



TAU-USA

Publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States
Spring 2009 - Issue 62



Watercolor by Betty Misuraca

Open the windows, spring is here!

TAU-USA

Frances Wicks, SFO
Editor-in-Chief
3307 Quail Meadows Dr.
Santa Maria, CA 93455
sfofrances7@earthlink.net

Julia Pearson, SFO
Human Interest Editor

M. Marko, SFO
Feature Page Editor

Dolores Cullen, SFO
Humor Page Editor

Francine Gikow, SFO
Franciscan Living Editor

Faith A. Libbe, SFO
Staff Editor

Delia Banchs, SFO
Contributing Editor

Mary & Bob Stronach, SFO
Special Assignments Editors

Fred McCarthy, SFO
Cartoonist

Dan Mulholland, SFO
Webmaster

Lester Bach, OFM Cap
Spiritual Assistant

Clare McCluggage, SFO
Liaison
2019 NE 179th St. Apt. # T92
Ridgefield, WA 98642
360-576-6524
claresfo@comcast.net

Robert Herbelin, SFO
Data Base Administrator
21010 Union St.
Wildomar, CA 92595
rherbelin@juno.com

Randy Heinz, SFO
Subscription Coordinator
810 Steffanich Drive
Billings, MT 59105
randyheinz@gmail.com

TAU-USA Website:
nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa.html

TAU-USA is a vehicle of communication within the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, allowing the national fraternity to disseminate information to the regional and local fraternities and allowing Seculars to communicate with one another throughout the country, thus fostering a sense of community Nation wide.

All professed members of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States receive the TAU-USA without charge. It is the responsibility of the Regional Ministers to ensure that the addresses of professed members are in the Data Base.

Local fraternities are responsible for providing copies of the TAU-USA for their Spiritual Assistants by purchasing subscriptions.

Permission to copy all material printed in TAU-USA is granted, except where the copyright is specifically reserved to the author or artist. In cases where the copyright is not reserved, please credit TAU-USA and the author. Care must be taken not to distort the author's intent or meaning of the article.

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

The deadline for sending address changes to Robert Herbelin, Data Base Adm. and for submitting articles to the Editor for the next issue is April 15, 2009.

Submissions to the newsletter for possible inclusion are welcome. To increase the likelihood of your submission being published, the following guidelines are offered:

- Articles should not exceed one page in length (single spaced).
- Please send all submissions for possible publication in WORD format, as an e-mail attachment or mail to Editor Frances Wicks (address is on top left of this page).
- Material received after the deadline for a particular issue will be considered for other issues.
- Please understand that all articles may be edited for length and clarity.
- TAU-USA does not accept ads.

Attention Poets: See page 32 for
Poetry Contest Rules.

Minister's Message...1

Novena...2

International Meeting...3

FYI...6

Summer Seminar...6

Book Review...7

Inaugural Address...8

Franciscan Living...9

Humor Page...10

Little Weeds...11

CNSA News & Views...12

Gospel to Life...14

Ecumenical/Interfaith...16

History...17

Financial Reports 18

Poetry Page...22

JPIC...23

Formation...24

Regional Roundup...25

Franciscan Youth...26

Orange Tree in Gaza...28

FAN...29

Our Fraternity Stories...31

Poetry Contest...32

Minister's Message

By Patrick Mendés, SFO
National Minister



Gethsemane by Marsani

“Love is patient; Love is kind...” in the words of St. Paul. I begin this edition’s message with a word of thanks for your patience and your outpouring of love and good wishes at Christmas. I can’t possibly respond to all who sent me cards and e-messages, but please know that I am grateful. You certainly made me feel affirmed and I am very grateful for your prayers.

Can it be Lent already? By the time you receive this issue of TAU-USA, Lent will have begun and I invite you to reflect with me on the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1Cor. 4-13). We, Franciscans, cherish our traditional belief that Jesus became man because of God’s love for His people and for this love; he suffered, was crucified and died for us. Join me in reflection upon God’s love as it is revealed in the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary.

The Agony in the Garden: Jesus prays “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will but as You will...” We hear an echo of the Lord’s Prayer – Thy will be done. Can I, do I say this when the difficulties of life arise? Do I trust in God’s love and mercy, certain that He will not abandon me? “Love believes all things; hopes all things...”

My prayer is simple. “Lord, fill me with faith, hope and love.”

The Scourging at the Pillar and the Crowning with Thorns: “Love...does not seek its own interests.” Jesus, for love of us, bore this terrible pain and humiliation. When I suffer physical ills and pain or when I have been

humiliated can I, do I say “All for you Lord Jesus Christ who suffered pain and humiliation for love of me?” Knowing God loves and cares for us, enables us to move ahead with confidence, trust and hope that God will see us safely through this difficult time. Hail, King of the Jews. Hail, King of our hearts.

My prayer: Jesus I trust in You.

The Crucifixion and death of our Lord: Father, forgive them...” “Love never fails...”

“...forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...” In the last moments of His earthly life, Jesus forgave those who persecuted Him. What a special lesson of unconditional love I learn at this moment. Have I forgiven those who have offended me as I have asked the Father to forgive me? As we read in the Gospel “Have I laid my gift at the altar” and gone to reconcile with my brother/sister?

My prayer: “Lord make me an instrument of your peace; your comfort; your joy.”

And on Easter Sunday, may we pray together as we celebrate the Resurrection, the great triumph of God’s endless and unconditional love, “for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.”

And always, my prayer for you is that the Sacred Heart of Jesus will surround you with His love and fill your life with His abundant blessings!

HAPPY EASTER!



Eternal Life by Richard Judson Zolan



Novena of Intercession

By Clare Mc Cluggage, SFO

Merciful Father, Prince of Peace, Spirit of Wisdom and Compassion, please look with mercy upon our suffering brothers and sisters here at home and around the world, [particularly in Orissa]. We humbly pray:

...For those who have been subjected to violence, and their families, we ask for healing, consolation, and relief of further suffering.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

...For those who have done violence, we ask for healing, forgiveness, and the grace of conversion.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

...For those in authority throughout the world, we ask wisdom, creativity, compassion and courage in addressing these situations.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

Lord Jesus, Your Sacred Heart burns for love of all your people. Please place in our hearts that same love and inspire us to have the courage, wisdom and ingenuity to take what measures we can personally to relieve the suffering of our brothers and sisters. We pray this in the Name of Jesus, our Lord, through the intercession of the sorrowful and immaculate Heart of Mary.

Memorare:

Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my mother. To thee to I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen

Insert specific concerns for which you would like to pray.

As agreed at the 2008 NAFRA meeting, the SFO in the United States would like to institute a “perpetual” novena for at least one year on behalf of the suffering people both home and abroad especially for those in Orissa, India, as we did in 2007 for Darfur. Every day for the next year, members of the SFO will be praying the novena prayer. For this to happen, 5 Regional fraternities are assigned to cover each month. To make sure we cover the entire month, there will be four to five “waves” of the novena, each starting on Sunday. People are assigned to these waves by Region, as noted below. For example, the first Sunday of December, members of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Region will begin praying the novena; the second Sunday of the month Lady Poverty will begin the novena. In this way, the people of Orissa will be held in prayer by the SFO for the entire year.

In the event there are only 4 Sundays in the month, the fifth Region can pray week 1, or choose another week. Individuals may start and end their novena on other days if necessary, or do a different week. If you want to continue to pray before or after your week/month you can certainly do that! You are also encouraged to share the novena with people in your parish, youth groups, or other organizations to which you belong.

A novena allows us to hold a particular concern before God in a special way. The name “novena” comes from the Latin for “nine”. Traditionally we pray a novena every day for nine days, and the prayer is usually a bit longer than a brief intercession. This allows us to give more of ourselves to our prayer for the concern we are bringing before God.

	Dec/June	Jan/July	Feb/Aug	Mar/Sept	Apr/Oct	May/Nov
Week 1	St. Elizabeth of Hungary	Bl Kateri Tekakwitha	Fr Solanus	The Tau Cross	Our Lady of the Angels	St. Katharine Drexel
Week 2	Lady Poverty	St. Margaret of Cortona	Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis	Five Franciscan Martyrs	St. Maximilian Kolbe	Holy Trinity
Week 3	Divine Mercy	Our Lady of Indiana	La Verna	Mother Cabrini	Franciscans of the Prairie	St. Clare
Week 4	St Joan of Arc	Queen of Peace	Juan de Padilla	Los Tres Companeros/Three Companions	Our Lady of the Rockies	Santa Maria de las Montanas
Week 5 or Week 1*	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Troubadours of Peace	Bl. Junipero Serra	St. Francis	St. Thomas More	Ohana O Ke Aneunue



The General Chapter

By BOB & MARY STRONACH, SFO

We looked forward to the trip to Budapest, but little did we realize how the General Chapter would impart an overwhelming sense of belonging to a world-wide Order. Part of it came from mingling with 111 attendees from 57 countries. We came away not only with new friends, but with the realization that we have family across the globe.

Other influences included:

- Br. Felice Cangelosi, vicar general of the Capuchin Franciscans, declaring that the Church recognizes Secular Franciscans as belonging to a real Order, and that profession in the Order is of the same importance as religious profession.

- Fr. Marco Tasca, minister general of the Conventual Franciscans, joking as a member of the family and offering a spiritual message that if we want our fraternities to grow and be alive, we need to see our brothers and sisters as gifts.

- The International Council expressing solidarity with suffering Secular Franciscans, such as in violence-torn Congo.

- Encarnación del Pozo (or Encarnita, as she likes to be called) asserting

that Secular Franciscans need to take charge of their identity as an Order, and act on the conviction that they are equal partners in the Franciscan family.

We got to see the Order through the eyes of our international leaders, who filtered and assimilated perspectives from scores of nations; who recognized the sheer wonder and vitality associated with 42 emerging national fraternities, anxious to join the 65 established national units; who long-recognized the vital importance of good formation, and in particular, of “forming the formators.”

They were so inspired by what was happening on the front lines with local and national fraternities, in Latin America and Asia and Africa, and they were in love with YouFra, a thriving movement in so many areas. In fact, Franciscan youth were an integral part of the General Chapter...a natural part of the family.

It was interesting to see the deference and affection the friars exhibited. Perhaps General Minister Encarnita was on to something when she declared that because of our SFO Rule, because of our identity as seculars, we are a unifying force for the Franciscan family.

On Nov. 19, day 5 of the Chapter,



Encarnación del Pozo of Spain was re-elected general minister for a second six-year term.

Encarnita was re-elected by an overwhelming margin to serve another six years as general minister. (The International Council, which goes by the acronym CIOFS, is also known as the Presidency.)

Doug Clorey of Canada was elected general vice minister. The newly elected Presidency councilors were:

- Consuelo Núñez of Venezuela, representing Spanish-speaking areas.
- Tibor Kausser of Hungary, English-speaking area 1 (North America & Europe).
- Lucy Almiranez of the Philippines, English-speaking area 2 (Africa, Oceania, Asia).
- Michele Altmeyer of France, French-speaking areas.
- Maria Aparecida Crepaldi of Brazil, Portuguese-speaking areas.
- Ewald Kreuzer of Austria, German-speaking areas.
- Benedetto Lino of Italy, Italian-speaking areas.
- Ana Fruk of Croatia, YouFra

The general spiritual assistants -- representing the OFM, OFM Cap, OFM Conventual and TOR branches -- presided over daily liturgies with cultural flavors from around the world, parts often in Latin (the universal language) and music that sent spirits soaring. The Eucharistic celebration was an expression of joy.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER (CIOFS)



FROM LEFT: Michele Altmeyer of France, Maria Aparecida Crepaldi of Brazil, Ewald Kreuzer of Austria, Consuelo Núñez of Venezuela, Lucy Almiranez of the Phillipines, Marion & Doug Clorey of Canada, Encarnita del Pozo of Spain, Benedetto Lino of Italy, and Tibor Kauser of Hungary. Not shown: Anna Fruk of Croatia.

After we arrived in Budapest, a Secular Franciscan couple met us at the airport, along with their teenage sons, who were holding up a sign with an image of the Tau. Our party included U.S. International Councilor Anne Mulqueen (who chaired an English language group breakout), Spiritual Assistant Richard Trezza, OFM, and videographer Michael Eaton, pushing a heavy cart of equipment. Michael was there to tape the Chapter and some sites in Hungary for a documentary about St. Elizabeth of Hungary that New York Secular Franciscan and St. Elizabeth biographer, Lori Pieper, wants to produce. With Elizabeth being patron of the Order, the Chapter was held Nov. 15-22, 2008, in Hungary, in conjunction with the closing of the 8th centenary of her birth.

It took almost an hour to reach our mountain retreat -- Manréza Hotel and Conference Center in Dobogókő. The last leg of the drive was up a narrow mountain road, winding through a leaf-carpeted forest. The site of the Chapter was nestled on a hillside among evergreens.

The Chapter got under way that first

evening (Saturday) with Mass and a call to the Holy Spirit “to descend among us.”

On Sunday, the general minister gave her state-of-the-order address, where she asserted the SFO as an equal partner in the Franciscan family. She gave a demographic overview: The number of professed, active members remains constant at some 400,000. They belong to 65 established national fraternities, 42 emerging national fraternities, and three areas working toward canonical establishment of their first local fraternities. Franciscan Youth, or YouFra, is present in 64 countries, as an organization.

Monday zeroed in on the Chapter’s theme, *SFO Profession and Sense of Belonging*, with Brother Felice and past general minister Emanuela DeNunzio as keynote speakers.

Friars and sisters take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Brother Felice said, and Secular Franciscans promise to be witnesses to Gospel living in secular society, but they are both gifts of God and they are both sacred acts recognized and blessed by the Church, within the context of Franciscan fraternity with a form of life or Rule. Both types of profession, he

said, place the person totally at God’s disposal.

“This leads us to maintain that the *propositum vitae*, or promise of the Secular Franciscan penitents, is equivalent to a religious profession.”

Emanuela tackled the Secular Franciscan’s sense of identity and belonging, especially in a secular world often at odds with people of faith.

Secular Franciscans, by the nature of their profession, can have a clear vision of identity and a motivating sense of belonging.

“The vocation to the SFO is a vocation to live the Gospel in fraternal community,” Emanuela said, quoting the Order’s General Constitutions. The members “are co-responsible,” she noted, for the life of the order through: (1) Personal presence, (2) Witness of Gospel and fraternal life (thus attracting vocations), (3) Prayer (as “it is the soul of this community of love”), (4) Active collaboration (for completing charitable and apostolic initiatives), (5) Being open to serve in various offices, (6) Economic contributions, based on one’s financial means, to provide resources for the life of the local and worldwide fraternities and their work.

That evening and the next morning



Anne Mulqueen, SFO
Wearing earphones to hear translation.



Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap
Speaking on Secular Franciscan Profession.



Emanuela DeNunzio, OFS
Speaking on Sense of Belonging to the Order.



Marco Tasca, OFM Conv
Bringing humor and spiritual joy to the Chapter of Elections.

the assembly broke into small groups to reflect on the presentations. During a followup discussion, Emanuela went on to emphasize the importance of formation in attracting and discerning quality vocations. Fraternities need to give concrete experiences to people in formation – which may require a fraternity ministry or initiative, not just individual ministries. “It’s a question of a real conviction...but we need to do this as a fraternity.”

Later, the Formation Commission unveiled the international Order’s first-ever training manual for formation directors -- recognizing the need for quality formation.

The afternoon of Day 3, November 17 -- the feast of St. Elizabeth -- the Chapter adjourned to nearby Esztergon Cathedral, a 20-minute drive by bus, to celebrate the feast with Cardinal László Paskai, OFM, and bring to a close the 8th centenary of her birth in 1207. Secular Franciscans, from all

over Hungary, and local faithful filled the expansive structure. Built over 200 years ago, the cathedral sits atop a hill, with a huge dome rising 100 meters into the air, visible for miles, and serving as a reminder that it is the mother church in Hungary. Cardinal Paskai recalled Elizabeth’s holiness as a committed wife and Secular Franciscan, who faced being ostracized, from her noble blood, for feeding the poor and building hospitals for the sick. At the conclusion of Mass, Encarnita reenacted Elizabeth’s act of mercy by distributing to the congregation hundreds of loaves of bread brought up to the altar by local women dressed in traditional Hungarian garb.

Prior to the Mass, the group got to visit a modern sculpture of St. Stephen, Elizabeth’s ancestor, being crowned king of Hungary by the pope. The larger-than-life sleek marble artwork sits on property adjoining the cathedral, on the edge of a cliff overlooking the

winding Danube River, as it separates Hungary from Slovakia.

On day six, we boarded buses once again -- this time to get a tour of Budapest, attend Mass at the downtown Church of St. Elizabeth, and be treated to a homemade dinner by the Hungarian National Fraternity.

On day seven, the General Chapter endorsed a recommendation to incorporate YouFra into the Order. With the endorsement, young people fascinated with St. Francis of Assisi, who wish to pursue a vocation, may begin the process within the YouFra structure and then continue with a regular Secular Franciscan fraternity.

There was a lot of discussion, including small group breakouts, trying to zero in on the focus for the next six years. The group reports covered a lot of areas, and it took a lot of parrying and negotiating to synthesize everything to the top five priorities (which the Chapter voted on):

1. Formation.
2. Communications.
3. Franciscan youth.
4. Presence in the world.
5. Emerging National Fraternities.

On day eight, the chapter came to a close and it was time for us to depart, amid a myriad of hugs and embraces. Our spirits were soaring.

READ THE BOOKLET

Check out Bob and Mary’s “Reflections on the General Chapter,” a 28-page booklet that can be downloaded from NAFRA-SFO.org (under Meetings & Resources).



Chapter attendees pose for photos at the statue of St. Stephen near Esztergon Cathedral (background).



Kathie Uhler, OSF, Allegany, NY returns to ministry at Franciscans International

Sister Kathie is serving once again on the staff of Franciscans International/New York (FINY), this time in a new role as Advocacy Officer. In this role, she will represent FI at the UN on matters concerning, among other things: the status of women, poverty, and the environment. Crucial to this role is the involvement of Franciscans within various UN forums around the world. For this collaboration, Kathie will concentrate particularly on Franciscan networks and grassroots in Canada and the USA. Kathie ministered at FI as co-director from 1993 to 2001. You may contact Kathie at: uhler@fiop.org. The Franciscan International website is: www.FranciscansInternational.org.

See the new ITALIAN CATHOLIC ONLINE MAGAZINE at: (www.italiancatholiconline.com).

The purpose of this new website is to make known the important contributions Italians and Italian-American Catholics have made, and are making to the Church through evangelization. Two of our patron saints, along with the Blessed Mother, are Secular Franciscans, Mother Cabrini and Padre Pio.

We are hoping that our ONLINE MAGAZINE will inspire other ethnic Catholic communities to make known and celebrate the rich orthodox traditions of their forefathers.

Al Barcas, Editor and Webmaster
Donald J. D'Elia, Ph.D., SFO, KHS, Consultant

THANK YOU from FAN

Sincere thanks from the Franciscan Action Network to the NAFRA Regions for the check totaling \$1928; what a wonderful year-end gift! All of us at FAN owe an extra measure of gratitude for these donations, which come at a crucial moment in the life of this organization. As you may be aware, the IRS is taking longer than usual to approve FAN's application for tax exempt status. As a result, our fundraising capability is hindered. Consequently, the contribution helps us to survive and thrive.

Fran Eskin-Royer
eskin-royer@franciscanaction.org

A Summer Seminar

Endorsed by the National Executive Council of the SFO
“Franciscan Spirituality for The Secular Franciscans”

Presenters:

Vinal Van Benthem, SFO and Bob “Fitz” Fitzsimmons, SFO

Thursday evening, June 25, 2009 – Sunday lunch, June 28, 2009

St. Francis University Loretto, PA

Important Instructions:

- 1. Please TYPE or PRINT all information clearly.
- 2. Payment must accompany this form and is NON-REFUNDABLE.
- 3. Make checks payable to: St. Francis University.
- 4. Mail this form and payment to:

Cecilia Maljan, SFO
111 Freyburg St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Early Registration:

Single Room \$220 - \$_____ (includes registration, air-conditioned dorm room, van shuttle to/from dorm, and all meal) After **April 30, 2009**, the registration is \$235 per person.

Double Room - \$180 pp - \$_____ After **April 30, 2009**, the registration is \$195 per person.

Amount Enclosed \$_____

I will be rooming with _____

I will need a roommate – match me up if your can ____

Title First Name (s) Last Name

Address City State Zip

Home Phone Work phone E-Mail

Address

Questions? Contact Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, 814-472-3367 (daytime) or e-mail kqueally@francis.edu

Book Review

By Shenandoah Brown, SFO

Lamp Unto My Feet

By Shenandoah Brown, SFO

Published by PUBLISH AMERICA, LLLP Baltimore, MD

<http://www.publishamerica.com/> ISBN 1-4241-6887-2

My pastor, Monsignor D. Raun states, “Shenandoah Brown has done a beautiful service to the Church in preparing Lamp Unto My Feet. In a straight-forward and systematic way, she lays forth the truths of our faith. This book truly is a lamp that will allow those inquiring into the fundamentals of the Catholic faith to see the beautiful truth of the Catholic faith.”

Lamp Unto My Feet discusses teachings and practices plus their relation to Holy Scripture. It includes scriptural exegeses, Bible study questions, prayer forms and devotions for spiritual formation over 409 pages and 32 chapters. It is written for use by seekers and students from the high school level and up. It’s an ideal tool for a personal exploration of the Faith or as a valuable resource for parish teen and adult study groups such as Inquiry or RCIA. Its organization makes it an ideal companion for the Catechism of the Catholic Church for those involved in these formal classes.

What is unique about this dynamic new book is its inclusion of progressive spiritual formation along with accurate doctrinal information and Biblical exegeses in between one set of covers. A pedagogical model for classroom usage is also included.

Do you sometimes feel lost on what the Church teaches? Are you non-Catholic and interested or curious about what Catholics believe? Then let this book guide you in an exploration of heart and mind about the teachings, beliefs and disciplines of the one true Church founded by Christ including such questions as: Why is the Bible hard to understand? How did the Church start and get where it is today? What is the Mass? What are Sacraments? Who is God and why do we need Him?

I was professed in 1989, and served my fraternity as Vice Minister and later as Minister. For several years, I have taught classes in Catholic subjects and have served in civilian and military parishes as facilitator and religious education coordinator, including the RCIA at Camp Foster MCB and Kadena AFB on Okinawa, Japan from 1995-97. My husband and helper, Jim, is a retired US Navy Religious Program Specialist with a BS degree in Business and Religious Studies from Regis University. Jim has taught religious education at all levels for over 30 years in civilian and military parishes worldwide and he served as a consultant on this book.

A Jews Prayer For the Children of Gaza

By Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman
Kol HaNeshama, Jerusalem

Lord who is the creator of all children, hear our prayer
this accursed day.
God whom we call Blessed, turn your face to these,
the children of Gaza,
that they may know your blessings, and your shelter,
that they may know light and warmth,
where there is now only blackness and smoke,
and a cold which cuts and clenches the skin.
Almighty who makes exceptions, which we call miracles,
make an exception of the children of Gaza.
Shield them from us and from their own.
Spare them. Heal them. Let them stand in safety.
Deliver them from hunger and horror and fury and grief.
Deliver them from us, and from their own.
Restore to them their stolen childhoods, their birthright,
which is a taste of heaven.
Remind us, O Lord, of the child Ishmael,
who is the father of all the children of Gaza.
How the child Ishmael was without water
and left for dead in the wilderness of Beer-Sheba,
so robbed of all hope,
that his own mother could not bear to watch
his life drain away.
Be that Lord, the God of our kinsman Ishmael,
who heard his cry and sent His angel to comfort
his mother Hagar.
Be that Lord, who was with Ishmael that day, and
all the days after.
Be that God, the All-Merciful,
who opened Hagar's eyes that day, and showed her the
well of water,
that she could give the boy Ishmael to drink, and
save his life.
Allah, whose name we call Elohim,
who gives life, who knows the value and
the fragility of every life,
send these children your angels.
Save them, the children of this place,
Gaza the most beautiful, and Gaza the damned.
In this day, when the trepidation and rage and
mourning that is called war,
seizes our hearts and patches them in scars,
we call to you, the Lord whose name is Peace:
Bless these children, and keep them from harm.
Turn Your face toward them, O Lord.
Show them, as if for the first time,
light and kindness, and overwhelming graciousness.
Look up at them, O Lord. Let them see your face.
And, as if for the first time, grant them peace.

Source: http://miketodd.typepad.com/waving_or_drowning/
Received from the Joliet Franciscan Sisters



President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009, in Washington, DC.

(Excerpts from the Inaugural Address)

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

...we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted — for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things — some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.

The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on our ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart — not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.

For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus — and non-believers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from

every end of this Earth...the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.

To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to the suffering outside our borders; nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect. For the world has changed, and we must change with it.

As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to tell us, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet, at this moment — a moment that will define a generation — it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all.

What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility — a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task. This is the price and the promise of citizenship. This is the source of our confidence — the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny.

In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river. ...With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.

Franciscan Living



By Jusepe de Ribera

Conversion: But it's Hard!

By Francine Gikow, SFO, Staff Editor

“United by their vocation as ‘brothers and sisters of penance,’ and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls ‘conversion’.”
SFO Rule, II, #7)

Secular Franciscans have committed to change. Our original name, as the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, means conversion (change). By virtue of our dedication to the way of St. Francis, we profess to make the lifelong effort to change ourselves. As St. Clare says in her Third Letter to Agnes of Prague, “Transform your whole being into the image of the Godhead Itself.” We are to become the Gospel by our lives. This is radical change, and by being radical, in essence, it means that it is not easy.

So, let's take a look at conversion. Conversion begins when we are graced with a new awareness of a need for change. This grace, coming from God, may be like a subtle, growing discomfort, or it might manifest itself as a sudden hit from a “two by four board,” as one of my sisters in Francis likes to describe her experience. We might have a growing concern or unease that our life does not conform with our ideals or we might be struck in a sudden moment of realization that what we do, is not loving. In any event, this awareness of a need for change is grace - a free gift from God. We can pray for this gift of awareness, but we cannot earn it. It comes in its own time. However, we can ask God to help us to develop sensitivity toward what is “of God” versus what is “not of Him” (discernment of the spirits). A Spiritual Director is invaluable in this effort. This growing awareness is really the beginning of a love story where God's love for us is enticing us to

expand our love toward greater things. As described in the Song of Solomon (7:10):

“I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me.”

Now comes the hard part. After we become aware of the need for change, we must respond. We can't ignore it and do nothing. We must acknowledge it and examine our life. This takes courage, especially if we are forced to examine our fears, our habits, or prior experiences in order to allow us to be free to love more deeply. Sometimes our own history prevents us from embracing change. We have to let go of whatever is keeping us from opening ourselves to greater love and this can be a challenge!

I find it helpful to write down what is encouraging me to change, so that I can keep in mind the call for conversion. I also write down my fears and concerns in a spiritual journal. There I can pour out to God, all of my objections as to why I feel the change is hard. I sit with it awhile - sometimes days or weeks, but God is there working in my soul, enticing me forward with His love. God does not rush us. He is patient with us in His loving. He helps us let go of what is hindering us from following Him.

However, there comes a time when all of the prayer about our concerns comes to an end and a commitment to change must occur. Then prayer becomes a prayer for courage, since it takes courage to change ourselves. It takes a leap of faith. We become poor to ourselves as we lean on our faith in God, who is our strength.

Often I say a little prayer which I repeat throughout the day: “O my God, I trust you (or hope in you or love you), help me to trust you (or hope in you or love you) always.” This is a prayer of will - I will it, so therefore, I will do it. Sometimes, we have to practice the virtue we want, in order to let our belief catch up. We act as if we have the courage to change, and eventually we do!

Ultimately, we must put aside ourselves and look only towards God. If we are always thinking about our fears, past history or concerns, we lose sight of God. God is THE way for us, our love and our very life. In a way, thinking about our own concerns can be another form of selfishness. We put “me” before God. That is why the desert fathers encouraged self discipline. It is the discipline of will toward God. We do not force; but we gently let go of our concerns so that we are free to find God in a new way and become His alone. It is a love story - the original love story between God and you.

God entices. God invites. God loves us to turn towards Him. He loves us in our very inner being and wants us to love Him more. We only respond to His love.

“My beloved is mine and I am His.” Song of Solomon 2

Humor Page

By Dolores Cullen, SFO

*Give me a sense of humor, Lord,
Give me the grace to see a joke,
to get some humor out of life,
and pass it on to other folk.*

STORY TIME

Man walks out and catches passing taxi. Cabbie says, "Perfect timing, like Frank."

Passenger: 'Who?'

Cabbie: "Frank Feldman. He's a guy who did everything right all the time. Like my coming along when you needed a cab; things happened like that to Frank Feldman every single time."

Passenger: "There are always a few clouds over everybody."

Cabbie: "Not Frank Feldman. He was a terrific athlete. He could have won the Grand-Slam at tennis - golfed with the pros - sung like an opera baritone and danced like a Broadway star. And how he played the piano! An amazing guy."

Passenger: "Sounds like he was something really special."

Cabbie: "There's more. Remembered everybody's birthday - knew all about wine, which foods to order, which fork to use. He could repair anything. Not like me. I change a fuse - the whole street blacks out. But Frank did things right."

Passenger: "Wow, some guy then."

Cabbie: "He avoided traffic jams. I always get stuck in them. Frank, never made a mistake. And he knew how to treat a woman and make her feel good. He'd never answer back even if she was wrong; and his clothing - immaculate; shoes polished. He was the perfect man! No one measured up to Frank Feldman."

Passenger: "An amazing fellow. How did you meet him?"

Cabbie: "Well, I never actually met Frank, he died. I married his widow."

He pulled the trigger while pointing the gun at the charging lion, only to hear a disappointing "click."
"Harriet? Harri-ET!"

"I'm right here, Harold."

"What do you mean, you're right here?"

"I mean, I'm right here. Is something wrong?"

"Did you unplug the blaster gun cord again?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean, yes?"

"I mean, I unplugged it again."

"You spoiled my fun. Why do you want to do that?"

"I did that so you would stop playing that silly game and do your chores."

"Harriet, you have no appreciation of a man developing his skills. When I take that trip to Africa, I need to be ready for anything - even a charging lion."
"That'll be the day, Harold."

"What do you mean, that'll be the day?"

"I mean, that'll be the day when you take that trip. If I could be so rude as to remind you that until you're actively planning to leave for the Dark Continent, you better actively take out the trash, mow the lawn, and trim the bushes before our house becomes overgrown and overcome with the odor of trash."

"Harriet, you're exaggerating. I'll make you a deal. You plug in the blaster and let me take aim one more time and then I'll do the chores."

"One more time?"

"One more time. I promise."

"OK, Harold."

She finds the plug and inserts it into the wall outlet behind the big TV screen. He presses the button to start the video of the lion sauntering through tall grass. Suddenly the lion "catches sight" of the player and begins its charge from behind the video screen. Harriet covers her ears in anticipation. Just as the cat leaps, Harold pulls the trigger. A resounding *BANG* from his blaster is heard.

The screen shows the words **RIGHT TO THE HEART** in bold, blood red letters. Harold is ecstatic. He has lost all sense of time and place. He presses the start button again.

"You promised 'one more time,' Harold!"

Oblivious to Harriet's words, he has already "sighted" the animal coming through the grass again.

Harriet leaves the room and returns with a hunting rifle. The video lion is about to spring. Harold - and Harriet positioned just to the left behind him - each take careful aim. There is a thunderous *B-BANG* and the smell of gunpowder,

"Aw, Harriet, why'd ya blast the TV?"



MOTHERNESS

By M. Marko, SFO
camontcu@aol.com
Brother Jacoba Community
St. Peter's in the Loop, Chicago, IL

October and November of last year were spent on OpMoMo (shorthand for Operation Mother Move). I live in Chicago; my mum lived in Elgin (an hour's train ride) and moved to Geneva (an hour-and-a-quarter's train ride). So I was zipping back and forth to Elgin during October to help her go through stuff and get ready for the move. The big day was October 31 (talk about a scary Halloween!). Then I zipped back and forth to Geneva a few times. I've also had to return to Elgin a few times – and more visits are upcoming – in connection with the sale of the house.

My brother and sister-in-law were able to help quite a bit as they have a car. But he also works full-time, so I did most of the ping-ponging.

I don't mind helping. She's a good mother. And I guess I wasn't much of a daughter early on in that she didn't have many of the usual mother-daughter perks: no prom dress shopping in high school, no sorority in college (no college!); and I never married, so no grandchildren (from me – one of my brothers has given her two grandsons; and, to be fair, I've given her two wonderful grandcats).

The couple of times she's mentioned that she would've liked me to get married, it was primarily so I'd have someone to 'take care of me.' Ah, yes, my recent application for Social Security notwithstanding, I'm still her little girl.

Being a good mother, she's given me many things. My love of words, for example. She's written hundreds of articles and poems, as well as nine published children's books. And I write . . . this. Some might call it fluff. (Personally, I prefer the term "literary lint.") Nonetheless, my mother is always complimentary when she reads my stuff, praising it and telling me I should write more. Motherness: y'gotta love it!

Another gift of hers was a love of the Faith. My Franciscan vocation is my own; but she set me up for it, so to speak, by passing on the Faith and teaching me its importance. If you're a parent, a grandparent, or an older sibling, I'll tell you right now: teaching a kid how to say a prayer is a good thing; kneeling down and praying with the kid is a great thing. It leaves an impression on their soul. It's been 50+ years now, but I can still recall kneeling next to my mother by the sofa, praying the Rosary. I could see it was important to her, so it was important to me. And, even as a child, I knew that we were not just saying words – we were *doing* something. Something that had value.

Francis' mother was a good mother. I can tell because of how he turned out. I'm sure he learned his prayers at her knee, often saying them with her. And I'm sure they went to Mass together. She probably wasn't too thrilled at the idea of his going to war; but she was also probably pretty proud when he rode off on his horse in all his metalness. Her little boy was a knight! When he came back, broken and ill, she nursed him back to health, figuring he'd find the right girl and settle down and go into his father's business. Well, we all know how that turned out, don't we?

Even after he was estranged from his father (and, therefore, the family), I'm sure she kept track of him. There was, doubtless, always word of him on the street. After all, he was that crazy rich kid who stripped in the piazza in front of the bishop! Y'wanna keep track of a guy like that cos it's bound to be interesting. So Mother Bernardone knew how his life was going. It wasn't quite the life she would have chosen for him; but it was obvious he was happy, and that was good enough for her.

Like I said, motherness: y'gotta love it!

EXPLORING

Things Franciscan



✦ CNSA News & Views ✦

Lester Bach OFM Cap

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2009?

The new year offers fresh possibilities for regular fraternity gatherings. Let me share some ideas about these important times together both as professed and as people going through *initial formation*.

1. If the regular gathering is, for example, four hours long, we spend about 48 hours together for the whole year. That means we spend two days out of 365 days for our gatherings. It actually doesn't sound like much to support a lifetime commitment. It seems realistic to extend the time we spend at gatherings or get together more often.

2. What we do during those 48 (more or less) hours is vital. *Ongoing formation* is an important issue for any fraternity. If our Franciscan dedication is at a standstill, we may need to up-grade what we do at our gatherings. Living a Franciscan life in the world is no easy task. We are expected to help one another to do better. The regular gatherings need to use plenty of the time for *ongoing formation*. Councils are responsible for achieving this. Fraternity members are expected to assist in achieving this task.

Ongoing formation, accomplished by means of courses, gatherings, and the sharing of experience - aims to assist the brothers and sisters:

- + *Rule 4 in listening to and meditating on the Word of God, "going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel;"*
- + *in reflecting on events in the Church and in society in the light of faith, and with the help of documents of the teaching Church, consequently taking consistent positions;*
- + *in discerning and deepening the Franciscan vocation by studying the writings of St. Francis and St. Clare and Franciscan authors.*

Constitutions - article 44.3

3. During the years of formation the sessions for newcomers (orientation/inquiry/candidacy) probably last from one to two hours per session to ultimately prepare people for *profession*. According to the

National Statutes, *initial formation* (Inquiry/Candidacy) may last from 24 to 42 months (6 months for inquiry - 18-36 months for candidacy - National Statutes - article 19.2). This is not a lot of time for what needs to be done.

Formation sessions prepare people to know, understand and live the Rule, the Constitutions, the Gospel; get acquainted with fraternity members; engage in apostolic activities; participate in fraternity gatherings; be involved in contemplative prayer; continue their conversion in the spirit of St. Francis and Clare; discern their vocation; learn about scriptural prayer; prepare for a lifetime of commitment; learn about SFO organization; understand the meaning of servant-leadership; become familiar with the life and words of St. Francis and Clare; recognize the SFO's relationship with the Church; develop a love for our Franciscan perceptions; put the learning into practice; understand the role of a SA. As any formation director/team can tell you, this is not all!

Initial formation requires a few hours for each session. Inter-active dialogue with new people involves them in the formation process (lectures cannot do as much!) and opens the door for good formation.

4. Formation directors are provided with good material approved by the National Formation Commission. But **how it is used will make all the difference**. In addition, the dedication of the formation personnel and fraternity members has its own way of forming newcomers.

The national formation commission is working to provide not only materials but workshops as well. When workshops are held, local and regional councils should do whatever they can to provide for attendance at the workshops by their formation leaders.

5. Local councils and formation directors are expected to prepare special sessions and materials to use with *the newly professed* to help them integrate into fraternity life.

The fraternity has the duty to give special attention to the formation of the newly professed and of the

temporarily professed, to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging.

Constitutions - article 44.2

6. The example of members of the fraternity is a part of making all these things happen. They are engaged in formation by the way they interact at gatherings, how hospitable they are, how they support the council, how they work with the spiritual assistant, how they contribute to dialogue and offer their skills and talents for fraternity life and growth, how they interact with the newcomers and how they invite others to consider a vocation to our way of life.

The Franciscan way of life **IS** our way to live! Nothing should interfere with continued growth in being a Franciscan who is passionate about the Franciscan way of life and able to live it with joy.

WORDS FROM BENEDICT XVI

If I have no contact whatsoever with God in my life, then I cannot see in the other anything more than the other, and I am incapable of seeing in him the image of God. But if in my life, I fail completely to heed others, solely out of a desire to be "devout" and to perform my "religious duties," then my relationship with God will also grow arid. It becomes merely "proper," but loveless. Only my readiness to encounter my neighbor and to show him love makes me sensitive to God as well. Only if I serve my neighbor can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me. ... No longer is it a question, then, of a "commandment" imposed from without and calling for the impossible, but rather of a freely bestowed experience of love from within, a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others. Love grows through love. Love is "divine" because it comes from God and unites us to God. ...

God is Love (Deus Caritas Est) - Benedict XVI - Paragraph 18

WORDS FROM FRANCIS

Blessed is the servant who does not consider himself any better when he is praised and exalted by people than when he is considered worthless, simple, and looked down upon, for what a person is before God, that he is and no more.

Admonition XIX - Francis of Assisi - The Saint - Vol I - Page 135

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE

As is the case with many of the people who serve the SFO, a spiritual assistants' presence does not last

forever. There is a twelve-year limit on the service of an individual spiritual assistant to the same fraternity. It makes sense to realize that a twelve-year stint with the same fraternity allows the SA to accomplish many things for a fraternity. It is also true that the fraternity brings many good things into the life of a SA.

The appointment of the Assistant is made in writing and for a limited time, which accumulated cannot be more than twelve years.

Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO - article 15.3

During the time of service a SA is called to stimulate and encourage a deepening of the Franciscan spirit among fraternity members. As a member of the Council he/she has many opportunities to share ideas and offer insights to enhance the life of secular Franciscans. The SA serves the formation team as well, sharing and helping them to prepare newcomers to understand and embrace the SFO way of life.

In all of these situations the SA serves rather than dictates. He/she collaborates with the fraternity, its council and formation personnel to foster communion with the Church and with the Franciscan family through witness and sharing of Franciscan spirituality, to cooperate in initial and ongoing formation of secular Franciscans and to express the fraternal affection of the religious towards the SFO.

Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO - article 2.3

WORDS ABOUT CLARE

In the cross of Jesus Christ, Clare realizes that God does not hold back anything for himself but rather gives himself completely to us. Divine revelation is the movement of God to poverty. The One who is rich in love comes down to where we are, takes on our humanity, and extends his arms on the cross to embrace us in love. In the mystery of the cross, therefore, Clare sees that God is self-giving and self-gift. God gives everything to us in the gift of the Son or, in Clare's words, the "beloved Spouse." God loves us to such a degree we might say God "throws it all away" out of love to be God-for-us. The poverty of God is the source of our true riches because "God promises the kingdom of heaven to those who possess and desire you (poverty)." The sign of God's outpouring love is the cross which manifests to Clare the victory of love. ... God does not love us for what we do but for who we are. God does not love us because we are good or perfect or do nice things but simply because God is love. Love is what God does because God is love. Those who "desire and possess" poverty, Clare indicates, live in the embrace of God's love.

Clare of Assisi - A Heart full of Love - Ilia Delio OSF - Page 3

Gospel to Life



By Jay de la Cruz, SFO, Oakland, CA
Blessed Junipera Serra Region

Many people from all over the world look at USA as the place where one can draw from the well for prosperity, a good job, a better life, buy a comfortable house, drive fast cars, entertainment galore, eat good food, and basically live a happier life. At least for me and my family, that was what we aimed for and through hard work and perseverance, we have accomplished most of it.

Just like the woman at the well in the Gospel of John, we continuously go to where that “happier” life can be found and still we are found wanting and are tirelessly searching for that life. For the thirst that needs to be quenched, we should look no further than what Jesus told the woman at the well, “. . .Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Our dogged pursuit for success in our careers, in buying not only one house, but two, enlarging our assets far more than needed, working two or three jobs to support our lifestyles, holding on to power without regard to ethics or moral principles...these are the five husbands that the woman at the well had allowed to rule her life. There is no end in sight to satisfy any of them at any time. Our want is always ahead of us. If we could just focus on one “husband” – Jesus Christ – to govern our lives, the spring of living water would finally quench that thirst for eternal life.

The woman left her jar by the well as soon as that encounter with Jesus changed her life. We are asked to do the same. Leave those endeavors which take our focus away from Jesus. Our lives should revolve around Him alone. Whatever gifts we have received from God, we must freely give to others, for those gifts are not for us to keep for ourselves alone. Those abundant blessings have to be shared so that the homeless may have a roof over their heads, the naked, clothes on their backs, the thirsty, something to drink, the sick, someone to comfort them, and the hungry, food to eat. This is the water that wells up to eternal life.

Lastly, the woman upon hearing the “good news” became the first evangelizer in the Gospel of John. So too, we must not hesitate to spread the good news to others, so that they too may know about the “living water” that brings about eternal life - a life of happiness and fulfillment.

Our Franciscan community (in the Third Order) is one source for that water, where we can bring it to others who may need to be refreshed. Our meetings, monthly newsletter, works of mercy, sacramental piety and other activities (individual and group) are all vehicles wherein God touches other people’s lives through us (imperfect) vessels for Jesus’ presence in this world.

+++



THE STORY OF BARTIMAEUS ***Mark 10:46-52***

By Jay De La Cruz, SFO

- Darkness of Life - In Jericho, Bartimaeus was on the roadside begging.

- Perseverance - Hearing that Jesus was near, he cried out, “Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.” He called-out many times.
- Encounter - Jesus stopped and Bartimaeus came to Jesus.
- Ask - Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?”-
- Discipleship - Immediately, he received his sight & followed him.

Blind means unable to see (the meaning of Jesus’ passion and the necessity to share in his suffering. As the men are given sight, they come to see the things to which they are now blind. So too, after the resurrection, the disciples came to see).

Reflection:

The Jesuit theologian, Pierre Teilhard Chardin said, “We are not human beings on a spiritual journey, rather we are spiritual beings on a short human journey.” It is on this short human journey that hunger, weakness, feeding our senses, and self importance are more and pressing than spiritual needs. As a consequence, fleshly desires rule our lives. This is the blindness that we are born with and living in that darkness, as Bartimaeus experienced, is not very pleasant. True, there are pleasurable cycles in our lives, but they come and go leaving only emptiness to follow.

It is in our spiritual darkness that we are called, loudly, by God to come to Him. However, many times we make the choice to rely on our own ingenuity to overcome the darkness with a quick fix. It is only when real hardship or crisis comes to us that we are willing to ask for God’s help and mercy, expecting a quick response and answer to our plea. Bartimaeus showed us that we have to persevere in calling/praying to God. He is already in us but our predisposition and acceptance of Him depends on our will to be truly united with Him. Otherwise, the encounter becomes short and fleeting, until the next crisis brings us back to him again.

When Jesus heard the persistent cry and prayer of Bartimaeus, he stopped and Bartimaeus came to Jesus freely. This encounter was the fruit of persistence by a nurtured heart, hungry for the union with God. In love and mercy, Jesus came to him. I have asked myself the question, “Why didn’t I have that encounter with the Lord early in my life?” A priest-friend told me that there was always the encounter, but I wasn’t ready for a more serious union with Him. It would have hindered me from seeing God for what he truly is.

In this meeting, Jesus asked Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus knew that he was blind, just as he knows our needs, but He would not want to force himself on us without our asking. We have to let him know what we want and ask for the grace that it may be granted. This teaches us humility and gratitude for all that God has given us.

In the end, eyesight was granted to Bartimaeus and he could see the light. He left the darkness. We, too, can leave the darkness of self-centeredness, the crippling blindness of materialism, the paralyzing effect of addiction and pornography, the devastation of families through unfaithfulness, the numbing effect of pride and total disregard for the poor and marginalized brothers and sisters in our midst. We can follow Jesus, as did Bartimaeus, and live in the light of Christ’s love and mercy.

Bartimaeus became a disciple. In Discipleship we learn to love Him with all our hearts and souls and to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Mt 22:37-39) We cannot truly love somebody whom we do not know...we can read the Bible, hear the sermons, attend retreats, listen to religious tapes watch videos of His life and His teachings. Only then, will we be able to say, I love him for I know Him. Amen.

+++

Brother Juniper



“By mistake, I put in QUICKSAND.”

By Fred McCarthy, SFO

Ecumenical



Interfaith/Committee

By Ed Shirley, SFO
National Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Chair
elssfo@hotmail.com (512) 794-0546

TIME FOR UNITY - TIME FOR REPENTENCE

One of the most difficult things about writing this set of articles is that I write them one month (yes, usually right before the deadline), and they are not published until two months later. I could blame it on my personality type (I am an Intuitive-Perceiver: grabbing ideas out of the air, and then not bringing them to closure), or it could be the flaw of procrastination, but, I suspect, it is a combination of the two. As I write this, we are in Prayer for Christian Unity Week, but you will not read it until we're well into Lent.

Jesus' "High Priestly" prayer, in the Gospel of John, asks the Father that "they may be one, as you and I are one." That's a pretty powerful image. We express that mystery of unity and distinction in the doctrine of the Trinity: God is, at the same time, both One and Three. Jesus also tells the apostles that the way the world will know they are his disciples is because of their love for one another. In the doctrine of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the Bond of Love that both unites and distinguishes the Father and Son: love unites, but also lets the other be other.

What does this have to do with Christian ecumenism? I will allow other Christians to do their own soul-searching, but we Catholics have a terrible tendency to think that what unites us is uniformity: we think we should all be the same. G.K. Chesterton, himself a Catholic, described the Catholic Church as "Here comes everybody." We have Latin and Maronite Rites, Franciscan and Carmelite spiritualities, Thomistic and Augustinian theologies. Yet, somehow, within these very real differences, there is a marvelous

unity. The unity is not based on agreement on every detail of thought and practice, but on love.

Jesus prayed that his disciples be one, and he prayed not just for the apostles, but for those who would believe because of them. He prayed for us. Yet, when we look at the Christian Church, it is obvious that we have not obeyed very well. Christianity looks hopelessly divided: Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox, and somewhere around 90,000 (that's hyperbole, not literal) types of Protestants. Sometimes, the divisions are over doctrines that are considered essential, but, too often, those divisions have been generated, or perpetuated, by the lack of love, by not listening to the Spirit of unity and diversity.

What if the response to Martin Luther had been different? What if the pope at the time had been a true pastor rather than worldly ruler and military leader, and had not allowed abuses in the Church to reach the point where Luther published his *95 Theses*? What if, instead of seeing the selling of indulgences as a way to fill the papal coffers, he had actually enforced Church teaching against the selling of indulgences? What if he had listened in love (not necessarily agreement) to Luther's concerns? Would the fires of division have gotten out of control? Would Luther be the founder of a new religious order, with its own legitimate theological and spiritual bent?

This is not just an historical problem for Church authorities: it affects individuals and families today. I know Catholics who have disowned relatives who have become Protestant, but who think themselves abused when shunned for being (or becoming) Catholic.

Ecumenism is not a Cole Porter "Anything Goes." It is not a dose of "Doctor Feel Good." It is an openness to members of our divided household, of the broken Body of Christ, in love and hope. No one knows what the united Church of the future will look like: ultimately, it is the Spirit who will work out the details of unity and diversity in the Church. Our part is to listen to the Spirit of Love.

So, perhaps the Spirit can use my personality flaw; maybe Lent is a great time to begin to repent for the lack of unity and love in the Christian Church, a time to begin to allow the Healing Spirit to mend the broken Body of Christ. And maybe, just maybe, during Prayer for Christian Unity week next year, we might be a little bit closer to realizing Jesus' prayer that we "all may be One." Don't be like me: don't put it off.

The Modesty Crusade



William Wicks SFO
NAFRA Historian
sfowicks2@earthlink.net

The word “modesty” has fallen out of usage. We don’t say, “You look so modest today.” We don’t hear it in the news; it is not used in movies – style, fashion and other similar words have shoved aside the word modesty. One can say that the word modesty is not in vogue - pun intended. That is not to say that we are not modest; it is in our God given DNA. Our present day culture has other things on its mind. The media has exploited un-modesty, and we now have words such as x-rated, porn, etc. Also, the internet, a wonderful tool for communicating, is not always a friend

Modesty – Circa 1930 of modesty.

My intention, here, is not to preach but to surreptitiously segue into a little bit of SFO history. What is written here was taken from the Franciscan Herald and Forum; years 1954 – 1963.

In the mid fifties, prompted by a request from Pope Pius XII that all organizations develop a Modesty Crusade, the Executive Board of the Third Order of St. Francis in North America, as we were called at the time, did meet in September 1954 at the Alverna Retreat Center in Appleton, Wisconsin to initiate a Modesty Crusade. “Think Smart, Dress Smart” was the official slogan of the Crusade. Tertiary parents were especially asked to inculcate the principles represented by this slogan in their children, and youthful Tertiaries were requested to refer to it and live up to it religiously. Leaflets published by *Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers*¹ (ACCM),

¹ This Confraternity exists today and is conducted under the auspices of St. Augustine Capuchin Province, Pittsburgh PA.

“Modern yet Modest” and “Modesty and Charm,” were to be read by all Tertiaries.

The Tertiaries were encouraged to sign the modesty pledge, “I believe that modesty in dress safeguards the virtue of purity. I pledge myself to set the example of Mary-like modesty for my family and associates at all times.”

The Modesty Crusade was in process for about a decade - from the mid fifties to the mid sixties. It was the theme for the 1955 Youth Congress held at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, N.Y. - 750 youth were in attendance.

A related story was found in the June, 1955 issue of the Franciscan Herald. “Miss Minnesota for 1954 – 1955 is Miss Jeanne Reince, former prefect of the Third Order of St. Francis, College of St. Teresa, Winona, Minnesota. Miss Reince conducted herself with dignity, avoiding the shoddy displays usually connected with the “Miss” contest. In fact, she is held in such esteem that the Winona Council of Catholic Women featured Miss Reince in a pamphlet published by the Council entitled “Miss Minnesota Models Modesty.”

The June 1960 issue of the Franciscan Herald urged fraternity leaders to push the Modesty Crusade using the following directives: 1) Place the slogan “Think Smart – Dress Smart” in your bulletins; 2) Have a conference on the importance of the Modesty Apostolate; 3) Publish the Modesty Pledge; 4) Distribute pamphlets obtained at the ACCM; 5) Present fashion shows at youth fraternities; 6) Pictures of modest fashions can be placed on school bulletin boards; 7) Have panel discussions on modesty; 8) Appoint a chairman and a committee to promote modesty in fraternity.

It is apparent to me that the Modesty Crusade was directed mainly towards the young – remember that in those days, the fifties and sixties, one could be professed at fourteen. Considering the demographics of today’s fraternities, and the spiritual astuteness of the members - for the most part, modesty abounds.

National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA

Quarterly General Fund Reports for Calendar Year 2008 as of December 30, 2008

Quarter Ending On:		3/31/2008	6/30/2008	9/30/2008	12/31/2008	TOTAL FOR YEAR	BUDGET for 2008
Acct #	INCOME						
6110	PER CAPITA	20,010.00	43,350.00	67,560.00	17,830.00	148,750.00	150,000
6120	INTEREST	1,082.94	658.00	558.36	523.63	2,822.93	3,000
6200	FORMATION SALES	10,992.06	11,833.15	8,983.25	9,895.90	41,704.36	47,000
6140	MISCELLANEOUS						
	TOTAL INCOME	32,085.00	55,841.15	77,101.61	28,249.53	193,277.29	200,000

EXPENSES

7110	CIOFS PER CAPITA				19,833.00	19,833.00	21,000
7115	FAN Fran. Action Network	-400.00		-233.00	633.00		4,000
7120	NEWSLETTER	8,657.73	10,380.58	13,606.42	10,561.28	43,206.01	30,000
7130	ANNUAL MEETING		9,652.30	2,377.50	23,556.31	35,586.11	40,000
7140	COUNCIL OFFICERS	2,180.92	594.00	861.47	330.55	3,966.94	7,000
7145	CIOFS MEETING	802.54		2,275.56	1,480.80	4,558.90	
7150	COUNCIL MEETINGS	8,354.17	5,866.67	1,002.59	228.83	15,452.26	9,500
7155	LIABILITY INSURANCE			1,610.00	1,610.00	3,220.00	2,500
7160	CIOFS VISITATION						
7171	MULTICULTURAL CMTTEE						5,000
7172	PEACE AWARD CMMTTEE				2,139.30	2,139.30	2,000
7173	NATIONAL ARCHIVES			2,560.89	460.89	3,021.78	5,200
7175	HISTORIAN	300.00	2,850.00	-318.66	183.12	3,014.46	2,300
7176	COMPUTER COMMITTEE		1,800.00	-1,800.00	4,395.32	4,395.32	6,500
	COMMISSIONS:						
7180	FORMATION-PRINTING	14,047.01	4,823.20	577.73	3,585.00	23,032.94	25,000
7181	FORMATION	10,299.62	5,502.86	180.46	3,652.35	19,635.29	16,500
7182	PEACE & JUSTICE		2,236.85			2,236.85	
7183	FAMILY						
7184	WORK						
7185	ECOLOGY						
7186	J P I C				240.05	240.05	4,300
7187	YOUTH	4,752.03	2,053.14	947.88	1,060.69	8,813.74	11,000
7188	ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE			2,965.70		2,965.70	4,200
7199	CNSA		4,000.00			4,000.00	4,000
7197	OTHER						
	TOTAL EXPENSES	48,994.02	49,759.60	26,614.54	73,950.49	199,318.65	200,000

NET INCOME(EXPENSE)	-16,909.02	6,081.55	50,487.07	-45,700.96	-6,041.36
----------------------------	-------------------	-----------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------

Bank Balances of General Funds:

Beginning: CHECKING - HSBC	20,509.84	12,396.97	19,851.52	73,478.23
SAVINGS - HSBC	139,544.85	130,748.70	129,375.70	126,236.06
MERCHANT ACCOUNT	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
TOTAL - Beginning Bal.	161,054.69	144,145.67	150,227.22	200,714.29
Ending: CHECKING - HSBC	12,396.97	19,851.52	73,478.23	25,098.99
SAVINGS - HSBC	130,748.70	129,375.70	126,236.06	128,914.34
MERCHANT ACCOUNT	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
TOTAL - Ending Balance	144,145.67	150,227.22	200,714.29	155,013.33

Respectfully submitted by Dennis W. Ross SFO, National Treasurer

National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA

Quarterly Financial Report for Calendar Year 2008

RESTRICTED FUNDS REPORT

Acct#	DUNS SCOTUS GRANT	BEGINNING	Quarter Ending On:				YEAR TOTAL	ENDING BALANCE
		BALANCE	3/31/2008	6/30/2008	9/30/2008	12/31/2008		
8220	LEGAL & OTHER EXPENSES	2,408.68	-1,526.61				-1,526.61	882.07
OTHER RESTRICTED FUNDS								
7307	DONOR FUND	6,525.33	875.00	490.00	2,708.00	-1,633.00	2,440.00	8,965.33
7310	CIOFS OFFICE FUND		237.00	1,041.00	490.00		1,768.00	1,768.00
7312	HISTORIAN FUND						0.00	0.00
7313	ARCHIVES FUND						0.00	0.00
7314	FORMATION COMM FUND	892.10					0.00	892.10
7315	ECUMENICAL COMM FUND	1,750.00					0.00	1,750.00
7316	YOUTH H2O COLLECTIONS					150.00	150.00	150.00
7317	Y/YA QQ2007 SCHOLARSHIP	3,765.72	-3,765.72			293.00	-3,472.72	293.00
7319	GIFT FUND						0.00	0.00
7335	QUINQUENNIAL FUND	5,847.85	-958.43	482.15	482.15	-982.50	-976.63	4,871.22
							checksum	19,571.72
TOTALS		21,189.68	-5,138.76	2,013.15	3,680.15	-2,172.50	-1,617.96	19,571.72

DUNS SCOTUS SECULAR FRANCISCAN FORMATION TRUST FUND

		Available for Grants	Investment Account	Total Value
12/31/01	Trust Fund Balance	7,275.22	462,650.00	469,925.22
	Investment gains/losses	104.48	-86,476.00	-86,371.52
	Grants Approved	-3,000.00		-3,000.00
	Grant Refunds	5,052.69		5,052.69
12/31/02	Trust Fund Balance	9,432.39	376,174.00	385,606.39
	Investment gains/losses during 2003	45.00	93,081.00	93,126.00
12/31/03	Trust Fund Balance	9,477.39	469,255.00	478,732.39
	Investment gains/losses: during 2004	51.00	49,942.00	49,993.00
12/31/04	Trust Fund Balance	9,528.39	519,197.00	528,725.39
	Investment gains/losses: during 2005	155.00	23,754.00	23,909.00
12/31/05	Trust Fund Balance	9,683.39	542,951.00	552,634.39
	Investment gains/losses: during 2006	284.00	62,368.00	62,652.00
12/31/06	Trust Fund Balance	9,967.39	605,319.00	615,286.39
	Investment gains/losses: during 2007	319.00	40,908.00	41,227.00
12/31/2007	Trust Fund Balance	10,286.39	646,227.00	656,513.39
	Grant to SALT TEAM 3/25/08	-5,000.00		-5,000.00
3/31/08	Investment gains/losses: First Quarter	68.00	-55,799.00	-55,731.00
6/30/08	Investment gains/losses: Second Quarter	35.00	-2,738.00	-2,703.00
9/30/08	Investment gains/losses: Third Quarter	34.00	-58,524.00	-58,490.00
12/31/08	Investment gains/losses: Fourth Quarter	33.00	-108,199.00	-108,166.00
12/31/08	Trust Fund Balance	5,456.39	420,967.00	426,423.39

NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER - USA

BUDGET FOR 2009

AS APPROVED BY THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 17, 2008.

Account #	INCOME	Amount	Per Capita
6110	PER CAPITA @ \$12 (14,500 members)	174,000	12.00
6120	INTEREST	3,000	0.21
6200	FORMATION BOOK SALES	47,000	3.24
6140	MISCELLANEOUS	0	
	TOTAL INCOME	224,000	15.45
	EXPENSES		
7110	CIOPS PER CAPITA	20,000	1.38
7115	FAN	14,000	0.97
7120	NEWSLETTER	42,000	2.90
7130	ANNUAL MEETING	40,000	2.76
7140	COUNCIL OFFICERS	5,000	0.34
7145	CIOPS MEETING	0	0.00
7150	COUNCIL MEETINGS	9,500	0.66
7155	LIABILITY INSURANCE	3,200	0.22
7160	CIOPS VISITATION	2,000	0.14
7171	MULTI-CULTURAL COMMITTEE	3,000	0.21
7172	PEACE AWARD	2,000	0.14
7173	ARCHIVE	3,400	0.23
7175	HISTORIAN	3,200	0.22
7176	COMPUTER COMMITTEE	6,100	0.42
7180	FORMATION - PRINTING	25,000	1.72
7181	FORMATION	16,500	1.14
7182	PEACE & JUSTICE	0	0.00
7183	FAMILY	0	0.00
7184	WORK	0	0.00
7185	ECOLOGY	0	0.00
7186	JPIC	4,700	0.32
7187	YOUTH	11,200	0.77
7188	ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE	4,200	0.29
7189	CONF NAT SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS	4,000	0.28
7335	QUINQUENIAL CONFERENCE	5,000	0.34
	TOTAL EXPENSES	224,000	15.45
	NET INCOME (DEFICIT)	0	0.00

Performance of Duns Scotus Investments

	a	b	c	d	DRTHX	NBSRX	PAXWX	DSEFX	TOTALS
Value at 12/31/00	179,896	82,144	150,357	124,595	536,992				
Value at 12/31/01	137,232	80,031	136,893	106,694	462,650				
% change in 2001	-23.72%	-2.57%	-9.09%	-13.84%					
Value at 12/31/02	96,924	68,467	124,578	88,205	375,174				
% change in 2002	-23.37%	-14.45%	-8.66%	-20.89%	-18.65%				
Value at 12/31/03	121,847	92,073	145,745	109,590	469,255				
% change in 2003	20.44%	34.46%	16.99%	27.13%	24.74%				
Value at 12/31/04	129,232	104,563	155,862	119,740	519,197				
% change in 2004	6.06%	13.67%	13.67%	9.26%	10.64%				
Value at 12/31/05	133,711	112,486	174,586	122,158	542,951				
% change for 2005	3.47%	7.58%	5.39%	2.05%	4.56%				
Value at 12/31/06	145,755	126,735	193,287	137,542	605,319				
% change for 2006	9.01%	14.45%	10.71%	12.95%	11.46%				
Value at 12/31/07	156,769	138,367	211,540	139,651	646,227				
% change for 2007	7.56%	7.48%	9.44%	1.46%	6.76%				
% change 2000 to End of 2007	-12.86%	68.44%	40.69%	12.00%	20.34%				
Balance on March 31, 2008	140,487	126,416	197,080	126,445	590,428				
% change for First Quarter	-10.39%	-8.64%	-5.84%	-9.39%	-8.63%				
Balance on June 30, 2008	144,054	125,689	193,654	124,293	587,690				
% change for Second Quarter	2.54%	-0.58%	-1.74%	-1.70%	-0.46%				
Balance on September 30, 2008	130,873	115,453	172,842	84,566	503,734				
% change for Third Quarter	-9.15%	-8.14%	-10.75%	-31.96%	-14.29%				
Balance on December 31, 2008	103,000	84,729	146,549	86,669	420,967				
% change for Fourth Quarter	-21.30%	-26.61%	-15.21%	2.51%	-16.43%				
% change 2000 to End of 2008	-42.74%	3.15%	-2.53%	-30.42%	-21.61%				

NAFRA - USA - SFO - 2008 REGION REPORT

As of December 31, 2008

Reg #	REGION'S NAME	ESTAB	2008 ESTAB. FRAT.	2008 Professed Members	2008 EMERG. FRAT.	2008 NEW FORM.	2008 YOUTH GROUP	FAIR SHARE AMOUNT	Reg #	2008 FAIR SHARE PAID IN 2008	2008 Professed Members	2008 DATE Received									
50	OHANA O KEANJENUE	10/25/91	4	47	1	1	0	40	50												
51	FIVE FRANCISCAN MARTYRS	10/23/92	36	690	3	0	0	45	51	\$ 7,180	718	10/22/2008									
52	ST FRANCIS	10/29/93	32	909	3	4	2	40	52	\$ 9,090	909	9/11/2008									
53	BL JUNIPERO SERRA	10/29/93	26	622	1	5	1	41.50	53	\$ 6,250		2/15/2008									
53	BL JUNIPERO SERRA									\$ 6,190	619	8/22/2008									
54	TROUBADOURS OF PEACE	10/23/92	10	276	1	2	0	50	54	\$ 2,760	276	3/14/2008									
55	QUEEN OF PEACE	10/23/92	29	566	3	1	1	45	55	\$ 5,660	566	8/14/2008									
56	DIVINE MERCY	10/29/93	30	763	3	2	0	29.50	56	\$ 7,870	787	8/6/2008									
57	ST MARGARET OF CORTONA	10/29/93	30	784	2	0	1	18	57	\$ 7,840	784	4/16/2008									
58	ST THOMAS MORE	10/29/93	10	229	1	0	0	35	58	\$ 2,220	222	4/21/2008									
58	MOTHER CABRINI	10/23/94	23	733	0	1	0	25	59	\$ 7,330	733	7/11/2008									
60	ST JOAN OF ARC	10/29/93	15		1	0	0	25	60												
61	BRO & SIS OF ST FRANCIS	10/23/94	24	430	3	4	1	40	61	\$ 4,300	430	7/6/2008									
63	FRANCISCANS OF THE PRAIRIE	10/23/94	9	273	1	0	0	20	63	\$ 2,730	273	7/28/2008									
64	HOLY TRINITY	10/23/94	18	280	3	1	0	25	64	\$ 2,800	280	6/26/2008									
65	LA VERNA	10/12/95	19	458	1	0	0	50	65	\$ 4,580	458	6/8/2008									
66	OUR LADY OF INDIANA	10/23/94	15	305	1	0	1	20	66	\$ (120)											
67	LOS TRES COMPANEROS	10/23/94	23	293	2	0	1	50	67	\$ 2,930	293	7/17/2008									
68	LADY POVERTY	10/23/94	25	450	1	3	0	25	68	\$ 4,500	450	6/12/2008									
69	ST KATHARINE DREXEL	10/23/94	32	840	1	0	2	25	69	\$ 8,400	840	7/11/2008									
70	ST MAXIMILIAN KOLBE	10/23/94	23	420	0	0	0	23	70	\$ 4,650	465	12/7/2008									
71	BL KATERI TEKAKWITHA	10/23/94	31	466	1	1	1	35	71	\$ 4,660	466	7/18/2008									
72	SANTA MARIA DE LAS MONTANAS	10/23/94	13	193	3	0	0	40	72	\$ 2,230	223	9/2/2008									
73	OUR LADY OF THE ROCKIES	10/12/95	7	77	0	0	0	23	73	\$ 730	73	9/7/2008									
74	ST CLARE	10/12/95	8	211	0	4	0	25	74	\$ 2,120	212	8/29/2008									
75	OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE	10/12/95	20	344	3	0	2	44	75	\$ 3,440	344	8/29/2008									
76	FR SOLANUS CASEY	10/17/95	35	983	0	5	0	21	76	\$ 8,650	865	6/22/2008									
77	OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS	10/12/95	48	700	3	0	0	25	77	\$ 7,000	700	1/16/2008									
77	OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS								77	\$ 6,000	600	10/14/2008									
78	ST ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY	10/17/95	37	725	0	0	0	35	78	\$ 7,050	705	5/2/2008									
79	THE TAU CROSS	10/16/97	39	783	2	0	0	25	79	\$ 4,000	400	3/27/2008									
79	THE TAU CROSS									\$ 3,830	383	4/28/2008									
80	JUAN DE PADILLA	10/17/95	12	188	2	0	0	30	80	\$ 1,880	188	5/13/2008									
TOTALS											683	14058	46	34	13		\$ 148,750	14262	99.73%	14300	% Paid

Average 32.5

2007 refund

2007

2007

The best poem of 2006

**When I born, I black
When I grow up, I black
When I go in Sun, I black
When I scared, I black
When I sick, I black
And when I die, I still black**

**And you white fellow
When you born, you pink
When you grow up, you
white
When you go in sun, you red
When you cold, you blue
When you scared, you yellow
When you sick, you green
And when you die, you gray**

And you calling me colored?

The poem above (from the Internet) was nominated by the UN, as the best poem of 2006. It was written by an African kid.

Above All Else

By David Seitz, SFO
St. Louis the King Fraternity
White Lake, Michigan

Lord,

Teach me to desire you
Above all else

Teach me to desire you
More than I desire sin

Teach me to desire you
In your Holy Word of Scripture

Teach me to desire you
In the community of your Church

Teach me to desire you
In the service of others

Teach me to desire God Alone
In the silence of my soul

Teach me to desire you
Above all else

Spring

By Jan Middlebrook, SFO
Enfield, CT

About 5:30 AM on Easter a multitude of birds were chirping excitedly as they started to perform as the darkness of night slowly slipped away revealing an incredible early spring pageant!

The sun's kisses welcomed the blossoms on the trees, bushes, and ground as they were burgeoning forth. The blooms in their early spring garb reminded me of their winter garments decorated with the beauty of sparkling snow and ice, but as I recalled the challenges associated with winter, I was most grateful for spring.

The moving concert of various species of birds were happily performing with enchanting solos popping up all over so beautifully and effectively throughout the area. It seemed as though Angels had to be directing this scene, so calmly and reverently until the chorus broke out seemingly in great bursts, "The Lord is Risen!" and "Spring is here!" and I responded in my heart with Robert Browning's poem: "God's in His heaven...All's right with the world!"

Touch

By Mary Whalen, SFO
Roswell, NM

Walking along
On a path I knew
Stepping on leaves
Of red and green and golden
brown
Reaching for a falling leaf
My arm touched a sleeve
belonging to a man
He had the face of Jesus
Did he come to gather leaves or
did he come for me?

Attention Poets: Read about the
New Poetry Contest on page 32.

The Game

By John J. Trause, SFO
Assumption Fraternity
Wood-Ridge, New Jersey

GODISNOWHERE

The good news came to us this
Thanksgiving Day, that our home team
had won the game at this late hour.
Rushing in the door as is the ritual,
our friends come piling in the living room
and huddle close together
as they struggle to remove their coats.
The noise sounds now in the dining room
of who did what and who scored when,
what this one did and that one didn't,
replaying each and every move upon the
field here at the table.
But I am left out here
and hear nothing from you,
my friends,
of me.
Yet here I am,
and I am the good news and
the thanksgiving.

© March 1994, 2008

The Master Artist

By Mary Clare Potthast, SFO
St. Bonaventure Fraternity
Jacksonville, FL

Winter white, summer green
And many colors in between;
A rainbow world is what I see,
Its colors blended skillfully.
Spring is done in pastel shades,
Autumn shines in red and gold;
A master artist is at work
Making each new scene unfold,
To please our eyes and lift our hearts,
So let's give thanks
When each day starts,
For all the beauty that we see,
God's great gift to you and me.

Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation

By Pat Brandwein-Ball SFO, JPIC Transition Chair
patball76@yahoo.com

Praying with Eyes Open

My Ordinary Time reading and meditations bring me into the heart of Lent. In the book, *Praying with Icons* by Jim Forest, he speaks of the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox tradition of gazing at an icon and keeping one's eyes open while praying. Through this practice, relationship develops and deepens with the "subject" of the icon. It is nothing new, using an icon or Western depiction of Jesus, Mary, saints, or an event as a focus of meditation. Keeping my eyes open the entire time is new. One begins to see with the eyes of Jesus—you become what you gaze upon.

St. Clare outlines a prayer tradition in a similar manner, a Franciscan prayer tradition: *

- *Gaze... to look at with loving attention*
- *Meditate... thoughtfully consider*
- *Contemplate... oneness with, listening/openness*
- *Imitate... become what you contemplate*

With eyes open, one's gaze is intermixed - Christ with the surrounding world. We often close our eyes in prayer to rid ourselves of distractions. Yet, the distraction begs for our prayer and attention. I don't mean the idle wandering of the mind when I speak of distraction, rather that a particular person or situation coming to mind. This compels listening for how to respond. Praying with my eyes open broadens my view of the world around me. Everything is more vibrant, more alive, perhaps more real than I have previously experienced.

The icon, "Virgin of the Sign" is quite ancient. Mary faces forward, her hands open and raised in prayer. On her breast is a medallion bearing the image of the Christ Child with His right hand raised in blessing. Mary represents the entire Church raising her hands in prayer to God. Christ, born of the Virgin, is borne by the Church, carried into the world. May we be the Christ-blessing to others. May our eyes be opened to those in need. May we be courageous and generous in our response.

Recall that intellect and will are faculties of the soul in considering our response. Therefore every decision to

respond to the needs of others is sacred and filled with all that is holy. Every decision not to respond is empty of sacredness. Praying with our eyes open transforms us and aids in making present the Kingdom of God.

Consider Matthew 25: 34-46:

Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him and say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?" And the king will say to them in reply, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me." Then they will answer and say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?" He will answer them, "Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me."

And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Being and Doing:

Pray with your special holy image, with your eyes open. Ask for the grace to see with the eyes of Christ and to respond with a transformed heart.

Throughout the day, interiorly return to the image. Allow your prayer time to slow down the hurry of life and awaken a sense of the sacred in you towards everyone and all of creation.

Be blessing to others and receive blessing from those you bless. Pope John Paul II says this returned blessing is the other half of our conversion.**

*See *Franciscan Prayer*, by Ilia Delio, OSF, p 67

** Encyclical *Rich in Mercy*, John Paul II

Franciscan Novelty



By Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO, NAFRA Formation Chair
rlfztsfo@verizon.net
509-582-7606

First of all, please indulge me a moment for a formation update: As we rapidly approach the celebration of the 800th anniversary of Propositum Vitae (Life Project-1209), I would ask us to take some time to reflect on the new way of life that Francis asked the Pope's permission to follow. The simplest reflection we might undertake is to ask of ourselves and then of our fraternities "Do we dare to follow the Gospel?" I don't just mean do we follow the rules or commandments to live good upstanding moral lives. That is certainly a part of the equation, but in the spirit of Francis, do we actually dare to live the Gospel?

As you are becoming aware, we are entering into a period of change in our re-appropriation of our Order, its governance, stability, its future, and its ability to empower us to gospel living. Since 2002, our International Presidency has been focusing on formation and developing a universal plan of study. The first phase of this Formation Project is to assist our formators, at all levels of fraternity, but, most importantly, at the local fraternity level, which is our foundation. For that purpose, I will try to keep you all updated to this process and also ask each and every Secular Franciscan to give me feedback on how formation, both initial and on-going has continued to fan the flame enkindled in you by the Holy Spirit that first led you to profess in the SFO. Think back on your own journey and story and dialogue with your sisters and brothers on how to enliven our fraternities and re-ignite the world for Jesus. Email me you comments: rlfztsfo@verizon.net

For Francis this desire for Jesus grew into the novelty of the Franciscans and into fraternity as the place where it was lived out.

So what is this novelty? I think it is 2-fold ideal. First, Francis received permission for a new venture or paradigm of Church (a model that will become a key element of Vatican II). The primary Church model in his day was based mostly on that found in the Acts of the

Apostles. It had definite hierarchical governance and definitive norms. Along comes Francis with the simple question, why could we not follow the example of Jesus and the Apostles in the Gospel? A loose gathering of people, held together around Jesus, by love of each other, living in equality, minority, service and committed to proclaiming by word and action the Love of God. This is what Francis believed going from gospel to life and life to gospel really meant. Innocent III gave his permission for this "experiment" of Francis, often, I think, feeling it would never grow beyond this tiny initial fraternal group.

The second half of the novelty is that this idea found three virtually simultaneous outlets, the original brothers (following the Apostolic plan), the women (St. Clare – monastic), and the Penitents of St. Francis (lay penitential movement). From our very inception, Francis sowed the seeds for people from all states and positions of life to embrace "religious" life. Francis' dream and preaching was not on great theological themes, but on the great love of God for all creation and our need to change our way of life to embrace this great Loving God. Spoken in the language of the common folk, this preaching and witness drew thousands into the Franciscan Spirit and the Church.

Fraternity was the place and way, mindset if you will, that this novelty was to be lived out, and while the groups were small, it worked well. As the numbers grew, fraternity gave way to a series of "Orders," more hierarchical in nature, but the basic part of this vast family remained fraternity, where the group was small enough to support each other as a family living the gospel life. The call to remain faithful to the fraternal way was seriously strained many times throughout our family history, but fraternity has always remained to call us back to the wisdom of our Founder. All branches of the Franciscan family continue to be called to live in love, equality, minority, service, and to live simply so we might be free to embrace the poor and humble Jesus.

All of us have the same charge, to Observe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But to observe it, we must dare to live it!

REMINDER: The National Formation Workshop for 2009 has been cancelled! This year members of the National Formation Commission will be contacting all the regions to ask you to help us discern the needs of your local formators. Since formation is the lifeblood of the Order and foundation for fraternity life, please be open and candid with us to help us formulate the best formation support for you that we can.

Regional Roundup

Please send Regional news to
Frances Wicks, SFO, Editor
sfofrances7@earthlink.net



Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region

On October 8, 2008 two candidates, Robert and Joanne Dorsey, SFO made their profession, during Mass in the Porziuncula celebrated by Fr. Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv. The Fraternity was on pilgrimage for ten days, following the steps of Francis and Clare. The St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity from Elizabeth City, NC, celebrated in front of St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi, Italy.

Blessed Junipero Serra Region

This year, Secular Fraternity members of the Blessed Junipero Serra Region gathered together at the Justin Herman Plaza on Market Street in San Francisco to march together in the Walk for Life event, which took place on Saturday, Jan 24. Members of Our Lady of Angels Fraternity of Burlingame brought a banner identifying their Secular Franciscan group.

The purpose of the Walk for Life West Coast was to establish a new West Coast tradition of celebrating life by calling for solidarity among women and all people of good will in affirming human life.

Preceding the Walk was Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral. Guest speakers were: Diana Nagy, Singer, (crisis pregnancy at 15 ended in adoption); Kerri Caviezel, (adopted two disabled children); Rev. Clenard Childress, Director of LEARN; Karen Shablin, Feminists for Life; And Fr. Frank Pavone from Priests for Life. There was an Info Faire at the end of the Walk at the Marina Greens. The Walk for Life was attended by Seculars and other Catholics from many parts of CA.

St. Thomas More Region

Preparing Saint John's Convent Project

By Margie Cavolina, SFO
St Clare Fraternity, Phoenix, AZ

In August 2008, Fr. Dale Jamison, OFM, Director of Native American Ministries, asked the St. Clare Fraternity to prepare the Native American Spirituality Center at St. John's Mission for the arrival of Sr. Dorothy and Sr. Geraldine of the Blessed Sacrament Order. This was about mid August and Father told us the sisters would be moving in on the first of September.

It is necessary to mention that the Spirituality Center had 20 years worth of desert dirt and ancient critters that inhabited the place. That didn't stop us (all things are possible with God), but we did send out an SOS call to other Franciscan fraternities and Catholic lay organizations in the area. Very quickly the Troops assembled and started work on the twelve bedroom Center, (soon to be), Convent. It took two weekends to sweep, scrub, dust, mop, and spit shine the place.

By the time the nuns moved in, the place had been painted and made to look like home. The fraternity visited to have a get acquainted meal with nuns and to do some finishing touches. It was at this time that we encountered a giant desert scorpion. It was so big and rubbery looking that it almost looked fake. However, Deacon Phil, came to the rescue and in true Franciscan style captured it and released it back into the desert.

When we had finally finished this sometimes overwhelming task, we were able to smile and say...this is perfect joy!



St. Clare Fraternity members with the Sisters on each end.



2008 LENTEN H2O PROJECT

NATIONAL FRANCISCAN YOUTH YOUNG/ADULT COUNCIL
www.franciscanyouthusa.com
franciscanyouthusa@hotmail.com

I would like to share with you about my experience on the Honduras water project. First of all, I did not plan to participate in the Water Project, but it was God’s will for me to be part of this mission trip.



I was excited about the trip, but I must say the hardest part was saying goodbye to my family and friends. As the trip got closer, I became more anxious and worried about adapting to a new country. Once arriving in Honduras, I became calm because it reminded me of my home, El Salvador. Seeing beautiful landscapes and being surrounded by loving people swept all my anxiety and worries away.

school, because they had to help support their families. The village was so poor; they did not have safe, clean water and electricity.

Being part of the Water Project reaffirmed how fortunate and blessed I am to live in a prosperous country. My participation in the water project allowed me to preach with action and not with words.

On behalf of the Las Guamas people and the Franciscan Young/Young Adult National Council, I want to thank everyone who supported the FYYA with the H2O Project, especially the Franciscan Sisters from Iowa.

Manuel Hernandez, SFO – Age 26
National FYYA Council
+++

Words on paper cannot even come close to describing my experience in Honduras. But, as I sit here gazing at the photographs we took, I think back on the life changing experience that I had and I will try my best to bring some of that to you.

I was chosen to join a team of 29 members to head to Honduras to work for a week to bring clean water to those in the village of Las Guamas. I had no idea what to expect and at times I was scared about ever having said “yes” to going. I knew about the poverty and the violence, but not so much about where we would be working and what exactly digging trenches would be like. After the first day, sore muscles, and learning to clean my clothes by hand, using a wash-board, I had a much better picture. It was not just dirt that we dug in, but mud and clay and sometimes we would be digging around coffee plants and bending over for hours.



The people from the village of Las Guamas were nice, united and hard-working. My first feeling about the village of Las Guamas was sadness. I felt this way because many of homes were made of cardboard and the majority of children could not attend



Regardless of the hours of hard work, my favorite moments were being with the people of the village, especially the kids. All of the teenagers would come to help with the work; and they worked much harder than we did. I even gave my gloves to a young boy because he kept taking my shovel from me. Either he really wanted to help or I was just that bad at shoveling.

The women would cook lunch and we would all eat together. They were so hospitable that, at times, some of them would not eat until they knew that we were all fed. The only thing that I wished I could do was speak Spanish. But each day, I would remind myself that much communication is in the face, a smile can speak so many words. Like St. Francis is quoted as saying, "Preach the Gospel always, use words if necessary." The kids love you no matter what; all they need is attention.



On Sunday, my favorite day out of the whole mission trip, we were invited by the village to watch a soccer game. We agreed and brought prizes for games that we would arrange for each age group. I got to be with the babies and they were so amazed at such a simple thing like bubbles. The most meaningful part was seeing all of the parents around with smiles and laughing with us and their kids. I wished the day would never end; however, it brought us even closer to the people and reminded us why it was so important for us to be down there.

On our very last day, Mass was celebrated. They only see a priest maybe about once a year, so this was very special for them. It was great to look around and see a nice age mix. I even held a little baby, who fell asleep on my shoulder, during the celebration. Afterwards, we took out a piñata and had a little party and played, until it was time to leave.

As we left in our pickup trucks and waved, I had tears coming down my face. One girl told Manuel and me that she didn't want us to go because we were her best friends. It was so hard to leave, but we had accomplished so much.

For me, I learned so much about the poverty, violence, and how hard it is for them each day. Most importantly I learned that it's not what you have but *who* you have. They have so little, but their families and friends mean so much to them. Jesus tells us that "It is in giving that we receive," and I received so much.

We learned before we left that we had finished about 70% of the main work. They could not stop thanking us, because, if it were not for us and the donations, they would not have realized their dream of having clean running water. I want to thank all who were able to give to the Franciscan Youth USA H2O Project, and thus to the Sister Water Mission, and all those who prayed for us. Please thank God for all our blessings, for clean running water.

Lori Taormina, SFO – Age 25
Queen of Peace Regional FYYA Chair
+++

Sister Water Mission Team in Honduras:

The Sisters of St. Francis, Dubuque, Iowa, for the second year, sent a 29-member Mission Team representing eight different states to Honduras from November 18 – 26, 2008. The team was housed in the village of Esquias. It is three hours north of Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, Central America. The team worked side by side with the Hondurans in the village of Las Guamas, about 40 minutes from Esquias. They dug trenches, laid and connected water pipes, installed pumps and educated the people in water purification techniques.



In Honduras, \$5,000 will purchase pipes, pumps, tanks, transport, and other materials needed to create an additional portion of a rural water system. When safe water became accessible to one Honduran village, daily diarrhea decreased by 47% within 30 days!

Sister Water team worked with the people of Las Guamas and the water project - there are about 70 homes and over 400 people that will be served by this project.

See more photos at: www.franciscanyouthusa.com



An Orange Tree in Gaza

By Faith Libbe, SFO
Staff Editor

Spring is such a beautiful season...a time for new life, new growth. It is a time for planting, filled with hope and anticipation that the crop will eventually bear much fruit. With the heart wrenching war raging in Gaza at the time of this writing, I am reminded of a day 5 years ago; when children in Gaza were filled with this same hope and anticipation as they planted an orange tree.

I have been blessed to work with so many fine people over the years that share my heart for the Holy Land. One of these friends had a special heart for the children of Palestine, living in the refugee camps (the poorest of the poor). Five years ago, he decided to donate both orange trees and olive trees to be planted in Gaza. My heart was touched deeply, when I received word that this beautiful soul had arranged to have one of these orange trees planted in my name.

I was blessed to receive photos of this event and a beautiful letter from a Gaza resident. He wrote that "my" orange tree had been planted in one of the biggest schools in the Rafah Refugee Camp. He then told me that there were many refugee students who offered to plant the tree. The students, who were selected, planted the tree on the right side of the main entrance of the school where there is an iron barred wall. This is a small garden for the students.

The letter went on to express that all the teachers and students were happy to get this new orange tree and the headmaster sent his best regards and thanks. The headmaster also said that a tree is a "symbol of hope for peace, while giving a green and beautiful look." I was also informed that the students asked the headmaster to say "hello" and that it was "clear from their faces that they were very happy because they knew there were people concerned for them, aware of their plight." The students promised to care for the tree, offering to water it every day. The students went on to ask the school to "surround the trees by iron bars so they will last forever."

As I recall this beautiful event that took place in Gaza five years ago, I am brought back to the reality of this present day. At the time of this writing, the war in Gaza continues to rage. Over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed and 13 Israelis have been killed. In addition, some 4,700 Palestinians have been wounded, as well as, some 100 Israelis wounded.

My heart is so deeply saddened by this war. I wonder if the little orange tree planted in my name is thriving as the dear children had hoped, or have bombs destroyed it? More important, I can't help but wonder if the precious children living in the Rafah Refugee Camp in Gaza, who planted my tree (see photo) are still alive. I hope and pray they are...The children of Gaza should be enjoying the fruit from their orange tree, not experiencing the horrors of war! Please join me in this prayer.

+++

FRANCISCAN TOP TEN LIST

By Betty Frances Deithorn, SFO
Doylestown, PA
Saint Katharine Drexel Region

You know you are a Secular Franciscan when...

10. You look up and smile at every passing bird.
9. The glass is not half empty, but half full.
8. MP no longer means Military Police, but Morning Prayer.
7. You notice every opportunity to serve, as an apostolate.
6. EP no longer means EP Henry paving stones, but Evening Prayer.
5. Your rosary jumps from five decades to seven.
4. You replace your little black book with a little red rule book.
3. The word "Tau" is not just used for college Greek fraternities.
2. You daydream of winning a trip to Assisi, Italy.
...and the number one reason you know you are a Secular Franciscan...
1. Your wardrobe is full of brown!



An “Earth Day” Appeal: Let’s Care for Creation! Franciscan Action Network’s “C 4 C” Program

“In our day, there is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a **lack of due respect for nature**, by the plundering of natural resources and by an progressive decline in the quality of life.”

“Faced with the **widespread destruction of the environment**, people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to use the goods of the earth as we have in the past.”

“**Respect for life** and for the dignity of the human person **extends also to the rest of creation**, which is called to join man in praising God (cf. Ps 148:96).”

“A new **ecological awareness** is beginning to emerge which, rather than being downplayed, ought to be encouraged to develop into **concrete programs and initiatives.**” *

These words of Pope John Paul II, written 19 years ago, are more fitting than ever. These words find a home within our hearts, for Franciscan life and “care for creation” go hand in hand. Alive with the spirit of universal kinship we are called to care for “Sister Mother Earth,” who truly is in peril.

One way to answer the call is to offer to host a “**Care for Creation (C 4 C) Program**” in your parish or community. The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) is a joint sponsor of this program of spirituality, education and skill building designed to help us become **Franciscan Creation Caretakers**. FAN invites us to offer this program during the upcoming Easter Season. Promotion for C4C could be done throughout Lent and the kick-off for your C4C program could be tied in with Earth Day, April 22. What a great idea! And what a great way to promote, not only care for creation, but also the SFO!

What does it take to host a C4C program?

- A willingness to promote the program
- 8-18 participants ready to become Franciscan Creation Caretakers
- One or two facilitators to lead the process

- Internet access for at least one of the facilitators.
- A regular room for hosting the 5-sessions of the program (each session is designed to run for 2 hours)

FAN provides promotional materials for newsletters & bulletins, facilitator and participant guides, and both “on-line” as well as “call in” support resources. The cost of the program is \$100 for the entire group, no matter the size. If you have ten people this is only \$10 each. This covers all the materials needed. For more information or to register your group please go to the FAN website at www.franciscanaction.org.

As we ponder this opportunity, let us again hear the words of Pope John Paul II: “I proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi as the heavenly patron of those who promote ecology. It is my hope that the inspiration of Saint Francis will help us to keep ever alive a sense of ‘fraternity’ with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created. And may he remind us of our serious obligation to respect and watch over them with care, in light of that greater and higher fraternity that exists within the human family.”

* All quotes taken from the message of Pope John Paul II for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 1990, “Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation” Can be accessed at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace_en.html



FAN Update Franciscans Take Stand for All Life in the *Franciscan Life Campaign*

From January 21-31, 2009, FAN participated in a national *Franciscan Life Campaign*. This Campaign paralleled the efforts of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB), to draw attention to and call for the non-acceptance of potential anti-life legislation called The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). The FOCA legislation has been introduced in several of the past Congresses and some suggest it could be reintroduced and potentially passed in 2009. The *Franciscan Life Campaign* invited people of faith to stop this potential harm and call attention to all the ways that life is threatened. The campaign included prayer, spiritual reflection on life, resources and reflections from a Franciscan perspective on the consistent ethic of life, and an opportunity to write members of Congress encouraging them to support life and oppose the FOCA.

To add your voice and continue the work of FAN in promoting a consistent life ethic please see the FAN website at www.franciscanaction.org.



Franciscan Action: Relationship Building Introducing “FAN” to your congressman!

On January 9, 2009 three St. Louis FAN members met via web cam with U.S. Representative Russ Carnahan, 3rd District of Missouri, and with Jim McHugh, Carnahan’s Regional Director. FAN members Fr. Pio Jackson OFM, Jan Parker SFO and Sr. Connie Probst OSF, arranged this visit to introduce the Franciscan Action Network, and themselves, to Rep. Carnahan and, in the spirit of Franciscan advocacy, to begin to build a relationship with him.

The meeting began with introductions and an explanation of the scope of the Franciscan family. The FAN members, representing three branches of the Order, explained this “family relationship” of both religious and laity. Sr. Connie gave the purpose of FAN, how it started and how its operations are both national, with an office in DC, and local, with members throughout the U.S. and with an outreach to approximately 1500 Franciscans in Carnahan’s district.

Prior to the meeting, the FAN members decided who would speak on each area of concern to be addressed, so the meeting continued with a discussion of such issues as the environment, immigration, the economy, and peacemaking. Carnahan expressed interest and asked questions. McHugh suggested some local strategies to address some of the concerns. What a “plus” it was for the FAN members to then inform Carnahan that Russ Testa, Executive Director of FAN and Fr. Larry Janezic, OFM, FAN Issues Advocate, would follow up with him in his Washington office. (Such is the beauty of our “network”!) The 30 minute meeting ended very positively and the group felt that they had achieved their goals and then some!

Arranging a meeting with your congressman, to build relationship and voice your concerns, is one of the most effective and satisfying means of advocacy and it’s easier to do than you think! Our FAN staff can provide guidelines and assistance so that such meetings will not only be effective, but conducted in a Franciscan manner.

Are you being called to this “courageous initiative” to promote justice? FAN will help you make it happen!

Environmental Notes

Celebrate Earth Day!

By Sr. Janet Corcoran, OSF - A “Green” Nun

St. Francis, a man both of and ahead of his time, had a special fraternal relationship with the natural and human environment; everyone and everything was brother and sister to him. Francis revered all of creation. He realized and lived out the thought that the power of the heart is greater than the power of the mind. Francis had “heart-titude” for all. In 1979, Pope John Paul II proclaimed St. Francis the Patron Saint of Ecology. He is often quoted by various philosophies and religions because of his inclusiveness and respect for all of creation. His loving heart was like a living room, which welcomed all.

Here in the United States, we have a day designated Earth Day, which calls us to a similar reverence for all of creation. You may wonder who founded Earth Day. John McConnell submitted a proposal to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, which was approved for the inauguration of the first Earth Day. This event took place on March 21, 1970, in the city of San Francisco. The celebration included the raising of the Earth Flag, which portrays our beautiful blue planet, but it was the late Senator Gaylord Nelson, who originated National Earth Day, during the summer of 1969, while flying from Santa Barbara to Berkeley (I like to think, when over the city of Santa Maria), he came up with the idea of Earth Day. In the spring of 1970, he announced that a nationwide Earth Day would take place on April 22, 1970. This first national Earth Day brought together over 20 million people across the United States to participate in activities that demonstrated and promoted a healthy, sustainable environment.

Earth Day is celebrated annually in the United States; this year, on April 22, all, (and especially Franciscans) will be able to join in the celebration of respect for our beautiful planet.

Sr. Janet Corcoran, OSF is a Franciscan Sister of Penance and Christian Charity. She is presently with Mission Services at Marian Medical Center in Santa Maria, CA.

Our Fraternity Stories



Deacon Tom Bello, SFO and Dorothy Steffanic, SFO

The Only Deaf Secular Franciscan Fraternity in the World Professes Six New Members

By Deacon Tom Bello, SFO
National Vice Minister

As far as we have been able to discover, NAFRA has the only deaf Secular Franciscan Fraternity in the world.

This fraternity is St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity of the Deaf located in our nation's capital.

Thus, it was, with great delight, that National Vice Minister Tom Bello participated in the Rite of Permanent Profession to the Secular Franciscan Order for six new members of this fraternity at a Mass celebrated with the Catholic Deaf Community at St. Francis of Assisi Deaf Catholic Church at the Center for Deaf Ministries in Landover Hills, Maryland on Sunday morning, December, 14, 2008.

On the feast of St. Francis, October 4, 2003, this fraternity celebrated its 25th anniversary. With its six new members, it is hoped that this fraternity will continue to thrive.

The six new members are Sally Mooney, Janet and Peter Noyes, David Koche, Godwin Ofodu from Nigeria, and Eleanor Ward. Joining them at their profession were two of the original members of the fraternity, Patricia and Alan Porreca. (See the picture on the right).

The Sunday Gospel was beautifully signed and spoken by Brother Deacon Hugh MacSherry, OFM, who has assisted in their formation.

Their formation has been a collaborative process with their Minister Dorothy Steffanic, SFO, and Jan Benton, SFO, a member of another fraternity, but also the Executive Director of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (www.ncpd.org). Jan can hear, but is very fluent in sign language, and she was able to do the formation assisted by Dorothy and Brother Hugh.

It was so moving to see the Gospel, Homily and entire Mass signed. Hands can be so expressive. For the six new members, this is the beginning of a permanent life of Gospel living, following Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis. For the continuing members of the fraternity, the new members offer new life and new hope for the future.

Continuing on a good note, Jan Benton adds, "The community is excited to begin a new formation cycle with six interested seekers."



New Members of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity

+++

African Dolls

By Carole Rielly, SFO
St. Mary's of the Portiuncula Fraternity, Hanover, MA

On my vacation to the mountains last year, I met a wonderful couple from New Jersey who had just come back from Fr. Lawrence's Boarding Schools in Uganda, Africa. They showed me slides of the schools they had

visited and the work that they were involved in during their trip. They also talked about a program called, "Change a Life" Sponsorship Program, started in 2006. This program is working two areas of Uganda: Nabbingo and Migyera.

Some children are in boarding school because their living situation is detrimental to their well being. Boarding schools are a common practice in Uganda, if you can afford to pay. Sponsorship includes providing for a child who may have HIV or AIDS; that child will get medical attention, receive medication, will be provided one meal a day and the opportunity to go to school, including uniform and books. If Africa is to be rid of this terrible disease, it has to start with education.

I got together with several members of my Franciscan fraternity and some friends, as well, to sponsor (\$300 per year) for a child. Her name is Teddy. She has learned to write letters in English, received an education (a wonderful student), and knows that we care about her. We have been doing this for two years.

While making baby blankets for the various hospitals, I met a woman who made Duduza (Comfort) dolls: soft huggable dolls that symbolize love and caring, and she was curious as to where she could send them. I became so excited because I knew exactly where we were going to send them – Uganda.

The Holy Spirit works in so many ways. Workshops were held to learn how to make the dolls, and last May, I brought 100 Duduza dolls to a Breakfast Workshop in New Jersey. At this meeting, I met Fr. Lawrence personally and many others involve with this Sponsorship program. In addition to the dolls that I brought to New Jersey, we have sent 250 dolls to Uganda. Oh, to see the pictures of the faces of these children who have absolutely nothing? To go from starvation and abuse to perhaps, someday, living in a dormitory (plans are underway for 2010), for all there to begin the education process. There are currently just over 300 children in the two boarding schools and 102 are currently being sponsored. It is truly miraculous!

I approached my fraternity to sponsor a child as a group ministry. They were delighted to become involved in sponsorship, and are now awaiting the name of their child.

+++

Poetry Contest



Art by Betty Misuraca

Attention SFO poets:

TAU-USA is having another poetry contest. The first place winner will be announced in the winter issue of the TAU. All other poems may be published in other issues. The contest begins now and ends on Oct. 15, 2009.

- Poems may be on any topic and of any length, but shorter poems are preferred.
- Poems may be spiritual or secular.
- Poems may be humorous, serious.
- Specific topics could be: Poems about Our Lord, Christmas, Lent, Easter, the Holy Spirit, and Franciscan topics or poems about the four seasons or anything.

Here are the rules:

1. Please send your poem to the Editor:
2. Frances Wicks, SFO
3307 Quail Meadows Drive
Santa Maria, CA 93455
3. Put your name, address and region's name on the back of your poem. Do not put your name on the front of the poem.
4. You may send in as many poems, as you like at one time.
5. Poems received by the Editor will not be acknowledged by mail, but chosen ones will be published.

NEW!

Seeking a Gospel Life #400: A, B

By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. Shows us how to live the Gospels in a Franciscan manner. 5½ x 8½ in., 124 pgs.
#400-A 1-9 copies \$11.00 ea + S/H
#400-A 10 or more \$8.80 ea + S/H
#400-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$6.00 ea + S/H
Special: 1 Book & 1 CD-ROM \$15.00 + S/H

Catch Me A Rainbow Too #100: A, B, C

The Franciscan Journey, by Lester Bach. Formation Program for Secular Franciscans, both initial formation and on-going formation. Questions and reflections offer opportunities for mutual faith sharing. 5½ x 8½ in., 448 pgs.
#100-A 1-9 copies \$17.00 ea + S/H
#100-A 10 or more \$13.60 ea + S/H
#100-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$12.50 ea + S/H
#100-C CD-ROM for Text Reader \$12.50 ea + S/H

Alcanza Un Arco Iris Para Mí También #200: A, B

PRICE REDUCED

La Jornada Franciscana, por Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. Ideal para la Formación Inicial y Permanente – en Español. 5½ x 8½ in., 520 pgs.
#200-A 1 or more copies \$12.75 ea + S/H
#200-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$12.50 ea + S/H

Come and See #103: A, B

Orientation & Inquiry, by Bach & Baker. An invitation to Explore Secular Franciscan Life. 5½ x 8½ in., 115 pgs.
#103-A 1-9 copies \$13.00 ea + S/H
#103-A 10 or more \$10.40 ea + S/H
#103-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$8.50 ea + S/H

Ven A Ver #203: A, B

By Bach & Baker. 5½ x 8½ in.
#203-A 1-9 copies \$13.00 ea + S/H
#203-A 10 or more \$10.40 ea + S/H
#203-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$8.50 ea + S/H

Pick More Daisies #109

Ongoing Formation for Secular Franciscans, by Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. 5½ x 8½ in., 256 pgs.
#109-A 1-9 copies \$14.00 ea + S/H
#109-A 10 or more \$11.20 ea + S/H
#109-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$10.00 ea + S/H

Handbook (Revised) For Spiritual Assistance to the SFO #231

By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. 8½ x 11 in., punched for 3-ring binder, 250 pgs.
#231 \$15.50 + S/H

To Set Themselves Free #221: A, B

By Teresa V. Baker, S.F.O. A continuous guide to the life and Rule of the Secular Franciscans, 8½ x 11 in., 284 pgs.
#221-A 1-9 copies \$27.00 ea + S/H
#221-A 10 or more \$21.60 ea + S/H
#221-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$14.00 ea + S/H

Guideline for Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Ministry #108

2006 Upgrade. Prepared by the National Youth/Young Adult Commission. 8½ x 11 in., 84 pgs.
#108 1-9 copies \$10.00 ea + S/H
#108 10 or more \$8.00 ea + S/H

Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership #105: A, B

INCLUDES RESOURCE LIST. An aid for those who wish to improve their service. 8½ x 11 in., 223 pgs.
#105-A 1-9 copies \$25.00 ea + S/H
#105-A 10 or more \$20.00 ea + S/H
#105-B 86 page Resource List .. \$10.00 ea + S/H

Digests (Set of Nine) #102: A, B

#101 Francis of Assisi; #121 Clare of Assisi; #131 Franciscan Prayer; #141 Franciscan View of Christ; #151 Franciscan View of Mary; #161 Peace & Justice; #171 Care of Creation; #181 Work & Spirituality; #191 Vision of Youth; each 8½ x 11 in., 4 pgs.
#102-A set of 9 \$7.00
#102-A additional sets \$3.00
#102-A singles or mixed, 50-100 \$.35 ea
#102-A singles or mixed, 101-250 \$.30 ea
above prices include S/H
#102-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$8.00 + S/H

Capturing the Spirit of Francis & Clare #304: A, B

By Lester Bach O.F.M. CAP. An ongoing formation book for Secular Franciscans. 5½ x 8½ in., 146 pgs., plastic coil binding.
#304-A 1-9 copies \$15.00 ea + S/H
#304-A 10 or more \$12.00 ea + S/H
#304-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$9.50 ea + S/H

Leaders Guide for Capturing the Spirit of Francis & Clare #306: A, B

By Niebuhr, Ryder, Fedor, SFO. Time and talk study guide. 5½ x 8½ in., 88 pgs., plastic coil binding.
#306-A 1-9 copies \$14.00 ea + S/H
#306-A 10 or more \$11.20 ea + S/H
#306-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$9.00 ea + S/H

Franciscan Family Connections #308: A, B

By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. A preparation book designed to form people who serve as regional or fraternity Spiritual Assistants, 5½ x 8½ in., 136 pgs., plastic coil binding.
#308-A 1-9 copies \$14.50 ea + S/H
#308-A 10 or more \$11.60 ea + S/H
#308-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$9.50 ea + S/H

NEW!

A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States #410

Volume 1, 1917-1942. 5½ x 8½ in., 450 pgs.
#410 1-9 copies \$15.00 ea + S/H
#410 10 or more \$12.00 ea + S/H

Elements of Formation #106

A reflection on the Formation Process! 8½ x 11 in., 44 pgs.
#106 1-24 copies \$5.00 ea + S/H
#106 25 or more \$4.00 ea + S/H

Guidelines for Initial Formation, SFO #107: A, B

Guía Para la Formación Inicial en la Orden Franciscana Segular de los Estados Unidos. Prepared by the National Formation Commission! 8½ x 11 in., 84 pgs.
English Language:
#107-A 1-24 copies \$5.00 ea + S/H
#107-A 25 or more \$4.00 ea + S/H
Spanish Language:
#107-B same prices as above

Life-Giving Union #112

SFO Spiritual Assistants Course. A year long correspondence course prepared by the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. 5½ x 8½ in., 73 pgs.
#112-A (2006) \$5.00 ea + S/H

Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order #302: A, B

Upgraded version, by Mulqueen & Sanborn. 5½ x 8½ in., 7 categories, coil binding & map, 288 pgs.
#302-A 1-9 copies \$15.00 ea + S/H
#302-A 10 or more \$12.00 ea + S/H
#302-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$11.00 ea + S/H

English/Spanish Promotional Brochures #110

8½ x 11 in., full color.
#110 50 copies \$40.00 (includes S/H)
#110 PDF file via E-Mail or Disk, you print & fold \$10.00 (includes S/H)

Rule Book #111

The Little Red Rule Book! By National Fraternity. 3 x 5 in., 32 pgs.
#111 10 copies \$20.00 (includes S/H)

SHIPPING/HANDLING

Items #105-A, #105-B, #221-A, #231: 1st copy add \$6.00, each additional add \$2.00; **Item #410:** 1st copy add \$7.00, each additional add \$2.50; **Items #100-A, #200-A, #302, #308:** 1st copy add \$5.50, each additional add \$1.50; **All other items:** 1st copy add \$5.00, each additional add \$1.00

Order from: Barbo-Carlson Enterprises, Box 189, Lindsborg, KS 67456
785.227.2364, Fax 785.227.3360, E-mail bevbarbo@kans.com

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
E-MAIL or FAX: _____

ITEM #	TITLE	QUANTITY	PRICE

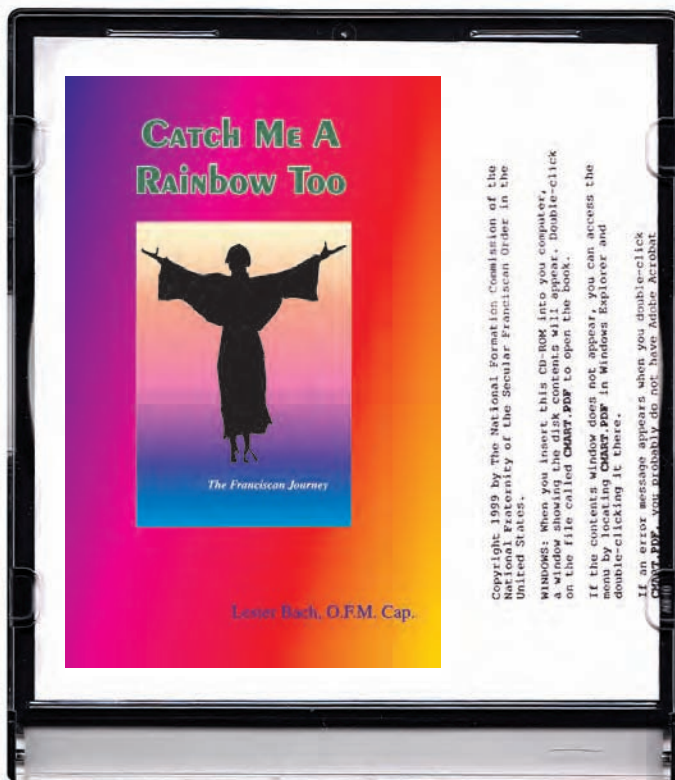
Shipping/Handling: Please Review, Most Expensive First Book THEN additional THEIR Charges:
(1/09) DATE: _____ INVOICE TOTAL: \$ _____

The NATIONAL FRATERNITY of the
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER, USA
1615 VINE ST
CINCINNATI OH 45202-6400



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Publications Available on CD-ROM (PDF format)



Seeking a Gospel Life

#400-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$6.00 ea + S/H

Catch Me A Rainbow Too

#100-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$12.50 ea + S/H

Alcanza Un Arco Iris Para Mí También

#200-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$12.50 ea + S/H

Come and See

#103-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$8.50 ea + S/H

Ven A Ver

#203-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$8.50 ea + S/H

Pick More Daisies

#109-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$10.00 ea + S/H

To Set Themselves Free

#221-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$14.00 ea + S/H

Digests (Set of Nine)

#102-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$8.00 ea + S/H

Capturing the Spirit of Frances & Claire

#304-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$9.50 ea + S/H

Leaders Guide for Capturing the Spirit of Frances & Claire

#306-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$9.00 ea + S/H

Franciscan Family Connections

#308-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$9.50 ea + S/H

Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order

#302-B CD-ROM (PDF)\$11.00 ea + S/H

For subscriptions or change of address contact:
Randy Heinz, SFO, Subscriptions Coordinator
810 Steffanich Drive
Billings, MT 59105
or E-mail: randyheinz@gmail.com

Domestic subscriptions are \$4.00 per year (four issues);
Canadian, \$6.00; Foreign, \$15.00

If this is a renewal and your name and address is correct,
please check here: