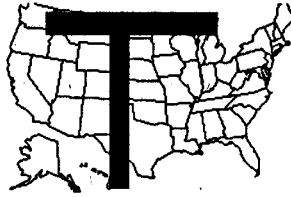


The National Fraternity
of
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER



Issue Number 8

THE NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Summer, 1995

- LET'S COMMUNICATE -

by Richard Morton, National Minister

Effective communication throughout an organization is one of the hallmarks of its health and can be thought of as its life blood. Its importance cannot be overstressed. Communication is the vehicle that carries the energy of one member to the other, of one group of members to another, of one fraternity to another, and of one level of fraternity to another. Without effective communication an organization becomes lifeless and ineffectual.

Traveling around the country and talking with many of the individual seculars at the local fraternity level, I find it disturbing that there seems to be a breakdown in our ability to communicate both within fraternities, between fraternities, and between the various levels of fraternity. This is most evident when it comes to the dissemination of the information in the National Newsletter. There are still too many members who do not know a National Newsletter exists, let alone keep current with the news.

The newsletter is mailed at no cost to each local fraternity minister and formation director. The intent is that they will make copies for distribution in their own fraternity or that they will disseminate the pertinent information in other suitable ways. The alternative is for the leadership to encourage each member to receive their own personal copy on a subscription basis. The subscription information is on the back page of each newsletter.

The last two issues the National Newsletter have taken on a new look in response to your suggestions. Hopefully, the newsletter is more informative and easier to read than in the past. For your information, approximately 3200 copies are mailed each quarter. About 1050 copies are sent to local and regional fraternities with about 2150 paid subscriptions. The long term goal for the newsletter is to have every member of the Order receive a personal copy.

A huge amount of work goes into the production of the newsletter. Our Editor, Patti Normile, SFO, spends a great deal of her personal time editing and laying out the copy, soliciting for articles, proof reading, and

performing the other tasks associated with publishing a large circulation newsletter. We are fortunate to have such an energetic, talented, and dedicated Editor. Thanks Patti, from all of us.

One final thought. There is a concept in leadership that leaders are readers. While it is obvious that most of us are not scholars or book worms, I think it is important that, as leaders in the field of gospel living, we do as much as possible to keep current on Franciscan spirituality and the news of the Order and Franciscan family. This is the glue, so to speak, that holds us together as a flourishing, life-filled community.

Our Mission:

by Ona C. Harris, SFO

As a Secular Franciscan, I strongly feel that the Seculars need a mission--a mission that is adopted by the International Council, which flows down to the National Council, regional councils, fraternities and cells. A mission, once adopted, is the focus of all members of the SFO. When decisions are made, these decisions are made within the focus of the "MISSION" of the total Secular Franciscan Order.

To give a better look at what I am saying: if the International Council, with the input of all Seculars through all levels of fraternity would adopt the mission: To Serve the Homeless, all Seculars would work towards achieving this mission. Each fraternity would decide how they would achieve this. Will they attempt to work with shelters, soup kitchens, men, women, children, youth (there are homeless youth!) or provide food, clothing, medical assistance, transportation, housing, spiritual support or legal assistance, etc. As you can see, there are many areas where there are needs! There are many ways to help the homeless! Each fraternity would decide what and how it adapt to the mission.

The first and most important key is to keep your focus on the MISSION. You must return to the question often--"Are we serving the homeless?" (to page 10)

Mildred Jones, SFO, Receives Pope John XXIII Award

Mildred Jones of St. Francis Regional Fraternity received the Pope John XXIII Award of Distinguished Service April 21, 1995, at Viterbo College in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Recipients of the award are selected for their unique contributions to humanity through outstanding service to education and community as well as the spiritual values expressed through their service.

In her late 60s, Mildred was inspired to start a shelter for runaway teenagers. That was 17 years ago. Now at 85, Mildred still puts her imprint on the Casa Youth Shelter. She lives next door to the Shelter and spends time each day with the young people who live there.

*"You are not called for yourself alone
but for the benefit of others."*

*Sister Clare and Brother Sylvester's
Admonition to Saint Francis*

Mildred says, "You start with the fundamental belief that there's so much good in every teenager. It's a matter of unlocking it." She says that the goals of the home are two-fold: to get a kid off the street and into a safe setting; then to get the kid reunited with family. About 85 percent of the kids served at Casa eventually get reunited with a parent or other family members, she says. Mildred's interest in troubled kids goes back to when she was seven and went with her mother to visit a neglected neighbor child who was locked up in the Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles County. She said she was horrified to see the barred windows and barren room where the girl was being held. "I said, 'Mother, when I grow up, they're not going to lock up kids like that. There's going to be a place for them.'" Since then, Mildred has done her best to make a place for kids, first as a teacher of refugees in Los Angeles and later as a social worker and probation officer. She joined the Navy during World War II, retiring as a Lieutenant Commander. Following her retirement from the Navy, she was among the founders of the first adolescent hotline at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles.

In the early 70s, Mildred joined the then Governor Ronald Reagan's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth. "The thing I discovered is kids need someone to listen to them," Mildred says. Mildred has been named Woman of the Year by the State of California and has been featured in Woman's Day magazine as a "Woman who has made a difference."

Mildred lives the true meaning of the Way of Life of the Secular Franciscan as she certainly is going from Gospel to life.

[Excerpts from News-Enterprise 4/13/95; & LaCrosse, WI Tribune by Gayda Hollnagel-printed in The Joy of St. Francis, St. Francis Regional Newsletter.]

Franciscans to Become Consultors to United Nations

(New York) The United Nations announced last week that the United Nations is prepared to grant Franciscans International the highest level of consultative status it offers to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Franciscans International is the international, interfranciscan NGO at the United Nations.

On June 14, the NGO Committee of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) approved the application of Franciscans International to full consultative status--Category I. Based on the recommendation of this committee, the ECOSOC final vote will be taken in Geneva. Pending the final vote, Franciscans International will become the 43rd NGO in the history of the United Nations to receive Category I status.

This marks a major moment in the thirteen-year evolution of the international, interfranciscan effort to engage the U.N. on behalf of the poor, peace, and the integrity of creation. Six years ago, the U.N. granted Franciscans International NGO status with the Department of Public Information. This entitled Franciscans to attend U.N. briefings, collaborate with other NGOs and work with the U.N. Secretariat as well as with national delegations on issues of mutual concern.

Several thousand NGOs are associated with the United Nations, but few are able actively to participate on a consultative level. It has long been a hope at Franciscans International that the U.N. would grant them this status. Among other things, a consultative NGO may actively participate in U.N. debates, assist in drafting international documents, propose agenda items for discussion by various working groups and collaborate with the U.N. in grassroots development and emergency assistance. "This is not just an affirmation for Franciscans. It is especially a challenge for us, to renew and strengthen our stance for the poor, for peace and for the integrity of creation," said Rev. John Quigley, OFM, Director of the Office for Justice and Peace for the Order of Friars Minor in Rome.

In order to be admitted to Category I, an organization must demonstrate competence in a broad range of concerns in which the U.N. is active. It must show how it involves grassroots members around the world in these issues. Franciscans will join such NGOs as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Save the Children Alliance, Rotary International, CARE International, Zonta International, and the International Chamber of Commerce.

SOYA INK



RECYCLED PAPER

Another Moment in History



This commemorative plaque at Regis University, Denver, marks the historic meeting of Pope John Paul II and President Bill Clinton in 1993 as a moment in history. In July of 1995 another quiet but historic moment occurred in this place. The National Executive Council, the Apostolic Commission Chairpersons, the Formation Commission members, Friars of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, National Newsletter Editor, two at-large participants and meeting facilitator gathered to explore the future of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.

The goal of the meeting was to develop a broad strategic outline to set the direction for the National Fraternity as it prepares the SFO-USA to enter the 21st century--the third millenium after

the birth of Christ. Meeting facilitator, Sister Brenda Hermann, MSBT, enabled the gathered Franciscans to build a foundation from which to begin revitalizing the order in this country. The process used is based on the work of Rev. Gerald Arbuckle, MM, author of Out of Chaos. Fr. Arbuckle had previously presented concepts on the principles of refounding religious orders and their application to the SFO in June and October, 1993. In October, 1994, Sister Christa Thompson, OFS, presented to SFO leadership a message based on rediscovering our founding myth as a lay penitential order.

The results of the week's work are multi-dimensional. To attempt to relate all that transpired at the Denver meeting would require an entire book and even that would be inadequate. Instead of a chronological explanation of the work of the whole body and of individual groups and committees, this issue of The National Newsletter will bring to the readers many of the questions and comments raised during the gathering as well as the reflections of those who attended. These may provide fraternities with points for discussion at meetings. There are no firm answers, only inspiring questions to be raised in attempts to discover direction for the future. Some who attended wrote brief statements of the feelings generated by the meetings. Others have contributed a single word that reveals the manner in which the Denver gathering affected them. The Denver meeting was but a beginning--a small spark that promises to ignite the potential contained in the spirituality of the SFO.

The meeting was funded through a grant from the Mae Bonfils Fund. One event planned for the group was a visit to Holy Ghost Church in Denver. This church which was built through the generosity of the Bonfils family has a particularly secular setting. A magnificent edifice, it is nestled in the curved, graceful flow of a glass commercial tower. The columns of the office building stand scarcely two feet from the church. The tower both embraces the church and reflects its image from mirrored exterior walls. Prayers of gratitude for the Bonfils gifts were offered in a small park area adjacent to the church.

Meeting arrangements were made by Ron Michieli, NAFRA Peace and Justice Chairman. A tour of Samaritan House, a nine-year old facility for the homeless, was on the agenda. Samaritan House provides shelter for 350 homeless men, women and children in an atmosphere of dignity, cleanliness and hope. A large number of Secular Franciscans are among the 300 volunteers who assist at Samaritan House.

Those attending the Denver meeting included: National Minister, Richard Morton; Vice Minister, Geraldine Rome; Secretary, William Wicks; Treasurer, John Sanborn; Councilors, Jerome Friga and Kay Pelletier; Councilors to CIOFS (International Secular Franciscans), Marie Amore and Laura Haukaas. Also attending were Apostolic Commission Chairs: Coordinator, Mary Mazotti; Ecology, Charles Spencer; Family, Carol Gentile; Peace and Justice, Ronald Michieli; Work, Edward and Mary Zablocki, Formation, Ronald Pihokker; Multicultural Coordinator, Consuelo Smith; and National Newsletter Editor, Patti Normile.

National Formation Commission members included: Edward Shirley; Teresa Baker; William Niggemeyer. At-large participants were Ona Harris and Marguerite Thomas. National Spiritual Assistants attending were: Rev. Fabian Sheganoski, TOR; Camillus MacRory, OFM Cap.; Michael Suszynski, OFM Conv; and CSNA Secretary, Benet Fonck, OFM.

(see following pages)

At the end of the workshop on "refounding," I find myself filled with these feelings:
the sadness of grief, facing the loss of a certain style of presence among the SFO;
the anxiety of change, knowing that I need to have a less directive, more prophetic presence in the SFO;
the impatience of waiting, longing to see the vision becoming reality;
the obstinance of not wanting to readily let go of my fear of failure and my penchant for exact order;
the excitement of encountering a commitment to a secular identity and a lay mission;
the pride of being associated with and standing in partnership with such a gospel-driven secular laity;
the satisfaction that, after 25 years of spiritual assistance, the SFO spirituality and mission is being actively articulated in word and deed;
the inner peace of accepting, by the grace of God, that I'm okay in my limits and in my giftedness.

Benet Fonck, ofm

As I listened to the Gospel of the seed being sown and heard how the seed can fall on different forms of soil, I thought of our lives and our vocations as Secular Franciscans.

Some persons do not want to hear the call and reject it from the start. Others receive the call and permanent commitment with great joy; however, their roots are shallow and they leave the call. Others receive the call and permanent commitment with joy, but the worries and cares of the world call them away from this vocation.

Still others, receive the call and permanent commitment and strive to live it with their whole heart, whole mind, whole soul for the good of God's holy people.

Teresa J. Baker, sfo

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Think not about your frustration, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible to do."

John XXIII (who was not at the Denver meeting! except in Spirit)

As I reflect back on the past few days, I must say that I come away from Denver with feelings of great anticipation, both feeling hopeful joy (or joyful hope) as well as somewhat overwhelmed by the enormity of the vision before us. I am excited by the prospect of playing some small part in the refounding of an 800-year old Order at a time which I believe is truly a crossroads in human history. At the same time I am humbled by being part of the Secular Franciscan Tradition which has brought us to this crossroads, and somewhat nervous about what lies out of sight, around the bend in the road.

But mostly I am touched by the real humanity of the people I met, and in awe at the diversity of gifts which were shared. During the past few days, I have met septuagenarians and people barely in their forties. I have met people who have been professed for thirty years and people who have not seen their tenth anniversary. I have met people whose spiritual journey has known only Franciscan roads, as well as those whose journey has taken them to the wellsprings of other Traditions. I have met people of deep contemplation and people of energetic action. I have met people who see visions in the stars and those whose feet are imbedded firmly in Mother Earth.

It is these people who have given me hope, for no vision can be imposed from the outside; visions can only take root when shared and articulated and lived out by real people in real circumstances. And it is these people who shall walk together in joy and anxiety as we face an unknown future. And when the task seems enormous, and I do not feel up to it, I shall remember the people I met in Denver, and remember their wonderful diversity and their common bond in the Gospel and the Way of Saint Francis. And I will remember that though none of us has it all together, together we have it all.

Ed Shirley, SFO

"Disbelief" was the word that grew out of the moment though the word that comes to mind now is "courage." The Refounding Pact about which all of us agree reminds me of what it must have been like for those who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Growth demands separation from the status quo at certain times to be everything God wants us to be and to do according to the times. Major change leaves no human emotion untouched.

Charlie Spencer, Denver, 7/30/95

The following are random thoughts, questions, comments, hopes, visions and dreams gleaned from the SFO Gathering in Denver. Ponder them, disagree with them, treasure them. Whatever you do, allow them to enable you to grow as a Secular Franciscan.

- +What is your dream for the SFO-USA? Do you have one?!
- +Formation is the most important thing we have going in the SFO.
 - +Many believe the SFO lacks dynamism.
 - +We must do things differently--develop a spirituality that results in apostolic works.
- +What is the myth--that truth larger than words can express--of our founding?
 - +Words for vibrant SFOs include: Listen-Wisdom-Prophet-Dream-Servant.
 - +What can our organization be like? What should it be like?
 - +Is the SFO important in the life of the Church and of the world?
 - +Are you important in the SFO, the Church and the world?
- +Do you believe that founders of most Orders are lay people who are forced by the Church to become something different?
 - +The laity must be intent on transforming society through their everyday lives.
 - +What does it mean to refound ourselves?
 - +Renewal is not refounding. Refounding takes time. It is a work of the Spirit.
 - +The work of the Spirit often comes in a whisper.
- +If we do not know who we are, we will go back to being who we were.
 - +Refounding is for us going back to the founding excitement of the ideas Francis generated.
 - +What happened to me when I went through a time of chaos? What did I learn?
 - +What excites me about being a Franciscan? depresses me? angers me?
 - +What is the fire that motivates my life?
- +"I have become a fool. You have driven me to it....I am in no way inferior to the "super Apostles."
(2 Corinthians 11:30>)
 - +Refounding the SFO is not about being a spiritual "Lone Ranger."
 - +"Evil is the good that refuses to be better." St. Ignatius
 - +The time is NOW!
 - +What would I like to change in the SFO?
- +Refounding is less about vision and planning--more about entering into the mystery of God's plan.
 - +What must we/I let go of to allow the SFO to grow?
 - +We are created to be prophetic, to deal with problems in the world.
 - +Who defines you? tells you who you are?
- +Unless we are willing to look at our own evil (see above definition) we cannot begin to refound.
 - +Things that prevent us from becoming new must be honestly named.
 - +The world is awaiting secular spirituality.
 - +Our culture has had an overemphasis on "Me-ism."
- +People resist any move to new forms because they fear that somehow the new will hurt them.
 - +Look at yourself as a leader. What do you struggle with?
 - +What are you afraid someone will find out about you?
 - +What scriptural person is a role model for leadership for you?
- +Every refounding member of a group must be constantly challenged by the Gospel.
 - +Refounding cannot occur without intentional faith-sharing.
 - +We exist to be a proverbial pain in the butt to society.
 - +I would like a SFO to be President of the USA or mayor of my town. (Italy's President, an SFO, is changing that country.)
- +We are about the prophetic--permeation of society with values coming from Gospel commitment.



Finding Identity as a Secular Franciscan

by Edward Zablocki, SFO, Work Commission Co-Chair

The operative phrase which keeps me focused as a Secular Franciscan is "conversion." I have come to understand that conversion represents the alpha and omega of my life as a Secular. Recent works by Raffaele Pazzelli, TOR and Robert Stewart, OFM have made it clear to me that *conversion* means today what *penance* meant at the time of Francis. So I feel connected in a very real way with the Serafic Father's first lay followers, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. Article 7 of the Rule now takes on special meaning:

United by their vocation as "brothers and sisters of penance," and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls "conversion."

Conversion is also my future. I now understand my vocation as a Secular Franciscan as a call to on-going conversion in all aspects of my life. The new General Constitutions confirm this understanding: "Secular Franciscans...propose to live in a spirit of continual conversion. [Art.13] It is a daily struggle: being converted to a more Christ-centered prayer life, to a more gospel-oriented lifestyle, to a more Francis-inspired apostolate by faithfulness in living out the Rule as a way of life. It is a daily struggle: being personally converted affectively, intellectually, morally, socio-politically, and religiously (to image conversion as suggested by Bernard Lonergan, SJ). But Article 7 does go on to say that "human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily."

Since I've come to this understanding of the Rule, I've shared with others my concern about its implications. "We ought to tell people what they are getting into if they take the Rule seriously," I would say, "This is powerful stuff." It reminds me of a section in Nikos Kazantzakis' *Saint Francis*: "Never enough," Francis shouted. "It is not enough, Brother Leo. That is what God has shouted at me during these three days and nights--'Never enough.' A poor man is made of clay and protests, 'I cannot take any more,' and God replies, 'You can.' And the man sighs, 'I am going to burst.' God replies, 'Burst.'" [p.119]

Of all the areas of my life in need of conversion, the most important for me personally at this time is conversion to a "secular spirituality." I believe it holds the key to helping us fully live out the Secular Franciscan way of life intended by the Rule. It is the key to living the kind of committed Christian life which the Church is imploring us to embrace as post-Vatican II lay Catholics.

What is Secular spirituality? It is the appreciation and incarnation of the reality that lay Catholics fulfill both their vocation and their mission (apostolate) *in and through their participation in the world.*

The vocation of the layperson is the same as that of other members of the Body of Christ--a call to grow in holiness, to become "fully mature in the fullness of Christ." [Eph.4:13] The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* states that "All in the Church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness." [n.36] Pope John Paul II in his post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [*Christifideles Laici*] on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, says that the "*world* [is] the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation. [n.36]

Where do I grow in holiness? In the world! By what means do I grow in holiness? Through participation in the world!

But we cannot speak about the secular orientation of the laity's vocation without also speaking about the laity's mission (=apostolate); the laity's vocation and mission are inseparably intertwined. As the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* states: "In fact, the Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well." [*Apostolicum Actuositatem*,2] And both lead to deepening engagement with the world:

The vocation of the lay faithful to holiness implies that life according to the Spirit expresses itself in a particular way in their *involvement in temporal affairs* and in their *participation in earthly activities*....

At the same time the vocation to holiness is intimately connected to mission and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world....Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these [lay people] are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history....

'Upon all the lay faithful, then, rests the exalted duty of working to assure that each day the divine plan of salvation is further extended to every person, of every era, in every part of the earth.' [*Christifideles Laici*,17]

The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* stresses that lay people "ought to take on themselves as their distinctive task this renewal of the temporal order." [*Apostolicum Actuositatem*,7]

Efforts to develop a new Rule for Secular Franciscans attempted, from the beginning to be faithful to the secular

(continued on page 7)

spirituality enunciated by the Second Vatican Council (the first ground breaking efforts in the history of the Church formally to address the question of the distinctive spiritual of persons in the lay state). In his book *The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation*, Fr. Robert M. Stewart, OFM provides the fascinating account of the 12 year process resulting in the 1978 Rule. (While, a secular spirituality is captured, to a degree, in the 1990 General Constitutions, Secular Franciscans are still becoming acquainted with this new document.)

As a consequence, there is a resistance to embracing aspects of the 1978 Rule which are grounded in a secular spirituality, for example, the apostolates. On one hand, we have the apostolic ideal as described by Fr. John Vaughan, OFM while he was serving as Minister General:

What a contrast between your previous Third Order spirituality and the modern Church's expectations of you as Secular Franciscans! You are now expected to find God in modern culture, politics and economics, and to delight in his presence there. You have been thrust into the front line as leaders in public life and transformers of secular culture. [Letter to Holy Name SFO Province on the occasion of its 1986 Congress with the theme "Secular Franciscans: Evangelizers of the Culture"]

But on the other hand, we are at times confronted with a reality which differs from this ideal, as conveyed by Fr. Carl Schaefer, OFM Spiritual Assistant to the International SFO:

I find that it is difficult to guide many Secular Franciscans into an active apostolic way of life. They want prayer, even active participation in the liturgy; they want spiritual assistance of the friars. But to convince them that living the Gospel necessarily involves being sent out to the world, and to form them to be publicly apostolic has been my most difficult task. [Letter to SFO Holy Name Province on the occasion of their 1986 Congress with the theme "Secular Franciscans: Evangelizers of the Culture"]

We are called by the Church to find a spirituality in a place where, in our hearts, we doubt that God can be found. If we knew and believed what the Church teaches--that we can meet the living God in places like politics, then we might more readily accept and carry out the Church's intended mission for us: to be salt, light and leaven for the world.

What would St. Francis do under these circumstances? He found God immanent in everything. Perhaps he would compose a Canticle of the Culture, helping us to see the good and Godly in Brother Boeing and Sister IBM, Brother Republican and Sister Democrat, Brother Michael and Sister Madonna. It's enough to make one want to burst. But wouldn't it be wonderful (and eminently Franciscan) to start finding God in every aspect of our lives in the world and stop being spiritual schizophrenics.

Secular Franciscans must grow in an understanding of the secular spirituality articulated in the documents of Vatican II and intended but implicit in the SFO Rule. We need to be converted to the vision of the Church which has been telling us that we will grow in holiness by participating in that discordant, untidy, unpredictable place we call the "world"; that it is a primary school of holiness and arena for evangelical action. Certainly we know this already to be an extent. We find the Lord active in our family life which is certainly a big part of our world. Seculars also find God's immanent presence deeply imprinted in nature. And we care for society's victims in countless ways, coming through this service to a deeper understanding of Christ's presence in the poor.

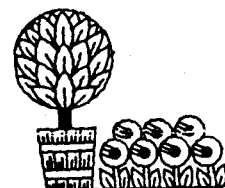
Once we more fully understand and learn to accept our proper vocation and mission--callings which are intensified and focused for us as Franciscans, Seculars can become leaders among the laity and for the Church in the world, "taking an active, conscientious and responsible part of the mission of the Church in this great moment in history." [*Christifidelis Laici*, 2] We will come to en flesh the ideal described by Secular Franciscan Fr. John Bertolucci:

You and I as disciples have a very special mission to be men and women of influence. God wants us to exert influence not only in our churches but also in our society and in our government; in the marketplace and the schools; in our place of employment and recreation; in medicine and law and other important professions. Wherever we happen to be as disciples of the Lord, we are to have influence.

We are not supposed to be men and women who are letting history happen to us. We are supposed to be happening to history. God wants to equip us and lead us forth in mighty ways that will actually *make* history happen.... We are to be aggressive, outgoing, and assertive in desiring to change things in accord with the principles we have learned in the Word of God. [*The Disciplines of a Disciple*, 120]

So burst!

[This article was first published in *The Cord*, November, 1993, Volume 43, No. 11)



SCENES FROM DENVER GATHERING

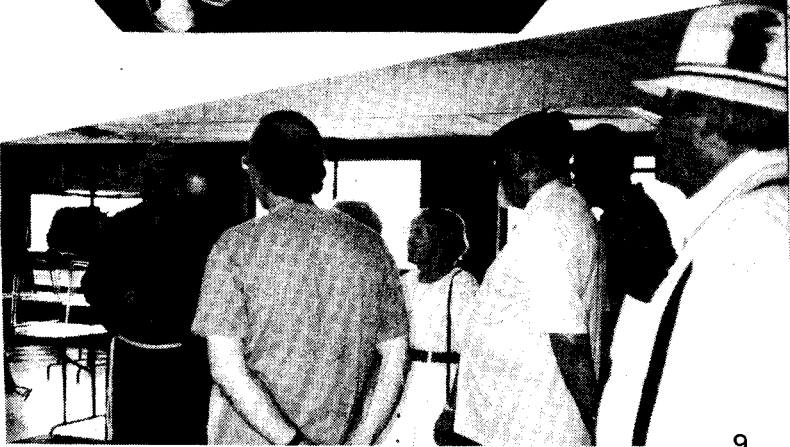
Light Moments -
Sitting in
Pope's &
President's
Chairs



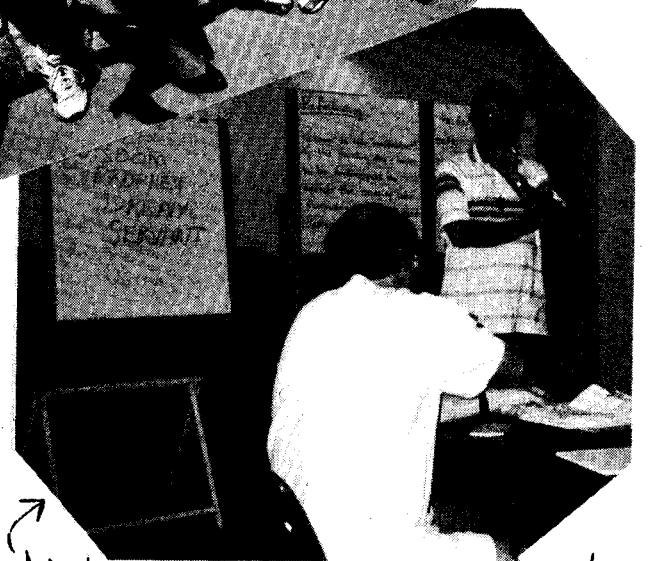
Facilitator -
Sr. Brenda



Resting!



Visiting Samaritan House



National Minister - Dick Morton

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)



Ona Harris, SFO, stuck with a job that did not seem to be her calling for 20 years while she raised her son. In 1986 she resigned. For one year she prayed about the direction to take. She had a real estate license but long hours and hard work produced little income. Ona wanted to go to college but had no funds. She applied to Mercy College and was accepted for a work/study program. She was assigned to work as a computer lab trouble shooter. To quote Ona, "I didn't know diddly squat about computers!" But she was determined to learn. Two years later she was offered a position as head of the computer center.

As graduation approached, Ona began praying constantly about the job she was to have after graduation. She didn't want just any job. She wanted to return what she had gained to God. She told fellow graduates that she had submitted only one resume--to God. She was offered a position as volunteer coordinator for all of Wayne County (Detroit area). To the astonishment of the interviewer, Ona refused the job saying she knew the job was not God's choice for her.

An newspaper ad appeared for Simon House, a home for HIV/AIDS mothers and children. Ona took the job though it was a volunteer position with no salary. Just as the financial squeeze tightened, retirement funds from her former company were released. This sizeable sum allowed her to pay debts and have some left for food, housing and her car. Providence had provided. Her position was finally funded. Ona had a salary.

In 1992, Ona became executive director of Simon House. A new challenge faced her. She was a shy woman who now was expected to address the public on behalf of Simon House. Ona says God enables her to do this also. She tells about the hopes for independent living for moms and children in apartments near Simon House. So far \$607,000 has been received in grants. She tells about families who live at Simon House and receive assistance with all aspects of their challenged lives. She still has a hard time talking about children who must be taken from dying mothers.

Now Ona would like a celebrity with an interest in HIV/AIDS mothers and children to take an interest in Simon House so programs can increase. "A celebrity can

raise millions with one event while we work and work for a few thousand," Ona comments. With Ona's history of answered prayer, that does not seem impossible. Ona also hopes that Franciscans will prepare to meet the AIDS epidemic, which she sees as unavoidable, with loving care.

Ona is vice minister of her fraternity and recently served as at-large representative to the National Executive Council's meeting in Denver.

Simon House is located at 16260 Dexter Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48221.



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 page 1)

The second important key is to nurture our members by providing counseling, spiritual nurturing, etc. whatever is needed so that they are able to continue providing for the needs of the homeless.

There must be an understanding among the present and the future Seculars that the responsibility of each member is to be come a part of achieving the MISSION. I believe that Seculars are called by God. Jesus did not call all to be Apostles but twelve to point the way to God. As prophets, we Seculars are called by God to go out and rebuild the Church, provide the care in whatever form it may take to the lease of our brothers and sisters as servants of God.

The Sword of Francesco Bernardone

Yes, he was once a warrior, and I, a stalwart,
redolent of violence, hung at his side.
Yet from the time his father beaming pride
and ambition bestowed me on him I knew
that I would come to no glory by his arm.
His was the grip of a romantic, his
clasp about my hilt sent no malice from sinew
into steel; rather the caress of artistry
as though holding the neck of a lute.
I marked him for an early death.

In the field he was inept, there was no lust
for killing in his heart. I rarely tasted blood
and never the ecstasy of swords: that certain
lunge that cuts flesh and life at once.
Such usage changed me. As if a rust or tarnish,
his manner imprinted my form. When captured
the Perugian captain held me aloft in the spoils
room and sneered, "No balance," "no heft," "a pretty
thing." These were remarks about *me*.

Meanwhile,
he grew wan and cheerful in jail. His heart became
an incendiary, a forge, his words hammer blows,
his body, God's anvil upon which an astonished
world would be retempered. "Unbalance," "bereft,"
"a pity"--these were remarks about *him* the day
he died in the public square, put on Christ
and knotted cord, and thought of war no more.

by Justin Carisio, SFO



Education: Bishops' Public Policy Agenda

by Mary C. Lahiff, SFO, Chairperson

FRATERNITY MINISTERS: Please duplicate this article and distribute to all fraternity members.

Please keep these articles for future reference as they contain broad outlines of Catholic social teaching which is the background for decisions on individual issues currently debated in Congress and State legislatures.

Much written in the Spring Newsletter still applies since the Budget has not been finalized as of July 15 and probably will not be until September. Make your views known. The **Earned Income Tax Credit** supported by U.S. Catholic Conference for more than ten years and its expansion--one of their finest successes in the last five years--is under attack in both houses. This is the only tax relief program targeted to the poor. The program has been criticized for error and fraud. IRS is monitoring the program, verifying Social Security numbers for parents and children before payment. This credit should be saved. Please write.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET

While the fiscal status quo of growing deficits and oppressive debt is unacceptable - economically and ethically - partisan combat must yield to effective action for the common good. (Details Spring issue.) The Conference recommends continuation of federal food and nutrition programs, especially food stamps and Special Supplemental Nutrition Programs for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). The Conference does not support "block granting" programs or capping them as they represent a crucial bulwark against hunger. After the Budget Bill is passed, about 13 appropriation bills must be voted on separately and sent to the President for signature. Some will be acted on in August, others after the August recess.

WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

It will be a formidable task to maintain individual entitlement to the public assistance programs included in welfare reform proposals. The goal of a balance budget by 2002 and social concerns about public assistance programs are real and legitimate to most people. The means of achieving these goals represents a ideological shift in governing strategy and understanding of the role of federal, state and local governments. It may be possible to establish outcome-based performance standards for each program in the welfare reform bill to show how changes will affect the recipients and what goals in each stated reform are. Benchmarks could include:

- increasing percentage of cash aid to recipients who have post-welfare employment for at least 6 months;
- increasing percentage of recipient families who achieve self-sufficiency based on self-sufficiency standard;
- increasing educational attainment and skill level of welfare recipients;
- closing the gap between percentage of families needing supportive services and those receiving them.

All individual entitlement issues will be played out over a long period at state and local levels as well as in Congress. It is important to join forces with city/county officials and school boards who also oppose repealing entitlement status of benefit programs.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Much effort on health reform is now set in a budgetary context. Members of the House and Senate look to reform Medicare and Medicaid to achieve savings needed to balance the budget by 2002 and fund a tax cut. The Bishops Conference has been active in sending Congress letters restating their concerns. As constituents of Members of Congress who represent you, please add your own voices in line with *what you think Jesus would do in our present situation. What are His values as you understand His preaching in the Gospels? We are His voice today.*

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Arms Trade: The Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers is supported by the USCC. The Code of Conduct would require the President to certify each year which countries are eligible for arms sales based on several conditions: human rights, democratic government, lack of armed conflict and participation in the UN Arms Registry. Lost in Committee by one vote. It will come up again.

Anti-Personnel Landmines: Please support a Landmines Bill (to be introduced in the Senate) to prohibit use by U.S. of anti-personnel landmines except in marked, guarded minefields along national borders. It would prohibit transfer of U.S. military equipment to countries that continue to export landmines unless the President determines it to be in the national interest to do so.

Foreign Aid: IDA-10. The third year of funding for the International Development Association, the World Bank's special lending program for the poorest nations, needs renewal. With bi-lateral aid under threat, it is important to maintain U.S. commitment to multilateral lending.

Foreign Aid: 150 Account. The USCC requests that you write Representative and Senators, committee chairs in support of bi-lateral assistance to poor countries for third world development.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): There is need to move further toward nuclear disarmament and renewal of NPT.

The above is excerpted and quoted from material received for the U.S. Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the U.S. Bishops Conference. On these and other issues important to you, make your views known to your elected representatives.

LETTERS FROM YOU



To all Franciscan Brothers and Sisters,
In view of the meeting in the next few weeks of the Major Superiors of all the Franciscan Orders, and because of the devastation and atrocities in Bosnia, we wish to request all Franciscans worldwide to unite in prayer and fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays for peace in that country.

We must unite our efforts in this common prayer of intercession. We cannot allow this to go on. The responsibility is ours; we promised to live the Gospel life which commands us to help our Brothers and Sisters.

As we begin this prayer of intercession, we can also thank God for His intervention, because in faith we know He will answer our prayers.

In Christ,
Brother John Raniszewski, OFM Cap.
Sandra McConnell, SFO

Excerpt from a letter:

By the way, who is Jane Wrobel, SFO? Her article in the recent National Newsletter struck a chord in me that resounded throughout my whole being and, if possible, I would like to contact her by letter. "On the way" has been mainstay of my own spirituality and mode of living for years. It is especially vivid since my trip to the Holy Land.

I know for a fact that it not only struck me but others also....If it hit us, you may be sure it will catch fire in many others....I sense a kindred spirit.

Peace and love,

Mary C. Lahiff, Chair, Bishops' Public Policy
(Editor's note: We, too, hope to hear from Jane again.)

In the Chronicles of St. Francis it was said there was a young friar who had the habit of praying the rosary before supper. One night the refectory bell rang but the friar had not yet prayed so he asked the superior's permission to pray the rosary. Permission granted, he went to his room--one hour passed and he had not returned. The superior told two friars to fetch him. They found him bathed in heavenly light, facing our Lady with two angels with her. Every time the young friar said the Hail Mary, beautiful roses came from his mouth. The angels took them one by one and placed them on our Lady's head. She smilingly accepted them. I presume this is the origin of the Franciscan Crown.

Yours in Christ, Oswaldo Casupang, SFO



Christmas At Greccio

On December 10, 1995, St. Bernardine of Siena Fraternity will sponsor a repeat performance a Franciscan Choral Prelude, "Christmas at Greccio," by Viola R. Hangs, SFO. Thomas F. Savoy, organist, and his choir will perform at St. Margaret Mary Church in Albany, NY at 2:00 p.m. followed by Mass.

These four original songs were arranged by Tom for choir, keyboard, trumpet and cello for a Christmas celebration. The narration text is by Omer Engelbert and Thomas of Celano, used with permission of Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, IL. Titles are "Greccio Gloria," "Lullaby of the Holy Family," "Adorable Baby," "Adorable Child" and "Light of the World."

Copies of "Christmas at Greccio" are available for those who wish to perform the work. Cost is \$8.95/single copy; \$7.95 each for 20 or more. Part of the proceeds will be used for Marian undertakings. Contact:

Viola R. Hangs, SFO
68 Wylie Street
Schenectady, NY 12307

The 1-800-FRANCIS telephone number is for inquirers, NOT for business with the National Minister.

Please send all letters and editorial material to:

Patti Normile, SFO
609 Amherst Avenue
Terrace Park, OH 45174.

Send subscriptions and changes of address to: Dolores Smelko (address p. 16).

NEXT DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15, 1995

The Truth!

The truth about our National Minister's kind words about the National Newsletter (p.1) is that Richard Morton is a sleuth! He is a news sleuth for the SFO. Watch out if he comes to your region/province! He can sniff out an interesting story or individual with a unique ministry or charism faster than you can say, "National Newsletter." Many thanks, Dick, for all the input you send to the Newsletter.

HAPPENINGS

SFO NETWORKING CORNER

Below are names and addresses of Seculars interested in networking with other Seculars of similar interests. If you wish to meet and 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.

EDUCATORS/TEACHERS/AIDS MINISTRY/WRITERS/UNIONS/PRISON MINISTRY

Jerry Mazuchowski
2812 Chestnut Street
Toledo, OH 43608-2462

FULLY MATURE

The third edition of Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ is now ready for distribution from the Franciscan Resource Center for \$15.00.

This initial formation program to prepare for profession in the Secular Franciscan Order by Benet A. Fonck, OFM has been completely revised and expanded, especially in the area of updated bibliography.

Fully Mature is modeled on the structure of the RCIA and includes six sessions for the Period of Inquiry, twelve sessions for the Time of Candidacy, and a complete manual of operations.

To order contact:

Franciscan Resource Center
HC 06, Box 339C
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Franciscans International

1995 has been named *The Year for Tolerance* by the United Nations.

Franciscans International which represents Franciscan presence in the United Nations is seeking new members. Are you interested in becoming a member of *Franciscans International*? For information contact:

Franciscans International
135 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201-4212
(718)858-8217 FAX (718)858-8306

A LOOK AT 1996

FRANCISCAN PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMS

The Assisi Experience

Franciscan Pilgrimages to Assisi
March 21-April 1; April 27-May 12; July 23-August 7

Franciscan Study Pilgrimages

June 18-July 15; September 16-October 10

Franciscan Leadership Pilgrimages

September 13-September 23

Franciscan Marian Pilgrimage to Mexico

February 1-8; October 6-17; additional 3-day options

Franciscan Pilgrimage to California Missions

April 13-21; October 19-27

Franciscan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

April 27-May 11

CONTACT: Fr. Roch Niemier, ofm
1648 South 37th Street
Milwaukee, Wisc. 53215-1724
414/383-9870; FAX 414/383-0335

How do you use the *Networking Corner*? Write to Mary Mazotti with ways this linking of Franciscans has been beneficial to you. See *SFO Networking Corner* for address.

Franciscan Family Apostolate

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

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

Name _____
Fraternity _____
Address _____

A Request

St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity in Burlington, Wisconsin, is seeking a fraternity apostolate. Any fraternity with experience to share is invited to share their story along with successes, learnings, failures. Prayers are also appreciated for the fraternity's discernment process.

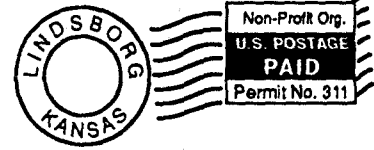
Please contact: Tim and Tina Brown
4830 Bluebird Lane
Racine, WI 53406

THIS IS A TEST. *Punch a 1/2 inch hole with a pen at the dot in the center of this page. Hold the page six inches in front of you. What do you see through the hole?*



You probably discovered that you see very little through this small opening. If you view your Franciscan life through a small view that is only through your own devotion or through your local fraternity, your view of life as a Secular Franciscan may also be limited. Secular Franciscans circle the world. In the United States there are nearly 20000 SFOs. Imagine the potential to bring Gospel to life and life to the Gospel if we work together. We seek a broader image of who we are in the world.

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



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NEWSLETTER

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



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