

We need an SFO which returns to its roots; relinquishes prestige for poverty, superiority for simplicity, and honor for humility in response to the Franciscan call, "go and rebuild my church."

(continued from page 1)

The index provides a concise summary of our calling as baptized Christians in the modern world.

OUR CALLING AS BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS

Called to holiness

by the witness of holy lives that are formed in suffering for generous service in simplicity of life.

Called to Christian community

in family and parish and small faith communities.

Called to mission and ministry

in the life of the Church, as a sacrament of Christ in the world, and as lay ministers in the Church.

Called to Christian maturity through

caring for children, religious and theological education, respecting difference, participating in the life of the Church, living with Mystery.

(Wording of Index adapted.)



The first chapter, "The Call to Holiness," begins with the following quotation:

Life according to the Spirit, whose fruit is holiness (cf. Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22) stirs up every baptized person and requires each to follow and imitate Jesus Christ, in embracing the beatitudes, in listening and meditating on the Word of God, in conscious and active participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church, in personal prayer, in family or community, in the hunger and thirst for justice, in practice of the commandment of love in all circumstances of life and service to the brethren, especially the least, the poor and the suffering.

(Christifideles Laici, No. 16)

One statement in particular caught my attention as a topic we Secular Franciscans could focus on. On page 18 the Bishops made the following point:

Finally, we urge Catholic laity to bring Christ's peace and justice to the world by working energetically to reclaim national concern for the common good.

(Underline mine.)

Concern for the "common good" has historically been a fundamental teaching of the Church. However, it seems to have been forgotten about in this ear of the I, ME, MINE mind set. As the theme and program for the 1997 Quinquennial Congress continues to develop, an emphasis on the "concern for the common good" should be one of the threads woven into the fabric of the Congress.

Note: Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, United States Catholic conference, Inc., Washington, D. C., 1995. Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium may be purchased through book sellers you normally use.

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Terrace Park, OH 45174
FAX (513) 831-7542
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THINK GLOBALLY

CIOFS NEWS

by Laura Haukaas, SFO, CIOFS Councilor

The governing body of CIOFS met February 1-7, 1996, in Rome. Fr. Zvonimir Brusac of Croatia was welcomed as the new General Spiritual Assistant for the TOR succeeding Fr. Antonio Morichetti.

The theme for the General Elective Chapter to be held in Rome, July 7-14, is "What kind of SFO do we want in the Third Millennium?" (See TAU-USA Fall '95, R. Morton). This theme is part of the preparation of councilors for the election of leaders.

The Presidency will present to that Chapter suggested revisions of the General Constitutions received from the National Fraternities of Brazil, France, Ireland, Denmark, Italy and the U.S.A., the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants and the Juridical Commission. The new Presidency will set up an ad hoc commission to prepare a revised text for approval by the 1999 Chapter.

The Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) will begin preparation for the year 2000. A small group consisting of one member from each family will work on a proposal. Emerenziana Rosato will represent the SFO. Marianne Powell will represent the CFF in dialogue with the Franciscans International Executive Committee regarding the future of FI.

Fr. Hermann Schalueck, OFM Minister General, is preparing a letter to the Franciscan family in connection with the 10th anniversary of the Assisi Prayer Day.

Guidelines for SFO fraternities wishing to promote and guide groups of "Friends of St. Francis" have been approved by the Presidency as a means of spreading love for St. Francis and his message in today's world.

United Nations and the SFO

by Jim and Barbara O'Neill, SFO

Secular Franciscans Jim and Barbara O'Neill, Carol Gentile and Ron Pihokker participated in the United Nations Habitat II PrepCom3 in February. Working with other members of Franciscans International: Director of FI, Ignacio Harding, OFM, Donal O'Mahoney, OFM Cap, Michael Surufka, OFM (USA), Agostinho Diekmann, OFM (Brazil), Prasad Reddy, OFM (India), and Carol Ann Kane, FMM (Kenya), the group addressed: Adequate Shelter for All and Sustainable Human Development.

Habitat is about the role of government at all levels in cooperation with "partners" (Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations and others from the private sector) and human beings all concerned about human development, all working for the betterment of urban and rural areas.

Main issues to be considered were rights of youth, women, children, the poor and all disadvantaged groups; issues of urban and rural planning, land reform, empowerment of local groups and leaders.

Franciscans sponsored a sharing session called "Human Settlements are More Than a Roof...A Dialogue on Solidarity Issues from a Franciscan Perspective." "The spirituality aspect came forth naturally as information about the origins and current activities of the Franciscans was received with interest," said Ignacio Harding.

Secretary General Wally N'Dow stated he was looking for solid progress toward fundamental issues of the post-Istanbul (Istanbul Conference, June, 1996) era: the right to housing and the issue of international cooperation. This conference is being dubbed "The City Summit" due to the influx of people from rural to urban areas around the world. Most of the world's population remains rural.

In addition to Habitat, Franciscans International has been focusing on multiple concerns at the United Nations. Their anti-landmine presentation in the General Assembly lobby was included in a recent CBS-TV special on the UN and religious groups.

FI also participated in the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in March. One of the main focuses was poverty. Speakers told the assembly that solidarity between North and South, governments and civil society, rich and poor, men and women is critical to combating poverty. The point was made that if a woman lives in poverty her children do also. All human resources must be used to eliminate poverty in our time.

It was stated that women's reproductive responsibilities are often seen as their primary functions, restricting access to credit, education and income-earning activities. Women tend to be the major income-earners among poor households; their work tends to be undervalued. Most employment available to women is low-skilled and low-status in many countries.

Women must be allowed to be part of the productive work force of a nation. This can be accomplished only through education and health programs. Women must be involved in decision-making within the work force with active participation in the productive sector.

**1996 -7 The International Year
for the Eradication of Poverty
Franciscans are urged to hold an event
on October 17, 1996
The International Day
for The Eradication of Poverty**



QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS PRAYER I

*We lift up our hearts to you, O Lord.
Hear us and let our prayers rise before you like incense.
Gracious God, we have seen your mighty works
in our world and in ourselves,
and we thank you, Lord.*

*We ask that you make your presence known in
the planning and fulfillment of our Quinquennial Congress.*

*Lord, we are awestruck by the enormity of the prophetic mission
you have entrusted to us.*

*May everyone involved in this Congress
be open to your Spirit.*

*May all participants be rich in patience
and persistent in accomplishing your will
for the good of your people.*

Give us the grace to hear your message and respond to it.

*We ask you to direct our energies in the way
you would have us go.*

*God of Abraham and Sarah,
you have led your people in the past,
lead us now we pray.*

*We ask your blessing upon us, our Congress and our order
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.*

Amen.

Education: Bishops' Public Policy Agenda

by Mary C. Lahiff, SFO, Chair

Fraternity Ministers: Please duplicate and make this article available to your members.

I am in the process of turning over this endeavor to Susan Burke, SFO, of Front Royal, VA, who is exceptionally well qualified by nature, grace and background experience to handle this responsibility. She is a very busy person but I am sure will find the time to give us a better presence at the USCC in Washington and to continue developing our awareness of the Bishops' Public Policy Agenda. Most importantly, Susan is a dedicated Secular Franciscan. Subsequent articles will be written by her.

The 104th Congress has been in session for about three months and we will now concentrate on what our Bishops' priorities are for the months ahead. A quote from John Carr of the Department of Justice and World Peace:

In the months ahead we need to chart our own course, not cheer for any particular party, challenging all candidates to stand up for human life and dignity, to work for greater justice and peace. We need to carry out our legislative advocacy, voter registration, or political registration in ways that challenge voters and candidates, and stand up for unborn children, poor families, workers and immigrants...The Catholic Community is called to advance our principles, not partisan agendas. We need to challenge candidates, not cheer their often selective support for human life and human dignity. We don't have to be partisan to be political...It is a time for consistent and principled political responsibility--the battle to mobilize Catholics is just beginning...How well we seize these opportunities will shape what kind of society we serve for years to come.

CURRENT ISSUES

Welfare and Medicaid

Welfare and Medicaid Reform may be affected by the politics of this election year and its passage avoided until after the election. The proposal presently being debated by Congress in effect ends the current Welfare and Medicaid guarantees of assistance to those in need. Our message should be: **We support genuine welfare reform which rewards work and strengthens families. However, the current proposal will make more children poor, hungry, sick and at risk of abuse and neglect.**

Specifically, our Bishops oppose:

- Loss of the entitlement for women and children to cash benefits, health care, and nutrition programs currently guaranteed under AFDC, Medicaid, and the Food Stamp program;
- A family cap prohibiting states from using federal funds to provide for the needs of children born to mothers on welfare or teen mothers;
- Reductions in the growth of Earned Income Tax Credit which provides essential help to low income working families to support their children;
- Loss of the states' requirement to maintain their current financial commitment to the poor.

Environmental Justice

During the first session of the 104th Congress, the new Republican majority moved a number of environmental issues including "takings" to the top of the legislative agenda. "Takings" refers to the Fifth Amendment Constitutional requirement that requires that government compensate property owners when property is seized for a public good. The crux of the current Congressional debate over takings is whether to extend this protection to the effects of government regulation on the value of property. Proponents claim that regulations, particularly environmental regulations, deprive property of financial value including potential profits. Opponents claim that an extension of takings would undermine basic environmental, public health and worker safety and interfere with local zoning practices. So far, the courts with few exceptions have been reluctant to extend takings to regulatory matters.

Status: The House voted out its version of the Bill and the Senate voted out its version S605, The Omnibus Private Property Rights Act of 1995 sponsored by Robert Dole, which applies its expanded compensation scheme to all federal regulations.

USCC Position: The USCC opposes this Senate version based on several moral principles including: (1) the right to the ownership of private property and the promotion of the common good are moral goods, but private property is a limited good conditioned by its contribution to the common good; (2) the government has a legitimate and necessary role in balancing the private and public dimensions of the common good, including private property, for the benefit of the entire society; and (3) the environment is a common good requiring all parties to exercise stewardship, voluntary restraint and sacrifice for the preservation and promotion of the common good that environmental protection affords.

Action Needed: (1) Defeat S605. Write or contact your Senators to urge rejection of S605 and ask them to address any needed environmental changes through the relevant authorizing legislation, e.g. Superfund, Clear Water, etc. (2) Monitor your state legislatures for local version of takings and urge similar approaches. The issue of takings is now before many state legislatures.

Note: The above is quoted directly from information received from the USCC.

Housing and Community Development

Both the Administration and Congress are working to make HUD more responsive to the nation's housing needs with less money.

Legislative Action: Currently, Congress is considering bills to reform the operation of public housing. By voice vote, the Senate passed S1260 The Public Housing Reform and Empowerment Act of 1995 which revises the public housing program by transferring federal money and authority to the 3400 local housing authorities. The bill creates two block grants, one for operating expenses and the other for construction. Under the proposal the local housing authority, the tenants and local government housing officials would work together to draw up plans describing policies and spending priorities and spending priorities. If approved by HUD these plans would guide the distribution of funds. The bill also: (1) forces the elimination of uninhabitable housing, replacing it with rent vouchers; (2) eases the eviction of tenants for drug related crimes and requires screening of applicants for drug and alcohol problems; (3) replaces Section 8 with vouchers based on local housing markets; (4) alters the "Brook Amendment" by capping the amount of rent by 30% for residents earning below 50% of median income; (5) ends the one for one replacement of demolished units.

The House has similar legislation (HR2406) awaiting floor action. Unfortunately, this bill would eliminate the Brook Amendment that was enacted in 1969 (amended in 1980 to ensure that rents do not exceed 30% of tenants' income.) It appears that the full House will consider HR2406 after the Easter recess in April or May. Numerous organizations including the USCC are involved in a campaign to save the Brook Amendment.

Note: Above quoted from USCC information.

As usual, if you agree with the Bishops' stand, please write your legislators, the President, Governor to let them know where you stand. Act not as a member of the SFO but as a constituent or lay person. Remember, the Church and the Order can educate--the laity make it happen. No one is excused from political responsibility. We do form the society we live in. These laws affect lives.

Mary Lahiff's diligence in studying materials sent by the USCC, synthesizing them into a readable format for our readers, and being wonderfully punctual in regard to TAU-USA deadlines have been a gift to the Secular Franciscan Order. In helping to educate our readers Mary has presented us with information reflecting the view of the Bishops' of the United States. This aids greatly to understanding the complex issues that face our nation. For all the hours of work you have given in this endeavor, we say, "Thank you, Mary." For the times we have failed to act on issues that mattered, we can only say, "Mea culpa!" In honor of Mary's tireless efforts and for the moral good of the USA, may we all be attentive to issues that shape our society.

We welcome Susan Burke to this page for future issues.



RECYCLED PAPER
SOYA INK

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

By Marguerite B. Stein, Canonist to NAFRA

Once, responding to a request by friars that he try and persuade a certain man of good life to join the Order, Francis said in part:

It is for God...to choose and to call those who are suitable for our way of life and to give them grace to be loyal to it....For one of the ways in which the devil will try to destroy the Order will be through bad and thoughtless admissions. Evil spirits will make all kinds of unsuitable men want to join the Order, and will stir up the minds of the Ministers so that they take in large numbers without testing either the firmness of purpose or the kind of motive or the strength of will of those whom they accept. Rather they will be swayed by such things as rank and wealth and learning and ability and reputation....God wills that the Ministers shall accept only such men as have Christ and His Spirit in their hearts and who seek to know the things of God.¹



Francis had great zeal for the perfection of the Order, and when he began to realize that some friars were setting a bad example and had begun to decline from the highest ideals of their profession, his heart was moved to the deepest grief and he once said to the Lord in prayer, "Lord, I return to you the family which you have given me!" Christ responded, in part:

I tell you...do not be too distressed about the others...for I have established the Order of friars in everlasting love. Rest assured that I have so great a love for the Order that if any brother returns to his own vomit and dies outside the Order, I will send another friar into the Order to win a crown in his place; and if such a friar has not been born, I will cause him to be born....I promise that were there only three friars remaining in the entire Order, it would still be My Order, and I will not abandon it to all eternity.²

When Francis was close to death, his loving sons asked that he give them his blessing and leave to them some memorial of his will. Francis replied, in part:

I give my blessing to all my brethren in the Order, and to all who will enter it in time to come until the end of the world....As a sign that they remember me, my blessing and my Testament, I wish them always to love one another, as I have loved them. Let them always love and honour our Lady Poverty, and remain faithful and obedient to the bishops and clergy of holy Mother Church.

When he blessed and absolved all the friars in the Order, both present and to come, Francis used to warn them that they must beware of setting a bad example, and he cursed all who by their bad example caused people to speak ill of the Order and life of the friars, since the good and holy friars are put to disgrace and great distress by such behavior.³

What do these beautiful passages mean to us today as Seculars? They mean that we must discern most carefully as we go about the process of discernment with our inquirers and candidates, not just to make sure that they understand our charism, but to make sure that they will become true contributors to our community, who will strengthen our fraternities and adhere to our principles.

All of us have difficulty sometimes in extending our love and understanding to one or another of our brothers and sisters because of personality problems--in us or in them!--and yet we strive in brotherhood to remember that each of us has been selected by Christ himself as a member of the Order, and that Francis himself wants us to love one another deeply for the good of the Order.

Occasionally, however, we find that our fraternity is upset and disoriented by one particular member who seems to cause constant friction, to engage in frequent verbal conflicts both in and out of fraternity meetings, to upset the atmosphere of the meeting so badly that other members have difficulty in praying, in participating in a relaxed manner, in sharing honest concerns for fear of criticism or ridicule. How to solve this problem in Franciscan charity, for the good of the Order?

One of the provisions of the new Constitutions offers us a clear solution: If one of us has chosen to "return to his vomit" and renounce that loving brotherhood which makes us uniquely Franciscan, he may, after appropriate discussion and dialogue, be suspended from the Fraternity. If his offenses are serious and persistent, and he refuses to abandon the conducts, he may even be recommended to the Regional Council for dismissal from the Order.⁴

Articles 55 through 59 of our 1990 Constitutions cover this situation. **NOTE THAT THE FRATERNITY COUNCIL HAS THE POWER AND THE DUTY (ARTICLE 56) to discuss repeated and prolonged default in the obligations of the life of the Fraternity, and other conduct in serious opposition to the Rule, with the person at fault. This is not the responsibility of the Formation Director or the Minister or anyone but the full Council acting together.**

Bring the offender to a Council meeting and talk with him about the problem. Tell him plainly what it is you object to and how you feel it violates the Rule or fails to live up to the obligations of life in fraternity. Ask for an explanation, and ask that the conduct be regularized. At the end of the meeting, it is wise to make the request of the Council very specific and in writing, signed by Minister or the full Council.

Then give him/her some time to comply.

At this point the member may wish to voluntarily withdraw from the Fraternity. The Council decides whether to grant the request, and notes the action in the Fraternity Register. Now he is excluded from meetings and activities of the Fraternity, including the right to vote or to be elected, but membership in the Order is not affected.

If, after a period of time, the member has not complied with the Council's request, and has demonstrated obstinacy or habitual default, the Council should, after a written warning of its intention to do so, consider by means of a secret vote whether to suspend the offender. If the decision is to suspend, the member is notified in writing, an entry is made in the Register, and the above consequences, exclusion, etc., apply. He remains, however, a member of the Order.

The Secular Franciscan, after voluntary withdrawal or suspension, may ask to be readmitted by addressing a written request to the Minister, and the Council then evaluates whether the causes which led to the action have been overcome; if so, it readmits the member and the fact is noted in the Register.

ARTICLE 58 applies to final actions to dismiss from the Order. A member may make this request to his local Minister, who, after a fraternal dialogue, refers the matter to the Council, which make its decision and lets the member know in writing. The entry is made in the Register of the Fraternity, and is communicated to the Council of the next higher level for its action.

Paragraph 2 of Article 58 refers to those who have publicly rejected the faith or been excommunicated: this dismissal is made by the Regional Council after admonishing and warning the member.⁵

Paragraph 3 of the REGIONAL COUNCIL'S POWER AND DUTY to declare dismissal from the Order at the request of the local Fraternity Council. This is done only after the Region has reviewed the request, together with all the documentation forwarded to them by the local Council, and has verified that the provisions of the (Canon) law and of the Constitutions have been followed. They take a secret written ballot, and if that is the decision, they issue their decree of dismissal and forward it and the documentation to NAFRA's Executive Council.

The decree of dismissal issued by the Regional Council becomes effective only after the National Executive Council has reviewed the documentation and confirmed it. The individual is then notified and entries are made in the appropriate Registers.

Within three months after notification, this decree may be appealed to the International Council of the SFO, and then to the Holy See.⁶

Article 20 of the new National Statutes provides that in the U.S. we follow the above provisions of the Constitutions.

This is a relatively simple way of ensuring that scandalous, contentious, irreverent or "wrong-headed" individuals do not continue to disrupt Fraternity meetings and the Order. Undoubtedly, a charitable and understanding dialogue will suffice to correct almost all problems; but it is comforting to know that, for the good of the Order, we have a way to take measured steps to settle such cases.

And Francis was assured by Christ that, for each Secular who leaves the Order, Christ himself will provide a substitute to gain his crown--and that if necessary Christ will cause the substitute to be born! This is our message of hope in the face of discord.

Peace and all good!

1 *Omnibus of Sources*, ed. Habig, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1973, p. 1844, citing Angelo Clareno's *Expositio Regulae* (ed. L. Oliger), pp. 50-51.

2 *Omnibus of Sources*, supra, p. 1212-13; *Mirror of Perfection*, 81.

3 *Omnibus of Sources*, supra, p. 1221; *Mirror of Perfection*, 87.

4 See Rule, No. 23, par. 4.

5 This action is discussed in the Code of Canon Law, c. 315 and 1733 ff.

6 Code of Canon Law, canons 1732-1739, guarantees the rights of the person at all levels.

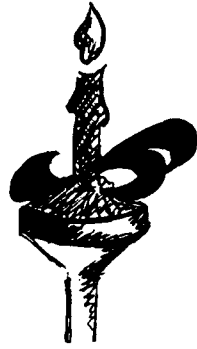
READING FROM



THE RULE

The Lampstand

"You do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket. You set it on a stand where it gives light to all the house. In the same way your light must shine before others so they may see your goodness and give praise to your heavenly Father." (Matthew 5:15-16)



John and Madonna Murphy have been married over 100 years--well, kind of. John was married to Madeleine for 43+ years. Madonna was married to Jack for 46 years. When John and Madonna had been married 7 years, they celebrated each of their 50+ years of marriage. Collectively, they have 11 children. Both of their spouses died of asthma. (John's first wife, Madeleine, suggested that Madonna whom she was barely acquainted with, was the woman John ought to marry after her death. Madonna's daughter picked John for her mother to marry.)

Children of the Great Depression, John and Madonna experienced great poverty. They had lived south of Phoenix, Arizona, in "Tent City," a city block where the homeless were allowed to live. Periodically the city bulldozed the area, and the "residents" had to rebuild their "homes." The two learned to cope with life's tremendous difficulties by becoming daily communicants for more than half a century. Poverty and prayer and the Eucharist have shaped their lives individually and as a couple.

John and Madonna are Eucharistic ministers for the sick and homebound. They belong to the parish bereavement group. John has been a Secular Franciscan over 50 years; Madonna was initiated more recently. John served as treasurer of the National Fraternity. Through the Vincentians, John also served the poor. At Andre House the couple prepared food and served the hungry. John helped out with a prison ministry and at St. Joseph the Worker, a resource center for the homeless and unemployed.

Now in their 80s, the couple volunteers at Malta Center, where they are trained for a specialized ministry working with persons with AIDS and their families.

John and Madonna chose at each turn of their lives to allow grace to work when faced with difficulty. Adversity never caused them to hide their light but to place it on the lampstand. Poverty taught them compassion for the poor which they did not forget when their financial burdens were eased. Caring for sick spouses led to caring for others who are sick and homebound. Madonna also cares for a handicapped

daughter. The loss of their spouses was cause for new love to grow in their lives--for others and for each other. John and Madonna's marriage is clearly a match made in heaven.

(Information for The Lampstand was found in an article, "A Case Study of Second Marriage," by Rev. Joseph Fichtner in Pastoral Life, March, 1996.)

Editor's Note: Marie Amore suggested the "The Lampstand" as a way to tell the stories of Secular Franciscans who live Gospel to life and life to the Gospel. Tell about a Secular you know. Send articles to:

Patti Normile, Newsletter Editor,
609 Amherst Ave., Terrace Park, OH 45174.
Fax: 513/831-7542

FROM THE CNSA

The annual meeting of provincial and regional spiritual assistants will be held September 17-20, 1996, at The Franciscan Center, Tampa, Florida. The theme will be "Sharing the Vision, Sharing the Charism: What We Supposed to Be Doing as Spiritual Assistants?" Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, will serve as facilitator.

Ministerial commitments have prompted the resignations of Conventual National Assistant Fr. Michael Suszynski and the TOR National Assistant Fr. Fabian Sheganowski.

Family Commission Chair, Carol Gentile, requests each Secular Franciscan to send a family picture in anticipation of the next National Fraternity meeting. Pictures might be shared at your local fraternity meeting and then sent together to:

Carol Gentile, SFO
136 Woods Avenue
Monaca, PA 15061

Youth and the Secular Franciscan Order will be featured in our Summer issue. Please send related articles to the editor. Address above.

"Work is dignified because of those who do it."
Steve Donahue quoted in *Dignitas*,
National Work Commission

SECULAR FRANCISCAN 1997 QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS

JULY 15-20, 1997

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
NEWARK, DELAWARE

*"I have come to light a fire on the earth.
How I wish the blaze were ignited!"
Luke 12:49*



A request: Pray for the 1997 Congress. (See prayer page 5)
A suggestion: Wrap this page around a milk carton or oatmeal box and place it in your kitchen.
"Feed" the container loose change/bills for the next year.
Fast, then "feed" the container what your meal might have cost.
By the summer of 1997 you will have a sizeable amount saved to attend the Congress.

Letters from you.....



In reading "Education: Bishops Public Policy Agenda" by Mary C. Lahiff, SFO, I found it to be very informative. In conclusion the question was, "What would Jesus do if he were making his voice heard in the public debate today?" I believe Jesus would do in our generation as He did in His generation. He would not address the problems found in the political, economic and social aspects found in the world today. Jesus' only statement concerning a political question addressed to Him, was His reply to members of Herod's party on the question, "Is it against our law to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor, or not?" Our Lord's reply was, "Pay to the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor and pay to God what belongs to God." Jesus never mixed politics, economics or social issues with the message He came to give. When He began to preach the message, "Turn away from your sins because the Kingdom of Heaven is near," He knew the problem with the human race was sin. Only when men turn away from sin will they find God's blessings and peace. But it would not be the peace that this world gives--prosperity, honors, wealth, power or status. Jesus' peace is found in adversity that leads to the cross amidst sufferings. The promise of the Resurrection is assured for those who have faith.

In Jesus' public life He never referred to the state to assist the poor, but He did command His followers, not only to love the poor, but to be poor. "Happy are those who know that they are spiritually poor, the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them." Our Lord was never concerned in resolving economic, social or political problems of His day. His mission was to be light in the darkness. He set out to call His disciples--fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot, an educated man who would betray Him, Judas--to be catchers of men.

Francis of Assisi captured the message by imitating Jesus. He did not try to change political, economic or social systems of his times, but concentrated on changing hearts. First his own, then those who would listen to him. This influenced people to follow, more his example than his words.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta has not set out to change the system but the hearts of people she touches by following the Gospel, doing good and showing compassion and kindness especially for the poorest of the poor. She does it because of her love for Jesus whose whole life was spent to praise and honor God, to give him glory by doing his will. Pope John Paul II has turned to the laity to become active in everyday politics, economics and social aspects of society by bringing to the market place their faith and the example of their lives. They are unable to do this effectively at this time because too many Catholics in America are not living the faith as they are called to live it. Some have not heard the Gospel message; some live only parts they find convenient or to their liking. Some use the faith for selfish reasons. Some have rejected the Gospel. But for those who accept and live the Good News, help to tame the world to some measure and inherit the Kingdom.

When the Bishops uphold the social agenda of the present

administration, they send a mixed and confusing signal that the social agenda must be protected, even if it affects the life issues. The message given is that we must feed, house and clothe the people before giving the Good News. It appears those who are well clothed, housed and fed are not only not listening to the message but are rejecting it, while the hungry and poor of the world are accepting the Good News. The spiritual hunger of the people must be addressed first, then they will have all that they need to feed, clothe and house them. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Al Rocco, SFO

St. Agnes of Assisi Fraternity

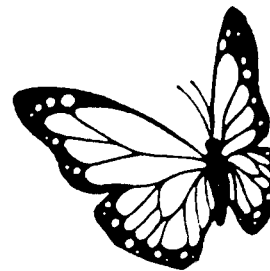
* * * * *

We feel interim commitment would dilute the idea of lifetime commitment as stated in our Constitution. These days, by the time a person decides whether he is grounded in Gospel ENUF, spiritually developed ENUF, doing good works and rebuilding the Church ENUF, reenergizing his roots ENUF, finally made the break through the stained glass from head to heart knowledge, he has passed both the one-year and the three-year extensions given for commitment and further, we believe that call to commitment is call to commitment, a rose is a rose--Amen? Amen!

Council, St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity

Does Francis Make Me Different?

It is wonderful how Francis still affects so many people!
It makes me think of how my life affects others.
When people think of me, do they think of peace?



do they feel loved?
do they feel comfortable?
do they find compassion?
do they experience mercy?
do they find forgiveness?
do they find acceptance?
do they see someone who
lives what she professes?

Does my life make a difference?

by Barbara Luebbers, Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity

1-800-FRANCIS

Marie Amore who fields inquiries about the SFO that are phoned through the -1-800-FRANCIS numbr or through ads announces an improved handling system.

Bill Geary who manages the computerized list of fraternity in the USA has provided Marie with an updated list. From that information she proides interested individuals with the name of a local minister nearest to them. Her prayer is that the fraternity will be a viable and welcoming one. Fraternity ministers will receive copies of letters sent to inquirers. Follow up is the responsibility of the local minister.

Questions Frequently Asked of the National Treasurer

(First in the series)

by John Sanborn, SFO, National Treasurer

[National Treasurer, John Sanborn, has noted that certain questions are asked of him on a regular basis. Consequently, he has prepared a series of articles to address these questions and provide answers for the benefit of all fraternities and members. It would be advantageous for fraternity treasurers to clip and save these articles for future reference.]

A. "Can I deduct my donations to the fraternity on my tax return?"

Ans. The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA is exempt from all federal taxation under IRC 501(c)(3) as part of the umbrella group of the United States Catholic Conference, Group Exemption Number 0928. In addition, each constituent part (fraternities, regions, provinces) of the National Fraternity is also tax exempt. Your donations to the fraternity, region, etc., no matter what amount, are therefore deductible on your federal income tax return.

B. "I made a large donation to the fraternity this year and I need the IRS form to send in with my tax return to prove it."

Ans. Internal Revenue Code Section 170(f)(8) requires that charitable contributions of \$250 or more, made on or after January 1, 1994, must be substantiated by a contemporaneous written acknowledgment from the donee organization. That means the fraternity (or region, etc.) must send you an acknowledgment showing the amount donated. Smaller gifts do not have to be acknowledged ever if they total \$250 or more. Keep the acknowledgement letter with your other tax records. Do not send it in with your tax return.

C. "As treasurer do I have to record the details of all donations received from the membership when traditionally we have never done so, preferring to keep this anonymous?"

Ans. The General Constitutions, Art. 52, states: "4. The treasurer, or bursar, has the following duties: (a) to guard diligently the contributions received, recording each receipt in the appropriate register, with the date on which it was given, the name of the contributor, or the one from whom it was collected". If members do not want donations to be recorded in detail, they have the option of giving cash into the common fund with no identification attached. If however they pay by check, or in an envelope with a name on it, it must be assumed they wish a record to be kept of it. Of course all records kept are strictly confidential, and should not be made available to anyone other than the Council, the fraternal visitor, or legitimate governmental agencies.

D. "I am bogged down by the legal details of incorporating our new region. I hope you can help."

Ans. There is no requirement to incorporate, and I see no advantage to doing so. My advice is to stop what you are doing; don't incorporate unless you can see a very clear cut, distinct advantage to it. There are some distinct disadvantages to incorporation, not the least of which are the lawyer's fees and filing fees. In addition, most states require that you maintain an office in the state of incorporation, and have available a designated officer or other contact person at that office. This could run into some expense, and difficulties when changes are made. Additional fees are required whenever a change of location or contact person, or corporate name, and maybe even every time new officers are elected (the officers of the corporation would be the elected council, headed by the president-minister). The question of limited liability is one which I was never able to get any satisfactory answers to. In any event, I assume insurance should take care of that issue. Please also note that if you incorporate the region, you will no longer be part of the umbrella tax exemption of the National Fraternity. You will have to make a separate filing through the local diocese, the procedure for which I am not familiar.

HAPPENINGS

SFO NETWORKING CORNER

Below are names and addresses of Seculars interested in networking with other Seculars of similar interests. If you wish to correspond with Seculars in your field of interest, share ideas, techniques, creativity, here is your chance. With courtesy and love, doors can open to new and rewarding friendships. Give it a try! If you wish to be listed, send your name, address and interest/profession, etc. to:

Mrs. Mary K Mazotti, SFO Networking
P. O. Box 2571
Arnold, CA 95223-2571

Names will be printed once. Save lists.

Secular living in "the sticks" interested in hospital & Eucharistic ministry and visiting the sick:

Diane Bertin, SFO
110 Jasper Street
Berlin, NH 03570

Retired garment worker, hobbies: reading, sewing, evangelizing the Word of God:

Helen M. Wozniak, SFO
818 Tawas Street
Alpena, MI 49707-1756

How do you use the Networking Corner?

Write to Mary Mazotti about ways the feature benefits you.

INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCAN LIFE

St. Francis College offers a correspondence program on contemporary Franciscan living. First course, FRAN201, is a 3-credit course; cost, \$275. For registration form or further information, contact Saint Francis College, Loretto, PA, (814) 472-3219.

SELF, "Secular Experience of Living Franciscanism," will hold its 13th annual program July 29-August 2 at the Bishop Malloy Passionist Retreat House, Jamaica, NY. For information on this year's program on "Evangelization," contact Jeanne Rocco, 125 Venetian Blvd., Lindenhurst, NY 11757-6107; call 516/957-6224.

Franciscans Online

SFO documents already on the INTERNET include: a weekly bulletin on the SFO, SFO Rule, General Constitutions, Statutes for Assistance, Franciscan Youth, Acts of SFO General Chapter 1993, and the international address list.

General Constitutions of the SFO and *Statutes for Pastoral Assistance to the SFO* will not be up for approval by the SFO General Chapter in 1999. The text is available in English, French, Italian or Spanish. It can be downloaded from the INTERNET. Free copies are also available by E-mail, Fax or regular mail.

The SFO bulletin is called CIOFS-L and is hosted at: LISTSERV@AMERICAN.EDU. It is distributed to more than 200 persons in 23 countries. It carries all the material of *Koinonia*, of the *CIOFS Bulletin* and of the *Letter from Rome to the Assistants of the SFO*. You can request it free of charge by sending an E-mail message.

E-mail address: OFM.CAP@AGORA.STM.IT
INTERNET: <http://listserv.americana.edu/catholic/franciscan/ciofs/ciofse.html>
Fax: +39 - 6 - 482 8267

Mail: Tertius Ordo

Via Piemonte 70, 00187 ROMA, ITALIA

(Information from *Tertius Ordo*, Ben Brevoort, OFM Cap)



DOES YOUR FRATERNITY NEED A MINISTRY?

Consider CHAP--Church Assistance Program. The program is designed to enable groups to provide assistance to those seeking assistance with drug and alcohol abuse and addiction, mental health problems such as eating disorders and depression. For information contact Carol Gentile, SFO, NAFRA Family Chairperson, 136 Woods Avenue, Monaca, PA 15061 (412) 775-4248.

Franciscan Family Apostolate

To receive information about supporting an impoverished family in India through Franciscan Family Apostolate, return the following to:

Alan Ouimet, SFO
Franciscan Family Apostolate
303 Church Street
Guilford, CT 06437

Name _____

Fraternity _____

Address _____



MORE HAPPENINGS

Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs

Travel to places of spiritual interest is made possible by Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs. The group travel offers ease, economy and education by Franciscan friars. You will be in the company of others with similar interests in holy places.

Tours offered include:

Mexico Marian Pilgrimage	October 6-14, 1996
plus Puerto Vallarta	October 14-17, 1996
The Holy Land	October 5-16, 1996
Central California Missions	November 2-9, 1996

For information about any of the above tours contact:

Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs

1648 South 37th Street

Milwaukee, WI 53215-1724 USA

Phone: 414/383-9870

Fax: 414/383-0335

The Franciscan Store

Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs gave over \$30,000 in scholarships for this year's programs. The Franciscan Store aids in providing these scholarship funds.

The store offers a variety of items with a Franciscan flavor: cards and crucifixes, tapes and tiles, books and birdhouses, jewelry and much more. For information contact:

The Franciscan Store

1648 S. 37th Street

Milwaukee, WI 53215-1742

Phone: 414/672-7946 Fax: 414/383-0335

Note: The Franciscan Store will be moving to Pulaski, WI this summer. Look for new address and numbers.

St. Anthony Retreat

Planning a retreat or day of recollection for 1997? Plan one with St. Anthony of Padua, one of our order's greatest preachers and wonder workers.

Madeline Pecora Nugent, SFO, author of St. Anthony: Words of Fire, Life of Light, presents St. Anthony's sermons as retreats and days of recollection along with other stories of the saint's life. Arrangements can be made by calling Saints' Stories, Inc., 401/849-5421 or writing 520 Oliphant Lane, Middletown, RI 02842-4600. The sponsoring fraternity is asked to provide a priest for Mass, Benediction and Confession. No fee is asked although the sponsoring group is asked to cover the speaker's expenses and may wish to give presenter and priest a stipend.

Invitation is extended to SFO members to attend such a retreat at Fatima Renewal Center, Dalton, PA (near Scranton) June 7-9. Cost is \$85. For information call 717/563-8500.

CELEBRATE FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS IN ASSISI

Visit Padua, Venice, Ravenna, Florence, Siena, LaVerna, Rome and Vatican City. Fr. Felix Petrovsky, OFM Cap, will lead a pilgrimage to Franciscan Italy, September 27-October 11, 1996. For information call Fr. Felix in Lawrence, KS (913-749-5064) or Hays Travel (1-800-423-3970); in Hays, 628-2808.

National Wildflower Week

"He commanded the gardener to leave the border around the garden undug, so that in their proper times the greenness of the grass and the beauty of the flowers might announce the beauty of the Father in all things. He commanded that a little place be set aside in the garden for sweet-smelling and flowering plants, so that they would bring those who look upon them to the memory of the Eternal Sweetness."

The Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano

National Wildflower Week 1996 will be history by the time TAU-USA reaches your mailbox. It is not too late, however, to note that this nationwide event is sponsored by the Secular Franciscan Order, USA. Sponsorship echoes the inspiration of the SFO Rule, Chapter II, Article 18: "Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which bear 'the imprint of the Most High,' and move away from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship."

National Wildflower Week was established in 1989 by Edward Piela, Chicopee, MA, and Charles Spencer, SFO, West Springfield, MA, co-founders of the American Wildflower Society. Upon Piela's death in 1992, the Society disbanded leaving NWW without a sponsor until the SFO accepted sponsorship in 1995.

The *Franciscan Wildflower Restoration Initiative* instituted in 1994 saw about 60 Franciscan wildflower gardens for this season. Approximately \$2500 has been raised through the project for the poor and other fraternity apostolates. Fraternities wishing to participate in 1996 may contact:

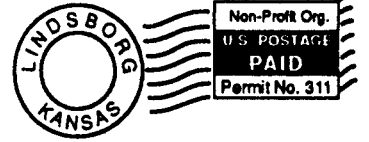
Charles Spencer, SFO, Chair
National Ecology Commission
107 Jensen Circle
West Springfield, MA 01089-4451
E-mail: cspencer@map.com

National Wildflower Week 1997 will be May 4-10.

*Plant a tree in observance of
World Environment Day June 5.*

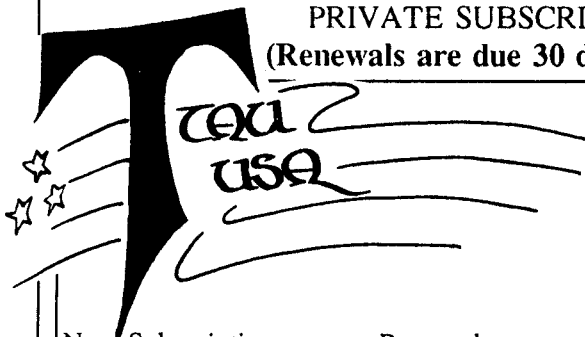
(above information from *The Guardian of Creation*)

SECULAR FRANCISCAN PUBLICATIONS
NATIONAL FRATERNITY
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
108 N. MAIN STREET, PO BOX 189
LINDSBORG, KS 67456-0189



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TAU-USA
The National Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order
c/o Dolores Smelko, SFO
RD 1, Box 155
Anita, PA 15711

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Please make check payable to NAFRA and send to the above address. Domestic subscriptions are \$4.00 per year (4 issues); Canadian, \$5.00; foreign, \$6.00. If this is a renewal, and your name and address on this newsletter are correct, simply check renewal.