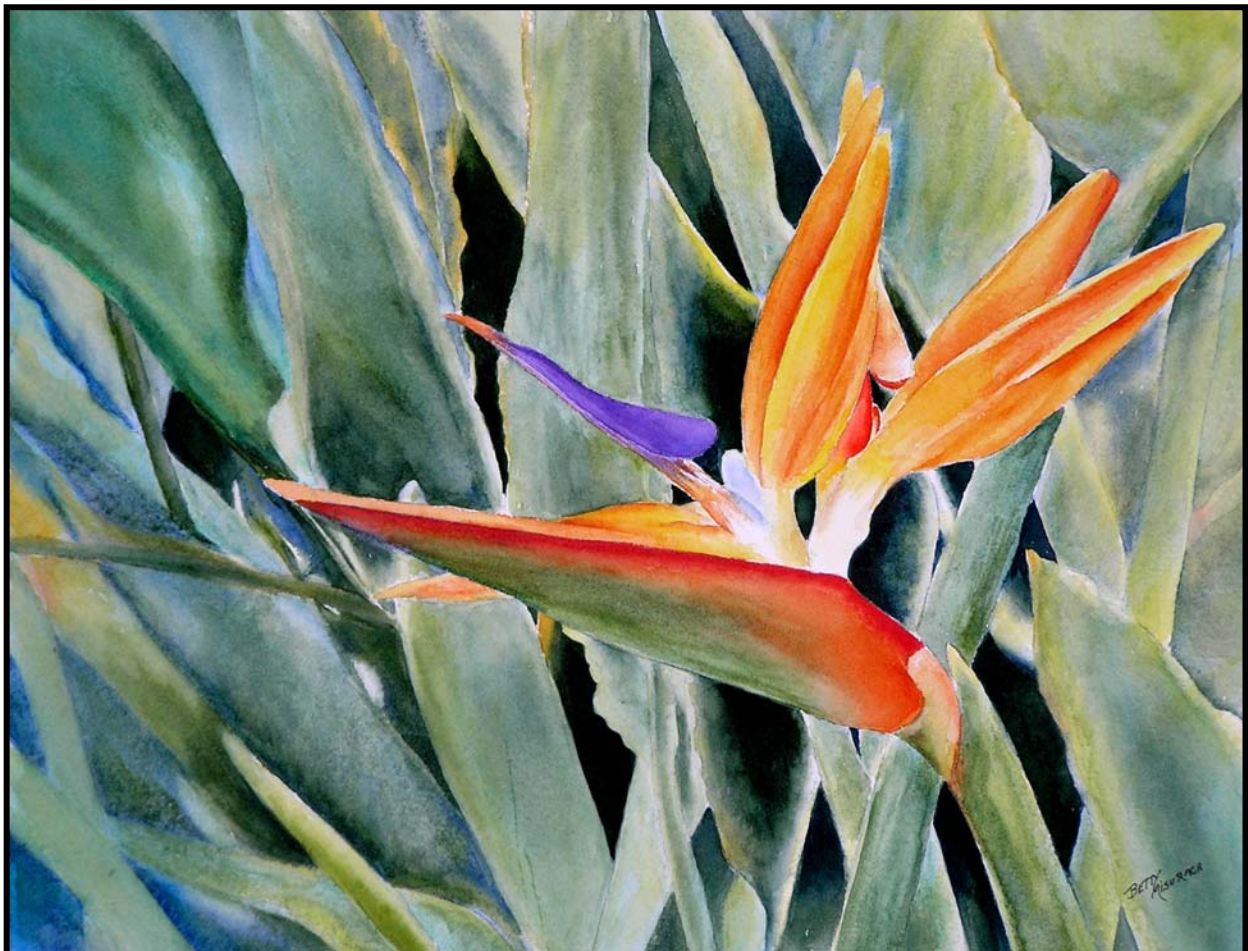


TAU-USA

Publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States
Summer 2008 - Issue 59



Tropical Blossom by Betty Misuraca

Birds of Paradise

We are the true birds of paradise, and we do not even know it.

Frances Wicks, SFO

TAU-USA

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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.

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The deadline for submitting articles to the Editor for the next issue is July 15, 2008.

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) in Times New Roman size 11 font.
- Material received after the deadline for a particular issue will be considered for other issues.
- 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).
- Please understand that all articles may be edited for length and clarity.
- All letters received become property of the editor.
- TAU-USA does not accept ads.

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, who wish to receive it, are in the Data Base. Please send the names, addresses, and fraternity names of newly professed members and all address changes and subscriptions to Marjo Gray.

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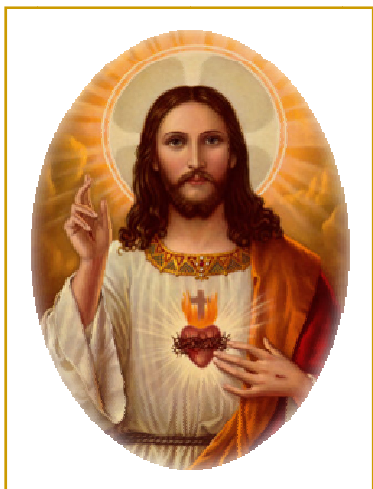


By T. C. Chiu

God bless your summer. Here's hoping that you will spend time with the Lord in the sun and in the shade, contemplating His goodness toward you and your families.



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Behold the heart that has so Loved mankind...

By Patrick Mendés, SFO
National Minister

Happily, this issue of *TAU-USA* arrives in time for me to wish you all the joy and blessings of the feast of the Sacred Heart!

Reflecting on the words of our Lord to St. Margaret Mary, we celebrate the feast of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (June 15) and traditionally, the entire month of June as the month of the Sacred Heart.

Our Franciscan roots to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus stem back to the early days following the apparitions to St. Margaret Mary. According to Timothy O'Donnell, S.T.D., in his book *Heart of the Redeemer*, our friars, especially of the German OFM Province, were deeply devoted to the Sacred Heart and zealously shared and encouraged this devotion in their preaching. Small wonder, then, that the American daughter Province of the German Province was given the name Sacred Heart Province. We have, in the United States a TOR Province also dedicated to the Sacred Heart as well as a Congregation of Franciscan Sisters.

We know well the devotion of our Holy Father Francis to the suffering heart of Jesus. So united was

Francis with the heart of Jesus that Our Lord granted him the stigmata.

Jesus, king and center of all hearts, you love us and lead us to yourself with unending mercy (Intercessions of the feast day). In our walk from Gospel to life and life to Gospel, we walk the path in the manner of our holy father, Francis, which leads us to Jesus and provides the impetus for our lives rooted in the Beatitudes, striving to live the expression of our vocation by corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Jesus, our King and Lord, directs us to "Love one another as I have loved you."

We find the model for our Franciscan "Fraternitas" in Jesus Himself. We are fortunate to have brothers and sisters who are confidants, patient listeners, and have compassionate hearts. They are the "cheer leaders" for our endeavors – our companions on the journey. Gifts of the Sacred Heart, we, too, are invited to become the gift. May we remember to give thanks for the brothers and sisters in our lives both in our nuclear and Franciscan families, who support and encourage us and share their unconditional love.

I'll conclude with the prayer from the Office for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. "Father, we honor the heart of your Son broken by man's cruelty, yet symbol of love's triumph, pledge of all that man is called to be. Teach us to see Christ in the lives we touch, to offer him living worship by love-filled service to our brothers and sisters. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Let us pray along with St. Bonaventure "... having found this heart, both yours and mine, O most sweet Jesus, I will pray to you, my God."

Know that you are especially remembered in my prayers to the Sacred Heart on His feast day and I ask a remembrance in yours.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings.





By Roberto Ferruzzi

A Pentecost Prayer and a Marian/Franciscan Reflection

By Fr. Stephen Gross, CNSA President-in-Turn
From Three Prayers by Oliver Clement

+
O
Heavenly
King,
the
Comforter,
the Spirit of Truth,
Who are everywhere and fill all things;
Treasury of blessings and
Giver of Life;
Come and dwell in us,
and cleanse us of every impurity,
and save our souls
O
Good One!
+

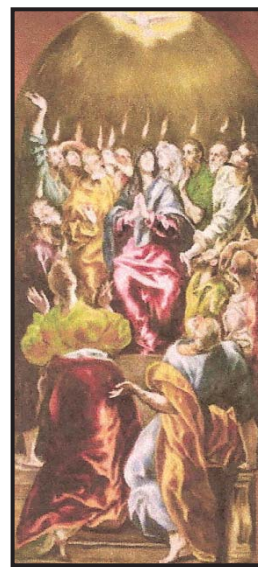
The Holy Spirit, though He bears us up and gives us life, surrounding us like an atmosphere that is ready to penetrate the slightest fissure within our souls, cannot do so without our consent, our call/invitation. We must pray: Come! *Veni Creator Spiritus!*

Creation exists only by the will, the love and the protection of God, Who, at the same time, is excluded by mankind from the heart of this creation – because that heart is man himself. We may then suggest that if creation has its abode within God, He cannot have His abode within creation, for man has retained, as it were, a perverted, luciferian guardianship of the keys: he is able to close the universe off to God. And thus the forces of evil arise, paradoxically given substance.

Mary gave a ‘city,’ a dwelling-place, back to God. She enabled Him to be incarnate within the heart of His own creation, as if to recreate it. One of the great teachers in the church said, “God created the world to find a mother.” Mankind welcomes its God through freedom, within Mary’s womb.

Jesus has no stone upon which to lay His head, unless it be in the ‘marian’ love of those who welcome Him. The Spirit, from all eternity the abode of the Son, can make of each one of us Franciscans the abode of the incarnate Son, on one fundamental condition – that we pray, “Enlighten the darkness of my heart” and “Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of every impurity.” (This ‘impurity of heart’ is likened to a tarnished mirror in need of cleaning and polishing.)

We must pray for receptivity. Like an empty cup that is freely offered up. May we receive the flame of the Spirit Who descends to recreate/renew us. May we become an interiorized Pentecost.



The Pentecost by El Greco



The Holy Father

Pope Benedict, XVI

By Frances Wicks, SFO, Editor



The Pope and his flock

Americans welcomed Pope Benedict with excitement and warmth on his April 16-21, visit to Washington, DC and New York. He, in turn, brought fatherly love and hope to crowds reaching the thousands. His homilies at Masses showed deep understanding of the complexity of life in these times. He spoke with compassion and reconciliation, reaching out to Catholics, who have been hurt or estranged from the Church. We found that peace begets peace, love begets love and hope lies somewhere in-between as the Holy Father offered his hand in peace and blessing to all.

Pope Benedict's homilies and speeches may be found on ZENIT.COM.

Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO, is Appointed National Formation Chair

The new National Formation Commission Chairman is Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO. He and his wife Patty live in Kennewick, WA. They were professed together in 1996, and are members of Holy Trinity Fraternity in Pasco, WA. Bob has served as Fraternity and Regional Formation Commission Chair for many years and has been extremely active in the life of his parish.

When asked about goals as the National Formation Chair, Bob states, "It is my goal to provide Secular Franciscans with a means via DVD presentations to receive practical support for their formation processes, initial and ongoing. These tools will be geared at incorporating and presenting a deliberate focus on both Franciscan Spiritual Tradition/Heritage and the Nature of the SFO. We must step into the 21st century and use existing technology to get the message of Gospel living out and accessible to all our brothers and sisters, not just the few lucky enough to be able to travel to a gathering. I am committed to some form of implementation of a "certified" formation process, since I believe before we need look to certifying local Formation Chairs, we need to establish a solid program along with modern teaching assists, to support their activities.



Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO

Eldercare

From a Franciscan Perspective

By Patti, Normile, SFO



The Virgin with Angels by William Adolphe Bouguereau

Caregiver. I like that word, Lord. It says so much about who we are called to be in your Kingdom. Care indicates the deep regard we hold for others. Giver echoes the scriptural assurance that you love a cheerful giver. As givers, we will strive to bestow on others your special gifts of faith, hope, love and healing. We will attempt to empower them to use their own abilities and strengths, while we assist them in their weakness. We will share with them the belief that your Holy Spirit is alive and well within them, no matter what their physical condition. *Caregiver is who you are to us, Lord. May we give care to others in return. Amen.*

My being a presenter at the Quinquennial Congress is proof that God has a sense of humor. I repeatedly told John Sanborn that I really didn't know much about eldercare. But maybe it was God's wisdom that led me to agree to the presentation. Many events helped prepare me: my Mom's move to a care facility, writing opportunities for Abbey Press and National Catholic Reporter on the topic of eldercare. Let me share what I've learned.

First we ask ourselves, "Who is an "elder?" My friend Marie is 99, going to be 100 in February, but her mind is so sharp, her attitude so upbeat, that it's hard to think of her as "old." She did give up growing

her geraniums from seed this year and is having more help with her huge rose bed. Marie is an elder only in her great wisdom.

We enter eldercare by various avenues: gradual aging of a loved one or when illness or accident change lives. Jack was an inventor, a brilliant man. His daughter and wife had died. When I visited Jack, who was then in his 80s, I knew something was wrong. As I put food into the refrigerator, I was amazed to see it packed full of uneaten food. Then, as we sat at his kitchen table, where he worked with his checkbook, Jack was puzzled that 2+2 kept equaling 6! Something was definitely wrong. Jack's niece tended to Jack's needs and found a nursing home for him. Jack entered, curled into a fetal position and remained in that position until his death. Would Jack's last days been different if he had had different care?

My Mom lived five joyful years with our son, his wife and two adorable children. She wore an alert button to call for help if needed. When she fell in the night, she made a choice that changed her life - she didn't push the button. Though she was not hurt, concern that she would fall and the children would find her lying on the floor led to a change. Our 1892 home was not an option for her. A care facility was her only choice. That saddened all of us. With time, she has adjusted and time spent with her peers has brightened her life. So we explore what is essential in caregiving. In *Franciscan View of the Human Person*, of *Franciscan Heritage Series*, Dawn Nothwehr, OSF, outlines four characteristics of the Franciscan view of people:

We are made in God's image. Each person bears an inviolable dignity. When I catch myself judging another person, I call to mind the most tragic human I have even seen. He was a patient in the hospital where I was a chaplain. No name was given because he was the son of a prominent family. He lay shackled to the bed, physically deformed, mentally deranged, raging, frothing, and soiling himself. Few were allowed to enter the room for fear of greater agitation. I would stop outside the room and pray for him as I reminded myself that God loves him just as he loves you and me. I keep that sad image as a reminder to judge none.

The Franciscan view of humanity holds that the dignity of bearing God's image is embodied in daily life at any time, any age, and any condition. Sally

visited her father-in-law, Henry, in time to hear an aide ask, "Does Henry have to wee-wee now?" Appalled by the lack of dignity offered a wonderful man, Sally addressed the problem, and then brought photos of Henry in earlier years to remind all of the man who lived in the aging body.

Sister Dawn reminds us that humans are creatures of earth who live in relationship with all creation. Many care facilities are adopting the *Eden Alternative*. This plan endeavors to keep residents of care facilities connected with life in all its forms. Plants, pets, outdoor excursions are provided to nurture the connectedness with creation. Residents love it! Finally, as finite creatures, humans ultimately need to embrace bodily death as part of life. This is not easy to talk about, but it is necessary to consider both your own and the patient's view of death. I recall a very elderly woman was ready to leave this life but her son begged her not to die. She said her son acted as if there hasn't been a Resurrection. This saddened her greatly.

With these thoughts in mind as the basis for all we do, look at the stages of eldercare. There is eldercare that comes upon us quickly such as when a loved one has a stroke or heart attack. Don't panic! Listen, assess the situation and gather your resources. Collaborate with family, friends, church members to do what is necessary at the moment. Long distance caregiving has its special challenges, but, with careful planning, electronic connections and a few loving people, it can be done. You will need help! Ask!

Many people wish to remain in their homes during recuperative time or as their health becomes more fragile. More efforts are being made by insurance companies and healthcare agencies to make this possible. Explore what is offered in your area. Catholic Social Services provide excellent information to guide you.

Begin with the practical. What caregiving agencies are available to assist you? What will insurance or Medicare cover? Listen carefully to what the medical personnel tell you. Go two-by-two [two pairs of ears hear better than one pair], with a notepad to record the information you hear regarding medical decisions that need to be made. No question is foolish if you do not know the answer. Ask!

Organizing paperwork is essential: a will, health care power of attorney, insurance policies, a living will,



Shepherdess by William Adolphe Bouguereau

DNR [do not resuscitate] and organ donor instructions need to be gathered.

Communication with family and friends and medical people is time consuming. Use a phone message recorder to relate up-to-date information for interested individuals. www.Caringbridge.com offers a way to send e-mail updates to interested people regarding the condition of the patient. When a patient comes home, a "stop & go" sign on the door says it's okay to visit if the green sign says "go;" please come another time if it is the red "stop."

Sometimes, homecare is not an option. Not being able to provide what your loved one desires is a painful experience, but one in which you are not alone. Just Google, "nursing home guilt" to discover how many deal with this feeling. As you search for an appropriate residence, have a vision shaped by Franciscan characteristics. Look at today, tomorrow and beyond. If someone needs only assisted living at this time, is skilled nursing care available for the future should it be needed?

Emotions arise at this time. Anger and frustration make overtake you. Forgiveness may be called for if an individual's actions or lack of self care have led to the current medical emergency.

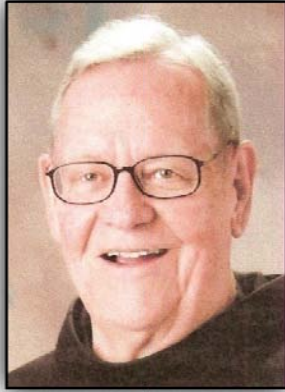
If mild to more intense dementia is a factor, staying sane as the caregiver may be a challenge! Staying sane as the caregiver may be a challenge!
(Continue on page 20).

Fond Farewells

Father David Eckelkamp, OFM

+ June 4, 1927 - April 1, 2008 +

By William Wicks, SFO



David Eckelkamp, OFM

Fr. David was a friar of Sacred Heart, O.F.M., Province. He was ordained on June 29, 1953. Former National Minister Richard Morton recalls that, while he was Vice Minister of Sacred Heart Province in the early eighties, Fr. David exhibited an understanding and an embracing of the newly developing concept of co-responsibility between the SFO and the friars; he noticed that Fr. David was glad to share the podium with the then minister, the late Tom Carter, allowing Tom to speak first. I concur with Richard's observation. I found Fr. David to be a kind, compassionate person, who treated me as a Franciscan brother. He has served as Spiritual Assistant at all levels of fraternity: provincial, regional and national, as the O.F.M. representative to the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. Patrick Mendés, our present National Minister, remembers Fr. David as an ardent promoter of the SFO and a role model of what it means to be a Franciscan - he was a good and holy man and a treasure of our Franciscan family. Patrick adds that Fr. David was a good friend, who will be remembered, not only for his wisdom, but also for his gentleness. +++

Quote:

The center of human nature is rooted in ten thousand ordinary acts of kindness that define our days.

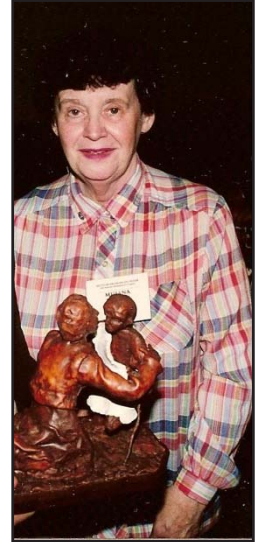
Stephen Jay Gould

Mujana Darian, SFO

+ 1927 - 2007 +

By Jan Parker, SFO

Mujana Darian, SFO passed from this life to be with the Lord on December 18, 2007. She was eighty. Mujana, a convert to Catholicism, was a member of Sacred Heart Fraternity in St. Clare Region. She was the author of several books, including, So That's the New Rule and So That's the Constitutions, which were popular during the time of transition to 1978 Rule - and books that were used in the R.C.I.A. program. She edited a newsletter, "*Franciscan Communications*," that was distributed to subscribers across the country in the eighties and early nineties, prior to the resumption of the official national SFO newsletter, in 1992. She also wrote for the *Franciscan Herald and Forum*, and sculpted, when inspired. Her original art work includes a large collection of statues of St. Francis, all depicting different scenes from his life. Mujana bequeathed her collection to the Poor Clares in Oakville, Mo. She will be missed. Memorials may be made to Masses.



Mujana Darian, SFO

+++

Quote:

"...let them pay attention to what they must desire above all else: to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity..."

Francis of Assisi

Little Weeds



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

Some years ago, during a visit to Italy, I ventured into the gift shop adjacent to the pensione I was staying at. I saw some stamps in the display case and figured that if I could get some airmail stamps there, it'd save me a trip to the PO. So I asked the lady behind the counter if she had any airmail stamps. She stared very nicely and politely back at me. It was obvious she had no idea what I was talking about. Not being able to remember Italian for "airmail," I lapsed into my best French accent: "*Par avion!*" (Actually, my French accent is quite good – it's the language that escapes me.) But she didn't understand that either.

Great! There I was in the middle of Rome, in the middle of Italy, and I had to run into a shop lady who spoke neither English nor French. Go figure. But I wanted the stamps, and she seemed friendly enough. So I repeated the phrase in both languages a few times, getting the same friendly stare.

Then, whether it was inspiration or desperation, I don't know, but I tucked my fingertips into their respective armpits and started flapping my arms up and down, all the while saying excitedly, "Airmail, airmail! *Par avion, par avion!*" The light bulb went on. Her head bobbed up and down: she understood my request. Her head wagged side to side: she didn't have any airmail stamps. Alas and alack! (Whatever that means.)

Yet the exchange had not been a total loss. She'd come away with a great "crazy American" story to tell her family over the dinner table, and I'd learned exactly how far I would toss my dignity for some airmail stamps. But the experience also reaffirmed a simple fact: if you stay open, stuff can get in.

If she'd shrugged her shoulders and walked off as soon as it was obvious I wasn't gonna say anything she could understand, or if I'd rolled my eyes and walked off when it was obvious she wasn't gonna understand anything I said, we'd never have connected. But we stayed open to one another, and we did connect.

That's how it is with God. You have to stay open. Francis did. He heard God tell him to rebuild His church. Granted, he didn't fully understand at first. But he didn't sit around musing about it. He didn't shut down figuring now that God had spoken to him, he didn't have to listen anymore. He acted while

remaining open to any other memos from on high. And he eventually got it straight.

Prayer is often called a conversation with God. ('Course, I've also heard that when you talk to God, it's called prayer; and when God talks to you, it's called schizophrenia. But that's another column . . .) That (the conversation thing) is a good way of seeing it, provided you follow through with the analogy: a conversation goes *both* ways. You wouldn't talk to your friend, then turn your back and walk away before they could respond. Nor would you like it if someone pulled that with you. Yet we do it with God all the time.

We say a bunch o' beads at Him, throw a litany or two His way, and then go about our own business. If we don't get what we wanted, we figure He either didn't hear us or didn't answer. But we never stop doing our own thing or shut up long enough for Him to get through.

Francis learned that the more you listen to God, the more you *have to listen* to God. Once you've started doing what He asks, you have to keep checking in to make sure you're on the right track. Francis didn't spend the entire rest of his life hauling masonry around, did he? God was able to set him straight. But not even God could've done that if Francis hadn't remained open to Him.

A good way to pray is to just sit still and not say anything. No formula prayers, no special phrases. Just sit still, close your eyes, and listen to your breathing. I read once that every breath you take is God saying, "I love you." And that's always a good way to start a conversation!

Brother Juniper



"I get nobler thoughts in a hammock than I ever get mowing grass."

By Fred McCarthy, SFO



On the Trail Again in Bend, OR

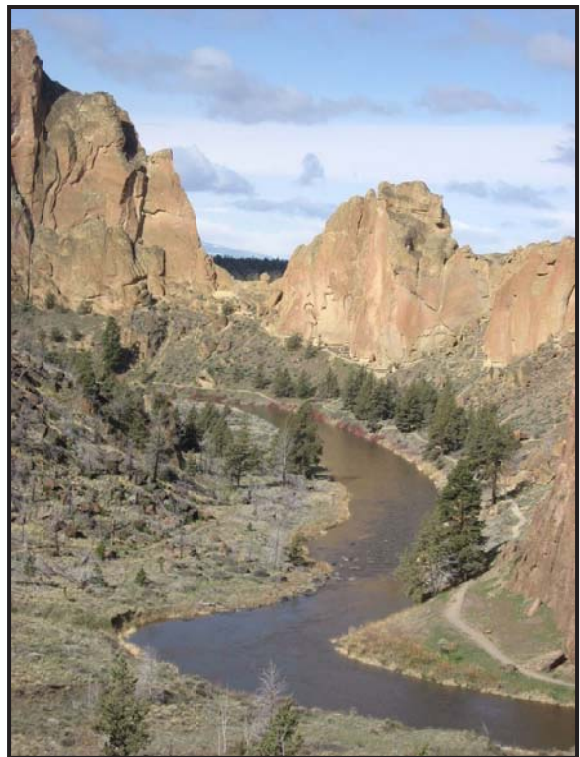
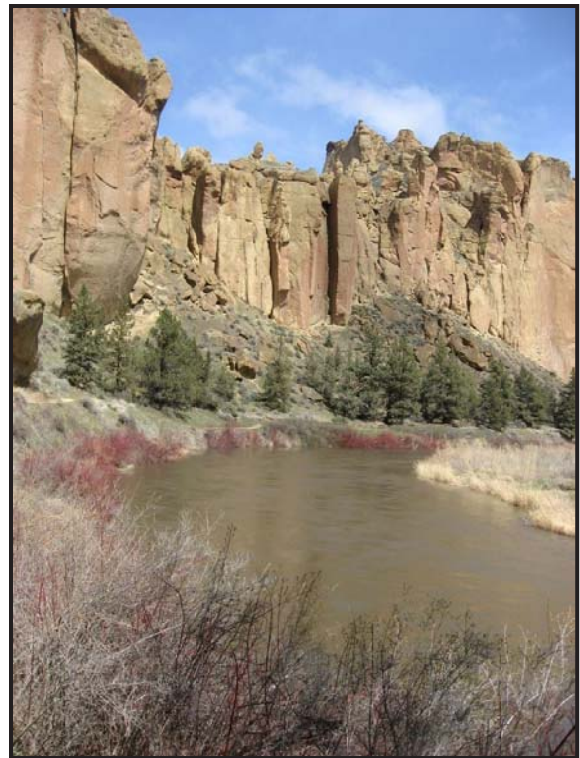
By Dan Mulholland, SFO
Photographer

We had a good hike at Smith Rock on Tuesday, waking up to 22 (-5C) degree temperatures with a promised high of 40 (5C). Smith Rock is always a good hike, except for the climb out at the end. We went there because it was windy, and we'd be down in the canyon, although it turned out the wind followed us down.

Even with the wind, there were climbers starting up, and geese, ducks, swifts and red tailed hawks enjoying the wind currents. You can tell it is spring in spite of the snow flurries, because the birds know it is, and some of the micro-flowers are in bloom. One of the interesting things about our climate here is that we've had daffodils up for close to a month, where they would be up and gone in a week or two in Virginia.

We hiked a little past Monkey Face Rock and found a nice grassy area among the trees to have lunch before heading back. While there were a couple of steep places to walk down on the trail going out, they weren't a problem going back; knees work better going up-hill.

Smith Rock is a place where the different colors, caused by millions of years of volcanic ash look quite different from season to season, and at different times of the day. It's a favorite place for local photographers to capture special moments of light and color, water, rock and sky.



I love these hikes and enjoy all this beauty, which God has made. Truly, the earth and everything in it is ours, a gift from the Lord.

For more pictures of this hike, see:
<http://www.dannymai.org/BSCTREK080415/index.html>

Two Anniversaries

By Teresa V. Baker, SFO
Chair, National Formation Commission

2008 30 years

On June 24, 1978, Pope Paul VI, our brother Secular Franciscan, approved and confirmed a new Rule for the Secular Franciscan Order. In doing so, he commented “We are happy that the Franciscan Charism today is still a force for the good of the Church and the human community, despite the infiltration of doctrines and tendencies that alienate people from God and the supernatural.”

Defining charism, Bishop Joseph Galante, formerly Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life, states: “A religious charism is an intensely personal reading of the Gospel resulting in an inner enlightenment that changes the way a person relates to God, to self and to others. This new way of relationship is so powerful that it has the potential to attract others who sense in themselves the same desire and capacity to read the Gospel in this ‘new key.’”¹

We may think that we have chosen to read the Gospel in this new key, to follow this path set out by St. Francis for ourselves; however, it is truly God who has chosen us. We have responded to this call through our act of profession. We have accepted the call to interact with God and others as set out by our seraphic father, St. Francis. We follow him in his lifelong commitment to daily conversion.

Our Order is and always has been a penitential Order, one that calls us to daily conversion; however, this conversion is not to be seen as a burden, but rather as a gift. In her contribution to The CORD in 2007, Sr. Margaret Magee reminds us, “The fundamental value of penitential spirituality is integral to the continued development of Franciscan life and spirituality. The penitential life is not a matter of ‘doing penance’ or accomplishing penitential acts, rather it is the openness to grow, to be shaped, and formed in a life that reflects the dynamic movement and presence of Christ within. *Metanoia* is not something we do; it is God’s gracious gift. Our participation in *metanoia* depends on our capacity to love, to dwell in Christ, and, with Christ, live in be

receptive, bent low in prayerful and contemplative bountiful love and service to others.”²

As noted, our stance in *metanoia* is twofold: we are TO BE receptive to God’s gracious love and bidding and then TO DO, to perform acts of mercy and service to others. In this way we will be able to combat the “...doctrines and tendencies that alienate people from God and the supernatural.”

2009 800 years

Beyond our own celebration, the leaders of the various branches of our Franciscan families are inviting us to share in the 800th anniversary of the primitive Rule, those selections of the Gospel that Francis chose to be the basis of his life in God. In 1209, he traveled with his small band of brothers to ask Pope Innocent III to ratify their way of life.

In their letter announcing the 800th anniversary of this rule, the General Ministers/President are reminding us “It is not a question of commemorating a figure, a Francis, Clare or any other person, but rather the calling to mind of the origins of the Franciscan charism,” the same charism Pope Paul VI commended in promulgating our Rule, the same “new key” that has led all followers of Francis, to this present day, to take the words of the Gospel as our way of life. Thus the Gospel has become the basis of all the Rules of the First, Second and Third Orders. Its values of love of God, reverencing ourselves as created in the image of this loving God and loving all others are at the core of the Rules we profess to live. However, it also challenges us to live the demands the Gospel places before us.

How might we begin to celebrate?

1. By prayers of thanksgiving for the gift the Holy Spirit has given the Church through our seraphic father St. Francis.
2. By prayers of thanksgiving for our own vocation and prayers for grace to sustain us in our profession that we might be witnesses of God’s goodness to the world.
3. By renewing our profession, as a fraternity, either on June 24, or on the anniversary of the establishment of your local fraternity.
4. By taking up our former General Minister, Emanuela De Nunzio’s, challenge to meditate on a chapter of the Gospel and an article of our Rule each day.
5. In preparation for our celebration of the primitive Rule next year, as you are meditating on the Gospel, select three passages, as Francis did, that will personally challenge you to live the Gospel more deeply.

¹ “Renewing Religious Life,” unpublished lecture, as quoted in *The First Franciscan Woman: Clare of Assisi & Her Form of Life*, Margaret Carney, O.S.F. (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993), 226.

² Recovering a Lost Horizon of Franciscan Evangelical Life: Reclaiming Penitential Spirituality for the 21st Century; Margaret Magee, O.S.F. The CORD vol 57, no 2 April/June 2007. p 149

Franciscan Living



Another Poverty: Letting Go

By Francine Gikow, SFO
Franciscan Living Editor

I remember when I was undergoing initial formation in the Order; one of the questions asked of me was “What would be a difficult thing for you to give up?” My response then was that “things” would not be difficult since I was not into status or acquiring things, but “people” would be a hardship for me. As a person with early losses of family, the remaining family I possessed was near and dear to my heart. The idea of giving up certain people through death would be hard for me. I still have this fear today.

For those of us who have been parents, parenting can be an experience of loss of control and “letting go.” We have to let go of our wishes for our children as they grow to make their own decisions. Sometimes, we have to let them go to make the wrong decisions, so they can learn from them what is truly important.

However, I have also realized that besides people, I have difficulty in letting go of many other things. Letting go of my own desires, assumptions, and concepts of how things should or shouldn't be, top the list. I am a person of opinions and goals, with comfortable routines and structure in my life. What if these were taken away? Would I despair, get angry about the “unfairness” of life or embrace with gracious love this new gift of subtraction?

We tend to forget that *all* is “gift.” Who we are and what we have is all gift! We do not “earn” things; we are given them by our Lord and Father. If these gifts were taken away, could I say like Job, “The Lord gives and the Lords takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord?”

Francis had a profound sense of “gift.” Since he chose to live with such material poverty, he never assumed his next meal or bed. When it was provided, he directly attributed it to God and thanked Him for the gift. However, even Francis had difficulty “letting go.” Although Francis was no longer Minister General of the Order, he found that it difficult to see a different path the Order was taking than the one given to him by the Father. Francis was stripped and

given the gift of a new type of poverty which forced him to rely even more on God alone.

Voluntarily letting go or giving up something may be hard but if we are stripped, like Francis, of what we hold near and dear to us, well that is something we are not prepared for! No one likes doing something which we have no control over, but sometime in our lifetime we are led to a place where we do not want to go. You can count on it - it is part of the spiritual life! We suffer with our loss of control and grieve over what might have been. It is not easy.

It has been said that we all suffer because we are all human and we live in a sinful world. However, the more we cling to the past, our desires, and our control over things, the more we miss out on the real gifts that the Lord has given us. He has given us the chance to grow closer to Him without the trappings of “things” and without “us” getting in the way. As we are stripped of what is not of God, then perhaps we are free to share His life more abundantly.

This can also apply to our spiritual life. We can cling to our consolations and the ways we have always “heard” our own personal voice of God. Recently, I pondered the scene of the Resurrection in John's gospel. (John 20:13-18) Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, and pleaded with “the gardener” to tell her where they had put the Lord. Then she realized that the person she was already talking to was the Lord, but she failed to recognize Him! Mary tried to grab onto Him but was told not to hold onto him because he had not yet ascended to the Father.

Sometimes, we too cling to our concept of what God should be or how He should act. We fail to recognize Him because we have not let go of our own perceptions and wishes. We get angry when our prayers are not answered or when dryness occurs in our prayer life. We cling to our consolations but God may be saying to us: grow up and let go of even our expectations of Him! He may be teaching us not to box Him into preconceived notions based upon our past, but to be free to find Him in new ways. We may need to let go of our control over our spiritual life and let God lead us, even when we do not know where we are going. The Lord desires us to be wholly His, without reservations, expectations or attachments. The more we trust in Him, the more we show our love for Him.

The Lord and My All!

Regional Roundup



St. Francis Region

Bill and Frances Wicks, SFO celebrated “Fifty Years of Love and Laughter” on their Golden Wedding Anniversary on June 7 in Santa Maria, CA. Bill is former national minister and Frances is editor of TAU-USA. The couple has five children and six grandchildren. They belong to St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity.

In Holy Spirit Fraternity, Dolores Cullen, SFO, Humor Page Editor, has just finished another book, “*Ensnared by His Words, My Chaucer Obsession,*” and it was published by Fithian Press. Dolores maintains that Chaucer used a particular language of allegory in “*The Canterbury Tales*” to conceal the true meaning of his writings from hostile authority in medieval England, where he lived. She broke the “Code” for us in her first book, “*Chaucer’s Host:*” the Host is Christ, who is leading Pilgrims on their journey. Now we get to see how this all came about in Dolores’ life story. Her e-mail address is: (Chaucer600@aol.com).

The Serra Retreat in Malibu took place on May 23-25 and the Annual St. Francis Regional Gathering will be held at St. Gregory’s Parish in Whittier, CA on October 25.

Our Lady of the Angels Region

St. Stephen’s Fraternity celebrated their 100th year anniversary of canonical establishment on Sunday, April 20 in Perth, NJ.

St. Thomas More Fraternity celebrated the SFO anniversaries of twelve members in October in New

York, NY. Honored were Norman Reilly, SFO – 48 years, Victor Sardinha, SFO – 47 years, Dorothy Allen, SFO – 46 years, Frederica De Joseph, SFO – 43 years, John Stehn, SFO – 42 years, Anthony Matus, SFO – 39 years, James Pieplenbosch, SFO – 32 years, Muriel Leckenbusch, SFO – 30 years, Maria Ficken, SFO – 28 years, William Ferrado, SFO – 27 years, Mary Ann Kelly, SFO – 26 years, Ernest Leckenbusch, SFO – 25 years.

Junipero Serra Region

A new executive council was elected at the Regional Fraternity Meeting in Danville, CA on February 29 – March 2: Cindy Wesley, SFO, Minister; Mikaela Shin, SFO, reelected Vice Minister; Kathleen Molaro, SFO, Secretary; Dianne Prior, SFO, Treasurer; Jim Wesley, SFO, Formation Chairmen; Claire Breen, SFO, Councilor; Cosmos Bacich, SFO, Councilor; Mary Munden, SFO, Councilor; The region covers Northern California from Bakersfield to the Oregon border and Northern Nevada.

Profession Anniversaries: 60 Years - Robert and Colleen McNutt, SFO, 50 Years – Maria T Ramos, SFO, 25 Years – Norma Perry, SFO, Betty Riedinger, SFO, Jim and Cindy Wesley, SFO, Chris and Natalie Alvarado, SFO, and Jonathan Runckel, SFO.

St. Margaret of Cortona Region

Corrections from the last issue are in **bold print**: The Region was blessed to have twenty-eight professions in the past few months. Professed were: Gail Barber, Colleen Faini, Helga Fallis, Karen Haskell, Maryann Helmgartner, Rose Millington, Vicki Sampson, Margaret Schlachter, and Christine Trippi of Immaculata Fraternity in Fredericksburg, VA; Ed Gerhardt, of Our Lady of the Rosary Fraternity in Hampton, VA; **Eileen** Highberger, **Deborah** Martin, **Taft** Martin, **Suzanne Tardif**, and **Jane** Snyder, of Companions of St. Francis and Clare Fraternity in Hiwasswee, VA; Michael Clinton and Maura Heedham of Holy Family Fraternity in Manassas, VA; Michael Clinton and Maura Heedham of Holy Family Fraternity in Manassas, VA; Kevin Kulesa of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Fraternity in Emmitsville, MD; Marily Gilson, Susan Suprock and Brandon Justice, of St Joseph Cupertino Fraternity in Ellicott City, MD; Jean Jomidad, Shirley Sapp, and Mercy Sponaule, of Mary Our Queen Fraternity in Baltimore, MD; Gemma Kim, Maria Gibson, Cecilia Park, and Elizabeth Nam, of St Bonaventure Forming Group in Fairfax, VA.



EXPLORING *Things Franciscan*



++ CNSA Notes & Views ++

Lester Bach OFM Cap

Spiritual Assistant's Workshop +

When CNSA planned this year's workshop for PSAs and RSAs, our initial desire was to include local SAs. However, we have a limited number of rooms available at St. John's Center in Plymouth, MI. Our decision, in the light of this fact, is to accept PSA and RSA (as well as Provincial) reservations first of all. Rooms for local SAs will be available after August 22.

We encourage PSAs, RSAs and provincials to send their reservations ASAP (even before August 22). Local SAs can send in their registration to get on the list for attending. When we are certain of the rooms available for **local SAs** they will be notified on a *first come, first served* basis.

Registrations, payments and travel arrangements are sent to:

Elizabeth Allen SFO
445 Nickman St
Chula Vista, CA 91911
(619) 427-4613 / (619) 829-4613 (cell)
esasfo@pacbell.net

Fly to Detroit airport

Cost - \$300...make check payable to CNSA

Arrive – September 23, 2008 – by evening

Depart – September 26, 2008 – after breakfast

The September program is designed for interaction among the participants throughout the workshop. Teams of friars and Seculars offer input to set the tone for discussion. We seek to continue our assistance to the SFO, understand our role, maintain vital reciprocity, and be aware of the present realities of SA's in the SFO and the 1st Order/TOR.

As one saying puts it:

We ASPIRE to INSPIRE before we EXPIRE!

+ Dreaming Impossible Dreams +



Our world often looks nothing like our Franciscan vision for life. We may wonder if our Franciscan vision is an impossible dream.

We are peacemakers in a world of violence. We are people who forgive while many seek revenge. We are people who seek unity in a divided Church and world. We are people who acknowledge our need for God in a world where some seem to ignore God. We are people of joy, because of God's love for us, in a world that often finds little reason for joy. We have hope in God's faithfulness, but we live in a world that seems to create more fear than hope. Seeking justice for all people, we live among many who seek justice for a few and leave others on the edges of society. Our spirit of poverty frees us to love one another while many seek power and possessions, but lack the desire to share power and possessions.

Life is a rum go, Gov'ner! (from the musical Mary Poppins) might echo some of our feelings. In the face of a world whose values and desires do not always support our "dream," we might consider our Franciscan vision an impossible dream.

However, no one can stop us from loving more intensely. No one can stop us from making changes in our lives and accepting Spirit-moved conversions. No one can keep us from praying. No one can keep us from learning better ways to be Franciscans. No one can force us to ignore the Gospel, nor delete its vision. No one can keep us from being faithful to our Franciscan commitment.

No one can stop us from building structures that support our vision nor from deleting those that no longer serve the vision. No one can deny us insights that enrich our dedication to a gospel life or to the commitment of our SFO profession.

We are free to direct our life to follow a gospel lifestyle. We are free to choose actions that flow from the inner values that come with a Franciscan vocation. We are free to develop opinions, ideas and actions that are in accord with the Franciscan vision.

The presumption, in this thinking, is that we understand the Franciscan vision. The presumption is that we are aware of how the Franciscan vision looks in everyday life. The presumption is that we evaluate things in life from the viewpoint of the Franciscan vision. The presumption is that we face everyday reality and touch it with our Franciscan vision and values. The presumption, on the part of the Church, is that the vision is clear to us and we bring our Franciscan gift to Church life.

To make certain such presumptions are not false hopes, the SFO continues to improve initial formation programs. To make certain such presumptions are not “pie in the sky” sort of hopes, the SFO requires ongoing formation for all Secular Franciscans.

But books are limited. Programs cannot make people change. Information, by itself, does not bring about conversion. Our willingness to be formed by the Holy Spirit is a foundational ingredient in formation. The tools are present. But we need a willingness to learn. We need a readiness to share compassion and support and insights and ideas. We need continuing evaluation of life and opinions and ideas and actions to make certain they are in sync with the Franciscan vision. We need an awareness of our need for personal conversion.

...motivated by the 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. Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.
(SFO Rule #7)

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39



+ Unity +

Our bond of unity, nurtured by the Holy Spirit calls us to establish relationships: with the Trinity; among ourselves; with enemies; with people who annoy us; with strangers; with immigrants; with criminals; with friends; with co-workers; with creation. Relationships have different levels of intensity. But relating to people and creation is part of our gospel commitment.

The theory sounds fine but we struggle as we try to live the vision! People don't always make it easy. We may not make it easy for others! We are called to the continual conversions that make the vision visible. Fraternity vitality and support enables us to deal with difficult relationships.

Achieving unity requires: courteous listening / responding / looking for the common good / assisting one another in love / forgiving hurts / seeking ways of reconciliation / creating an atmosphere that embraces rather than separates / avoiding arrogance and know-it-all-ism / developing a spirit of prayerfulness.

Franciscans allow their vision to blossom in daily life. They recognize the process as one that lasts a lifetime. They help one another to stay faithful to their Franciscan profession and to influence people and their surroundings.

Let them love one another, as the Lord says: “This is my commandment; love one another as I have loved you.” (cf. John 15:12) *Let them express the love they have for one another by their deeds, as the Apostle says: “Let us not love in word and speech, but in deed and truth.”* (cf. James 2:18)

Let them revile no one. Let them not grumble or detract from others for it is written: “Gossips and detractors are detestable to God.” (cf. Romans 1:29-30) *Let them be modest by showing graciousness toward everyone. Let them not judge or condemn.*

The Earlier Rule (Chapter XI)
Francis of Assisi – The Saint – Page 72.



Holy Conversation

Jan Parker, SFO
National Formation Commission Member
jansfo@yahoo.com

This article is an excerpt from Jan's
Presentation at the National Formation
Conferences in January and May 2008.

We all know the value of good communication but have we ever considered the development of communication skills as an exercise in virtue? Do we realize that engaging in sincere conversation can be a holy endeavor?

My eyes were opened to this spiritual truth during last summer's Quinquennial Congress. I was fully prepared for Rev. Eric Law to present some practical tools for good communication, but I was delighted when he placed his presentation within a Christian and Franciscan context. I should not have been surprised. Are we not called to "go from Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel?" In our conversations, as in all of life, we seek to grow in virtue. As we become aware of the spiritual nature of communication we can move from discussion or dialogue to what I call, "*Holy Conversation*."

Good conversation involves both listening and speaking. By contrast, Holy Conversation involves listening in love and speaking in truth (witnessing). Love and truth are key virtues in Holy Conversation, and both are necessary. There can be no real and lasting love without truth, for truth is the structure of love. By the same token, love gives one the courage to speak one's own truthfulness as well as to receive the other's truth. Jesus made mutual love for one another the highest imitation of himself. On the night before he died, Jesus told his followers: "Love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12) Shortly after this Jesus prayed to his Father for those same followers saying, "Father, dedicate them to yourself by means of the truth." (John 17:18)

Jesus made the sharing of truth the most profound dedication to the Father. This sharing in love and truth reflects the inner life of the Trinity – a Holy Unity of Persons. As we listen in love and witness in truth, we reflect this inner life of the Trinity. God's grace flows into our relationships. This is transformative. "If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow completely into Christ, who is the head." (Ephesians 4:15) Living the grace of Holy Conversation builds up our unity as believers and our unity in Christ.

How is this put into practice? As we engage in Holy Conversation, we let go of our own agenda, be-

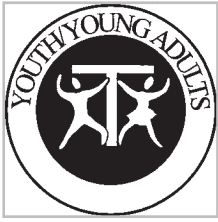
come totally present to the other and listen with love. We listen to the whole person – the feelings, the expressions, sometimes even the silence – to the heart of the one who speaks. This kind of listening is redemptive and fosters growth. By listening we call the other into being. We satisfy the other's need to be heard and help them clarify their own perspectives. By listening we ourselves also experience growth. We learn and are encouraged. Can you see Christian love in action in this process?

In Holy Conversation we also speak. Dedicated to the truth, we speak this truth in love. As we witness to the truth we strengthen the faith of those listening. We share, too, our own personal feelings and experiences. We share courageously, knowing that in Holy Conversation what we say will be received in love. In this gentle and courteous exchange we find freedom, acceptance and joy in our common journey.

In many SFO fraternities, formation takes place within a context of conversation. Something is read or shared and then we talk about it. Have you experienced Holy Conversation in your fraternity gathering? Perhaps you can recall a time where everyone took turns listening and sharing, after which there was a wonderful sense of realizing the truth or seeing the truth in a new way. This is one of the fruits of Holy Conversation.

Times when the principles of Holy Conversation are not practiced, a discussion, which could be formative, can prove distressing. Imagine your fraternity members in a less than virtuous discussion. Even as the discussion begins there are those who are intent on making a point – they are not looking to be changed. They fortify their positions with facts and the debate goes back and forth, like a ping-pong ball. Sometimes the truth is sifted in an attempt to sway another to their side. Discussion like this can be competitive. It is motivated by concern for one's own view of the truth. Meanwhile some members are not even given the chance to speak. Many choose not to listen.

On the other hand, when we enter into Holy Conversation, we are open to learning something new. There is mutual respect between persons, as we acknowledge each other as equals. We stay curious about each other. We expect that, at times, our conversation might get messy or ambiguous. We slow down, so we have time to think and reflect. The goal is to share our thoughts, feelings, and experiences and to listen to those of others. We explore questions that matter. As we converse, we hold fast to the virtues of love and truth, and find opportunities (Continue on bottom of page 15).



Are You Ready For Some Action?!

Kathy Taormina, SFO, Chair
kltfsfo@frontiernet.net 952-997-2243
www.franciscanyouthusa.com

The Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission held its annual meeting in April to pray, discern and plan for the future. The clued-up commission took their diverse personal experiences and incorporated the mandates from the 2007, 1st YouFra Assembly and the suggestions from the 2007, Franciscan Youth Congress' participants to chart a course for the next three years.

A new vision for the FYYA, includes a more uniform FYYA formation, an enhanced presence within the SFO, and more opportunities to serve the poor among us through mission and apostolic works. It was discussed and implemented.

Highlights of the vision are:

- **USA FYYA Local Fraternities list** – is now located under the contacts link on the left column on our web site at www.franciscanyouthusa.com
- **New Commission Member** – the FYYA Young Adult Members appointed Timothy Taormina, SFO to the FYYA Commission beginning immediately. Timothy was the Franciscan Youth USA delegate at the 1st YouFra Assembly in 2007 and brings that experience and enthusiasm to the Commission.
- **SFO Profession** – FYYA Commission member Manuel Hernandez will celebrate his SFO Profession in May. Manny has shared his gifts with YouFra, the FYYA Commission, and now brings joins those gifts to the SFO, as a member. *Congratulations!*
- **FYYA SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS** – to raise funds for scholarships to National FYYA Assemblies/Gatherings, the FYYA will reissue the brown *PEACE and GOOD* rubber wristbands and black *GOT GOD?* T-shirts and craft new beaded *PEACE* bracelets. Information will follow on how to order for individuals or FYYA/SFO fraternities to raise their own funds for Franciscan Youth.
- **FWYD 2008** – the Franciscan Youth USA will be represented by FYYA Commission member Ashley Hautman, SFO from July 12-20, in Sydney, Australia. Daily photos will be posted on the web site's front page!

- **National Statutes of the Franciscan Youth/Young Adults of the United States of America** – revisions will be presented for ratification to NaFra during the annual meeting in October.
- **H2O Project** – Manuel Hernandez and Cathy Kwon, FYYA Commission members, are scheduled to be a part of the Mission Trip with the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters to Honduras in November. They will physically and spiritually support the *Sister Water Project*, as they build a water system for, and pray with, the indigenous people in the village. Check us out on the OFM Conventual web site in the newsletter link to *FRANCISCANS IN ACTION*
http://www.franciscans.org/ENEWSLETTER_000.htm
- **Reserve the Dates** – the 2nd *Franciscan Youth Congress – a National YouFra Assembly* will be held in San Antonio, Texas in late June/early July 2009. The focus of this Assembly will be group participation in a local mission project. More information on the web site will follow, as it becomes available.

**GET READY AND STRAP ON YOUR
FRANCISCAN SEATBELTS...IT'S
GOING TO BE A RADICAL RIDE!!!**

+++

Formation Continued from page 14.

to exercise other virtues such as patience and forgiveness. The result is a Holy Conversation that is generative and transforming, as it develops a shared meaning that wasn't there before.

Good communication skills are vital to the work of formation within our fraternities. At our 2007 Quinquennial Congress, Rev. Eric Law presented to us some wonderful communication tools. I encourage all fraternities to investigate and utilize these tools, keeping in mind the Christian context in which they were presented.* Franciscans are called to ongoing conversion. Holy Conversation will help us on that journey. Let us go forth together to listen in LOVE and witness in TRUTH.

All praise to Christ who is Truth! All honor and glory to God who is Love!

*Rev. Eric Law's "Respectful Communication Guidelines" and a description of "Mutual Invitation" can be found on the NAFRA website. Click on "Quinquennial Congress 2007" and then "Handouts from the Keynote talk on Wednesday."

Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation

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

JPIC, fully living the Secular Franciscan Rule, responds to the call of the Church in the twenty-first century. The apostolic commissions, combined to form JPIC, allow for maturation of the secular Franciscan charism. The previous two articles written for the TAU-USA were addressed to all members of the SFO in the US. It is crucial that everyone is given the same opportunity to understand JPIC and, from the beginning, receive all information/formation.

Some are eager to jump into restructuring, not seeing the need for formation “after all this is nothing new.” We cannot quickly move JPIC into structure. That implies trading one system for another, remaining dysfunctional and unsure of our Franciscan culture. If we do not take the time for study and prayer about our identity, direction, and the secular Franciscan vision we will be no better off than we were with our frustrations with the apostolic commission model. Formation requires prayer, patience, lively discussion, and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Church calls all Orders to return to their founders’ intentions. Now is the opportunity to do just that as expressed in the Preparatory Document for the International General Chapter in Hungary.

Francis lived in an era of penitential movements arising from the desire to live the gospel more deeply—holiness belonged to the laity also! These movements took on various forms and expressions and not all groups were heretical as we’ve often heard. Francis was moved by scripture and, most likely, spiritual direction from the clergy with whom he associated. He found that Biblical conversion (metanoia) and respect for the clergy was lacking in penitential movements. For him, these were essential elements if one were to follow the gospel authentically.

Some scholars believe his “Letter to All the Faithful” was written for his followers in the ordinary circumstances of life who could not leave family and work responsibilities. Written for us, some 800 years later, it remains vibrant with exhortation for today’s world, becoming the Prologue to our 1978 Rule. Our Rule, a Vatican II document, rich in the context of today’s new evangelization, will lack the vitality of our Franciscan penitential foundation unless we understand it in light of the Prologue

The Penitents of Assisi lived an interior change of heart to God, without which acts of penance are empty. Prayer, fasting, alms giving, and works of mercy take on a new meaning: personal sanctity and transforming the ills of society. Conversion on this level – to this extent – is not easy. It requires a constant vigilance and a community to support and give guidance. Fraternity is another hallmark of the penitential way of life. To quote Henri Nouwen, *Because now the question no longer is: How can I best develop my spiritual life and share it with others? But Where do we find the community of faith to which the Spirit of God descends and from which God’s message of hope and love can be brought as a light into the world? Once this question becomes our main concern we can no longer separate the spiritual life from life in community, belonging to God from belonging to each other and seeing Christ from seeing one another.* (Behold the Beauty of the Lord, H. Nouwen, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 1987, p 60)

We have a lot of work ahead of us to “re-discern” our Franciscan way of life. Let us rise up with joyful hearts to meet the challenge, embracing the fullness of Pentecost.

Being and Doing:

* Use the preparatory document for upcoming International Chapter with your fraternity as on going formation. Be sure to send Anne Mulqueen your discussion responses by September 15.

* Quietly read the Prologue, sit with it a while. Hear Francis speaking these words to you personally, to your fraternity. Listen to the voice of God in the Prologue.

* Evaluate your “one new way to energize your life in the Church/ Fraternity” from the last TAU-USA issue **Being and Doing**. What further call from the gospel do you hear?



SFO, Friar and Sister FAN Commissioners in Washington DC

FAN is off to a Good Start!

By Dan Mulholland, SFO

The FAN meeting held in Washington DC on March 6-7 was a good effort for the twenty action Commissioners and Staff who attended from the six regions from around the US (bios are available at http://www.franciscanaction.org/FAN_Staff.html). The SFO was well represented with Ken Beattie, Tom Bello, Patti DeWitt, Dan Mulholland, Jan Parker, and Stephanie Sormane all present.

The meeting had good input; “How Do We Do Change” was discussed with our 450 represented ministries in the USA Franciscan Family. Change starts from our experience as Franciscans to then perform social analysis (political, economic, sociological, and cultural) examined in light of our Faith and Values to see what God invites us to do to make some dedicated actions for change in our society. This may be to raise our Franciscan voice when bills in Congress reach some critical points, where they may be dropped because of lack of perceived support. With a Franciscan voice in Washington DC, we may be able to positively change some legislation to reflect the common good.

We had discussions on how a Bill becomes Law and the process where 30,000 bills introduced may only result in 300 bills becoming laws. Ken Preston-Pile, from Pace e Bene, discussed how to approach advocacy from a non-violent, Franciscan perspective, and used Franciscan Sr. Rosemary Lynch, who is almost 90, as an example. Sr. Rosemary says, “Advocacy starts with Spiritual Groundedness,” and building connections with your legislator, connecting

to their goodness. A start is to express gratitude for bills they have supported, and appeal to them on new issues from a position of values and faith. She always approaches this from a win-win approach for what can be done rather than from being reproachful for what hasn't been done. Sr. Rosemary points out that you may not get through the first time, but you will have established a relationship that opens the door the next time, on the next issue. Relationships are always more important than issues when trying to advocate.

Here are some pictures from the FAN meeting where you may see a couple of familiar faces:

http://www.dannymai.org/FAN_Meeting_March_2008/.

We adjourned the meeting to visit the new FAN office, and have a blessing ceremony, followed in proper Franciscan fashion by a dinner. The next day we finished up discussions on how to expand the FAN membership and what things can be done to the website to support these efforts. It will be possible for members in different regions to join FAN using the website fairly soon after things settle down from the FAN Kick Off. We finished up by noon after a Mass and adjourned to travel to the hotel in Alexandria, VA.

The FAN Kick Off started the next evening after the 6:00 PM Mass. The FAN press release follows this article on page 18. Below are links to the pictures I took from the FAN Kick Off, which weren't too many as I was too busy talking with old friends. It was good to see Marie Dennis, SFO (from Maryknoll and co-director of Pax Christi USA) and Franciscan Sr. Marie Lucy there, as well as one of my favorite Jesuits, Jim Hug, SJ (from the Center of Concern). Ann Corro, SFO and Karen Connair, SFO (from St Margaret of Cortona Region) and Ken Butigen and Ken Preston-Pile (from Pace e Bene) were there also, as were many FAN Commissioners and guests to witness the Kickoff. http://dannymai.org/FAN_Kickoff/

Fr. Hug, SJ told me afterwards that he didn't realize that the Franciscans were so “High Church” (referring to the formality of the Kick Off). I told him we can be when we need to be.

FAN is off to a good start!

Franciscan Action Network

P.O. Box 29053
Washington, DC 20017
Phone 202-527-7575
www.franciscanaction.org



Transforming the World in the Spirit of
St. Francis and St. Clare

Contact Person: Peter Sloan
sloan@franciscanaction.org

Franciscans “Launch” Inspirational Social Change Network

New Level of Public Action Envisioned

March 8, 2008; Washington, DC—With spiritual and social transformation on their mind, more than 130 representatives of the new social advocacy organization, Franciscan Action Network, celebrated a transformation of their own—one from shared idea to joint reality. Michael Perry, OFM, formerly with *Franciscans International*, was one of the evening’s two keynote speakers. Fr. Perry, a friar from the Sacred Heart Province in the nation’s heartland, touched on the theme of an idea whose time has already come.

“Much like the Franciscan movement of the 12th and 13th centuries, the Franciscan Action Network arises at a particularly critical moment in the course of human history,” said Fr. Perry. “It comes at a moment when the future of the planet and its inhabitants is being decided.” Fr. Perry put the nascent network, called “FAN,” into this context of a world in crisis, a world in need of faith-based innovation. The speaker implied that partnership with the UN-based non-governmental agency, FI, and other like-minded non-

profit organizations, would be a part of the new network’s overall strategy.

FAN’s kickoff celebration, slated as a halftime event at Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD), underscored another part of that strategy. From March 7th to the 10th, EAD played host not only to FAN, but to over seven hundred other religious advocates in a weekend that culminated in 250 visits to congressional legislators on Capitol Hill. During the visits, EAD participants from all religious denominations advocated for a truer vision of security, one based on human and ecological well-being rather than fear and mistrust.

“It is just this type of integrated awareness – of faith with social responsibility – that our new network seeks to facilitate,” said Russell Testa, executive director of FAN. Mr. Testa, a layperson, cited the support of fellow ecumenical leaders as crucial to the organization’s ability to realize its full potential. “Many people don’t know it, but St. Francis was ecumenically-minded, to employ a modern term,” he said.

“In reaching out to a leader of the Muslim faith by traveling to Egypt and Syria during the 13th century, Francis demonstrated the kind of moral courage from which we hope to draw inspiration.” Mr. Testa said that FAN is dedicated to bringing a Franciscan approach to Christian-based social advocacy. Over the next few years, as it grows, FAN will help the more than 450 Franciscan ministries in the U.S.

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The National Archives of the SFO

By Sharon Deveaux, SFO
2416 N Valencia Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92706
sharonx@earthlink.net

The archives continue to grow with new materials coming in. If you have anything that you think needs to be in the archives or need some information that may be in the archives, please contact me. Thank you. Sharon

Quote:

There were many ways of breaking a heart.
stories were full of hearts broken by love,
but what really broke a heart was taking away
its dream – whatever that dream might be.

Pearl Buck



OUR EXTENDED FAMILY: JUDAISM

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

In the last issue, I addressed the family resemblance among the various branches of the Christian family tree. Now, I am going to turn our attention to our extended family, namely the other Abrahamic religions: Judaism and Islam. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are called “Abrahamic Religions” because they trace their spiritual ancestries back to the Hebrew patriarch, Abraham.

Pope John Paul II called Judaism “our sister,” meaning that we were very closely related to that tradition. After all, Jesus was a Jew, as were the apostles. The earliest followers of Jesus were Jewish, and saw themselves as a form of Judaism. Building on the pope’s family analogy, I would like to suggest that Judaism is our older sister. Like many older siblings, Judaism broke new ground, tested the waters, and laid a groundwork upon which her younger siblings could build. Through many centuries of religious evolution, she fine-tuned her ideas of monotheism, the Covenant, God’s ability to bring good out of bad situations, and the dignity of human beings created in the Image of God, and passed these on to their younger siblings--us.

One of the biggest mistakes the Church ever made was to think that, after Jesus, God abandoned the Jews, that their Covenant was nullified. The Church’s liturgy prayed for the “perfidious Jews.” We carried out persecutions, and even put them to death. We forgot that St. Paul said that God will never abandon the Jews, and since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has taught that authoritatively. In fact, Jews have a rich tradition of biblical scholarship, theology and spirituality that developed from the ancient world, through the Middle Ages and into the present day.

After the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 AD, there were only two forms of Judaism that survived: the school of the Pharisees and the Jesus movement. As time continued, these two rival interpretations of Judaism parted ways, with the Jesus movement growing into the Christian Church, and Pharisaic school developing into rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinical schools produced commentaries on the Torah, called

the Mishnah and the Talmud. By the Middle Ages, Judaism, like Christianity, had been influenced by Greek philosophy. Moses Maimonides, a Spanish-born rabbi, incorporated elements of Aristotle’s philosophy into his study of the Torah, and he, in turn, influenced Thomas Aquinas, who lovingly calls him, “Rabbi Moses.”

A rich mystical tradition also emerged. Like Christian mystics, Jewish mystics believed that God could be directly experienced. The Kabbalah is a system of intellectual mysticism that explores the relationship between God and the world. Only married males over the age of 40 were allowed to study the Kabbalah, because the secrets it contained could drive one mad. In the 18th century, a more devotional form of mystical Judaism emerged in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov (Lord of the Good Name), a Ukranian rabbi who used folk tales, song and dance to celebrate ecstatic love for God. These two forms of mysticism continue to inspire Jews and non-Jews today.

There are six main forms of modern Judaism. Orthodox Jews believe that the commands of the Torah are eternal, and they try to keep every one. They segregate men and women to opposite sides of the synagogue (because of purity laws). Their services are in Hebrew. Men keep their heads covered at all times (either with a hat or a “skull cap” - a yamulke) to show that God is always above them.

Reform Judaism, on the other hand, has made many adaptations to ancient practices, holding that some are not necessary, or even desirable, in today’s world. Their liturgies are largely in the vernacular, they do not segregate the sexes at services, and they ordain women rabbis.

Conservative Jews believe, with Reform, that many practices are not necessary today. However, they feel that Reform Judaism has gone too far in adapting to the modern age. They keep most of the ancient laws, but make adaptations for certain ones (e.g., travel on the Sabbath). They have, in recent years, begun to ordain women rabbis.

Hasidic Judaism is sometimes called “ultra-orthodox.” Their followers dress completely in black, tend to live in their own communities, and practice a type of Jewish devotional mysticism that goes back to the Baal Shem Tov. Their worship is joyous, often incorporating singing and dancing.

Reconstruction Judaism is a 20th century movement that believes that change is an essential part of the Jewish Tradition. However, they feel that Reform is too individualistic, and so they emphasize the importance of community. Jewish Renewal is an

attempt to bring the mysticism of Hasidism into the modern age. They draw deeply from the mystical teachings, seeking union with God, but are also informed by modern science, and are open to modern movements like feminism, and so forth.

Judaism, our older sister, is alive and well, and continuing, like their ancestor Jacob, to wrestle with the Divine. And like any older sister, she has a lot to teach her younger siblings.

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Eldercare from a Franciscan Prospective

Continued from page 5.

Staying sane as the caregiver may be a challenge!

You get the point....repetition, as a result of dementia, can be maddening. This leads to the topic of self-care. You are the "life blood" of your patient. You may be their energy, help, hope, hands and feet. It is essential that you maintain your own health. Become aware of stress...headaches, aches in your neck or back are indicators. Stress can be alleviated through exercise, sharing your feelings with a trusted friend, getting adequate sleep, healing touch or massage therapy. No time for these stress relievers? No excuse! It is essential for you to care for you.

Prayer is always an effective stress reliever. The Lord has promised to share your burdens when you are willing to turn them over to him. St. Francis admonished: If you are upset for any reason whatever, you should immediately rise up to prayer, and you should remain in the presence of the Most High Father for as long as it takes him to restore you to the joy of your salvation. As a caregiver, you may require St. Francis' "therapy" many times each day. The stages of grief apply for both the patient and the caregiver in eldercare. Denial says to us, "It is really not so bad. She will be better soon." This may be true at times but not always.

Anger surfaces when the patient refuses to do what is necessary for recovery. Past neglect of self creates resentment. The caregiver may be angry at himself, "If I had only noticed that she wasn't feeling well!" And yes, you both may be angry at God. That's okay...God can take it! In prayer be honest with God about your feelings.

Bargaining enters the scene. We may bargain with God, with the patient, with the medical people. "If he just improves, I promise to _____!" This stage may yield to depression. You may find yourself sitting, looking into space, unwilling to move or even think. You may not want to get out of bed or eat. Your energy level may drop to that of a

slug. Dealing with the circumstances surrounding you may seem impossible. Don't deny depression. Deal with it. Sometimes simply admitting you are depressed is the beginning of healing. Acceptance marks the time to move on with the care giving, to strive for improvement or admit that your patient may not achieve the level of his former health.

The spiritual side of eldercare must not be neglected. Some might say, "Offer it up." I prefer *praising* the Lord in all things. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! ...Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God." Philippians 4:4, 6-7

Prayer may be difficult when in emotional or physical pain or when confusion marks your thoughts. Focusing on the rosary or on an icon may enable prayer during these times. St. Clare admonished Agnes of Prague to pray with our whole being by: gazing on Jesus [our eyes on the San Damiano Cross], considering him [our mind]; contemplating him [our spirit], desiring to imitate him [our heart] and suffering with him [and we will reign with him]. Weep with him and you will rejoice with him. Die to self on the cross of tribulation and Heaven will be yours.

You are never alone during your caregiving. God's love surrounds you even in the darkest times and Jesus is always our companion. Caring for a loved one is a time of personal integration. We discover who we really are. We may not like all we see, but the opportunity is there for personal growth. We are called to create hope. The late Erma Bombeck interview a group of kids with cancer. One told her that she would like to create hopelets, describing them as little hopes that could be shared. Expect healing! People are healed; diseases are cured. Offer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, healing touch therapy, prayer, praise, joy, laughter all help with healing. ***Live for the moment, even if the moment seems precarious!***

Resources:

Administration on Aging aoa.gov
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging Area Agency on Aging n4a.org or 1-800-677-1116
Family Caregiver Alliance Family Caregiver Alliance National Center caregiver.org
AARP aarp.org
Catholic Social Services
Eldercare Locator eldercare.gov 1-800-677-1116
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys naela.org
Medicare Rights Medicare Rights Center medicarerights.org
National Hospice and Palliative Care Org. nhpco.org
Nursing Homes Medicare - Nursing Home Compare medicare.gov/nhcompare

Origin of Three Distinct Orders

By Delia Banchs, SFO
Contributing Editor
sfohelper@aol.com

The desire to categorize, classify or prioritize, while giving structure to society, has often been a task undertaken by leaders throughout history. St. Gregory (535-604 AD) was such a leader. Known as *Gregory the Great*, he reigned as Pope from 590-604 AD. He came from upper class patrician society, and had served in the Roman government before he left it to become a Benedictine monk. Called forth to become Pope, he began to work to bring structure to the disorder within society and the Church of the early Middle Ages.

Pope Gregory conceived three distinct *orders* or “*states of life*” which went from the lower to the higher levels of commitment towards perfection: Christian lay people, Clerics in pastoral service Monks and nuns dedicated to contemplation.

The reforms in the Church of the 12th century, which brought about the “Renewal of Monasticism,” and the various Crusades gave birth to the new religious “Orders of Chivalry:” Knights of Malta (1099), Knights of St. John, also known Knights Hospitalers (1113), Order of Knights Templar (1118), Orders of Alcántara and Calatrava (1156, 1158), Order of Knights of Santiago (1161), and the Teutonic Knights (1189).

Early during the “holy wars” of the Crusades (1096-1270), the Knights Hospitalers were founded to care for sick pilgrims in the Holy Land. Originally engaged in actual nursing, in 1118 the Knights became primarily a military order to defend the “holy places.”

The Templars were founded as “soldier-monks” to protect pilgrims journeying from Europe to the Holy Land, and to defend Christian holdings in the East. Their Rule was written in 1128, by St. Bernard of Clairveaux, and they lodged next to the site of the Temple in Jerusalem. Their ever increasing numbers, power, and wealth aroused political opposition: Pope Clement V dissolved the Templars in 1311.

In Spain, to protect pilgrims and fight the Moors, the Orders of Calatrava, Alcántara and Santiago were founded. These religious Orders were under the authority of the Pope, but in 1523, were annexed by the Spanish Crown. They elected their own Grand Master and had great power.

Essential Elements of Franciscan Spirituality

By G.W. Irving, SFO
girving@teamcmi.com

Our Secular Franciscan ongoing formation is a continual and enlightening process. Recently, Alice and I attended a National Formation Workshop in Florida. Gratefully, we learned many things and would like to share one thing in particular: a strikingly simple list of “**Seventeen Essential Elements of Franciscan Spirituality**,” from Motion 9, Assisi Congress, 1969. We have maintained the listing of Constitution Articles that were in the original document. These have changed with the publication of the current Constitutions, but we wanted to illustrate that these Essential Elements are all based on the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order and each of these Essential Elements could be used for ongoing formation at a Fraternity meeting.

17 Essential Elements of Franciscan Spirituality:

- 1...To live the gospel according to the spirit of St. Francis (Articles 1,4,5,14)
- 2...To be converted continually (Articles 2,4,5,7,9,12,16)
- 3...To live as sisters and brothers of all people and of all creation (Articles 13,18)
- 4...To live in communion with Christ (Articles 1,4,5,14)
- 5...To follow the poor and crucified Christ (Article 10)
- 6...To share in the life and mission of the Church (Article 6)
- 7...To share in the love of the Father (Articles 4, 12)
- 8...To be instruments of peace (Article 19)
- 9...To have a life of prayer that is personal, communal & liturgical (Article 8)
- 10...To live in joy (Article 19:2)
- 11...To have a spirituality of a secular nature (Articles 3,6,8,11,13,14)
- 12...To be pilgrims on the way toward the Father (Article 11:2)
- 13...To participate in the apostolate of the laity (Articles 15,16,17,18,19,24)
- 14...To be at the service of the less fortunate (Articles 13,14,15)
- 15...To be loyal to the Church in an attitude of dialogue and collaboration with her ministers (Article 6:2)
- 16...To be open to the action of the Holy Spirit (Articles 1, 4:2)
- 17...To live in simplicity, humility and minority (Article 11:1)

General Chapter

The next General Chapter will be held in November 2008, in Hungary and the theme will be *“The Profession of Secular Franciscans and Their Sense of Belonging...”*

Prayer for the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order

Most High Glorious God, we praise You for Your presence in the world and for the tremendous gift of our Franciscan vocation.

We beseech You to inspire every brother and sister of the Secular Franciscan Order as we prepare for the upcoming General Chapter in Hungary.

Grant the necessary wisdom to our brothers and sisters who will take part in the Chapter to develop the priorities for the Order for the next six years and to elect those You want to lead and animate us.

Guide and direct us so that we may follow the Gospel and our Rule more closely and be coworkers with You in the rebuilding of the Church and the World.

We ask this through Christ our Lord and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis, St. Clare, and our holy patrons St. Elizabeth and St. Louis.

Amen.

NAFRA Peace Award

“A nominee should have made significant efforts in the generally defined area of Peace. Current activities would carry more weight than past activity; that is, a nominee exhibiting current Peace activity will have more weight over a nominee who displayed activity a few years ago. In order to prevent any scandal, the nominee should be of known good moral character. As this is a National award, nominees who reside in the United States or U.S. Territories would have more weight than nominees from other parts of the world. Nominees need not be Franciscan or Catholic. Nominees should not be political, nor carry an agenda.”

Nominations may be submitted in hard copy by email to any of the members of the Committee: our National Peace and Justice Chair, Carolyn Colburn (colburn@sonic.net); La Verna Regional Minister and former Chair of the Peace Award Committee, Ken Beattie (beatiesfo@aol.com); St. Clare Regional Minister, Jan Parker (jansfo@yahoo.com); Mother Cabrini Regional Minister, Stephanie Sormane (stefsfo@sbcglobal.net); or to me, directly (Tom Bello, SFO/ 1710 Chesterbrook Vale Ct./McLean, VA 22101-3244/tbellosfo@aol.com).
(For more info: write to: Tom Bello, SFO).

A nomination needs to be of three parts: one, the name of the possible recipient; two, reasons why this person should be considered; three, the name of the person or group making the nomination.

The firm deadline for receiving nominations is July 1, 2008.

Past National Peace Award Recipients are:

1950 - Myron C. Taylor
 1951 - John Foster Dulles
 1952 - John W. McCormack
 1953 - John C. Wur
 1954 - Ralph Bunche
 1955 - *
 1956 - John R. Gariepy
 1957 - Most Rev. Richard J. Cushing
 1958 - Patrick McGrehan, Sr.
 1959 - Victor Andrew Belaunde
 1960 - J. Edgar Hoover
 1961 - George K. Hunter
 1962 - Mrs. Lester Auberlin
 1963 - Rev. Martin L. King
 1964 - Most Rev. John J. Wright
 1965 - Pope Paul VI
 1966 - Cardinal Wyszynski
 1967 - Bishop Fred Pierce Carson
 1968 - Robert F. Kennedy (post)
 1969 - Msgr. Robert Fox
 1970 - Bp. James Walsh MM
 1971 - *
 1972 - Jean Vanier
 1973 - *
 1974 - Mother Teresa of Calcutta
 1975 - Dom Helder Camara
 1976 - Abp. Joseph L. Bernadine
 1977 - 1979 *
 1980 - Anwar Sadat
 1981 - 1985 *
 1986 - Pope John Paul II
 1987 - 1999 *
 2000 - James Flickinger, SFO
 2001 - Hal Sieber, SFO
 2002 - Ona Harris, SFO
 2003 - 2006 *
 2007 - Dr. Anthony Lazzara, SFO
 (* No award that year).

Comprehensive Course on Franciscan Missionary Charism from Germany

The CCFMC-News, Challenge and Reflection are on line. You can read it or download it at:

News:

pdf: http://www.ccfmc.net/wEnglish/ccfmc/ccfmc-news/2008/2008_04_News.pdf

html: http://www.ccfmc.net/wEnglish/ccfmc/ccfmc-news/2008/2008_04_News.shtml

Challenge:

http://www.ccfmc.net/wEnglish/ccfmc/impulse/2008/2008_04Impuls.shtml?navId=13

Reflection:

http://www.ccfmc.net/wEnglish/ccfmc/meditation/2008/2008_04_Medidation.shtml?navId=116



A Summer Seminar for Secular Franciscans
 Endorsed by the National Executive Council of the SFO
“Development of Lay Leadership in the Secular Franciscan Order”

June 26 – 29, 2008

At St. Francis University - Loretto, PA



Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR, is currently the Director of Novices for his religious community, and serves on his province’s leadership team. He was ordained in 1978, and has been involved in spiritual ministry and retreat work since

1979. He has traveled widely throughout the country in a ministry of preaching, spiritual conferences, and retreats. He served on the formation team for his religious community as Vocation Director from 1993 to 1996, and has done extensive work in Franciscan Spirituality through the Franciscan Federation of the U.S. and as a spiritual assistant for the Secular Franciscan Order at the local, provincial, and regional levels. Fr. Bernie serves on the Advisory Board of the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life at St. Francis University, and teaches a course on Franciscan Servant Leadership for the Institute.

Fr. Bernie is a founding member of the Vineyard Guild, an ecumenical organization dedicated to promoting spiritual leadership and a member of Spiritual Directors International. He is an author of spiritual books including, “Paradox: *The Spiritual Path to Transformation.*”

Anne Mulqueen, SFO

has served the Order in many ways in the 24 years, since her profession. Currently, she is serving as the National Fraternity’s International Councilor to CIOFS. Before being elected International Councilor, Anne served as formation director at all levels of fraternity in the United States: local, provincial, regional, and national. In her role as formation director, she has conducted and presented at various formation forums, including *Spirit and Life Team presentations.*



NEW BOOKS

Seeking a Gospel Life

By Lester Bach, OFM, Cap, Barbo-Carlson Enter.

Seeking a Gospel Life explores the scriptural foundations of our Franciscan life. It can be a helpful book for people who are related to SFO people but not a part of the SFO. It would help them understand our Franciscan approach to life. It is also helpful for SFO members to go from *gospel to life and life to gospel.*

History of the Secular Franciscan Order
In the United States Volume I

By William Wicks, SFO, Barbo-Carlson Enter.

Some fraternities plan to use this book as a fraternity program to study the early history of the SFO in the U.S. A study guide is available upon request to author at sfowicks2@earthlink.net. Volume II of SFO History (1942 to 1978) is presently being written, and should be available for sale by the end of the year.

Old Books

Good news for readers: There are now many old books back in print. See below:

Franciscan Supplies:

Franciscan Resources

P O Box 350
 Menahaga, MN 56464
 800-772-6910
 franres@wcta.net

Old books back in print,
 Fully Mature-the Fullness of Christ, etc.

Barbo-Carlson Enterprise

P O Box 189, Lindsborg, KS 67456
 785-227-2364, bevbarbo@kans.com

Books and formation material,
 Catch Me A Rainbow Too, Pick More Daisies, etc

St. Anthony Messenger Press

28 West Liberty St.
 Cincinnati, OH 45202
 800-488-0488

The Ritual, To Live as Francis Lived, etc.

A Little Bit of History

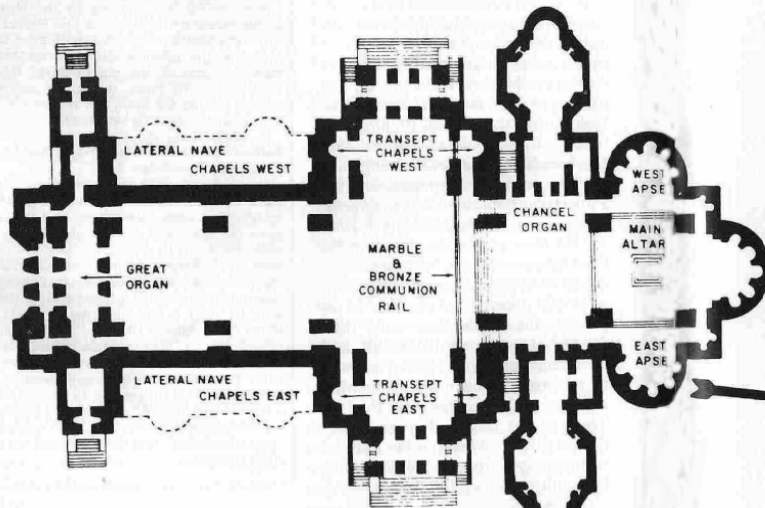
Pope Visits the National Shrine

By Bill Wicks, SFO
National Historian

As you know, in mid-April, our nation was blessed with a visit by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. On April 16, he celebrated vespers at the Basilica of the national shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in Washington D.C. What you may not know is that the East Apse (see plan shown below), known as the Franciscan memorial, was sponsored by the Franciscan family in the United States. The Tertiaries donated their share, \$100,000 – amounting to \$1.00 for each member. The five apsidal chapels are dedicated to the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. Six statues of Franciscan Saints are positioned between the chapels, and a large mosaic of St. Joseph the Defender of the Church, rises above the chapels to the dome. If you are ever fortunate enough to visit the basilica, search out this Franciscan memorial that was gifted in our name. (Franciscan Herald and Forum 1964)



EAST APSE
FRANCISCAN MEMORIAL
GREAT MOSAIC

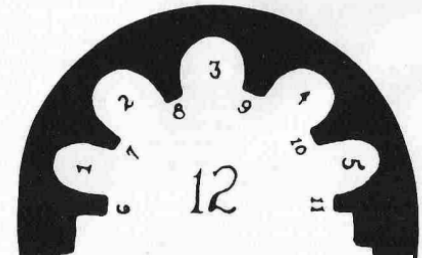


FIVE APSIDAL CHAPELS
Dedicated to the
Sorrowful Mysteries
of the Rosary

1. Christ's Agony in the Garden
2. Christ is Scourged at the Pillar
3. Christ is Crowned with Thorns
4. Christ Carries His Cross
5. Christ Dies on the Cross

SIX STATUES OF
FRANCISCAN SAINTS

6. St. Francis of Assisi
7. St. Clare
8. St. Anthony
9. St. Bonaventure
10. St. Joseph Cupertino
11. St. Lawrence Brindisi
12. ST. JOSEPH,
THE DEFENDER
OF THE CHURCH



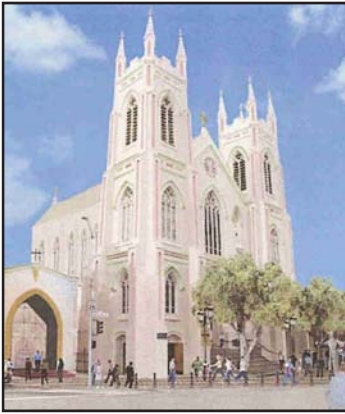
The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., is the preeminent Marian shrine of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. This beautiful votive church of pilgrimage...honors the Blessed Mother under the title of the Immaculate Conception, as the Patroness of the United States. Built as the medieval cathedrals of Europe, without structural steel beams, framework, or columns, the Shrine is entirely of stone, brick, tile and mortar. It is a blending of techniques, both ancient and new, in which architecture mingles with symbol.

“...the Shrine is home to the largest collection of contemporary ecclesiastical art in the United States. Amid a rich patina of mosaics, sculptures, and artistic renderings, the more than 65 chapels and oratories reflect not only the devotional traditions of the American Church but also the rich ethnic mélange of the Universal Church. In 1990, Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) named the National Shrine a minor basilica, the 36th in the United States.

See: www.nationalshrine.com

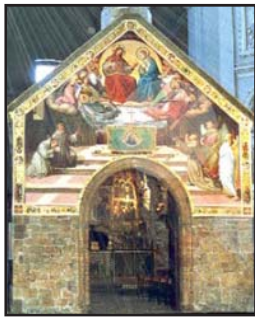
The Renaissance Project

By William Wicks, SFO
National Historian



St. Francis of Assisi Church (at left), the first parish church of San Francisco, was recognized a National Shrine by the National [United States] Conference of Catholic Bishops in September, 1999. The Renaissance Project is an inspired plan to bring the Shrine to its true potential, in four phases (see below): The Porziuncola, The Piazza, Preservation, and Programs.

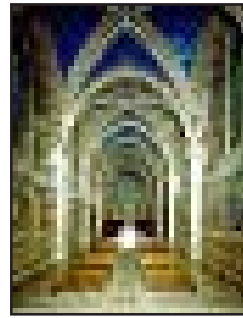
The first phase of the Renaissance Project, the building of a replica of the Porziuncola Chapel (next to the Church), will be completed this year and will be dedicated on September 27th by Cardinal William Levada, Protector of the Congregation of the Doctrines of the Faith. All are invited to participate in this grand celebration. For up-to-date information, access www.shrinerenewal.org/overview.



Porziuncola



Benny Bufano Statue



Preservation



Programs

- A replica of St. Francis' **porziuncola** chapel from Assisi, Italy, right next to the Shrine's main Church
- A welcoming **piazza** on Vallejo Street, featuring the renowned Benny Buffalo statue of St. Francis
- A beautiful upgrade of the exterior and interior of the Church – a **preservation** of our national treasure
- An international spiritual center with **programs** that express Franciscan prayer and thought

Francisco's Rock



Francisco's rock is one of the two rocks that were reclaimed during the retrofit of the Porziuncola in 1998. The Vatican believes the rock was handled by St. Francis during his building of the chapel. One of the rocks was a gift to the shrine. It is a cherished relic that will be permanently installed in the altar of the Porziuncola replica in an open enclosure so pilgrims can touch it.

Classic Franciscan

Julia Pearson, SFO
Classic Franciscan Editor



A Dog And A Tau

By Jean Wonderly, SFO
and Teresa Gauspohl, SFO

An intense “Christ Renews His Parish” weekend retreat at her parish church deepened Teresa’s need to grow in her faith and led her to start her Secular Franciscan inquiry with a fledgling fraternity, to see if she had a vocation to be a Secular Franciscan. She began her studies with ten others and on August 28, 2005, Teresa was one of six, who made their permanent professions at Mass. This joyful event fit into her life, because of her love for Jesus and the gospel life. With God’s grace, the small, but growing St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity of fifteen Secular Franciscans in St. Maximilian Kolbe Region continues to do God’s work and that of St. Francis of Assisi.

The small thriving parish at Hicksville, located in Northwest Ohio, has something for all ages, including the blessing of the animals given by their remarkable parish priest, Fr. Oedy. Naturally, Teresa, who loves animals, took her dog, “Zach” for the blessing. Besides the blessing, three years of obedience school, a temperament evaluation and a special health record form from a veterinarian qualified Zach as a therapy dog. The temperament evaluation measured his behavior around people in wheelchairs, with crutches and special needs. His certification with a national agency and previous events in life led Zach, a 153 pound Newfoundland, to be in his unique ministry.

The yearly health form and the institution visits records, signed by an administrator, along with the annual fee, allow him to be re-registered. Zach’s picture badge allows him to go to nursing homes, hospitals, and libraries, where children can read to

him. Recently, therapy dogs were allowed to go into funeral homes, so the fraternity held a 12-week grief training program. Now, members can assist Teresa and her dog in this ministry.

The response Teresa gets, when she takes him to nursing homes and other places, is the most rewarding reason for having Zach as a therapy dog. The residents are so excited to see them when they visit almost every weekend. The joy this big loveable dog brings into their lives brightens their smiling faces like lighted Christmas trees! Teresa and Zach can fill a small void when they visit. It’s wonderful to hear them talk about their families and find out what is new and exciting that is happening in their lives. Sometimes the news they are telling her is not always good, but they start telling her while petting Zach, and you can see the joy he brings them. They always ask Zach if he’s been a good boy, and they ask about Abbey, a two-year-old Newfoundland, who is also being trained to be a therapy dog.

On February 17, 2008, Zach was officially made the St. Michael the Archangel’s Fraternity Mascot. How wonderful to have Franciscan Mascot Therapy Dog and St. Francis will be smiling from above. They can both wear their Taus to the places they visit. This should raise questions from the residents, and Teresa says that it will be great telling them about, Zach, the Franciscan Mascot.



Teresa Gauspohl, SFO and Therapy Dog, Zach



Backyard Retreat

By Faith Libbe, SFO
Staff Editor

I love to travel to beautiful “faraway” places on pilgrimage/retreat, such as Assisi and the Holy Land. I know in my heart, however, that I need not go beyond my own backyard to retreat with God and nature.

God has blessed my backyard in the Florida suburbs with a beautiful variety of wildlife and plant life. The beauty of nature in my own backyard inspires me to be still; and to contemplate an even greater beauty, that of its Creator. I like to think of this sacred space as a place of peace, where all of God’s creatures feel welcome and at home.

Some of the wildlife that has graced my backyard includes a wide variety of birds, such as: mourning doves, cardinals, blue jays, wrens, woodpeckers (including the magnificent piliated woodpecker), mockingbirds, tufted titmouses, and red-winged blackbirds. Some of the most unique sightings have included a parakeet and a precious little screech owl! I delight, with St. Francis, in feeling one with all of God’s creation. Indeed, we are all “related” as we share the same Heavenly Father! Perhaps this is why I desire to not only admire His creatures from afar, but to also have the occasional opportunity to “interact” with them!

One such opportunity arose after tossing a peanut towards a woodpecker perched in my sycamore tree. The woodpecker did not hesitate to investigate the peanut and subsequently devour it! Thus began an almost daily ritual of the woodpecker perching in the sycamore tree and boldly calling out to me to toss him a peanut! I would then (on cue!) toss him a peanut, he would swoop down, scoop it up, fly off to eat it, and return to the sycamore tree to repeat the same sequence!

In addition to birds, many, many squirrels have

graced my backyard with their playful antics. Gifted beyond belief in their ability to outsmart a “squirrel proof” bird feeder, they never cease to amaze me! The squirrels are also fond of raw peanuts and boldly approach my porch in search of a handout! This can happen first thing in the morning, before I even finish my morning prayers! I have to smile, however, as another opportunity to interact with God’s creation presents itself!

The plant life in my backyard also delights my heart and inspires me to give thanks and praise to our Creator. Some of my favorites include butterfly weed (always attracting monarch butterflies), wisteria, camellias, jasmine, honeysuckle, bougainvillea, and roses. There is something about the beauty and fragrance of a rose, however, that touches my very soul. I have been brought to tears by the beauty of a rose glistening with morning dew, as my heart filled with love for our Creator. I recently discovered the following poem, placed next to a photo of a rose in a beautiful inspirational book I was reading:

***“Absorb beauty...look for beauty
and joy in the world around.
Look at a flower until its beauty
becomes part of your very soul.
It will be given back to the world again by you
In the form of a smile or a loving word
or a kind thought or a prayer...
Laugh more, laugh often.
Love more.”***

By Anonymous from “God Calling”

The beauty of God’s creation can indeed delight all of our senses and be experienced “around the clock.” As we open our eyes to a brand new day, are we not blessed to hear the beautiful, sweet song of the birds, welcoming the new day? Then, before we close our eyes at night, as we get down on our knees to pray and thank the Lord for the gift of the day, we can see the outline of the trees stretching up to the sky, revealing the beauty of the stars, right outside our window.

Let us give thanks for such “sacred refreshment” found in our own backyards! This summer, let us find a favorite chair or bench (or simply sit in the grass☺), close our eyes, savor the gentle breeze on our face, and smile as we are enveloped by God’s love. In our oneness with God and His creation, let us pray the same words as our seraphic father, St. Francis, “Praise be to thee my Lord, with all thy creatures!”



Emblem of America

(Since 1782 A. D.)

Painting and poem by Hulda Sellingsich, SFO

The bald eagle – strong and free,
Large brave and beautiful, will stand
As emblem of our land.

The eagle's nest built high may be
Over land, lake, near sea;
Withstanding storms of awesome might,
Safe from prey day and night.

Stout-hearted mates, chosen for life,
Share their work, claim their site;
In nests of sticks built high each year
They hatch chicks without fear.

The bird's defense for any cause
Is its sharp beak and claws;
Nature's way for sustaining life,
Avoiding rise in strife.

The eagles, beautiful in flight,
Through gift of long range sight
Can see what lies on earth below,
Alert for food or foe.

Stern eyes, yellow beak, and head white
Add stature to great might.
God grant our emblem and land be
Ever safe, strong and free!

Our Vacation by the Sea

By Angela Wagner, SFO

In a beautiful beach house by the sea,
My family gathers; so dear to me!

Selecting sea shells; seeing sunrise;
Savoring sea air; we're so free!

Riding waves; wading chairs;
Seeking sand crabs; brave are we!

Morning walks with my grandchildren,
Full of goodness and glee –

Just one week by the seashore,
So precious to me!

A Promise

By Shirley Hainse, SFO

I loved you yesterday
In the spring of our life.
It was a time of new beginnings,
The awakening of our sensuality
The dawn of our commitment
My promise to be always yours.

I loved you yesterday
In the summer of our life.
It was a time of giving and taking
The gift of our children from God,
The days of forgetting of self,
My promise renewed.

I love you today
In the fall of our life.
A time of reaping our harvest,
Commitments brought to fruition
The afternoon of knowing each other.
My promise the reality of our love.

I will love you for all our tomorrows
In the winter of our life
The seeking of our roots in God,
His divine love giving us peace.
The night a time of wisdom
His promise to be with us always,
My promise to you an echo.

St. Francis in Song

By Kenton S. Miller, SFO

How sad to be without a Song,
All dust and empty silence
Locked inside each day,
A marionette dangling
On soundless strings
Of dry necessity,
When Joy is in full Chorus,
Swelling in my breast till it explodes
And fills the universe with Love!

Within confines
Of your heart, too,
A Song is being sung
And its Harmonies
Can radiate and resonate
And shatter the icy glass encasement
Of your soul.

If you but learn to listen,
Adagios will fill your ears,
Endless etudes of boundless Love
In symphony of Compassion,
Then you too can join the Chorus
Of those for whom the Lord
Has sung His cosmos into being.

GOD'S WHISPER

By E. Jennings, SFO

Imagine –
God's whisper
Sticking to our skin like glue.

Imagine –
God's Whisper
Seeping into our every pore.

Imagine -
God's Whisper
Filling our lungs with His Wind.

Imagine –
God's Whisper
Enflaming our hearts with His Fire.

Imagine –
God's Whisper
Re-programming our brains into His.

Imagine –
God's Whisper
Shooting out of our eyes to all we see.

Imagine – God's Whisper!



By T. C. Chiu

Love Beyond Love

By Ellen Jennings, SFO

No love is freer for winning souls,
No love is greater for healing wounds.
The culmination of life on earth
Is found in the love from Christ's own birth.

To come to save us was only half the plan;
The treasure found in the Lamb
Was greater far beyond all thought;
Containing blessings the wise men sought.

A Heart of compassion for all those in sorrow
Who sees now only darkness, but receives Light
tomorrow
For Christ's Heart so Sacred shows us an end to our
plights.

That Heart that taught and led and healed
All who followed – and provided a meal.
The Heart that bid the children to come
To receive blessings that pour forth from the Son.

That Heart that gave a lasting call –
From a spear's wound the blood did fall.
And into the land such Love it did impart;
The great Agape Love from Christ's Sacred Heart.

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.*

AIN'T LOVE GRAND!

Two antennas met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.

No one is perfect until you fall in love with them.

Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

A hug is a great gift—one size fits all. It can be given for any occasion and it can be easily exchanged.

When you're in love, it shows.

The bonds of matrimony are a good investment only when the interest is kept up.

If you judge people, you have no time to love them.

A hopeful suitor registered with a computer dating center and entered the qualities he was seeking in a prospective date. He wanted someone who enjoyed water sports, liked company, favored formal attire, and was very petite.

The computer dating center operated faultlessly. It sent him a penguin.

Marriage is made in Heaven—so is thunder and lightning.

By all means, marry. If you get a good wife, you'll become happy; if you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher. Socrates

Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.

Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

"Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

Just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other. And just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do.

A man came home from the office and found his new bride sobbing in great distress.

"I feel terrible," she told him. "I was pressing your suit and I burned a big hole in the seat of your trousers."

"Oh, just forget it," consoled her husband.

"Remember that I've got an extra pair of pants for that suit."

"Yes, I know. And it's lucky you have!" said the woman, drying her eyes, "I was able to use a piece from them to patch the hole!"

May someone love you enough to forgive your faults, be blind to your blemishes, and tell the world about your virtues.

A senior citizen said to his eighty-year old buddy:

"So I hear you're getting married?"

"Yep!"

"Do I know her?"

"Nope!"

"This woman, is she good looking?"

"Not really."

"Is she a good cook?"

"Naw, she can't cook too well."

"Does she have lots of money?"

"Nope! Poor as a church mouse."

"Why in the world do you want to marry her then?"

"Because she can still drive after dark!"

When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take NO for an answer.

What other people think of you is none of your business. *All that truly matters in the end is that you loved!*

Our Stories

Francis, the Easter Saint

By Jan Parker, SFO
Minister of St. Clare Region

Last spring (2007), we featured an article in our Clarion inviting our brothers and sisters to think about what Easter might have meant to Francis. This Easter, our region received a letter from our Poor Clares in Belleville, Illinois. They had read the article in the Clarion and wanted to share with us the impact it had. They wrote: "Over the past year one of our Sisters became so interested in your proposal that she did a study on the topic, which turned out to be a real avenue of grace for her and us. Part of the fruits of her research, a three fold folder entitled "Francis of Assisi: 'The Easter Saint'" will be included in our community's post-Easter mailing... To thank you for your insights, which in turn gave rise to much prayer and pondering here, we are sending you a copy of the folder and the full study with references."

The folder the sisters sent to us is fascinating. It begins, "Can the Poor Man of Assisi who bore on his body the wounds of Jesus Crucified, rightly be called an "Easter Saint?" If you would like a copy of it please send a small donation to: The Poor Clare Nuns / Monastery of Our Lady of Mercy / 300 North 60th Street / Belleville, IL 62223-3927 and ask them to send you a copy.

Below I have attached excerpts from the Spring 2007 Clarion:

Our Regional Formation Director, Mary Wainscott made the following observation: "In all the reading I've done about Francis, I don't recall reading anything about how he spent Easter...I give you a fun challenge for discussion....how would Francis and his brothers have celebrated the greatest feast of the year, Easter, the Resurrection of Jesus?"

Mary, you have a good point! We know how crazy Francis was about Christmas and how well he celebrated the Incarnation. Now try to imagine what Francis experienced as he celebrated the Sacred Triduum. Did he have his feet washed on Holy Thursday? Did he wash the feet of others? What did it mean to him to receive the Eucharist on that holy night? How did Francis spend Good Friday? How

did he venerate the cross? Where was his favorite place to pray as he pondered the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus? How did he celebrate Holy Saturday? Just how early do you think he awoke on Easter Sunday, or did he even sleep at all? As Brother Sun peeked over the horizon on Easter morning what thoughts and feelings filled the heart of Francis? How did he celebrate? How was his life changed as a result? What was his response to Jesus' outpouring of love?

*Let's ponder how Francis would
have celebrated Easter...*

I echo Mary's challenge and I also add to it. Let's ponder how Francis would have celebrated Easter and then ask ourselves how will WE celebrate this season? What is "ours" to do this day? This season?

We each "have our part." We see this as we read through Scripture. We catch little glimpses of people who came forward to "do what was theirs to do." Joseph of Arimathea appears on the scene to ask for the body of Jesus, and provides the tomb for burial. In the space of three sentences, he arrives, and departs, never to be heard of again. He's somewhat like Simon of Cyrene or the woman who anointed Jesus at the beginning of the Passion account. They are front and center only briefly, and we know nothing about them, before or after. There are hundreds like them.

Each of us is created and placed here by God, at this particular time in history, and given a role by God that is given to no one else. Our life's work may not appear in the history books. But God uses a different book.

So let us ask ourselves just what is it that we are called to do each day of this Easter season, and not miss the opportunities given. As Mary Wainscott suggests, it is helpful for us as Franciscans to first reflect on the way our Father Francis lived out each day. Then, in light of this, we must ask ourselves, "What is mine to do this day?"

*Easter came early this year. Hope
you had a good one.*

One More Story

The Cab Ride

By Unknown Author

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. One night I took a fare at 2:30 am, when I arrived to collect, the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window. Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once. But I had seen too many impoverished people who depend on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself. So I walked to the door and knocked. "Just a minute," answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor. After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her eighties stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940's movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase. The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, or any knickknacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware. "Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, and then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly to the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness. "It's nothing," I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother to be treated."

"Oh you're such a good boy," she said.

When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, and then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?"

"It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly.

"Oh, I don't mind," she said "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice". I looked in the rearview mirror, her eyes were glistening. "I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quickly reached over and shut off the meter. "What route would you like to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived,

when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom, where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes she'd ask me to slow down in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now." We drove in silence to the address that she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab, as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in the wheelchair. "How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse.

"Nothing," I said.

"You have to make a living," she answered.

"There are other passengers," I responded, and almost without thinking, I bent over and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly.

"Thank you. You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said.

I squeezed her hand, and then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run or had honked once, then driven away? On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life. We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware, beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small coincidence.

People may not remember exactly what you did or what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel. +++

Quote:

When you carry out acts of kindness, you get a wonderful feeling inside. It is as though something inside your body responds and say, Yes, this is how I ought to feel.

Rabbi Harold Kushner

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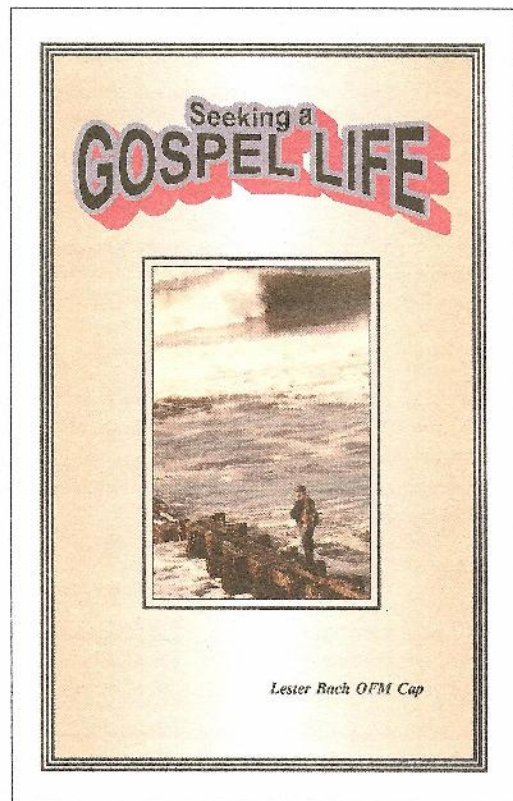
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