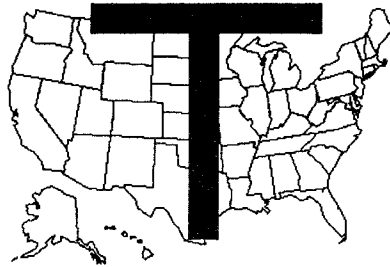


THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY
of
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER



Newsletter

Summer, 1992

**CHRIST'S FAITHFUL PEOPLE
INTO THE VINEYARD?**

**Richard Morton, SFO
National Minister**

"The reign of God is like the case of the owner of an estate who went out at dawn to hire workmen for his vineyard. After reaching an agreement with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them out to his vineyard. He came out about midmorning and saw other men standing around the market place without work, so he said to them, 'You too go along to my vineyard and I will pay you whatever is fair.' At that they went away. He came out again around noon and midafternoon and did the same. Finally, going out in late afternoon he found still others standing around. To these he said, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' 'No one has hired us,' they told him. He said, 'You go into my vineyard too.'" (Mt. 20: 1-7.)

Working in a vineyard is not the easiest task in the world. As summertime employment, it is hot, dry, dusty, buggy, and just plain hard work. The kind most of us would avoid if we could. Perhaps this is why many of those in the market place failed to respond

the first time they were invited. In fact, some may have avoided the invitation several times and maybe a few avoided going at all even after receiving five invitations.

Working in vineyards is not reserved just for farm workers and vineyards are not just for growing grapes. Our Lord Jesus Christ also has a vineyard into which he invites us to work. His vineyard is creation, and the fruit to be harvested is that of the souls of all of God's people.

In responding to Christ's invitation to "Come, work in my vineyard." those of us who are can, have a choice: we can say yes, or we can say no. When deciding on our response, we soon realize that there is no middle ground. We either go and work in the fields or we turn our backs on an opportunity to participate in the building of the Kingdom.

When we choose to do the work, it is most often a rewarding experience. Many times, it turns out not to be work at all, but a joy, a chance to serve, and a chance to grow. Working in the vineyard many times calls us to leave our comfort zone, the place or the circumstances of our life where we are not at risk. It is an opportunity to face the unex-

pected, the unknown, sometimes to face rejection, criticism, ridicule, and the like (just as Jesus did).

If we decline the opportunity to go and work, we need to ask ourselves why. One answer may lie in the following comment in Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation, *The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World (Christifideles Laici)*:

"The temptation of being so strongly interested in Church services and tasks (is) that some fail to become actively engaged in their responsibilities in the professional, social, cultural, and political world; and the temptation of legitimizing the unwarranted separation of faith from life, that is, a separation of the Gospel's acceptance from the actual living of the Gospel in various situations in the world." (p. 12).

We can stay in our "comfort zone," and become "so strongly interested in Church services and tasks" that we fail to. . . "become actively engaged. . ." and to "live the gospel."

However:

"Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel." (Rule, par. 4).

So do we, as Secular Franciscans, have a choice as to whether or not we are to work in Christ's vineyard if we are to be faithful to our Rule? It would seem not.

Concerned about how to go into the vineyard? Why not attend the Quinquennial Congress. The theme of the congress "Christ's Faithful People, the Challenge and Response," provides us with a chance to better experience and to learn of the opportunities, challenges, and invitations to go out into the world, to be

a leaven, and to be an instrument of peace and change. The Holy Father's Apostolic Exhortation is one of the reference documents to be used for the Congress. As Secular Franciscans, it is not enough to just closet ourselves within the security of "Church services and tasks;" we must, to the extent we are able, infiltrate society to help enable it to become the Kingdom of God on earth.

Are you planning to attend the Congress? I challenge every fraternity to sponsor at least one member by paying all or a sizeable portion of the expenses. That way, the expense to attend can be shared by the entire community. The person attending can bring back the story of the Congress and share it with the sisters and brothers. Here is an excellent opportunity to have one of the younger members have a chance to see a broader view of the Order than just that of the local fraternity.

Hope to see all of you there.
God bless you.

INTERNATIONAL LETTER

A letter from our Minister General to the National Minister indicated that our election proposal is acceptable. The elections held in 1991 are for the usual three years; 1992 will be for a two year term, and 1993 will be for a one year term. As of 1994, we will be on the required schedule of National elections once every three years.

AD MULTOS ANNOS

Congratulations and prayerful good wishes to Rev. Richard A. Portasik, OFM on the 40th anniversary of his ordination. Fr. Richard is the Spiritual Assistant of Holy Savior Secular Franciscan Province.

SUMMIT ON THE MOUNT

In mid-March, at Mount St. Francis, Indiana, the Regionalization Committee met, followed by meetings of the Executive Council and the Apostolic Commissions. Separate and joint brainstorming sessions were held.

Regionalization Committee

The Regionalization Committee recommended approval of five emerging regions: three in the California area, one in the Minnesota area, and one in Florida-South Georgia.

It also received two requests: one for an ethnic region and one for an Eastern Rite region. The Committee, while sympathetic to the requests, could not support them because it would create a structure analogous to the one that we are to discontinue. Also we must follow the example of the Church which does not establish ethnic dioceses.

Executive Council

The Council approved the above recommendation of the Regionalization Committee.

A committee of spiritual assistants and Seculars are preparing guidelines for regional spiritual assistants.

A handbook of procedures and definitions is to be prepared for all levels of fraternity. It is to serve as a guideline until the National Statutes are revised and approved by the International.

(Ed. note: Regional and provincial statutes must be approved by the National Executive Council. Until the National Statutes are approved by the International, the Council cannot approve regionals or provincials. It will probably be two years minimum before new National statutes are in place. Considering the schedule for regionalization of the U.S., it is a moot point whether provincial statutes will be needed long enough to justify rewriting.)

Newsletter

The Editor reported that, as of the beginning of March, the publication was nearing 1800 mailings. Private subscriptions paid for two of the 1991 issues. Because of the necessity of getting information to as many SFOs as possible, the subscription price will remain the same as long as possible.

Treasurer's Report

See Tax Status, p. 4

National Formation Commission

Progress on the Franciscan studies correspondence courses continues. Preliminary discussions with Middle States Accreditation Association have paved the way for the issuance of proper credentials.

The first course in the series on Franciscan sources will be written by Fr. Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap, of the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. Other faculty members are being sought to sponsor the effort, planned to begin in September.

It is still anticipated that the program will be a certificate program, requiring a bachelor's degree for admittance as well as letters of recommendation. The course of study will include 24 to 30 credits. Those without the proper credentials will be able to take up to 21 credits (possibly continuing education credits), but not receive the certificate.

Apostolic Commissions

The Commissioners expect to begin publication of a newsletter sometime this year.

They reported an increase in provincial and local fraternity response and activity with the greatest activity being in the areas of Family and Peace & Justice.

TAX STATUS

John Sanborn, SFO, National Treasurer, has received the following information from the General Counsel to the U.S. Catholic Conference:

The National Fraternity, as an Order within the Roman Catholic Church, is listed in the annual Official Catholic Directory and, thus, is exempt from federal income, gift, estate, and unemployment taxes under the USCC Group Ruling.

The Order is not exempt from payment of Social Security tax for any employees. To avoid FICA tax, hire independent contractors when possible and do not "exercise 'direction and control' over them in such a manner as to make them appear to be employees."

Please note that the Group Ruling applies only to federal taxes. Exemption from state and local taxes, including sales tax, must be sought separately from the appropriate state or local tax authorities.

The Group Ruling, which gives exemption from federal taxes, applies to regions, provinces, and local fraternities **except** those that are incorporated. Incorporated regions, provinces, and local fraternities must seek their own listing in the Official Catholic Directory.

Donations/bequests made to the SFO are tax deductible.

Tax form 990 does not have to be filed by any level of fraternity.

Lobbying is allowed as long as "it is an insubstantial part of total activities."

N.B.: "insubstantial" has never been defined; extreme caution is recommended.

Participating in or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office is forbidden.

The restrictions on lobbying and campaigning obviously apply to the Order and its members who might identify themselves as SFOs. Such activities must never be done in the name of the Order.

If your province or local fraternity is incorporated, or if you have any questions, please contact the National Treasurer:

Mr. John K. Sanborn, SFO
1611 West River Parkway
Grand Island, NY 14072

YOUR HELP, PLEASE. WHERE IS -

Mrs. Dora Pawlowski, SFO
852 Brian Court
Rochester, MI 48063

The Postal Service returned the Spring issue of the *Newsletter*. Can someone supply Dora's correct address, please?

QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS

Dayton, Ohio

August 2 - 7, 1992

Have you seen the Delta and
U.S. Air discounts?

For information write to:

Miss Catherine Miltz, SFO
1615 Vine Street,
Cincinnati, OH 45210

MARY AND OUR FRANCISCAN CALLING

Rev. Lawrence Landini, OFM
Conf. National Spiritual Assistants

The Secular Franciscan Rule reminds us of the great affection Francis had for Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Article 9 echoes the words of St. Bonaventure, "He embraced the Mother of Our Lord Jesus with indescribable love, because, as he said, it was she who made the Lord of majesty our brother... After Christ, he put all his trust in her and took her as his patroness for himself and his Friars." (*Legenda Major, IX, 2; Omnibus, 699*). Francis and Mary are thus bound together in their mutual love for Christ and similarly challenge us to a Christ-centered life.

The Rule then draws attention to the source of Mary's blessedness, which was her lowliness, as a "humble servant of the Lord." Mary's lowliness and poverty were the reasons why Francis of Assisi, the Minor, the little brother, came to love her above all else after Jesus Christ. The lowliness of Mary was linked in the mind of Francis with the poverty of Jesus, who emptied Himself and became a human being, accepting death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2: 7-8). Francis expresses this link in the Letter to the Faithful. He writes, "He was rich beyond measure and yet He and His holy Mother chose poverty" (*Omnibus, 93*).

Such love calls for imitation and service. Francis' love for Christ and Mary led him to embrace the lowliness of that poverty and humility by which we all have become rich (2 Cor 8:9). Similarly, the Rule calls for imitation of Mary's complete self-giving. The gift of self in humble service is an apt expression of Franciscan lowliness and poverty.

In imitation of Christ "who chose for Himself and His Mother a poor and humble life," the

Rule suggests further ways of imitating the lowliness of Mary and Francis. Secular Franciscans are to "purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power." They are to "seek a proper spirit of detachment by simplifying their material needs." They are to use wisely the goods of this world (Art. 11). They are to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they should strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ (Art. 13).

There is also a deep poverty and lowliness involved in the freedom called for in Article 12. The Rule reads: "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." Such freedom in poverty would keep Franciscans from ever trying to dominate or control others. Such genuine love in the spirit of poverty would keep them from laying claim to relationships which bind others to selfish whims. The loving freedom of the poor person would never lay claim to money, power, prestige, in order to define oneself or to "lord it over another".

An appreciation of Mary "who was open to His every word and call," (Art. 9) speaks to the vocation of going from "Gospel to life and from life to gospel." (Art. 4) Mary models what it means to ponder the Word of God (Luke 2:51). Love for Mary, says the Rule, leads to imitating her earnest and confident prayer. As for Jesus and Mary, contemplation becomes "the soul of all they are and do" (Art. 8).

The many touch points between Mary and the Secular Franciscan Rule come together in the Eucharist. The cultivation of Sacred Scripture, lowliness before God and others, awareness of God's presence and humble sacrificial service of others are all contained

in the Eucharist. The joyous spirit of her Magnificat, Mary's hymn of wonder and praise, fills the heart of every member of the Franciscan Family gathered around God's holy table.

For such reasons, Francis made Mary the protectress and advocate of the Franciscan family. She protects the essential elements of our Franciscan calling by her way of life. Through her powerful intercession, she is our advocate in our efforts to live the Rule as we have promised. May we desire to embrace her with Francis' kind of indescribable love.

J.D.L. CHARITABLE FUND

Missionaries of Charity
"Gift of Mary"
2714 W. 9th St.
Chester, PA 19013

Dear Mr. Morton and all in Jesus,

Let us praise and thank our Loving Father for sending us His only Son that we may have life and have it to the full.

Thank you for your gift of love to Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poorest of the poor.

Your gift enables us to give something of God's own love and care to His poor that they may know and believe that God is their loving Father.

Our gratitude is our sincere prayer for you. May God bless you all and pour upon you all His choicest Graces and Blessings and fill your heart with His joy.

God bless you.
Sincerely in Jesus,

Sr. Suma Rani, MC

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Pax et Bonum! I feel I must reply to your article "A Few Thoughts: in the Spring edition of the Nation Newsletter. While I understand your feelings that the Minister of the National Fraternity should be a CIOFS representative for that nation, I cannot agree to a term of only three years for the person who represents the nation, irregardless of whether that person is the National Minister.

It has been my experience and that of other representatives who have served the National Fraternity in this office, that being at a gathering of the International Fraternity is a "whole new ballgame". First of all the International Fraternity usually meets only once every three years. There are language differences, cultural differences to say nothing of the very structure of the meetings which is so different. There are many other areas which cannot be prepared for or even anticipated until you are present. It takes your first meeting to get a better understanding of CIOFS and what is expected of you. It takes that first meeting to determine ways to work with people from so many different nations to build a Secular Franciscan Order that is God's instrument in the secular world.

The second meeting, normally three years later, unless a special meeting has been called, is a time when you have a better "handle" on what is happening. You have met your brothers and sisters from around the world and already have a sense of being "family" as well as a working relationship with them. In many cases, these persons are not the national minister of the country they represent.

I truly believe that if the National Directive Board elects a person to the office of a CIOFS councilor, that person would be the one who is best qualified, in the judgment of that

board, whether that person is the National Minister or not.

It remains to be seen at the coming meeting of CIOFS whether representation in the CIOFS International Fraternity will be determined by the number of Secular Franciscans in a country or whether each nation will have just one representative. However, I agree with the constitutions that a six year term is necessary to give the best service to the country and the Order which you represent.

God bless you and reward you for all you do for the Secular Franciscans of the United States.

Your Sister in Christ and St. Francis,
Marie Amore

(Marie is Minister of the Province of St. Joseph and a Councillor to CIOFS.)

REGRESSIONS

Dr. Joseph J. Halka, SFO,
Chair, Work Commission

The lingering recession of the past two years conjures up a more disturbing specter than we have ever had to face in our history as a nation. Economically, ethically, educationally, and environmentally, we have entered a phase of regression. We can no longer expect that our children will be better off than our generation. Those things for which we worked so hard, fought so tenaciously, struggled so hopefully are eluding our grasp. Modern science has failed us as an alternative religion, and we have not found another god to save us from ourselves.

Greed has driven up the cost of doing business, greed both of the producers and the managers. The producers find the job markets dwindling, fleeing to foreign shores, or becoming low paid service oriented. Managers see profits eroding, quality debasing, and ownership emigrating. The producers must

settle for less just to survive. The managers fashion golden parachutes for their financial safety with no thought for the safety of others, or the next generation of their countrymen.

After almost a century of agnostic, a-religious, amoral education, the dream of John Dewey has become a nightmare of reality. Humanism has failed to inspire humans to greatness and instead has erected a monument to mediocrity.

Christian schools have been decimated by lack of funds even at a time when their success has never been more apparent. Gone are the self-sacrificing men and women religious whose apostolate of Christian education made our parochial school system the marvel of the western world. Gone in their wake are the self-sacrificing parent, pastors, and pioneers. Catholics move away from the narrow confines of their religious ghettos under the burden of environmental abuse and misuse. Our democratic institutions seem unwilling or unable to find solutions amid our growing uneasiness. We patch, cover, and gloss over the root causes of our discontent.

Now is the time for all good men and women to examine their choices, not only for the good of the country, but for the good of their souls. If the catalogue of failures, perils, and risks seems overwhelming, the prescription for their cure is limited. Victory is not to the swift, but to the pure of heart whose cause is just. Now as always is the time to set our priorities straight. Now is the time to ascend the mount of the decalogue, the mount of the beatitudes, the mount of simplicity to regain our perspective on life itself. From those heights we will have a clear vision of our manifest destiny. There we will rediscover the direction to the promised land of true freedom. But who can lead us safely, for the road is steep and narrow? Who will be our guide? His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Prince of Peace!

FAIR PUBLIC POLICY IN FUNDING EDUCATION - A MATTER OF JUSTICE

Mary C. Lahiff, SFO

Did you know that the U.S. Government is seeking innovative ways to improve education over the next ten years by a program called America 2000? It is a well recognized fact that public school education is just not doing the job.

The education of our children is the responsibility primarily of the parents and then of the schools. Schools have a tremendous impact on our youth. Unfortunately, when the public school system has attempted to include principles of a religious, moral, or Christian ethical nature, they have been challenged in the courts and, as a result, have now been reduced to the lowest common denominator. Public schools have been left with Secular Humanism and nothing of the Judaic/Christian principles on which this country was founded.

Catholic and other religious schools, on the other hand, continue to educate the whole person, giving each child a sense of self-worth as a child of a loving God and a sense of moral, ethical, and religious values. Of course, the basics of a well-rounded academic curriculum, taught in this environment, form pupils well equipped to meet the challenges of today's society. They have a disciplined work ethic, are able to solve problems, and take an interest in the welfare of others.

This is now a well established and recognized reality. In fact, in some of our large cities, local corporations are contributing to the funding of our Catholic inner city schools in order to keep them open.

Personally, I have long felt the injustice of paying high taxes to support the public school system when no part of that tax money fol-

lows the child who attends the parochial school. Most of us who are Catholic just accept this policy and do not challenge it.

But a change is on the horizon and will come about provided we show our support for it. The idea of tax money following the child to the school of the parents' choice, whether it be public, private, or religious, by means of a voucher system is a policy supported publicly by our current President and some members of Congress. Also, this same voucher system has been proposed in some state legislatures. Ohio has a bill, recently introduced, involving this system in an experimental five year program. Other states are experimenting with the idea too. Our own elected officials need to hear from us on how we feel on the issue. Write to your own state representative and senator. Also write to your U.S. senators and representative and to the President; let them know how you feel.

These bills open debate on the volatile issue of using public money to subsidize private school tuition. The public education establishment opposes it, because it would break their monopoly on education. Competition would, in fact, upgrade all schools. Extremists oppose it because they say it violates the Constitutional separation of Church and State. This is a fraud. The Constitution states: "Congress shall make no laws establishing a religion and shall promote the free exercise thereof;..." (Emphasis added.) The last half of the clause is overlooked.

The Bishops of the United States exhort the laity to join in supporting government efforts to provide financial assistance to all parents enabling them to choose the type of schooling they desire for their children.

Our Rule and Constitutions exhort us to have an active presence in the Church and in society.

Our parochial school system is at stake. Our elected representatives must hear from those of us who support this voucher plan effort. Inform your friends and parish organizations. This program can be achieved, but not unless we work at it. Will you help?

(Mary is Minister of St. Anthony Fraternity in Elyria, Ohio. For more information contact her directly at:
1260 Lakeland Ave., Lakewood, OH 44107.)

1991 NATIONAL REPORT TO CIOFS

Laura Haukaas, SFO
CIOFS Councilor

Membership:

Professed	23,129
Candidates	937
Inquirers	392

820 inactive members reported by provinces and the membership of four provinces that refuse to communicate are not included in the report.

Fraternities:

National	1
Provincial	27
Regional	1
Local	860

Emerging Local Frats	43
Emerging Regions	5

Each fraternity has an elected executive council and is automatically a member of the immediate higher fraternity. The National Fraternity is composed of the Executive Council, CIOFS Councilors, Provincial/Regional Ministers, and National/Provincial/Regional Spiritual Assistants. Commission chairmen are non-voting members.

Commissions:

The National Formation Commission, chaired by one of the three National Vice Ministers, develops formation and leadership materials, publishes a newsletter, presents workshops on

both leadership and formation and is presently working to establish a correspondence course to obtain a degree in Franciscan spirituality.

The Apostolic Commissions (Work, Family, Ecology, Peace & Justice) are coordinated by a National Vice Minister who represents them on the National Executive Council. To eliminate duplication of efforts the chairpersons of these commissions meet as a group to develop programs. A member of the Peace and Justice Commission is affiliated with the Franciscans at the U.N. Efforts are being made to increase Secular Franciscan membership in this worldwide effort to insure full accreditation as NGO members.

Each local fraternity is encouraged to have a commission and commission chairperson modelling the National Commissions.

Regionalization:

The first Region (Ohana O Ke Anuenue, HI) was approved for membership, October, 1991. The West Coast Area (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, and parts of Nevada, Utah, and Montana) is in the development stage. This area consists of four provinces who continue to support and oversee the appointed leadership. Several other areas are working toward this geographical alignment. Ethnic groups are seeking regional status which must be addressed by the National Regionalization Committee. This committee is chaired by a representative of the National Executive Council. The goal to complete the process of Regionalization is 1996.

JUFRA:

The Region of Hawaii has a small group of high school and college students meeting. One youth group has been reported which consists of 10 members ages 6-12 who are children of Secular members. Their meet-

ings include study and activity. They do not consider it a baby sitting group. In the Southwest Area efforts are being made to introduce the youth to the JUFRA groups that are affiliated with Mexico. This lack of activity with our youth is considered a glaring omission in our National Fraternity.

APOSTOLATES:

The apostolates are many, particularly individual. A partial list with fraternities participating as a group includes: Feed and clothe the hungry (15), Hospital and nursing home (13), Mission and parish outreach (9), Right to Life groups (10), Abused women and children (4), AIDS ministry (6). Other unique fraternity apostolates are working with Down's Syndrome, letter writing campaigns, seed distribution, and prison ministry.

Fraternity is developed and maintained by the annual National Chapter and a variety of gatherings at local and regional levels. A National Quinquennial Congress is being planned for August, 1992. The National *Newsletter* is published quarterly and a publication, *Lift Up Your Heart* for shut-in members is published monthly.

An annual report will be developed so that a more accurate accounting of the membership and activities in the United States can be reported to the Presidency. Financial support of the National Fraternity is now \$2 based on professed membership of which twenty cents will be sent to the Presidency. Communication from the Presidency to the National is sincerely appreciated and we intend to cooperate fully.

NATIONAL DIRECTORY UPDATE

Page 2, St. Barbara Provincial Minister

Mrs. Diane Halal, SFO
11741 Cherry Street
Los Alamitos, CA 90720
(213)596-3162

NAME THAT REGION

We've become so used to having the name of a friar province that the necessity of naming a new region takes us a bit off guard.

These are the rules:

1. The names of current provinces will not be allowed.
2. Duplicate names will not be allowed, regardless of geographic separation.
3. Duplication will be permitted, if the language is sufficiently different; e.g., Luis Rey and King Louis would be OK.

For those fraternities that now qualify as an emerging region, or for those who will shortly qualify, one of your first dutys should be name selection. Fr. Larry Landini, OFM, who is a member of the Regionalization Committee, has suggested that there be study of and emphasis placed on the names of Secular saints and blessed.

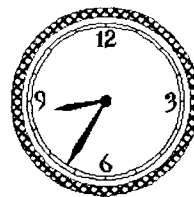
As soon as the emerging region has decided on TWO names (first and second choice in case another region already has the first choice), send it to:

Mr. Richard Morton, SFO
3191 71st Street East

Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

If the name is available and acceptable, Dick will notify you, and the name is yours!

TIME IS GETTING SHORT.



**HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR THE
QUINQUENNIAL?
DO IT NOW!**

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS!

Dr. Marguerite B. Stein, SFO
Canonist

BROTHERS, SISTERS - HEAR THE ALARM ...our numbers are dwindling in America, and new Seculars, the vital life-blood of Francis in today's world, are not emerging as replacements. How many times in recent years have you and other Seculars joined in a discussion of this, shaking your heads over fraternities becoming inactive or limited in their apostolic work for lack of energetic members. "How can we attract others to join with us in our inspiring life?" goes the question. "We are an Order, not a sodality or club," goes the answer. "It would be unsuitable for us to engage in anything like advertising." And so the subject dies again, with an excuse for inaction. We are dying of inertia.

What would Francis say to this attitude? Remember the day when Francis heard the Gospel telling how the Lord sent his disciples out to preach, with no money, no wallet, no bread, no staff, no shoes or two tunics, and Francis cried out:

*"This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart."*¹

How did Francis think of himself as he went about his business in the world? Remember when he was going through the woods singing the Lord's praises in French and robbers rushed him, roaring, "Who are you?" and he replied loudly:

*"I am the herald of the great King."*²

Francis, the herald of the great King, wanted to go out to each as Christ had sent his disciples, as the Gospel prescribed.

What was the result? How well we know: *Carried away by the force of his preaching, great numbers of people adopted the new rule*

*of penance according to the form instituted by St. Francis which he called the - Order of the Brothers of Penance. The way of penance is common to all those who are on the road to heaven and so this way of life includes members of both sexes, clerics and layfolk, married and single.*³

And so today we as Seculars, seeking to emulate Christ as Francis saw Him,

*should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon...should strive to bring joy and hope to others.*⁴

That's what we are all about: that is our major apostolic work.

*By word and example the Secular Franciscans...become a living gospel for all to read....The Secular Franciscans foster an openness to the Spirit and creatively exercise their mission.*⁵

How can we say that there is any impropriety in trumpeting the splendid delights of our vocation, in telling others what it is, what we do, how we serve Christ and the Church in the manner of the lovable Saint Francis?

Our status in the 1983 Code of Canon Law has two facets:

Can. 298 §1. In the Church there are associations which are distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. In these associations, Christ's faithful, whether clerics or laity, or clerics and laity together, strive with a common effort to foster a more perfect life, or to promote public worship or Christian teaching. They may also devote themselves to other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives for evangelization, works of

piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with the Christian spirit.

§2. Christ's faithful are to join especially those associations which have been established, praised or recommended by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

Can. 303 Associations whose members live in the world but share in the spirit of some religious institute, under the overall direction of the same institute, and who lead an apostolic life and strive for Christian perfection, are known as third orders, or are called by some other suitable title.

(By the way, did you know that the S.F.O. is subject to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life as to some aspects of our function, and to the Pontifical Council for the Laity as to others? The new Code serves to include us in the general renewal of the Church after Vatican II, and to respond to the needs of the modern world, but there is no change in the original intention; the past is reformed to enrich our charism and adapt it to the needs of today.

One of the things that has been done in the new Rule and Constitutions is to eliminate the monastic language used and to employ more modern terms: "candidate" rather than "novice," for example.)

Francis was constantly emphasizing the work of the Holy Spirit in building up his band of followers - "The Lord gave me brothers" - and in the world of today the assistance of the Spirit is even more necessary than ever before, because of the secularization and what's-in-it-for-me mindset that infects our culture.

Pope Paul VI speaks of evangelization as a fundamental duty of the people of God, noting that the early Christians constantly spoke

of their firm belief in the Church, without beginning or end, or geographical limits. And he goes on to say that the Lord willed that it should be a universal church without bonds or limits.⁶

Agreed: We are here to evangelize. How to expand our horizons?

1. Get the shut-ins praying for the Holy Spirit to bring people to answer the call.

2. At each fraternity meeting set aside time for (a) reports on action taken by each member, and (b) sincere prayer for the intention of adding members.

3. Form a specific committee to publicize the Order, its purposes, its membership. Invite a friar to speak at a general meeting to familiarize people with our ideals.

4. Place items in every Church bulletin in your geographic area two weeks before your monthly meeting. Phrase the notices in terms of welcome, exploration, particular subject matter, or speaker available.

5. Be ready for inquirers: Have members assigned to greet and introduce them.

6. Make your library of books and magazines available with gracious but definite plans for return which will lead to further contact with an interested person.

Remember, we are not "advertising" or begging people for something. We are sharing our joy, our gospel, our Christ, and our leader, Francis...we are, in a word.....
EVANGELIZING!

¹ I Celano 22, Omnibus, p. 246.

² I Celano 17, Omnibus, p. 242.

³ Bonaventure, Major Life, IV, 6. Omnibus, p. 657.

⁴ Secular Franciscan Rule, Chapt. II, §19.

⁵ Ibid., §6.

⁶ Evangelii Nuntiandi, Dec. 8, 1975, Vatican Council II, Vol. 2, Flannery, O.P., Costello Publishing Co., Northport, NY.

THE VINEYARD

Juanita M. Echeverria, SFO

In 1970, a Conventual, Fr. Emil Cook began a mission in a remote, rural area in the highlands of Honduras. The parish encompassed 500 square miles and has over 100,000 people. The center of the parish was in a town called Gualaco. The parish also had one other town and some 60 scattered settlements separated by rough mountains and jungles. At that time the only means of transportation was by foot or mule. Portable water and electricity were unknown; schooling, especially beyond the third grade, was a luxury. Sickness and infant mortality were high due to malnutrition and poor sanitation. Medical care was non-existent.

In beginning the mission, our task was to ask the people their needs - which were many. Although we hoped to serve the total person, we had to go slowly. We chose education as the basic tool to progress. We opened a boarding school for boys and one for girls. We recruited in the villages students who, hopefully, would some day become leaders in the country and would make the difference.

From September 1970 to July 1975, the mission was making headway. We were beginning a high school and seminary; there were new farms and rabbit breeding. We had petitioned for a road into the area. And we had volunteers coming from the states. We began a local SFO to promote native lay vocations.

As Secular Franciscans, we became active in addressing the humanitarian needs of the people. We began a free medical clinic, staffing it with volunteers from the states; some were professors and taught us how to treat emergency cases. Some were medical students who gained as much from treating the sick as the sick gained in restored health. We

worked with our students on a water project. The students dug ditches to lay pipes that reached to a spring some five miles away deep into a mountain. The blessing of water in the village helped fight poor sanitation and intestinal diseases. We dug outhouses, planted fruit trees, vegetable gardens, taught hygiene as well as Franciscan spirituality. Alcoholics Anonymous made a significant difference in many lives along with the League of the Sacred Heart for the men.

In 1978, the Seculars opened a home so that women could further their studies. I financed the home by teaching English at a Carmelite School in the capital. Men could study at the seminary. By 1980, our town's new mayor was one of our graduates; he pursued a degree at the University of Tegucigulpa. We also received a grant from the church in Germany to provide transportation between the mountain and the capital. It was a fifteen hour drive on rugged roads.

Our home in Gualaco was called Casa Santa Maria Del Camino; it was built to serve as a training center for Seculars. It was also used for the clinic and to house homeless women and children. My husband, José was the builder. He taught the boys how to build with brick and mortar and how to make sun dried adobe blocks. He began a project with Catholic Relief providing food for labor, of bettering living conditions for the poor. He turned dirt floors into cement which brought smiles to many faces. He also built a farm house, which was used each Sunday for retreats and relaxation. Seculars and towns people alike learned the value of renewal amid poverty.

The town was upbeat. Vespers, sung by the Seculars who gathered together at the day's end in a small chapel, could be heard floating through the air. A cooperative was just beginning to find ways of initiating limited

industry in the area. But, as joyful as the climate was, a note of sadness began. Town's people began to disappear. Our lives were threatened. It seemed that as long as the Franciscans were caring for each other and the needs of the poor, we were in the way of a revolution. In order to gain control over the people, guerillas wanted to do the work we were doing; to get rid of us, they threatened to kill us.

Having secured tourist visas for the U.S., my husband and I left Gualaco to wait out the threat from Nicaragua's rebels; we returned in a year.

When we returned in 1983, U.S. military were visible. But the town was depressed and overly crowded. The locals were untrusting of the "outsiders"; the town now had a government clinic, but medicines were scarce. José, our three children, and I returned to the States, hoping to work here and save funds for an eventual return. José died unexpectedly, which caused personal financial problems. However, I did get some loans and grants to further my education. I transferred to the SFO Rainbow Fraternity of Sts. Francis and Clare in Middleton, Wisconsin. Our international apostolate is helping the Honduran Seculars to keep the volunteer clinic open.

Presently we have a medical volunteer who, for the past three years, has worked at the clinic for six months; he returns to the States for six months of work to replenish his funds and, then, back to Honduras. Another volunteer teaches health classes and does lab work. There is still a great need for more medical volunteers including students. To house and feed the volunteers and to run the clinic requires about \$8400 per year. "What you do for the least of my brothers you do for me."

Anyone interested in volunteering or contributing, please write to or phone Mrs. Juanita Escheverria, SFO:
918 D, Eagle Hghts., Madison, WI 53705; (608) 238-4085.

THE FRANCISCAN PYRAMID, PART II

He told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven; to the woman caught in adultery, he said he did not condemn her, but she was not to repeat the sin. To Peter, he gave the keys, the power to loose and bind. Among the many New Testament references to metanoia, a most striking one is in Luke (24:46-47): when, following the resurrection, the Lord appeared to his disciples, "*And he said to them, 'Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'*"¹

What was penance or conversion; what was its form? As stated in Pyramid I, sacramental definition was not precise in the primitive Church. The tendency was to continue to follow the Torah and the prevalent punishment. The practice of restricting a sinner and subsequent lifting of the ban was known as "binding and loosing" in rabbinical law which we recognize as being carried into Christian law by Christ.

Paul suggests that the binding and loosing be done "by the power of the Lord Jesus" during communal meetings; however, there is no specific ritual given anywhere in the New Testament.

Further, the treatment during and after the conversion of the sinner was a new experience for the Christian community. An important point for us to remember is that the Jews were even afraid to say the divine name, let alone approach God as a child would his father. The teachings of Christ were of mercy and forgiveness so long as the sinner was cooperative. That Yahweh was merciful, forgiving, and loving was a new concept.

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Martos observes, "Evidently the only ritual of forgiveness known to the earliest Christian community was baptism, and today biblical scholars view almost all the texts which speak of a call to repentance as a call to baptism and moral rectitude after baptism. Even the words of Jesus to the disciples about the forgiving and retaining of sins (John 20:22-23) are seen as referring to baptism or the discipline of binding and loosing rather than to a special sacrament of penance, in the later Catholic sense."²

He further suggests that, in a broad sense, the Christian community was a sacrament of reconciliation in that those, who joined it and lived by its standards, had received the message of salvation.

The human concept of time led to the expectation of an imminent second coming, but it didn't occur. Meantime, Christians were persecuted. Because of that and probably some lesser reasons, some left their communities. If, later, they wished to return, what was to be the procedure? Some communities were emphatic in saying, "No!" The more gentle communities felt that there could be a second repentance or conversion after baptism.

Hermas, a Christian living in Rome, claimed a visitation in which an angel of God told him that there could be forgiveness after baptism, but only once. Clement of Alexandria approved, saying that repeated falling and repenting would deride God's mercy.

During those decades, the only ritual-type of action was a general confession at the beginning of worship, similar to our penitential rite at the beginning of Mass. A directive called *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* said, "Confess your sins in the assembly and do not come to your prayers with a guilty conscience." As now, it was simply an admission of human sinfulness and the need of forgiveness. It was not a confession of specific sins. The binding and loosing continued with no standard definition; bishops and communities made their own rules.

Meantime, during the many decades of the development of sacramental definition, the old Judaic view of an unapproachable God was given a new twist. God may be approachable, but man was too sinfully miserable to approach; so, baptism and repentance were often postponed until near death. Another reason for postponing was to avoid the stigma often attached to penance. Catechumens were

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excluded from the Eucharistic portion of community worship until their instruction was complete - at least a year's worth. Penitents were also excluded, but for an obvious difference. And, although the community usually prayed for them, there was certainly some disgrace involved. Therefore, with the astuteness of human reason, they postponed baptism, rather than be baptized and, then, have to become penitents.

Christ's admonition to Peter to forgive seventy times seven is often seen as the individual gesture of reconciliation complementary to the communal gesture.³ But, if the individual is to forgive as often as necessary, shouldn't the Church do the same? Computers and FAX would have made things so much easier and faster. But it was the third century before penitential standards began to emerge and with them the Order of Penitents. To be continued.

¹ The New American Bible, 1970, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C.

² Martos, Joseph, Doors To The Sacred, 1962, Image Books, Garden City, NY, pp 313-314.

³ Hamelin, Rev. Leonce, Reconciliation In The Church, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, p 28.

THE TV PROJECT

Twenty-five corporations have been targeted to receive letters of protest. (See insert.) Their selection was an education.

Philip Morris, for example, owns: General Foods, Kraft Foods, Baker's Chocolate, Birds Eye, Breyers Ice Cream, Brim Coffee, Calumet Baking Powder, Cool Whip, Country Time, Fruit'n Fibre, Grape-Nuts, Jell-O, Louis Rich meats, Lowenbrau, Maxwell House, Millers, Oscar Mayer, Parkay, Post, Sanka, Sealtest, and a few others.

Philip Morris is one of the largest conglomerates, but, in going through the lists, it became more and more apparent that those corporations are a large part of every family. So, it is our money that is promoting the filth and irreverence.

August 15, the Assumption, has been chosen as the target date for mailing the letters. It is hoped that each member can mail to each company and the networks. As that will require about \$8 per member, it may be a burden. If so, please divide the list among members to insure that each company receives as many letters as possible. Be sure your name/address are legible. Multiple signatures on a letter are counted as just one letter, which defeats the purpose. Try to involve parish/friends.

We are supposed to evangelize. Let's do it!