



That They May Be One

by William Wicks, S.F.O., National Minister

After my mother passed on, my brothers and I divided her cherished possessions. I chose a prayer book and her Bible. The prayer book, in German, was brought over by my Catholic great-grandmother from Bavaria. As near as I can tell, it was printed in the mid-seventeenth century. I treasure it as an heirloom. The Bible, a King James Version, was given to my mother by her father, a Christmas gift when she was sixteen. My mom was Episcopalian. The gift words written by my grandfather are, "To my Josephine, I give you this word of God's, that you may become a Soul Winner, learning to love your Bible and apply its teaching to your own heart and life, and also to others' lives and hearts. May it be your guide, and God's promises will give you power to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him. Your Daddy." When Mother was taking instructions, before marrying my Roman Catholic father, she asked the priest if she could keep her King James Bible given her by her father. That was a legitimate question then. It was her good fortune, and mine, that the priest said yes. Mom read to us from that Bible. Raised in the Episcopal Church, she brought a love for scripture to our home. She fell in love with our Catholic Church, making friends with Sisters of Charity who taught at our parish school. She was overjoyed when, shortly after the Vatican II, we began to sing at Mass. She missed singing the hymns that she sang during her childhood.

Fr. Stephen Gross, O.F.M. Conv., Jerry Rome, S.F.O., and I participated in the Third Order Society of St. Francis Convocation in New Orleans last July. We were welcomed as brothers and sister in Francis. Franciscan spirituality abounded. It was a joy being with those beautiful Episcopal Franciscans. When we shared in small groups, I experienced the same sense of family that I do when sharing with my S.F.O. brothers and sisters. Our wonderful experience at that gathering was a launching pad for what is now the Ecumenical Committee. Committee members are: Fr. Stephen Gross, O.F.M. Conv., Jerry Rome, S.F.O., Therese and David Ream, S.F.O., Laura Haukaas, S.F.O., and myself. We are being guided by Atonement Friar, Fr. Paul Ojibway, S.A. The mission of the Atonement Friars is Ecumenism. The time is now for us to reach out in fellowship to our separated brothers and sisters who follow Christ with the spirit of St. Francis. These are Anglican Lay Franciscans, Lutheran Lay Franciscans, the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans, Friends of Francis and others.

In his Encyclical Letter, "Ut Unum Sint [That They May Be One]," Pope John Paul II states, "The Catholic Church embraces with hope the commitment to ecumenism as a duty of the Christian conscience enlightened by faith and guided by love." Here too, we can apply the words of St. Paul to the first Christians in Rome: "God's love has been poured into their hearts through the Holy Spirit and hope does not disappoint us" (Rom. 5:5). This is the hope of Christian unity, which has its divine source in the Trinitarian unity of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit" (Article 8). Also, in Article 20, the Holy Father states, "With regard to other Christians, to the great Christian family, he [Pope John XXIII] observed: 'What unites us is much greater than what divides us.'"

While at the Convocation in New Orleans, I attended Liturgy at the Episcopal Cathedral on St. Charles Avenue. The church is in the neighborhood where my mother grew up. I could picture her, a young sixteen year old girl, sitting in the pew ahead of me with her Bible in her hands, singing her heart out. I am sure that she and my father are smiling down from heaven appreciating that we are becoming the answer to Jesus' prayer, "That they may be one, as thou Father are one in me, and I in thee that they may also be one in us; that the world may believe that the Lord has sent me." (John 17:21, King James Version).

Anniversary of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

A Letter from Emanuela De Nunzio, O.S.F.

To My Brothers and Sisters,

The renewed Rule is 20 years old. The Presidency of the CIOFS feels that this anniversary should be remembered in the life of each local Fraternity, and by each member of the Secular Franciscan Order, in order to promote, above all, a renewed gratitude for the "gift" of the Rule. Yes, because it is a gift of the Holy Spirit which has inspired the longing of lay Franciscans to respond to "changing times" and for the "provisions and encouragement given in regards to the Second Vatican Council" (cf. The Apostolic Letter "Seraphicus Patriarca.") .

The celebration of the 20th birthday of the Rule gives us the occasion to renew our lives. As a Fraternity, and as single individuals, we should ask ourselves what meaning it has had in our existence. How much have our choices and our style of life conformed to it? How much have we been able to incarnate our ideals to possess its identity and express its nature? How much has belonging to the Fraternity favored the promise to proclaiming Christ to the people of today and in being witness to him in our daily life through service?

Within the Fraternity and in our own personal prayer, the Rule should be meditated upon and prayed, almost as a "lectio divina" so that it can produce in us deep meditation, inspired interpretation, a strong impression and a spirit of unity with the brothers and sisters of the whole Order. If we model our lives on the Rule, we shall reorder our values and our reality. We shall favor the simple, the humble and the poor. We shall convince ourselves of our worthlessness and we shall let ourselves be filled with the wisdom of God. We shall be the leaven of a new humanity, convinced that "even with the spread of comfortable doctrines, and the growth of tendencies which turn people away from God and supernatural things, there is already the presence of His Kingdom in life and history" (cf. Apostolic Letter "Seraphicus Patriarca").

With fraternal affection,

Emanuela De Nunzio
Minister General, Secular Franciscan Order

FINDING GOD WITHIN Part 2

by Richard Morton, S.F.O.

This is the second in a series of articles dealing with the challenges I presented at the conclusion of the Quinquennial Congress in July of 1997. I asked that we first find the God Within. The recognition of the God Within will bring us to community/fraternity with all its rewards and perhaps some trials. We will then go from fraternity to more fully participate in building the Kingdom of God.

THE SPIRIT AS GIFT! Part 2

By Richard Morton

In the previous issue of this newsletter, I offered several thoughts concerning the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity and how they have been gradually revealed throughout the course of human history. This "making known" of God continues even to this very day, occurring at times ever so slowly within each one of us, saints and sinners alike, as we grow in the Spirit and the knowledge of God.

As followers of St. Francis, we must know God in more than just an intellectual way. Scripture and our faith tell us that our God has always desired and continues to desire to develop a deep personal relationship with each of us and to dwell in the very depths of our being.

"No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is brought to perfection in us. The way we know that we remain in him and He [dwelling] in us, is that he has given us of his Spirit" (1 John 4:12-13). The promise of Pentecost is fulfilled! Just as the revelation of God's existence has been gradual throughout history, so has been my own realization and appreciation that the Spirit of God lives within each of us, including myself. The fact that I so often fail to recognize his presence doesn't mean he isn't there.

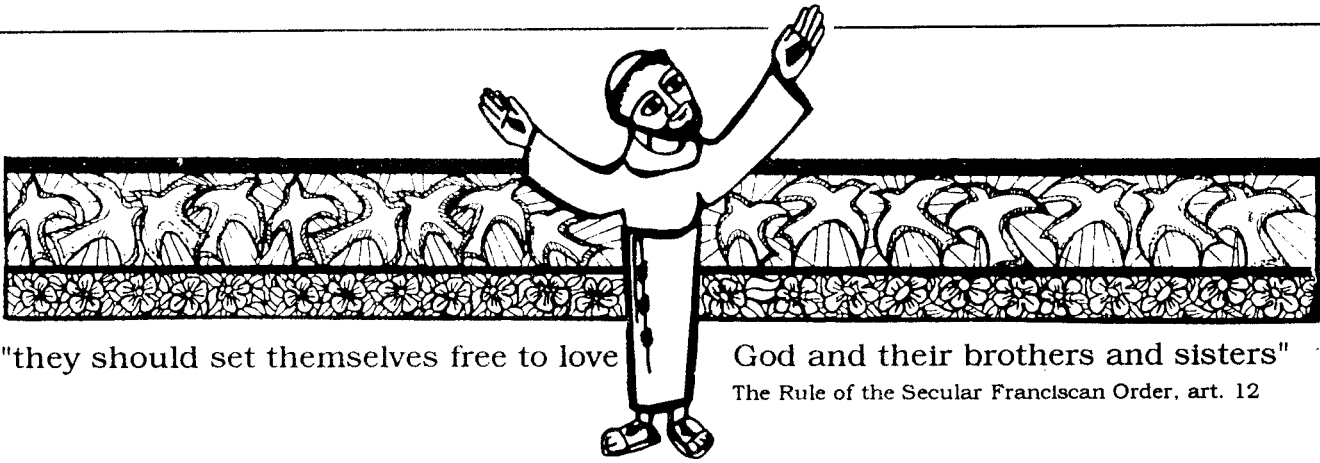
In my personal struggle to find God within, it seems as though there's a window blind hanging between myself and the brightness of Jesus, the Son of God for whom I am searching. I find the blind nearly fully closed most of the time with very little light coming through. At other times, the blind will open just a little and stay open for a while and then close again. I ask myself, "Why can't I open the blind a little more or even all the way? Why won't it stay open?" To "fully open the blind" and to keep it open so I can recognize the Son and walk in His light my life long desire.

As we continue on our journey as Franciscans, let us constantly search to find the God within and to develop an intimate relationship with Him. Try to make him your constant companion, your best and most intimate friend, your confidant and source of strength. Nurture your relationship with Jesus through prayer and contemplation as Jesus did with his Father. "As Jesus was the true worshiper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all [you] are and do" (Rule, Article 8). Limit distractions that don't lead to unity with the Lord Jesus. Finally, don't attempt to make the journey alone.

Our models for the Gospel life, Francis and Clare, both struggled with and searched for intimacy with Jesus. In their struggles they were led to life in community, a community of faith, a community where the Holy Spirit unites those who are involved in a similar effort to find the God within. We too, as their followers, find strength and support in our life of community, our life in fraternity.

[To be continued in the next issue.]

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"they should set themselves free to love

God and their brothers and sisters"

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, art. 12

"From Gospel to Life and Life to the Gospel"

The Secular Franciscan Way of Life

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Happy Anniversary! The Ongoing Formation section of this issue of TAU-USA continues the Commissions' series of reflections on the 1978 Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order which is now twenty years young. What a beautiful gift we celebrate! Unlike its predecessors which it definitively abrogated, the Rule of 1978 is not a *prescriptive* Rule, that is, it does not impose specific religious observances and penitential disciplines on members of the S.F.O. Rather, it is an *inspirational* Rule which embraces and embodies a post-Vatican Council II view of the *Christifideles*, Christ's Faithful People. With the Rule of 1978, the Church in the person of Pope Paul VI recognized and celebrated the fact that the sisters and brothers of the Secular Franciscan Order are mature and maturing adult members of Christ's Faithful People, not children who need to be spoon-fed from a menu of disciplinary practices all neatly spelled out. The challenge presented to us in our Rule's Second Chapter, "The Way of Life," is that of responding in dynamic and ever-changing ways to the promptings of God's Holy Spirit calling us to respond to the demands of faithfully witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus in our own age.

An official commentary prepared by the National Spiritual Assistants' Commission (of which Fr. Benet Fonck, O.F.M., served as coordinator) accompanied the 1979 edition of the Rule as published by the Franciscan Herald Press. This commentary offered the following insights about this chapter:

The second chapter of the Rule is a thorough and detailed description of the Secular Franciscan way of life. The first part (articles #4-#6) gives the meaning of gospel living in the Franciscan tradition. Then conversion and worship are explained as the necessary preconditions for achieving this gospel life (articles #7-#8). Finally, [articles] #9-#19 describe the manner of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ by how the Secular Franciscans live (articles #10-#14) and what they do (articles #15-#19). In the light of scripture and the teachings of Vatican II, this chapter is envisioned as a program for evangelization: how we ourselves are evangelized after the manner of Francis and, secondly, how we evangelize others. (1979, p.13)

In recent years Pope John Paul II has repeatedly called the whole Church---clergy, religious and laity---to cooperate with God's grace and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in proclaiming and making real in our world a new evangelization, a fresh and bold proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ within a world spiritually starving to death for want of Him. On the eve of this past Pentecost (May 30, 1998), our Holy Father met at St. Peter's in Rome with over 500,000 members of ecclesial movements and new communities from around the world, including representatives of our Secular Franciscan Order. He issued anew to all of us the Gospel mandate to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). He prayed in part that the Holy Spirit would come and "make ever more fruitful the charisms you have bestowed on us. Give new strength and missionary zeal to these sons and daughters of yours who have gathered here. Open their hearts; renew their Christian commitment in the world. Make them courageous messengers of the Gospel, witnesses to the risen Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of all. Strengthen their love and fidelity to the Church."

The National Formation Commission strongly encourages local and regional fraternities to focus their ongoing formation efforts on a renewed study and reflection on the Rule of 1978. As a framework for this study, we wholeheartedly recommend two resources: Formation Commission member Teresa Baker, S.F.O.'s book Gospel Living Every Day of our Lives: A Formation Guide to the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order which can be purchased from Barbo-Carlson Enterprises (see order form on the last page of TAU-USA); and Fr. Benet Fonck, O.F.M.'s Called to Follow Christ: Commentary on the Secular Franciscan Rule by the National Spiritual Assistants' Commentary Commission, the first volume in the six-volume S.F.O. Resource Library that Fr. Benet is coordinating and which can be ordered from The Franciscan Press, 1800 College Ave., Quincy, IL 62301; phone (217) 228-5670.

In our present Rule of Life, we Secular Franciscans have a particular and graced pattern for realizing the hopes that Pope John Paul II expressed for all the Church's ecclesial movements on Pentecost. Our way of life as envisioned in this central chapter of our Rule, Chapter Two, is more about personal conversion and communal transformation than it is about a purely personal piety. It is about us incarnating the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, thus helping to bring about a fuller expression of the Reign of God.

Commissions Conference Update; New Date Set for June 24-27, 1999

The date for the Commissions Conference to be held at St. Bonaventure University has been changed from July 2-5, 1998, to June 24-27, 1999. Here's what happened. At the Quinquennial Congress, many Seculars provided feedback asking that the proposed date be changed. The reasons were twofold: family commitments over the July 4th weekend and difficulty in traveling then. Over Labor Day weekend the Commissions Conference planning committee, including representatives from St. Bonaventure University, met at the University. We discovered that the only viable alternate date during the summer of 1998 was in direct conflict with the scheduled National Ecology Apostolate Leadership Training Conference to be held on June 20-26, 1998.

While the Commission representatives express regret at this unexpected delay, we believe that we will have a better conference to offer in 1999. First, all the Commissions will be represented. Second, there will be more funding available from the International Center for Secular Franciscan Studies Endowment to help cover costs. Third, in two years time, more regions should have their regional commission positions filled. It is still the intent to invite regional commission chairs to attend the Conference itself at no cost (not including transportation). All Seculars are cordially invited to participate in this gathering.

Please see the full-page notice on page 11 of this issue of TAU-USA regarding this Conference.

Working My Way Back To You, Lord

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I'm writing this reflection on Chapter Two of our Rule, *The Way of Life*, on June 24, 1998. Twenty years ago today, on June 24, 1978, the present Secular Franciscan Rule was promulgated. Twenty years ago, I was a lost soul--embittered, frustrated, convinced that life was meaningless and religion absurd. Through God's mercy, later that year a heavenly 2X4 hit me, giving an overwhelming experience of His Presence. I began praying again, for the first time in years. One of my sincerest prayers was, "Lord, you know how distant I've been and how easily I can stray. Now I know you're really there, help me. If I return only as a Sunday Catholic, you'll lose me again in no time. Help me find a *way of life* that will pull the fragments of my life together into a meaningful whole and serve to keep me close to You."

My prayer was soon answered. At a small, daily, evening Mass, where everyone sat in a circle, there was a man my age wearing an odd looking cross. Someone had cut the top off. How unusual. I had to ask him about it. It was, of course, a Tau cross. That was the beginning of my introduction to the Secular Franciscans. It was the beginning of an answer to my earnest prayer for a *way of life*.

I've tried to capture the essences of this Secular Franciscan *way of life* in a simple mnemonic (memory aid):

- ✓ Secular Franciscans have *one* way of life---following Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis, through the practice of
- ✓✓ *two* spiritual disciplines---prayer and participation in liturgy;
- ✓✓✓ *three* aspects of lifestyle---simple living, life in fraternity, selfless service;
- ✓✓✓✓ *and four* apostolates or commissions---peace and justice, work, family, and ecology.

This formula is surely far from perfect, but it has helped me keep focused on our Rule as a *way of life*.

It is so important that work is part of our Secular Franciscan *way of life*. We spend most of our lives working. Our Rule wouldn't be very good at providing a *way of life* if our productive lives were omitted from the equation. Whether it's work for pay or work in the myriad tasks through which we take care of our own lives or care for others, most of our waking lives are spent working.

So much of our works seems like drudgery and we can be tempted to think that it's spiritually meaningless. If we only had more time to pray, we lament! We can feel guilty about our type of work, that it can't be pleasing to God because we're not directly working with the poor. I felt that way after moving to an administrative position at a university after working with physically disabled adults so we could start a family. I found it a great comfort to begin to learn, through reflection on Article 16 of the Rule, that my meager efforts have importance in the celestial economy. My work is a factor in the drama of the world's ongoing creation and redemption. I learned that the type of work I am doing isn't important; it is important that my work allows me to use God's gifts (my talents) to serve others and to please the Lord. My work, done with right intention, helps me grow in holiness, to develop into the person God wants me to become. The Secular Franciscan Rule---what a great *way of life*!

Dialogue Starter

1. To what extent is being a Secular Franciscan a *way of life* for you?
2. Does it extend to your work?

Holiness

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The revised Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, approved 20 years ago, is a prescription for holiness. In Article 4 of the Rule of Life, we are called to witness through Christ "the life which the Father has come to give abundantly." As this "gift" becomes more apparent and central to our spirituality, we become equally absorbed by the "Franciscan concept of universal kinship." But also, as our extended family of humanity and brothers and sisters of creation grows, we are made more deeply aware of the many sufferings and anguish caused by exploitation. It is here we find a breeding ground for reverence and compassion, which draws us to "the forefront." The more we are made aware of suffering, the greater our call to action and conversion, always reflecting upon *The Way of Life* in all we do and hope for.

Moving from one Article to the next in *The Way of Life* it becomes apparent how austere our Rule is. In fact, it's quite surprising that so many have stepped up to the altar of God to profess this *Way of Life*. Is there a more challenging Rule within the Church? In Article after Article we are called to strip away every excess, "simplifying our material needs," while "purifying our hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power," to be made free "to love God," as "messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance." What a great privilege and opportunity we are given by the Church to practice this Rule. It is ironic that only rarely do we meet someone in public who has even heard of the Secular Franciscan Order. Why? To profess to a Rule in which one has not been fully informed, ill-informed, misinformed or self-excused is an injustice in itself. It would be less harmful to profess no Rule at all. Do we set good enough example for ourselves? Are we fully sure of our own expectations? Otherwise, we would surely be known to the world.

At the recent Ecology Commission Conference on Environmental Health at "Graymoor" in June, the most common response given by attendees was being "overwhelmed," by what they learned from some of the nation's leading outspoken scientists and physicians. At a meeting in July with about thirty of the world's environmental scholars and leaders to discuss the wording and implementation of the "Earth Charter" to hopefully and eventually be adopted by the United Nations, the one word that stood out more than any other in describing certain situations and conditions in the world community was "devastation." Even if we can't bring ourselves to profess to promoting justice, we must have a knowledge of suffering to broaden the intention of our prayers.

In remaining strong to the conviction of our profession we shall grow, through often consulting the Rule in the spirit of self-denial, strengthened by the Eucharist, and all the while questioning our intent. That is why we have the Rule and Apostolic Commissions, to bring out the best of them and us. Before pointing to ignorance elsewhere, we must recognize ignorance in ourselves. Here lies the breeding ground of humility, the root of apostolic effectiveness, the spirit of peacemaking, the value of poverty, the gateway to freedom and ultimately the way to holiness.

Questions for reflection:

1. Given such a far reaching and demanding Rule, why do you feel the Secular Franciscan Order is scarcely known?
2. What do you think are the most difficult Articles in *The Way of Life* to follow? Why are they difficult?
3. What must we do to make the Secular Franciscan Order a more effective means of hope and relief for all of God's creatures, poor and victimized?

Challenges for Secular Franciscans

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Chapter II of our Rule opens with the deceptively simple statement, “The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and center of his life with God and people.” [Article 4]

This sounds simple until we try to break it apart and see what it means for us, practically, in our daily lives. Luckily for us, our Rule continues to describe our way of life in more detail. We are not left to flounder.

The first several articles of Chapter II give us the foundation for our way of life. When we read them, we understand our firm rooting in Christ and some of the tools we are to use along the way.

Article 5 says we should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ everywhere. Article 6 tells us we must go forth as witnesses and instruments of the mission of the Church. Article 7 reminds us we must seek daily conversion, to conform our thoughts and deeds to those of Christ. Articles 8 and 9 reinforce the centrality of prayer and contemplation as the very soul of all we are and do.

These four basic concepts: (1) to be Christ-centered; (2) to witness to the mission of the Church; (3) to practice daily conversion; (4) to make prayer our very soul, provide us with the strength and the tools we need so we can act in those areas that the Rule then lays out for us in the rest of Chapter II.

Our four apostolic areas are described in Articles 15, *Justice*; 16, *Work*; 17, *Family*; 18, *Ecology*; and 19, *Peace*. This sandwiching of justice and peace around other apostolic areas does not seem an accident. If justice is integral to all our relationships, then we will have true peace.

Article 15 states, “Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives.” The Peace and Justice Commission does not have ownership of this article. It can be an umbrella for *all* our apostolic works. In all areas of our lives, Seculars are to be in the forefront, promoting justice at work, in our families, in relation to the earth and all

people. Wherever we find ourselves, we should be concerned with promoting justice, finding just solutions to problems and encouraging just relations.

Article 19 states, “Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.” This article can be viewed in many ways. At its heart is a description of a way of acting that we Seculars can adopt in every encounter. When we interact with our co-workers, family members, friends and neighbors, we need to seek ways of unity rather than discord. We should encourage dialogue and find ways to resolve conflict through reconciliation, love and pardon. We must always be mindful to, “Love one another as I have loved you.” Article 15 says, “especially in the field of public life we need to make definite choices in harmony with our faith.” Couple this with the attitude described in Article 19 and it becomes clear that in also public and political arenas Secular Franciscans are to encourage dialogue, nonviolence and a path of harmony.

Like Francis when he approached the Sultan, believing in the power of prayer and knowing the strength of conversion, our courageous initiatives should always intend peaceful and just solutions. We know that working for a just and peaceful world is an unceasing task, but that is what we are called to do to live fully our Rule and truly follow the example of St. Francis.

Some questions for reflection and discussion.

1. In what ways is my fraternity in the forefront in promoting justice? How do we support each other’s “courageous initiatives?”
2. What is the relationship between peace and justice? Is one possible without the other?
3. Francis brought healing and reconciliation between the people of Gubbio and the wolf. Where do I see a need for reconciliation and peacemaking? How can I become a reconciler and a peacemaker?

Way of Life

“The Call” “The Commitment” “The Daily Conversion”

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The Agony in the Garden

He kept saying “Abba [O Father], You have power to do all things. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you would have it, not as I.” Mark 14:36
When they had eaten their meal, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.”
At which Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” John 21:15
“Francis, rebuild my church . . .”

Gordon Allport, a well-known psychologist, stated that “any commitment that is authentic has two elements.”
First element: You are half sure, not knowing exactly how totally your commitment will affect your life.

Second element: You are entering this commitment wholeheartedly, entirely and unconditionally. Living our commitment will involve six stages according to Richard T. Knowles in his book Human Development and Human Possibility: Erickson in the Light of Heidegger, pp 130-137.

First---the *Call* This is a response to an *Invitation*. We are called to come out of our preoccupations and concerns. Example: your call to serve as a Secular Franciscan, a priest or in married life.

Second---the *Declaration* The exchange of vows. Example: profession for a Secular Franciscan, ordination for a priest, wedding vows in marriage. Now we feel that our commitment is permanent. We are almost positive that we will keep this commitment without sacrifice. For example: Peter says, “You know, Lord, I love You.”

Third---the *Involvement* We now find that the commitment involves more than we thought it would. Example: You might be saying, “If I knew then what I were getting into, I wouldn’t have done this.”

Fourth---*Purpose and Meaning* At this stage there is an increase sense of purpose and meaning to the commitment. Example: you realize that you must “Walk your talk.”

Fifth---the *Struggle* There is a real sense of personal struggle. You doubt the commitment and feel like you are losing control. All commitments involve sacrifice, suffering, self-discipline, loss of control. Example: God’s will be done. *Whoever loves father or mother, son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me. He who will not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me.* Matt.10:37-37

Paschal Mystery

Every commitment will take you to a place you would rather not go. *I tell you solemnly; as a young man you fastened your belt and went about as you pleased; but when you are older you will stretch out your hands and another will tie you fast and carry you off against your will.* John 21:18

Sixth---the *Divine Identity* Those who remain faithful experience feelings of satisfaction, worthiness, a sense of fit with Life. Commitment is no longer what I do but rather who I am. Those who remain faithful to our Lord will have the strength to bear witness, talents beyond reach, wisdom above and beyond and will be able to experience unconditional Love. There is a deeper sense of unity between heaven and earth.

Francis the Knight-----Francis the Brother-----Francis the Saint

Peter the Fisherman-----Peter the Apostle-----Peter the Pope

and-----YOU! Who do you say you are?

Questions for reflection/discussion

Call: When did you begin to search for the answer to your call?

Commitment: At what stage are you in your journey?

Daily conversion: What does daily conversion mean to you?

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Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers, in speech, in love, in faith, and in purity.
1 Timothy 4:12

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Inviting Youth and Young Adults to the Gospel Life Forming Youth/Young Adult Groups

Spiritually motivated and dedicated youth are not formed in a vacuum. They are lifted up by those going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel.

The Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission asks you to think and pray about starting a Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Group with the help of your fraternity or parish. What are your resources? Fraternities and parishes abound with already trained leaders such as classroom teachers, CCD teachers, CYO leaders, Girl and Boy Scout leaders and other such youth groups. They have knowledge of youth's developmental phases and are familiar with well-rounded lesson plans and balanced activities. These same skills and formats can be adapted to fit in the formation of Franciscan Children and Youth/Young Adults.

The Church recognizes that there is a hunger among youth for deeper meaning and purpose to their lives. There is a strong desire among many of them to make the world a better place, to save it from its seemingly bent to self-destruct. Are we up to this challenge?

The Commission is happy to inform our Secular brothers and sisters, and other Franciscans interested in Franciscan Youth Ministry, that it has now made available [A Guide for Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Ministry](#) (see this issue of [TAU-USA](#) for order form). The [Guide](#) gives simple suggestions for community building and social group building activities, works of charity, retreats, special observances, formation, extra helps and suggested reading.

The [Guide](#) differs from other youth group information in that the Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Group accepts the [Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order](#) as its document of inspiration and for the growth of its own Christian and Franciscan vocation. The [Guide](#) includes suggested formation material for primary grades (ages 5-7); elementary (ages 7-12); middle school (ages 12-14); teen program (ages 14-19 and beyond).

The Commission encourages you to think again about the skills and spiritual gifts you have, and the gifts of others that can be of help to you, for starting Franciscan Youth Groups in the age brackets listed above. More help will become available through the Commission later, as research in these areas continues.



Secular Franciscan All Commissions Conference

Forming The Body of Christ

Bringing Forth the Kingdom of God

**Ecology
Family
Formation
Peace & Justice
Work
Youth/Young Adult**

June 24-27, 1999

**Franciscan Institute
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For additional information contact:

Mary Mazotti, S.F.O.

(209) 795-3809

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Dignitas

Proclaiming the Dignity of Work

*Ed & Mary Zablocki, S.F.O., Co-Chairs, National Work Commission, Secular Franciscan Order, U.S.A.
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How I Discovered the Presence of God on My Job Part I

*Sally Haddad, S.F.O., Chair, Work Commission, Solanus Casey Region.
A member of St. Pius X Fraternity, Middletown, Connecticut*

Whenever we take the time to review our past, we can usually discover God's saving power in our lives. Then we experience the presence of God and, therefore, glorify Him. When I reviewed my work history it became clear to me how God has been forming me in my attitude towards work in general and towards my job in particular. Presently I work as a senior pipe designer at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics in Groton, Connecticut. I've been employed there for almost 25 years, and its product is the nuclear submarine used by the U.S. Navy.

When I started working at the Electric Boat I disliked my job very much. First, I had hoped to get a job as a computer programmer after I graduated from college in 1973. Unfortunately, there were no openings in any of the companies where I applied for work. After several months I settled for a position at Electric Boat as a math tech aide in piping design. Second, I had participated in protest marches against the war in Vietnam. Therefore, it was embarrassing for me to be working for a company with a product related to war. Third, when I surrendered my life to Jesus I developed the attitude that working in an office, receiving a weekly paycheck from a secular business, was incompatible with following Christ.

God used several events in my work history to reform my thinking towards my job. First, whenever Electric Boat launched a submarine during the 70's and 80's, there would always be a group of protesters (usually the same people). There was never any violence. In fact, the Electric Boat employees and the protesters rarely spoke with one another. What the protesters did accomplish was a five or 10 minute work break for Electric Boat employees because we enjoyed looking out at them through the windows, especially when they were wearing weird costumes. I have to admit, however, that God may have used them to propel

me into meditating on the Church's teachings about war and peace. I had to find God's presence or leave.

When I joined the Secular Franciscan Order I asked my Postulant Instructor if I would even be allowed to belong to the Secular Franciscan Order with the type of job that I had, and he told me that my job was not an obstacle to membership. The fruits of my meditation were that I began to realize it was the soldier who picked up his gun and went off to war who put an end to the tyranny of Japan and Germany during World War II. It was not the pacifist who stayed home to protest World War II who put an end to the war. Also, St. Joan of Arc was chosen by God to set France free from the tyranny of England, but the French had to fight in a war in order to receive that freedom.

In other words, God's Kingdom is not fully established, and it will not be fully established until the end of time. Right now, we live in a world where we need police officers and soldiers to maintain peace and law and order. I began to realize that some people are called by God to maintain peace, and I am one of them. I accomplish that by working at Electric Boat.

[To be continued.]



Education: Bishop's Public Policy Agenda

by Susan Burke, SFO

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

Pope John Paul II has declared the year 2000 a Year of Jubilee. As social action director Stephen Colecchi says, "A reflective reading of Leviticus 24 suggests that jubilee begins in Sabbath and moves to justice. . . . Rest . . . gives us an opportunity to get in touch with God and to take a closer look at the world."

In his encyclical *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, Pope John Paul II wrote, "In the spirit of the Book of Leviticus, Christians will have to raise their voice on behalf of the poor of the world, proposing the Jubilee as an appropriate time to give thought, among other things, to reducing substantially, if not canceling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations."

As of 1996, developing nations owed foreign creditors more than \$2 trillion. According to the U.S. Catholic Conference, this debt was incurred by people in power who often used the money for purposes that did not help the majority of the nation's people, particularly those living in some of the worst poverty on earth. The poor, however, are paying for this debt; their governments use resources that could be used for health and human service programs to pay back the debt. In our country, individuals who get too far in debt can file for bankruptcy and get a chance to start over. There is no such option for poor countries. The cost of providing relief for the 20 nations affected most by the international debt burden would be \$6 billion, less than the cost of one stealth bomber.

The USCC's Department of Social Development and World Peace is working with other national groups to develop a bill that would allocate more funds to both bilateral and multilateral debt relief: Bilateral---\$100 million for the poorest countries in FY 2000; \$100 million in FY 2001; multilateral, i.e., debt owed by poor countries to the World Bank, IMF, and other international lenders, \$100 million in 2000; \$200 million in 2001; \$400 million in 2002. Among other things, the bill will call for redefining the measure of how much debt service countries are able to pay, rewarding governments that are committed to poverty reduction with more debt relief.

The USCC, with Catholic Relief Services, has convened a 10-person international working group on debt. Its members are the counterparts of CRS in Germany, the United Kingdom, Scotland, Ireland, Austria, Spain, and Italy. Another member is Caritas Internationalis, an international Catholic network representing 147 agencies like Catholic Charities throughout the world. The group wrote a position paper on international debt called *Putting Life Before Debt*, containing background on the debt crisis, Catholic social teaching, the World Bank/IMF debt relief initiative, policy recommendations, ideas for action, and lists of international contacts. Contact Jennifer Donnelly at Catholic Relief Services, tel. (410) 625-2220, for copies. It's also posted in several languages on the Web sites of CRS and European-based CIDSE (www.cidse.be).

Meanwhile, consider attending the National Catholic Celebration for Jubilee Justice, July 15-18, 1999, at the University of California Los Angeles. More than 30 national Catholic offices and organizations are planning this unprecedented gathering of clergy and lay leaders.



Bracelets

There are little bracelets that are very popular with Christian youth that bear the letters WWJD. These letters stand for, "What would Jesus do?" They are reminders that as Christians our actions should always reflect the faith and joy we have for Jesus. Our TAU crosses are symbols of our particular spirituality as Franciscans, and I have heard many times from fellow Franciscans the words, "What would Francis do?"

To be truthful, I must admit I have not asked the question WWJD since I was an adolescent just getting to know Jesus, and I have never asked myself WWJD. As I sit here, trying to piece together thoughts about the *Way of Life* chapter of our Rule, I wonder why I don't.

I think the main reason is that WWJD implies that if Jesus were here he would do something, instead of me. WWJD is a question I have always imagined Francis would not want us to ask. When he was dying, Francis did not tell us what to do what he did on earth. Instead, he completely trusted God to guide us, leaving us with this wish, "I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what you are to do" (2 Cel p 214). He didn't say, "May Christ teach you what he would do," or "May Christ teach you what I did."

The message here is twofold. First, WWJD is not an inappropriate question for adolescents. Knowing what Jesus did in his time is essential for them and to apply these actions to their life. Any of us who have ever exerted influence over a child's development have taught lessons by word and example, so that in a bind the child may ask "What would Dad do?" "What would Aunt Sue do?" Developing minds and hearts thrive on example and need role models.

The second point is the same as the first. WWJD is an appropriate question for an adolescent, but not for an adult. As a child grows through adolescence into adulthood, they naturally develop their own ways of responding to the world around them. Respond is the root of the word responsibility. As adults, we can no longer look to our parents to act on our behalf. We must act on our own behalf and respond to our vocations, our crises and our relationships as we are able.

As I ponder this thought, I am well aware that the Catholic Church, the Secular Franciscan Order included, has many adolescent members of all ages. There are members of our Church who are elderly, who were formed as Catholics and Franciscans when the clergy made the rules and the people simply obeyed them. Some of these people have consistently refused to acknowledge that change is going on all around and they have missed out on some of the finest gifts the Church has to offer. There are members in their 40s and 50s who fall into two main categories of adolescents. There are those who want to fall back into the Church of their youth who want nothing more than to mouth rituals of their childhood and forget the challenges of Vatican II. Then there are those who took the changes of Vatican II and abused them to serve their own agenda of rebellion and dissent.

If we are to be adults in the Church we cannot ask WWJD. If we are adults in our church and in our faith we know what Jesus would do because we have allowed Jesus to teach us through prayer and Scripture. The question we must ask is, "What must I do?" If we are adult Franciscans we know what Francis would do, but he did what was his to do and left us to find out from Christ what is His will is for us.

The question WWJD or WWJD won't work for us. If we are elderly adolescents we will confuse this with the questions, "What would Father do?" or "What would Father tell us to do?" If we are baby boomers still smarting from the changes that took place in our Church during our young adulthood, we may color our response to WWJD with sentimental desire to return to old ways of thinking and acting that bring us the comfort of our youth. If we are members of the 60's revolution, we may be sorely tempted to answer the question with another question, born not of a desire to be like Jesus but a desire to make Jesus the way we want him. We may not even realize that we are asking, "What would I like Jesus to do," or "What do I think Jesus ought to do?"

If we are Catholics of the generation now marrying and rearing young families, or in high school and college now, we are floundering. The question WWJD is very important to these young Catholics because there are so few adults in their Church. Everywhere they turn, these young people hear a different philosophy, even a different theology. Many have parents who have abandoned their faith, or just do lip service it because they have no idea what they believe. Many are leaving the Catholic church for evangelical churches, not because they hate the Catholic Church but because they do not know it.

The challenge we face, if we are to take Chapter II of our Rule and integrate it into our life until it becomes our *Way of Life*, is an adult one. We must put aside childish ways and behave as though we really believe what we profess on Sunday morning. We must take risks and be willing to suffer for our faith. We must sacrifice ourselves for the good of others, loving without condition. We must not set limits on God and unite ourselves with God in prayer every chance we can. We must long for and open ourselves to receive God's powerful grace especially in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and thrive on the Bread of Life. We must convert, minute by minute, day by day, always repenting for missed opportunities to love, always seeking the gift of the Holy Spirit that we need do to what we must. Our way of life is not spelled out for us. Our Rule does not deny us our adulthood. On the contrary, the living of our Rule requires our adult response. Our responsibility as adult members of the faith is the same as our responsibility as adult members of society. We must form the next generation and teach them to live as adults in this world, in our beloved Church. When we see a young member of our Church seeking an answer to WWJD, let us pray that they find it by looking at us.

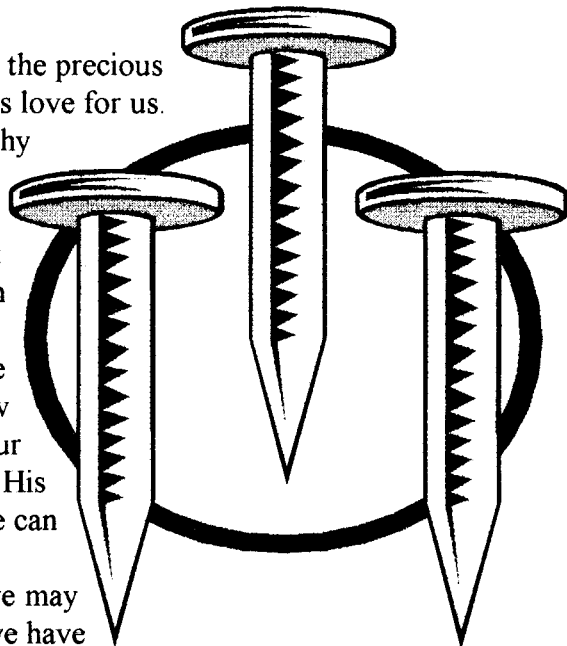
Respond to His Love . . .

Len Bernas, S.F.O., Our Lady Queen of the Angels Fraternity

My beloved sisters and brothers, remember we are all called to have a personal and intimate relationship with our Lord. Christ was never meant to be worshiped from afar. He lived among us. The beloved Son of the Father willingly submitted to the role of "the servant of man." By His life He showed us that it is possible to be human and also elevate the part of us that has its origin in God to a height that transcends all other life on this planet.

Each of us must be willing to approach the crucifix and gaze on the precious gift of the Father, His very Son, and appreciate the magnitude of His love for us. I sometimes have to ask what we could possibly do in life to be worthy of such love. Thank God that thoughts are not our thoughts, but wouldn't it be wonderful to see ourselves as God views us? It would go a long way in promoting peace and harmony in this world. The next step is bigger. We must be willing to respond to His love through change. It takes courage to change our ways of thinking and acting. We fear the unknown, we hang onto the familiar, the ways we have always done things. Our great leap of faith occurs only when we allow ourselves to hear God's call and we respond to it. Each of us, in our own time and way, must ascent that cross and pull the nails from His hands so He can embrace us. To pull the nails from His feet, so that he can walk through life with us.

I pray that our hearts will be open to hear God's call that we may have the wisdom to embrace the love that flows from Him and that we have the courage to share that love with all around us.



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I was appointed by the NAFRA Executive Council at its February 1998 meeting as your new Multi-cultural coordinator.

First, I would like to thank Consuelo Smith, S.F.O., for all her groundbreaking work as past Multi-cultural Coordinator. She did an outstanding job for which we are grateful. Secondly, as I begin my term as Multi-cultural Coordinator, I realize that even though a lot has been accomplished, there is much more that needs to be done. We need to acknowledge the cultural differences of members in our fraternities and be open to their needs, but more importantly, to their gifts. The following story by Jack Miffleton illustrates how we sometimes relate to the strangers among us and how, if we choose, we have the ability to change.

The story takes place in a land not far from here. There grew a garden of many delicious vegetables: Sweet Native American Corn, Virginia Red Beets, California Artichokes, Peoria Pumpkins, New York Italian Tomatoes, Boston Irish Potatoes and Wonderful Kentucky Green Beans. The vegetables were filled with nutrition and color, and they lived and grew in harmony. The town people loved the garden and cared for it.

One day, however, a stranger appeared in the colorful garden. The stranger was not a vegetable like the others. The stranger was a prickly Cactus plant. The vegetables had never seen anything like this Cactus before, and they were afraid. The stranger uttered such words as "Buenos dias," and "Pax, mis amigos," which made the vegetables suspicious, but they did not venture too close for fear of the sharp Cactus needles. The vegetables spent many days and nights arguing and gossiping and trying to make a case against the Cactus. In fact, they spent so much time quarreling and wrangling that none of the vegetables noticed that it had not rained for months. The once beautiful garden became a dry and dreary sight.

The town people, however, were well aware of the sad state of the garden, for their food supply was very poor and tasteless. Many people began to hoard and steal. The town people blamed the vegetables, and the vegetables blamed the Cactus, and the Cactus stood quietly and said sadly, "Pax, mis amigos."

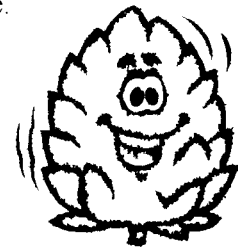
So the vegetables began to conspire with the town people against the Cactus, looking for a way to destroy it and restore the peace once again. At midnight

they came sneaking into the garden, armed with clubs, shovels and axes. When the signal was given, they all broke into a fierce battle cry, and with one mighty whack someone sliced into the side of the Cactus. At that, something very unusual happened. Water, sweet water, began to flow from the side of the Cactus, soaking the garden and refreshing the parched vegetables. No one could understand it. Everyone was stunned and silent.

A sense of shame came over the group for what they had done.

The vegetables began saying to one another, "Surely, this was a friend."

To this day the language of the stranger is remembered as a common sign of welcome for all who come to this land. "Buenos dias." "Paz, mis amigos." Good day. Peace my friends.



Throughout our National Fraternity we have fraternities that are made up of members of different ethnic backgrounds. We have fraternities that are made up of members who share a common language or ethnicity, e.g., Vietnamese, Korean, Cuban, Mexican, Polish, Native American, Lebanese, Black American, Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, etc. Nationally we have a region that was set-up based on its liturgical rite. Considering these differences, I have set the following goals in order to better serve you. I plan to do the following:

- ☼ Contact all Regional Ministers and request a list of all fraternities whose membership is made up of specific ethnicity or language.
- ☼ Contact those fraternities and find out where they are acquiring the materials needed for the life of the fraternity, e.g., initial formation, ongoing formation, Ritual, Rule, etc.
- ☼ In light of the above information, develop a resource packet that would be available through the National Fraternity.
- ☼ Work with Regional Ministers in setting up a Multi-cultural Coordinator in every region.

I look forward to meeting and working with all regional Ministers and future Regional Multi-cultural Coordinators.

Paz y Bien,
Juan F. Lezcano, S.F.O., National Councillor

Queridos Hermanas y Hermanos,

He sido nombrado por el comité Ejecutivo de NAFRA durante la reunion en Febrero 1998, Coordinator Multicultural.

En primer lugar quiero agradecer a Consuelo Smith, S.F.O., por todo su trabajo inicial como Coordinadora Multicultural. Hizo muy buen trabajo, por lo que todos estamos muy agradecidos. En segundo lugar segun comienzo mi termino como Coordinador Multicultural, realizo que aunque mucho se ha logrado, aun hay mucho por hacer. Debemos tener en cuenta las diferencias culturales de miembros en nuestras fraternidades y aceptar sus necesidades, pero mas importante, sus talentos. El siguiente cuento por Jack Miffleton muestra como a veces respondemos a gente extrana entraña nostros, y como, si lo deseamos, tenemos la capacidad para cambiar.

El cuento ocurre en una tierra no muy lejos de aqui. Habia un jardin donde crecian vegetales bien deliciosos: maiz dulce, nativo de America, beets rojos de Virginia, Artichokes de California, Calabazas de Peoria, Tomates Italianos de New York, Papas Irlandesas de Boston y deliciosas Habichuelas Verdes de Kentucky. Estaban Henos de colores nutritivas, y vivian y crecian en armonia. La gente del pueblo querian el jardin y lo cuidaban.

Un dia un extraño vino al lindo jardin. Este extraño no era un vegetal como los otros. El extraño era un cactus espinoso. Los vegetales nunca habian visto a este Cactus anteriormente, y tenian miedo. El extraño decia palabras coma "Good Morning," y "Pax my friends," lo cual causaba sospecha en los vegetales, pero estos no se acercaban por miedo a las espinas filosas del cactus. Los vegetales pasaron muchos dias y noches discutiendo y rumorando tradando de formar un caso en contra del cactus. Por cierto, estuvieron tanto tiempo discutiendo que ninguno de los vegetales se dieron cuenta que hacia meses no llovia. El jardin que una vez fue precioso se puso seco y feo.

Sin embargo, la gente del pueblo sabian del mal estado del jardin, ya que la comida era mala y de mal sabor. Mucha gente empezaron a robar. Ellos culpaban a los vegetales, los vegetales culpaban al Cactus, y el Cactus se quedaba tranquilo, y con tristeza decia, "Pax, my Friends."

Los vegetales empezaron a conspirar con la gente del pueblo en contra del cactus, buscando alguna forma

de destruirlo y restaurar la paz. En la medianoche llegaron al jardin con palos y palas. Cuando dieron la señal, todos empezaron a gritar en batalla, y con un golpe grande uno de ellas corto al Cactus en el costado. En ese momento alg o muy raro paso. Agua, agua dulce, salio del costado del cactus, llenando al jardin de agua y refrescando a los vegetales secos. Nadie podi entender. Estaban todos en silencio. Un sentido de culpa cayo sobre el grupo por lo que habian hecho. Un sentidoUn sencido de culpa cayó sobre el grupo por lo que habian hecho. Los vegetales se decian unos a los otros, "Si, este era un amigo."

Aun en dia las palabras de este extranjero son recordadas como señal de bienvenida para todos los que vienen a este poblado. "Good Morning," "Peace my friends." Buenos dias. Paz, miz amigos.

Finalmente, a traves de nuestra Fraternidad Nacional, tenemos fraternidades que estan compuestas de miembros de diferentes grupos etnicos. Tenemos fraternidades que estan compuestas de miembros que comparten un lenguaje or grupo etnico comun, por ejemplo, Vietnemeses, Koreanos, Cubanos, Mejicanos, Polacos, Americanos nativos, Lebaneses, Americanos de raza negra, hawayanos, Chinos, Japoneses, Filipinos, etc. Nacionalmente tenemos una region que fue basada en su rito liturgico. Considerando estas diferencias, he puesto estas metas para servirles a ustedes mejor. Deseo hacer lo siguiente:

- ☛ponerme en contacto con todos los Ministros Regionales y pedir una lista de aquellas fraternidades cuya membrecia esta compuesta de lenguajes a grupes etnicos.
- ☛ponerme en contacto con aquellas Fraternidades y ver donde ellas consiguen los materials necesarios para la vida de la Fraternidad, por ejemplo, formacion inicial, formacion corriente, ritos, regla, etc.
- ☛con la informacion obtenida desarrollar un paquete de recursos que estraia disponible a traves de la Fraternidad Nacional.
- ☛trabajar con los Ministros Regionales en establecer un Coordinador Multicultural en cada region.

Espero con deseos reunirme y trabajar con todos los Minsitros Regionales y futuros Coordinadores Regionales Multicultural.

Pax and Good,

Juan F. Lezcano, S.F.O.



Family Matters

Carol Gentile, S.F.O., Chair, National Family Commission

Power of One

There are in the end three things that last: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

Jean Thompson stood in front of her fifth grade class on the very first day of school in the fall and told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her pupils and said that she loved them all the same, that she would treat them all alike. That was impossible because, there in front of her, slumped in his seat in the third row, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he did not play well with the other children, that his clothes were unkempt and that he constantly needed a bath. And Teddy was unpleasant. It got to the point during the first few months that she would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then marking the F at the top of the paper biggest of all. Because Teddy was a sullen little boy, no one else seemed to enjoy him either.

At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's records. She put Teddy's off until last. When she opened the file she was surprised. His first grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is a bright, inquisitive child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners . . . he is a joy to be around." His second grade teacher wrote "Teddy is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home is a struggle." His third grade teacher wrote, "Teddy continues to work hard but his mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken." Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and sometimes sleeps in class. He is tardy and could become a problem."

By now Mrs. Thompson realized the problem, but Christmas was coming fast. It was all she could do, with the school play and all, until the the day before the

holidays began and she was suddenly forced to focus on Teddy Stoddard. The children brought her presents, all with beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Teddy's which was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper of a scissored grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing and a bottle that was one-quarter full of cologne. She stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on and dabbing some of the perfume behind the other wrist.

Teddy Stoddard stayed behind just long enough to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smell just like my mom used to." After the children left she cried for at least an hour. On that very day she quit teaching reading and writing and math. Instead she began to teach children. Jean Thompson paid particular attention to the one they all called "Teddy." As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him the faster he responded. On the days that there would be an important test, Mrs. Thompson would remember that cologne. By the end of the year he had become one of the smartest children in the class and . . . well, he had also become the pet of the teacher who had once vowed to love all of her children exactly the same.

A year later she found a note from Teddy under her door, telling her that, of all the teachers he had in elementary school, she was his favorite. Six years passed before she got another note from Teddy. He wrote that he finished high school, third in his class, and she was still his favorite teacher of all times. Four years after that she got another letter saying that while things had been tough at times he'd stayed in school and would graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still his favorite teacher.

Four more years passed, and another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree he decided to go a little farther. The letter explained that she was still his favorite teacher, but now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed, *Theodore F. Stoddard, M.D.*

The story doesn't end there. That spring there was another letter. Teddy had met a girl and was to be married. His father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering . . . well, if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit in the pew usually reserved for the mother of the groom. And guess what? She wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing And I bet that

on that special day Jean Thompson smelled just like . . . well, just like the way Teddy remembers his mother smelling on their last Christmas together. The Moral: "You can never tell what type of impact you might make on another's life by your actions, or lack of action. Consider this fact as you venture through life." Author unknown.

If I have faith great enough to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 1 Cor. 12:2

With all of Jean Thompson's ability to convey academic knowledge, to teach, without *love* all would have been lost!

Called to Rebuild the Church

by Patti Normile

This is a quiz. All of you who have read the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order please raise your hands.

Wait a minute. You, over there on the East Coast. Did you read them or are they sitting on a shelf? And you, in Oregon. You may have read the Rule many times. It's the Constitutions we're talking about now.

Okay, you may put your hands down now. And use them to brush away all guilt if you haven't spent any or much time studying these documents vital to the Secular Franciscan Order.

The good news is that Fr. Lester Bach, O.F.M. Cap., has provided the Secular Franciscan Order with A Spiritual Commentary on the Constitutions. Fr. Lester, who has devoted much of his life to the Secular Franciscans has listened to us, helped us on our journey with such books as Catch Me A Rainbow [and soon, Catch Me A Rainbow, Too!]. He acknowledges that his relationship with the S.F.O. has provided strength and support for him and that relationship has certainly blessed the S.F.O.

Called to Rebuild the Church is intended, in Fr. Lester's words, "to give flesh" to the Rule. That is precisely what the Constitutions do as they expand on the meaning of the Rule. Called to Rebuild the Church continues that role, enabling members to see how their lives can be influenced by the Rule and the Constitutions. It gives flesh, heart and spirit to these documents.

Fr. Lester remembers as he writes that we "take the gospel to a marketplace that is not always good to people," and that we "take the gospel to [our] own inner lives where the Spirit makes it grow." The spiritual focus of the book shines in such statements as: "Our Franciscan way of life is quite impractical if rules, regulations and structures are what people seek. Rules, regulations and structures can help us on the way, but they have no power to save or sanctify. We must have a personal awareness that Jesus is Savior.

Called to Rebuild the Church is organized by linking the Rule with the Constitutions and speaking about them from the heart. Fraternity libraries will be greatly enhanced by a copy of Fr. Lester's book which is available from The Franciscan Press. A gift of this book to parish libraries would help spread the word about the Secular Franciscan Order, too. Perhaps you or your fraternity would be willing to order copies of this book for your parishes.

WINDSONG SANCTUARY

Franciscan Resources in Windsong Sanctuary. The very name sounds like a place you'd like to be. And once you've encountered Jim and Sis Hein, S.F.O., proprietors of this Franciscan ministry, you feel you have visited the heart of this place in Menahga, Minnesota. This year Franciscan Resources celebrates its 10th anniversary of providing materials, books, Franciscan items to Franciscans around the world. The Heins do more than supply Franciscan items and information. They build Franciscan community through their life's work.

Twenty-eight years ago Jim and Sis, their two children, Mary and Dave, their parents, Haydn Hoffmeister and Hugo and Mary Hein decided to leave metropolitan St. Paul, Minnesota, to become part of the "Mom and Pop" resort scene in northern Minnesota. They settled at Blue Heron Lodge. When they opened a small Catholic book store in Park Rapids, the summer tourists came but few others. In 1987, Jim was working in the book store when Richard Morton, S.F.O., of Sacred Heart Province approached him with a problem. The Province's resource center was in financial difficulty. Could the Heins help? Sensing a deep spiritual bond with Richard, Jim and Sis agreed without hesitation to assist with maintaining the struggling resource center. Richard assured them that the center would require no more than an hour a day to maintain. He added that the inventory would take up just the space of the hutch in the Heins' dining room.

In January 1988, in a friend's borrowed van, Sis, Jim and Richard traveled to Lombard, Illinois, loaded the remaining inventory and trucked it back to Minnesota. The assorted inventory was accompanied by a mailing list of 250 names of Franciscans plus a complicated debt and no business plan, just an openness to the Spirit with full faith in the words, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," would guide the venture.

The Heins were invited to bring their inventory to various Sacred Heart Province gatherings. Other Provinces heard of their ministry and they traveled farther. During these early days, their work was blessed by the aid of an anonymous benefactor who helped with these trips. Jim and Sis are still not certain about the identity of their benefactors but they are grateful.

For a handful of years, Jim and Sis were able to maintain the Blue Heron Resort and the small book store while making occasional trips to meetings in various areas. This stage of their lives ended when their parents

died and Mary and Dave were off to college. Five years ago, after 23 years, the Heins decided to downsize. They stepped aside from being resort hosts and book store proprietors. Placing everything in the hands of God, they laid out their needs: exact specifications for a house and facilities for the Resource Center and a budget to cover daily living plus a series of medical expenses.

Menahga, situated south of Park Rapids, is a town, hovering at a population of about one thousand. On the fluke of a jaunt Jim and Sis took a peek at a house in the woods, just 80 acres of absolute junk woods [miscellaneous trees grown in an earlier logging site], a creek, bugs galore, marshlands and abundant wildlife, all nestled by state-owned land. It became home; it became Windsong Sanctuary, sanctuary for wildlife and for those who are troubled along the way of life. Some spend private, quiet retreat time at Windsong Sanctuary with the happy friars, the good sisters and lay friends.

Franciscan Resources is always open. When Jim and Sis travel, someone is present to provide help. They have a map to Windsong Sanctuary but people manage to find it even without the map. Those who cannot visit in person can do so by phone or fax or e-mail. [See addresses below.] Franciscan Resources carries stock from over 75 suppliers. Most items are in stock and can be shipped overnight on request. Items are selected on the recommendation of the National, regional and local fraternities. The outreach is international, going beyond Franciscans bound to the National Fraternity of the United States to serve English-speaking Franciscans throughout the world. A mailing list that now exceeds forty-five hundred reaches fraternities in Japan, Jerusalem, Germany, Thailand, Canada, South Africa, Great Britain, and Australia. Franciscan Resources receives an average of ten calls daily and each month a couple overnight shipments go to fraternity ministers who have procrastinated in ordering materials.

Sis and Jim note a resurgence in interest in the Franciscan Crown Rosary. For years inquiries and purchases were dormant; now interest runs high.

Jim just celebrated 25 years as a Secular Franciscan. Sis has been professed six years. The vocational "model" for their Franciscan life is the life of Mary Magdalene Hein, Jim's mother was a professed Third Order member who was an isolated tertiary. Her life proclaimed the Gospel by example. Living with the family at Blue Heron Resort, she touched hundreds with her presence and example. Many came just to talk and walk with her. Jim and Sis say of their children's Franciscan tendencies, "They both love animals. Mary answers the phone and tends the Center when she is here."

When Jim and Sis aren't traveling with their wares to regional meetings or Quinquennial Congresses in Dayton, Ohio, or Delaware, they are still busy traveling. Jim is Vice Minister of the Queen of Peace Region; Sis is Minister of St. Cloud Fraternity, their "local" fraternity. If you find Menahga on the map, you will see it is 110 miles from St. Cloud. The Heins use travel time for thinking. "We feel that every thought that comes to mind is at least 10 miles from home," they quip.

They have been active in the formation of several new fraternities: Elk River, Baudette, Brainerd, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota. During the devastating floods in Grand Forks, North Dakota, they became catalysts for channeling over \$10,000 in flood relief to Secular Franciscans in Grand Forks. Their St. Cloud fraternity, which celebrated its 75th anniversary this year, had been slipping in membership from earlier numbers of 180. The members were praying that a couple would join their fraternity. When Jim came and Sis was professed, that prayer was answered. But the group didn't stop. They fasted and prayed for the Holy Spirit to increase their numbers. The fraternity officially has about 60 members with 35-40 who are active. Five people are in formation with another group beginning. One blessing for the candidates to be professed was the arrival of Seamus in February, 1998. He was conceived while his parents were in formation; they never missed a meeting!

But the Heins' work does not cease with St. Cloud Fraternity, 110 miles from home. For two to three years they have worked in formation with a group

from Brainerd. Recently four couples were professed bringing the fraternity to eleven members with two spiritual assistants. This group began with several men seeking to become candidates. Wives said, "Hey, what about us?" The newcomers are vital men and women in their 40s, many are professionals. This group's formation was not without bumps in the road. At one time only one or two people appeared for formation meetings that the Heins had driven miles and hours to attend. They were exhausted and planned to tell those who came to a meeting that they would have to go to St. Cloud to continue formation. Without explanation, men began enter by various doors in the meeting. The meeting ended with five thinking of joining. A youth group is the newest undertaking.

Formation of the Baudette fraternity was a two-year odyssey of driving 200 miles each way once a month to meet with the founding fraternity. Looking at a map once again shows that between Black Duck and Baudette there is no civilization on the map. In Minnesota winters that part of the journey was a time for faith and prayers. "We had no experience of how to start fraternities," Jim and Sis advise. "The friars used to do this. Now there aren't enough of them. Just get out and do it and trust the Spirit."

Much credit for the growth of Secular Franciscan fraternities in their area goes to the spiritual assistance provided by the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls. Sister Thomasine, a woman in her 80s, is referred to as the "Mother Superior" of Spiritual Assistants. She selects sisters to match the needs of fraternities. Currently, nine sisters serve fraternities.

Jim and Sis agree, "We absolutely love the life style we have been gifted with. Why anyone would not want to be Catholic and Franciscan is beyond our understanding. Our travels to various Franciscan gatherings has been so rewarding in new friendships and experience."

FRANCISCAN RESOURCES

P. O. Box 350,
Menahga, MN 56464

phone-1-800-772-6910

fax 1-218-837-5447

e-mail franres@wcta.net

My Story

by Leonard L. Richard, S.F.O.,
St. John the Evangelist Fraternity, Lafayette, LA

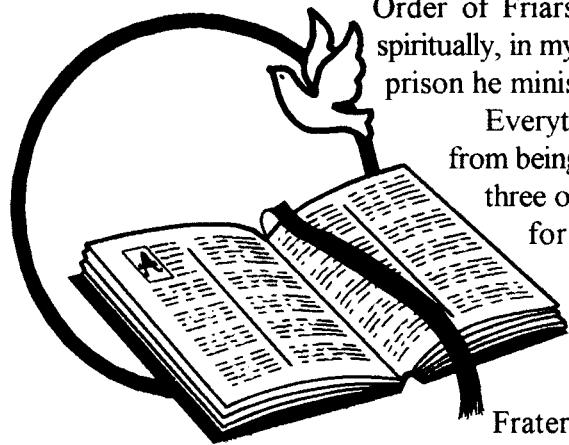
After having a wonderful conversion experience at Prairie Ronde Cursillo Center in January 1972, I experienced a tremendous amount of spiritual growth during the next ten years. Then Robert Oliver came into my life, urging, but not forcing, me to look at the Secular Franciscan Order.

In April 1982 I began to investigate this Franciscan way of life. I had spent 4 ½ years in the Secular Carmelite Order. After going to Dallas and talking with the Carmelite Regional Spiritual Director, he helped me to see that the Secular Franciscan Order was that path where I would grow; he could see that the contemplative life style was not where I was at that time in my life.

On April 15, 1982, I began the formation process for the Secular Franciscan Order, and on April 15, 1984, I made my final profession. I kept up regular attendance and the Franciscan way of life. In my own words, the S.F.O. really meant something to me inside where my little voice resides. We are to live as a people on a mission set in motion by St. Francis.

It all came alive when I made my first national meeting, as a member of St. John the Baptist Province (before we were regionalized), in Dayton, Ohio. A couple of years later I attended a second national meeting in Dayton. Then I made a meeting with the St. Joan of Arc Region in New Orleans. Shortly after our regional meeting, they voted me in as Regional Formation Director. It was very interesting, and enjoyable, spending time with my Franciscan brothers and sisters from different parts of Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Tennessee. This experience enabled me to see the “bigger” vision.

My personal mission, while all of the above was going on, was to assist Fr. Dennet Jung, O.F.M. and Mary Simon, S.F.O., in jail ministry at the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center. I always had the utmost respect for the Order of Friars Minor, but this small, frail priest came to be a very big person, spiritually, in my eyes, as I watched him direct, lead and lend support to the women in prison he ministered to on a weekly basis.



Everything seemed to be going great. Then I had to take a leave of absence from being the Regional Formation Director because of a new job offshore. I set three or four people in geographical areas to help me, since I would be gone for 30 to 35 days at a time. Election time came and Robert Oliver was voted in as the new Regional Formation Director.

My biggest blow came in August 1997. I lost all the sight in my right eye and 55% of the sight in my left eye.

Now my ministry is reaching out to shut-in's in our Lafayette, LA Fraternity, St. John the Evangelist. It means so much to them, and me as well, since I now have the time, and the Lord is showing me new talents to deal with their particular plights in life.

This little Secular Franciscan from Scott, Louisiana, would like this short story about my coming into the Secular Franciscan Order to give encouragement to those in formation and the years after. To hear the gospel, go out and live the gospel to the best of your ability. Observe nature, lead a simple lifestyle, and be open to Father Francis' messages and encouragements.

My wife Janice is considering becoming one of us. She is presently in formation in the St. John the Evangelist Fraternity.

May the spirit of St. Francis touch you as it has touched me, and you too will know that it is not a meeting you go to, but a special way of live, called by our Father Francis, in which we live a particular way of life by living the gospel and then going out and touching all people, Christians as well as Catholics, that we might encounter in our daily lives.

A Lay Co-Director for Franciscan Mission Service

Fr. Joseph Nangle, O.F.M., Co-Director, Franciscan Mission Service of North America

The question has always made us think twice---wouldn't it be better if a lay person directed the Franciscan overseas lay mission effort. Now Franciscan Mission Service has put the question to rest with a resounding, "Yes."

Since our founding in 1985, and especially after 1990 when we began sending lay missionaries to work with vowed and ordained Franciscans in underdeveloped countries, friars and sisters have directed the F.M.S. It probably had to be that way, given the organizational and financial resources the friars, brothers and priests have.

The success of this lay mission program testifies to the wisdom of that original arrangement. Some fifty women and men have worked with vowed Franciscans and other religious in undeveloped countries since the F.M.S. lay mission program began eight years ago. That's more than all missionaries sent by the combined O.F.M. provinces in the same period.

Still, the anomaly of religious and clerics training lay folks has remained until now. At the May meeting of the Franciscan Mission Service Board of Directors named Joanne Blaney Co-Director of F.M.S. by unanimous consent of Board members present. Joanne has served on our staff since January 1996, with responsibility for the three-month Orientation Program offered to prospective missionaries. She comes well prepared for new and expanded duties as Co-Director. Her preparation began long before joining our staff. For more than two decades she taught and served as principal in inner-city schools in Washington, D.C. Five years ago Joanne joined the Maryknoll lay mission program, dedicating three years to working with women's groups in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Family responsibilities required her to return home in 1995, a distinct gain for the F.M.S.

For a variety of reasons, it was gratifying for me to welcome her as Co-Director. In the 2 ½ years on staff she has proven dedicated to Franciscan values and style of mission. She says our manner of going among other peoples holds great appeal for her. Joanne shows a huge capacity for the hard work this lay mission entails, and wonderful creativity in crafting Orientation Programs. She has researched and secured funding from foundations to underwrite our ministry.

Above all, Joanne brings a layperson's outlook and spirituality to F.M.S. This obvious, yet rare, they cannot overvalue combination in our work. We do not pretend to send "mini-sisters" or "mini-friars" overseas, only lay missionaries. The difference is real and substantial.

In promoting this essentially lay program we have someone heading our organization who understands and lives what our missionaries are all about.

No doubt our Secular Franciscan sisters and brothers will celebrate this initiative at Franciscan Mission Service it. Think of it, a laywoman directing the official North American O.F.M. lay mission program. In September our Orientation program will function at Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Maryland the house of studies for friars from the Holy Name (O.F.M.) Province. Lay women and men will live and study with the brother and priest candidates for the First Order, under the direction of a laywoman. A new moment has arrived in our rich history as followers of Francis

and Clare, as well as in the American Catholic mission enterprise.

Do take a moment, dear S.F.O. brothers and sisters, to say a little prayer for Joanne, and me, as we begin this new phase of our Franciscan Mission Service journey.

And, the Franciscan Mission Service would welcome S.F.O. missionaries! Call (202) 832-1778 for information..



Canticle for the New Millennium

by Sue Cavanaugh, S.F.O., Immaculate Conception Fraternity, Atlanta, Georgia

In early autumn, as the hours of daylight wane and Brother Sun does not leap quite so high overhead, we Franciscans cherish moments to enter again into the mysteries of the waning earthly life of our Father Francis. His physical strength, consumed by illness, is spent from giving himself away in the away in the salvific loving of others in holy obedience to the Gospel, in humble union with the self-giving love of the Son of God. His vision is dimmed to near-blindness so much has he wept that Love Incarnate is not loved by man caught up in secular pursuits. His heart is broken by the actions of his closest brothers whose virtue and sanctity still lag far behind that of their spiritual father. Francis surrenders all his suffering for his Order, now spread across nations, in trust of Him whom he acknowledges as the true Master and Lord of his spiritual family.

Francis' holy and pure love of Jesus, poor and crucified, urges him to make total his oblation, self-sacrifice, that his union with the beloved might be complete. He prays for grace to suffer in his body, to love in his heart, to the fullest extent humanly possible, to be one with Jesus, drawing all those his life touches to the redemptive mercy of the Cross. The crucified and Risen Lord appears before Francis in a foretaste of His glorious return and pierces him through and through with divine grace until suffering love pours forth from Francis' hands, feet and side.

Our hearts fall silent before such a mystery, and wonder leads us to profound reverence. Does God the Father love His creature in such measure as to want make of him a living image of His own Beloved Son? Is this what it means to be called to walk literally in the footsteps of the Crucified as we Franciscans profess as our vocation? My God, who am I that You should love me in this way? Soon Francis bursts forth in a new springtime of praise to God:

Most high, all powerful, all good, Lord!

All praise is yours,

All glory, all honor and all blessing.

To You alone, Most High, do they belong.

No mortal lips are worthy

To pronounce Your name.

He calls upon all creation, Brother Sun, Sisters Moon and Stars, Brothers Wind and Air, Sister Water, Brother Fire, Sister Earth, to praise God in virtue of the countless ways the elements of nature reflect and proclaim His glory.

Then, his heart pierced to grief by the worldly strife between the civil and religious authorities of Assisi, Francis, unable to go himself, sends his brothers to sing the word of truth, the hymn of redeeming love which the poor and crucified Christ has written in his pure heart and mind and upon his lowly flesh:

Happy those who endure in peace,

By You, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be Yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,

From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!

Happy those she finds doing your will!

The second death can do no harm to them.

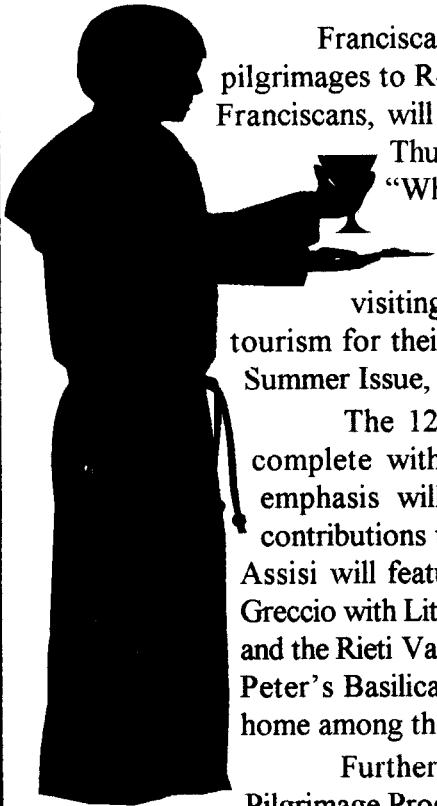
Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks,

And serve Him with great humility.

If we listen with open hearts and minds, we can surely hear the echo of Francis' voice as our Holy Father bids us to renew our lives in Christ and to rebuild the Church in preparation for the Third Millennium in union with Him who is Peace, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever: "To foster peace, an atmosphere must be created in which people have a sense of God's existence, a taste for beauty, love for truth, a desire for solidarity, an ability to be tender and the courage to pardon others."

Is there a canticle more beautiful for us to sing to the world, to live in the midst of the world than the one taught us by our spiritual father St. Francis?

The Assisi Experience



Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs of Milwaukee sponsors annual Franciscan study-pilgrimages to Rome and Assisi. This year a special tour, particularly geared for Secular Franciscans, will depart from the United States on Sunday, October 25, and return on Thursday, November 5. The study-pilgrimage will be staffed by Friars John "Whitey" Wojtowicz, O.F.M., Roch Niemier, O.F.M., and Benet Fonck, O.F.M. This is an excellent time to visit Assisi. Tourists are staying away in vast numbers since this year's earthquakes, though the town is safe for visiting. The townspeople of the hometown of St. Francis, who depend on tourism for their livelihood, plead, "Come back." [See the related article in TAU-USA, Summer Issue, 1998.]

The 12-day program features visits to the major places of Francis and Clare, complete with historical and spiritual input, rituals, prayer and Eucharist. Special emphasis will be offered on the spirituality and place of the Secular Franciscan contributions to the Franciscan story and its importance today. The seven-day visit to Assisi will feature an excursion to La Verna. The trip to Rome will take pilgrims to Greccio with Liturgy celebrated in the cave where Francis introduced the Christmas creche and the Rieti Valley. A three-day stay in Rome will include visits to St. John Latern, St. Peter's Basilica and the Tomb of Peter, and San Francesco a Ripa, which was Francis' home among the poor.

Further information is available from Fr. Roch Niemier, O.F.M.; Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs; 1648 South 37th St., Milwaukee, WI 53215-1724; Telephone: (414) 383-9870; Fax: (414) 383-0335

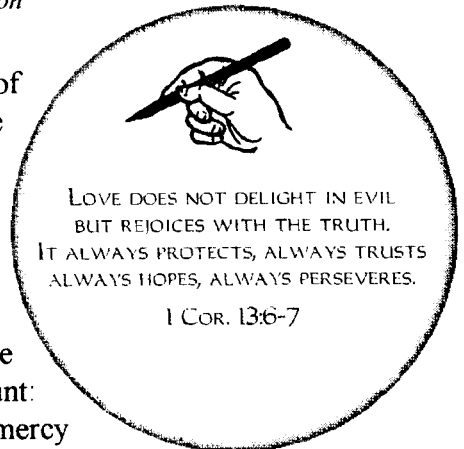
To Judge or Not to Judge, That is the Question

by Bob Sommer, S.F.O.,

Our Lady, Queen of the Angels Fraternity; St. Margaret of Cortona Region

In today's culture, the only thing it seems we can be intolerant of is intolerance. However, "Judge not lest you be judged" refers to the person, not the deed. As Franciscans, can we stand in judgement? Sure we can. Perhaps if not of the person, then at least of the act. We judge not the murderer but hold the wanton homicide to be sinful. We judge not the homosexual but can view sodomy as unnatural and sinful.

In order to lead a moral life, we must have the leeway to judge acts as either moral or evil. We also have an obligation to transmit these judgements to others. Among the spiritual works of mercy we count: instruct the ignorant, and admonish the sinner. Spiritual works of mercy seem to me to be essentially Franciscan.



To Find Those Who Are Seeking . . .

By Elizabeth Francis, S.F.O.

Queen of the Angels Fraternity in Lima, Ohio, experienced a decline in members in the fraternity---they had five active members, the minimum to maintain their status as an active fraternity. Other members were elderly and not able to be active in the fraternity. They considered deactivating the fraternity; nobody else was coming to join them. How could they continue like this? Nevertheless, these five people decided to work in a soup kitchen (a wonderful Franciscan activity). Do you know what happened? They had a good time working there---and they gained *five more* members. They doubled their number. And more people are now in formation.

Members of St. Frances Cabrini Fraternity, Akron, try to hold Professions in the home parishes of candidates. One pastor, approached about using the church on a Sunday afternoon for a Profession said, "No. Please have this during the 10:30 A.M. Mass Sunday. The people need to see this!" So the Profession was held at the "main" Mass on that Sunday, and had the complete cooperation of the music director and choir, etc. One of the people attending that Mass joined the fraternity and is now the fraternity minister. Church visitations are another activity of this fraternity. Contact is made with the pastor well in advance, letting him know that Secular Franciscans will be attending a specific Mass will stay after Liturgy to answer questions. Then it is off to brunch (a wonderful time for fellowship).

One late Thursday evening I received a telephone call from a man in Washington, D.C. He found my name though the Diocesan Chancery (is there at least one member of your council listed in your diocesan directory?). "My mother is dying," he said. He explained she had told him that she wanted a Franciscan Prayer Service when she died--but he forgot that until now. He wanted to know if we could do this. Early Friday I called the fraternity vice-minister, gave him the name of the nursing home the woman was in, and asked if he would visit her. Bill promptly went to the nursing home. Emily was drawing her last breaths. Since no one at the nursing home seemed to know if Emily had the Anointing of Sick, Bill, having to leave for work soon, called a priest and asked him to come. Father came and anointed Emily; an hour and a half later she died. A Franciscan Wake Service was held for Emily. Fraternity members present almost outnumbered Emily's family (and at that, only one of the Seculars present knew her). After the service the son said he was going explore the Carmelite Third Order when he returned home. He explained he had a Carmelite spirituality, but had never acted on his vocation. The caring of the Secular Franciscans opened his eyes. This was also an excellent chance to explain something about the S.F.O. to the funeral director, who had never heard of the Order. Actually, any time we hold a Franciscan Wake Service we talk at length to the funeral director about this. Before beginning the Wake Service we always explain the S.F.O. to the people present. This is an excellent chance to give a very short teaching on what we are about. People always have questions to ask afterwards.

So, what does all of this mean to you and your fraternity? Get out there. Let the joy of Franciscanism be known. Do something in the community. Let your presence be known. Preach the Gospel with your actions, using words if necessary. Many people are seeking a spiritual path in life. Many of these people may have a Franciscan vocation. Nevertheless, if we hide our lights under a bushel basket, if we are invisible, how can they find us?

Here are a few more suggestions. Write brief articles for the secular and diocesan newspapers, especially when there is a special event in your fraternity, such as a profession. Contact the editor of the publication, let him or her know that the article is coming. Always include your name and phone number so that you may be contacted for further information or clarification. Check with pastors to find out if they will allow special events in the fraternity to be published in the church bulletin. Invite friends and families to special gatherings such as professions and picnics. Always wear your TAU cross. People will ask what it means; be prepared to answer their questions, and then invite them to a gathering. What a wonderful opening to teach another about the Secular Franciscan Order. Pray to the Holy Spirit that those people who have vocations to be Secular Franciscans will respond to that call.

A Franciscan Creed

(based on the guidelines set by the Assisi Third Order Congress)

from The Cabrini Herald

Inspired by the vision of St. Francis, we commit ourselves to the Gospel as our way of life.

Our own world-view is Christo-centric; we see Jesus Christ as the beginning, the way and the goal of all creation.

This world vision reveals to us a God who is Father and a life which is love. This demands of us a life as brothers and sisters of all persons and of all creatures.

We are in pilgrimage, trying to reach our Father, trying to live a life of love. We have not yet arrived; we are sinners, not saints.

As sinners, weak human beings, we must undergo a continuing conversion, returning always to the Father as prodigal sons and daughters.

Christ was poor and Christ was crucified; we seek to share in His poorness and in His suffering. We further commit ourselves to the service of the less privileged, the poor.

In making our way through life, we are guided more by simplicity, humility and littleness rather than by power, prestige and status.

Like Christ, like Francis, we seek to become instruments of peace, peacemakers.

Acknowledging the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit, we declare our loyalty to the Church in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation with her ministers.

We are conscious of our obligations to share in the life and missions of the Church. We are lay apostles, called by Christ to continue His work on earth.

Our life and our spirituality, however, is characteristically secular, in the world and for the world.

Joy sustains our lives, fulfills our lives; we seek the same for others.

To achieve all this is difficult, hence we declare our need for Christ's Eucharist, for personal, communal and liturgical prayer.

Respect for All Life

from The Peacemaker, St. Francis and St. Louis Fraternities

All they did was pray the Rosary. Catholics and Franciscans pray for various reasons. They prayed to save the lives of God's most vulnerable---the unborn. Yet they are being sued as racketeers!

The National Organization for Women charged them under the federal Racketeering, Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) law. The charge is engaging in a conspiracy to close abortion clinics through protests against abortionists and "harassment" of potential customers.

The defense lawyer, who has given up his livelihood to remain on the case, warns the future of the entire pro-life movement hangs in the balance all over America. He calls the charges outrageous. He is truly a courageous, brilliant and tenacious man.

Any good NOW does for American women is overshadowed by this heinous charge against innocent people.

Prayer to St. Francis

by Peg McGuire, S.F.O., Divine Mercy Region

Hold my hand in yours,
Jeweled with the rubies of the stigmata.
Let the stains from your feet
Blaze the way for me,
For I shall lose the path without you.
Bless me, anointing with the chrism
from your laciniate side.
Touch my eyelids,
Erasing the cataracts of blindness;
You who suffered the corrosive torture,
Of ceaseless pain, of days made night,
Of the fumbings of the blind.
In your great benevolence,
Grant me a measure
Of your tranquility of mind,
Your vigor of spirit---now.
And when I greet
Your little Sister Death,
Hold me close to your heart
In Jesus. Amen

Earth Conference '98

The Canticle of Creation

Bringing Franciscans, and those with Franciscan hearts, together to create a *Synergy* around the issues of the Earth, its creatures and its care through input and activities by various presenters. It will be a learning, sharing, networking, praying event, September 26-27, 1998, on the Sylvania Franciscan Grounds, Sylvania, Ohio. The Sisters of St. Francis and the Franciscan Federation are the sponsors.

Among the presenters are: Bill Short, O.F.M. and Gabriele Uhlein, O.S.F., William Wicks, S.F.O., *National Minister of the Secular Franciscan Order in the U.S.A.*, from Santa Maria, California, and Carol Gentile, S.F.O., *Chairperson, National Secular Franciscan Family Commission* from Monaca, Pennsylvania.

The Lord called St. Francis to "Rebuild My Church . . ." A renewal of lay spirituality is needed in today's world---a restoration of the original blessing through the care of all of God's creation."

For more information and registration, contact:
Rosine Sobczak, O.S.F.

Voice 419-885-3211 ext. 220

Fax 419-882-3897

E-mail rsobczak@lourdes.edu

Funds Needed for Convocation on Spiritual Assistance

Additional funds are needed to hold the National Convocation on Spiritual Assistance to be held in Denver, Colorado, September 22-25, 1998.

This gathering is very important for our Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. It will bring to the attention of First Order and Third Order Regular leadership the importance of spiritual assistance in the life of the S.F.O.

Individuals and fraternities wishing to contribute may send checks made payable to:

NAFRA/Richard Morton Fund

Send checks to:

John Sanborn, S.F.O., NAFRA Treasurer
1811 W. River Parkway
Grand Island, NY 14072

Now Accepting Resumes for the Following Positions

The National Executive Council invites Secular Franciscans to send in resumes for the position of *Chair, National Ecology Commission*.

Requirements include:

- ☼ Active Secular Franciscan status;
- ☼ familiarity with Mission Statement and Goals of the National Ecology Commission;
- ☼ ability to communicate, educate and motivate Regions and Fraternities on Ecology;
- ☼ provide ongoing Formation articles for **TAU-USA**
- ☼ provide summary of personal experience with the Ecology Commission Fraternity or Region;
- ☼ provide copy of Certificate of Profession;
- ☼ ability to attend at least two four-day national meetings yearly.

Interested Seculars should mail resumes to:

Mary Mazotti, S.F.O.

Coordinator, National Apostolic Commissions

P.O. Box 2571

Arnold, CA 95223-2571

The deadline for resumes is January 31, 1999

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The National Executive Council invites Secular Franciscans to send in resumes for the position of *Chair, National Family Commission*.

Requirements include:

- ♥ Active Secular Franciscan Status;
- ♥ familiarity with Mission Statement and Goals of the National Family Commission;
- ♥ ability to communicate, educate and motivate Regions and Fraternities on family matters;
- ♥ provide ongoing Formation articles for TAU-USA;
- ♥ provide summary of personal experiences with the Family Commission in Fraternity or Region;
- ♥ provide copy of Certificate of Profession;
- ♥ ability to attend at least two four-day national meetings yearly.

Interested Seculars should mail resumes to:

Mary Mazotti, S.F.O.

Coordinator, National Apostolic Commissions

P.O. Box 2571

Arnold, CA 95223-2571

The deadline for resumes is January 31, 1999

HAPPENINGS

S.F.O. Networking Corner

Are you interested in networking with other Seculars with similar interests? With courtesy and love, doors can be opened to new and rewarding friendships. To be listed, send name, address and interest or profession to:

Mary K. Mazotti, S.F.O., Networking
P.O. Box 2571
Arnold, CA 95223-2571

I am interested in networking with S.F.O. members who have taken private vows in the Church, to make a retreat with them, and to keep in touch.

Jenny Moreira, S.F.O.
4801 Lauren Ct.
Ellicott City, MD 21043

I am a disabled, house-bound 51 year old, married (28 years), who has lived in Italy on and off. I would like to communicate in English with someone about the S.F.O. and for general Catholic fellowship.

Ron Miller, S.F.O. E mail: remiller@netwide.net

Names will be printed once. Please save the lists. Write to Mary and let her know how the S.F.O. Networking Corner benefits you.

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Alan Ouimet, S.F.O.
Franciscan Family Apostolate
303 Church St.
Guiford, CT 06437

The Franciscan Family Apostolate may be able to provide a speaker for your next regional meeting.

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For registration or information contact:

St. Francis College
Office of Continuing Education
Loretto, PA 15940-0600
Phone (814) 472-3219
E-mail ICFL@SFCPA.EDU

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James Flickinger, S.F.O.
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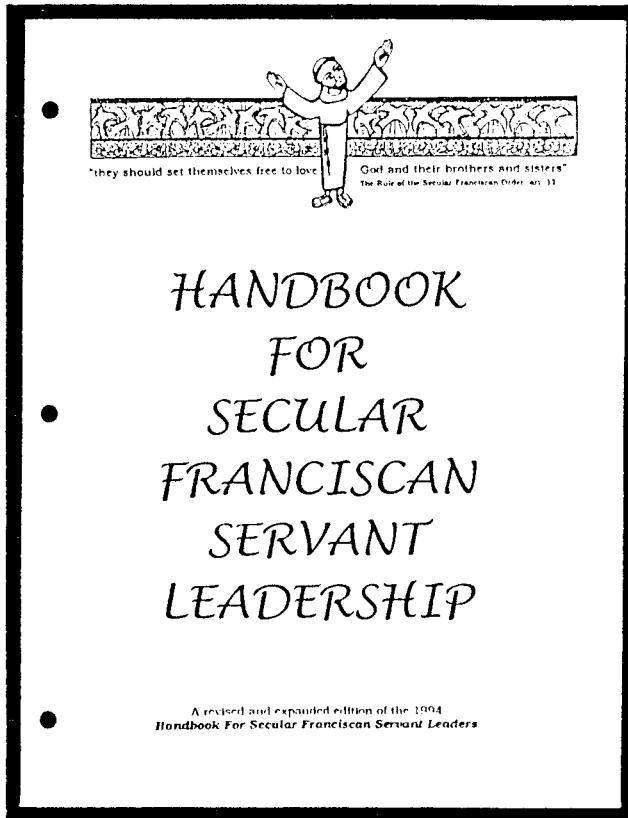
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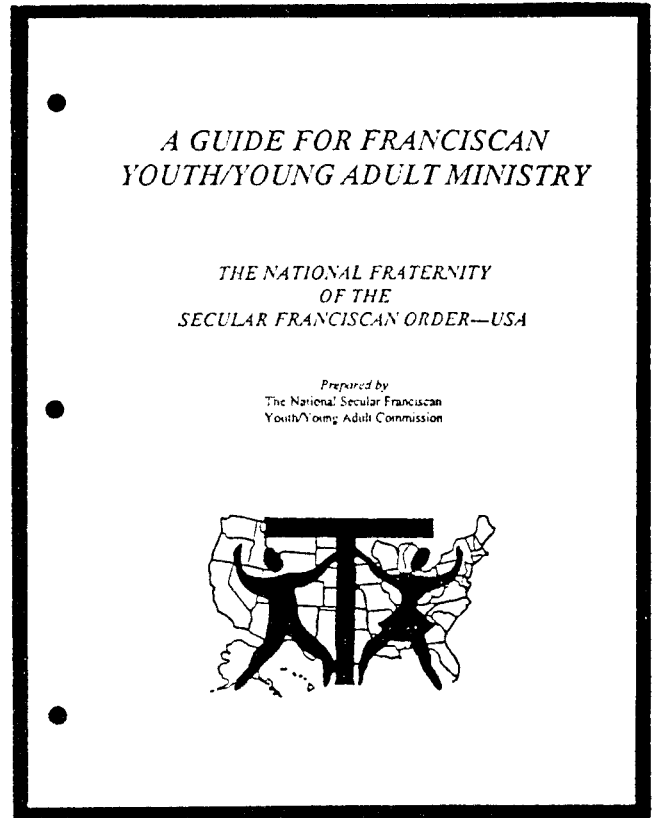


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FRANCISCAN FORMATION MATERIALS

MADE AVAILABLE BY THE NATIONAL FORMATION COMMISSION

- Catch Me A Rainbow: The Franciscan Journey (revised edition). Bach, Lester, OFM Cap. (1990). 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 405 pages. \$10.00 per copy, plus \$4.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.50 for 2, and \$7.00 for 3; 10 or more copies = \$8.00 per copy plus P&H. **Coming in 1998, Catch Me A Rainbow, Too! A complete revision by Father Lester! Watch for it!**
- Gospel Living Every Day Of Our Lives: A Formation Guide To The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Baker, Teresa V., SFO. (1994). 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 131 pages. \$10.00 per copy, plus \$4.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.50 for 2, \$7.00 for 3; 10 or more copies is \$8.00 per copy plus P&H.
- Elements Of Formation: A Reflection On The Formation Process. (1995). 8 1/2" x 11", 38 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies = \$4.00 per copy plus P&H.
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- Guidelines For Initial Formation In The Secular Franciscan Order In The United States. (1986). 8 1/2" x 11", 38 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies = \$4.00 per copy plus P&H.
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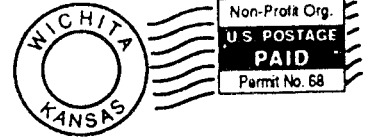
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Nobody should be proud, but find glory in the Cross of Our Lord.

Observe, O man, to what distinction the Lord has raised you in creating and molding you according to the image of His beloved Son bodily and according to His likeness spiritually (cf. Gen. 1:25).

Yet all the creatures under heaven in their way serve, recognize and obey their Creator better than you do. And even the demons do not crucify Him, but you with their help crucified Him, and still crucify Him when you take pleasure in vice and sin.

So, on what grounds can you glory?

For if you were as subtle and wise as to possess all knowledge and explain any kind of language and penetrate keenly into the mysteries of Heaven, you could not glory in any of it, since any demon once knew more about heavenly matters and now knows more about earthly matters than all mortals, though there might be a person who had received of the Lord a special insight into the sovereign Wisdom. From The Words of St. Francis: An Anthology by James Meyer, O.F.M.

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