



# TAU-USA

Publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States  
Summer 2009 - Issue 63

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*Iris*es by Betty Misuraca

# 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 sending address changes to Robert Herbelin, Data Base Adm. And for submitting articles to the Editor for the next issue is July 15, 2009.

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

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

**Fred McCarthy, SFO,  
Brother Juniper Cartoonist,  
asks for your prayers  
for his health.**

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# Minister's Insights



## Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

By Patrick Mendés, SFO  
National Minister

*Jesus meek and humble of heart, make my heart like yours.*

This familiar prayer comes from the Gospel of St. Matthew:

*“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart.”*

The Lord’s yoke, which we are invited to share, is that of His passion and death, which leads us to the glory and joy of the Resurrection.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew we hear the Beatitude: *“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the land.”* To be meek is to have a humble and gentle attitude toward others. Meekness is decisiveness, gentled by love. It shoulders the responsibility for our own life. Guided by the principles of the Kingdom of God, it is the freedom to create the quality of our inner lives regardless of any event. One sees meekness when a person accepts a difficult circumstance, and then, turns it into creativity. A modern saying goes, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!”

Cultivating the virtue of meekness, we are not always insisting on our own way; not always belligerently fighting for what we want, but taking the Franciscan attitude of the servant.

From His great love, Jesus, our Savior, surrendered, unreservedly, to the fulfillment of the will of the Father. Out of love alone, we have been redeemed. “For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten son...”

As we rejoice in Jesus, the gift of the Father’s love, let us take some time to reflect on how we best mirror the love of God to those whom we meet. Have we taken the opportunity to treat gently and as images of Jesus, poor and crucified, everyone we meet, whether or not we agree with or like them? Have we reached out to those we have offended or who have offended us?

Article 8 of our Holy Rule reads: “As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.” Do we take some time regularly to sit quietly and reflectively before the Blessed Sacrament? The Rule continues, “Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist.”

I would be remiss if I didn’t invite you, as your time and circumstance allows, to celebrate the traditional First Friday devotions to the Sacred Heart. For me, it’s like an opportunity to celebrate the feast of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, not just in June but every month!

Be assured that you are remembered in my prayers to the Sacred Heart everyday.

I wish you all the blessings of this special feast day. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus make us mirrors always of His love and compassion.

My prayer for you, as always: may the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings.





# Pope Benedict XVI's Address to the Franciscan Family

“CHAPTER OF MATS”- APRIL 20, 2009

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy  
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Translation by Matthew Pollock  
Zenit.org

*"Attract to Christ Men and Women of All Ages"*

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Franciscan family!

I am pleased to welcome in a special way the Minister Generals gathered with the priests, Sisters and Brothers of the worldwide Franciscan community present at this audience. As you mark the Eight-hundredth anniversary of the approval of the Rule of Saint Francis, I pray that through the intercession of the Poverello, Franciscans everywhere will continue to offer themselves completely at the service of others, especially the poor. May the Lord bless you in your Apostolates and shower your communities with abundant vocations.

With great joy I welcome you all at this happy and historic occasion that has gathered you all together: the eighth centenary of the approval of the "protoregola" [monastic rule] of St. Francis by Pope Innocent III. Eight hundred years have passed, and those dozen friars have become a multitude, scattered all over the world and now here, by you, worthily represented. In recent days you have gathered in Assisi for what you wanted to call the "Chapter of Mats" to recall your origins. And at the end of this extraordinary experience you have come together with the "Signor Papa" [Lord Pope], as your seraphic founder would say. I greet you all with affection: the Friars Minor of the three branches, guided by the respective Ministers General, among whom I thank Father José Rodríguez Carballo for his kind words, the members of the Third Order, with their Minister General; the Franciscan women religious and members of the Franciscan secular institutes, and knowing them spiritually present, the Poor Clares, which constitute the "second order."

I am pleased to welcome some Franciscan bishops, and in particular I greet the bishop of Assisi, Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino, who represents the Church of Assisi, the home of Francis and Clare, and spiritually, of all the Franciscans. We know how important it was for Francis, the link with the bishop of Assisi at the time, Guido, who acknowledged his charisma and supported it. It was Guido who presented Francis to Cardinal Giovanni of St. Paul, who then introduced him to the Pope and encouraged the adoption of the Rule. Charism

and institution are always complementary for the edification of the Church. What should I tell you, dear friends? First of all I would like to join you in giving thanks to God for the path that he has marked out for you, filling you with his benefits. And as Pastor of the Church, I want to thank him for the precious gift that



By Domenico Gherlandaio

you are for the entire Christian people. From the small stream that flowed from the foot of Mount Subasio, it has formed a great river, which has made a significant contribution to the universal spread of the Gospel. It all began from the conversion of Francis, who, following the example of Jesus "emptied himself" (cf. Phil 2:7) and, by marrying Lady Poverty, became a witness and herald of the Father who is in heaven. To the "Poverello" [little poor man], one can apply literally some expressions that the apostle Paul uses to refer to himself and which I like to remember in this Pauline Year: "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And this life, I live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God who has loved me and given himself for me." (Gal. 2:19-20) And again: "From now on let no one bother me: for I wear the marks of Jesus on my body." (Gal 6:17)

Francis reflects perfectly the footsteps of Paul and in truth can say with him: "For me, to live is Christ." (Phil 1:21) He has experienced the power of divine grace and he is as one who has died and risen. All his previous wealth, any source of pride and security, everything becomes a "loss" from the moment of encounter with the crucified and risen Jesus. (cf. Phil 3:7-11) The leaving of everything at that point becomes almost necessary to express the abundance of the gift received. A gift so great as to require a total detachment, which itself isn't enough; it requires a entire life lived "according to the form of the holy Gospel." (2 Tests, 14: the Franciscan Sources, 116)

And here we come to the point that surely lies at the heart of our meeting. I would summarize it as follows: the Gospel as a rule of life. "The Rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" this is what Francis writes at the beginning of his Rule. (Rb I, 1: FF, 75) He defined himself entirely in the light of the Gospel. This is his charm. This is his enduring relevance. Thomas of Celano relates that the Poverello "always held himself in the heart of

Jesus. Jesus on the lips, Jesus in his ears, Jesus is his eyes, Jesus in his hands, Jesus in all the other members [...] In fact finding himself often traveling and meditating or singing about Jesus, he would forget he was traveling and would stop to invite all creatures to praise Jesus." (1 Cel., II, 9, 115: FF115) So the Poverello has become a living gospel, able to attract to Christ men and women of all ages, especially young people, who prefer radical idealism to half-measures. The Bishop of Assisi, Guido, and then Pope Innocent III recognized in the proposal of Francis and his companions the authenticity of the Gospel, and knew how to encourage their commitment for the good of the Church.

Here is a spontaneous reflection: Francis could have also not gone to the Pope. Many religious groups and movements were forming during that time, and some of them were opposed to the Church as an institution, or at least didn't seek the Churches' approval. Certainly a polemical attitude towards the hierarchy would have won Francis many followers. Instead, he immediately thought to put his journey and that of his companions into the hands of the Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter. This fact reveals his true ecclesial spirit. The little "we" that had started with his first friars he conceived from the outset inside the context of the great "we" of the one and universal Church. And the Pope recognized and appreciated this. The Pope, in fact, on his part, could have not approved the project of the life of Francis. Indeed, we can well imagine that among the collaborators of Innocent III, some counseled him to that effect, perhaps fearing that his group of monks would end up resembling other heretical groups and pauperisms of the time. Instead the Roman Pontiff, well informed by the Bishop of Assisi and Cardinal Giovanni of St. Paul, was able to discern the initiative of the Holy Spirit and welcomed, blessed and encouraged the nascent community of "Friars Minor."

Dear brothers and sisters, eight centuries have passed, and now you have wanted to renew this gesture of your founder. You are all sons and heirs of those origins, of that "good seed" which was Francis, who was conformed to the "grain of wheat" which is the Lord Jesus, died and risen to bring forth much fruit. (cf. Jn 12:24) The saints propose anew the fruitfulness of Christ. As Francis and Clare of Assisi, you also commit yourselves to follow the same logic: to lose your lives for Jesus and the Gospel, to save them and make them abundantly fruitful. While you praise and thank the Lord who has called you to be part of such a great and beautiful family, stay attentive to what the Spirit says to it today, in each of its components, to continue to proclaim with passion the Kingdom of God, the footsteps of your seraphic father. Every brother and every sister should keep always a contemplative mood, happy and simple; always begin

from Christ, as Francis set out from the gaze of the Crucifix of San Damiano and from the meeting with the leper, to see the face of Christ in our brothers and sisters who suffer and bring to all his peace. Be witnesses to the "beauty" of God, which Francis was able to sing contemplating the wonders of creation, and that made him exclaim to the Most High: "You are beauty!" (Praises of God Most High, 4.6: FF 261)

Dear friends, the last word I would like to leave with you is the same that the risen Jesus gave to his disciples: "Go!" (cf. Mt 28:19, Mk 16:15) Go and continue to "repair the house" of the Lord Jesus Christ, his Church. In recent days, the earthquake that struck the Abruzzo region has severely damaged many churches, and you from Assisi know what this means. But there is another "ruin" that is far more serious: that of people and communities! Like Francis, always start with yourselves. We are the first house that God wants to restore. If you are always able to renew yourselves in the spirit of the Gospel, you will continue to assist the pastors of the Church to make more and more beautiful the Church's face, that of the bride of Christ. The Pope, now the same as then, expects this of you. Thank you for coming! Now go and bring to all the peace and love of Christ the Savior. May Mary Immaculate, "Virgin made Church" (cf. Greetings to the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1 FF, 259) accompany you always. And may my Apostolic Blessing, which I cordially impart to all of you here present, and the entire Franciscan family, support you as well.

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## **A Franciscan Dream...**

(Continued from page 20).

Stories, music, interviews, the account of Francis and the Christmas Crib at Greccio - a true "Franciscan Christmas," offered to Catholic stations in a season when they need programming to fill the gaps in their schedules during the holidays.

What form could this collaboration take? We are interested in suggestions for programming. We want to hear ways the SFO family celebrates Christmas in service to the world. We need musical talent. Above all, we need financial resources to bring the dream to reality. If you have ideas which can help us make this dream a reality, we'd love to hear from you. Write to me at: [Letters@FranciscanRadio.org](mailto:Letters@FranciscanRadio.org).

St. Francis gave the world a beautiful Christmas gift at Greccio in 1223. Could we do something similar with the gift of a "Franciscan Christmas" to the world this year?



## THE NAFRA TRIENNIAL ELECTION

October 24, 2009

Albuquerque, New Mexico

**ALL Secular Franciscans are eligible to nominate someone for the NAFRA Executive Council.**

### TIMELINE:

<b>APRIL</b>	Notice of Election published and Call for Nominations
<b>JUNE</b>	Nominations close
<b>JULY</b>	Nominations Committee contacts nominees, they accept or decline nomination
<b>AUGUST 15</b>	Deadline for return of nomination forms returned from nominees
<b>AUGUST 22</b>	Start 9 week novena for a Holy Spirit-led election
<b>AUGUST 29</b>	Resumes of nominees sent to voting members of the Elective Chapter

### PROCEDURE:

For the office of Minister, Vice Minister, Secretary, Treasurer, Councilor, and/or International Councilor, email (preferred) OR snail mail the name, address, and email address to **BOTH** Kathleen White & Linda Grady. (Nominations are sent to both committee members to avoid a nomination being lost. Committee members will continually cross reference nominations.)

**Kathleen White, SFO**

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Kokomo IN 46902

DO NOT send nominations to the NAFRA-L list.  
Nominations are confidential.

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### Letter from Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO National Formation Chair

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I promised, here is the latest update to our Formation Project. We truly stand at the crossroads of the life of our Order and are being asked by CIOFS to embrace and take complete ownership of it. Once again at General Chapter, CIOFS stated that formation was the number one priority, and with that asked that the nations use the new CIOFS material as the foundation of a standardized formation plan world-wide. We are working to adapt those materials to the Order here in the United States and have also added topics we feel appropriate as the foundation of all those currently professed and those seeking profession. Our aim is to provide all of us

from the oldest to youngest enough information to hold fast to the legacy we inherited from St. Francis and to quicken the heart to seek transformation, moving that basic information into the heart where our Loving God can be met and embraced.

Here is the outline of the National Standardized Formation Plan. I hope that you all will become as excited about this as we are, as we all seek to deepen our understanding of our Franciscan Heritage, our identity as Secular Franciscans and our sense of belonging to our Order. As you look at the outline below, there are subcategories under many of the topics, but due to space constraints they were removed for this presentation. Topics, where CIOFS is listed, indicates a section in which much of the material was developed or recommended by CIOFS. Please comment freely on these materials/topics. It will assist in developing a user-friendly manual for the Local Formation Director and the Local Fraternity.

As always, peace and every blessing to each and all and I ask your prayers for all of your sisters and brothers working on this project. Fitz

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### THE FORMATION PROJECT FOR THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER - USA

By Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO

**ORIENTATION** - not less than three (3) months

- O-1 Creed from Catechism of the Catholic Church (in briefs)
- O-2 Ecclesiology of the Laity (BAPTISM) [CIOFS]
- O-3 The Franciscan Movement

**INQUIRY** - not less than six (6) months

- I-1 Vocation & Discernment [CIOFS]
- I-2 Charism of the Founder / Mission of the Order [CIOFS]
- I-3 Fundamental Elements of Christian Doctrine [CIOFS]
- I-4 Nature of the Secular Franciscan Order [CIOFS]
- I-5 Identity of the Secular Franciscan [CIOFS]
- I-6 Discuss - Biography of Francis

**CANDIDACY** - not less than eighteen (18) months

- C1-3 Rule of the SFO
- C4-5 JPIC
- C-6 Conversion – Penance & the Penitential Movement [CIOFS]
- C-7 Further Elements on Conversion [CIOFS]
- C8-9 PROFESSION
- C-10 Fraternity As Fundamental Element of St. Francis [CIOFS]
- C11 Francis and Divinity [CIOFS]
- C12 Francis and the Blessed Mother
- C13 St. Clare
- C14-15 Spirituality of St. Francis [CIOFS]
- C-16 History of the SFO and its Rule [CIOFS]
- C-17 Franciscan Saints – Focus on SFO
- C-18 General Constitutions
- C-19 Franciscan Youth & FYYA

## Reflections on the Blessed Mother And St. Joseph

By Maggie Lippincott, SFO  
Denton, TX



By Roberto Ferruzzi

It is hard to grasp the concept of a human being who has no sin. We are a flawed race and such a person does not fit into our experience with each other.

But two such human beings do exist, Jesus Christ and his mother, Mary. It is easy to accept Jesus as sinless because He is God. Mary, however is a different phenomenon.

God created Mary for a special purpose, to bring Himself into His creation in the person of His son, Jesus. Since God is all holy (that is without sin), the means of His coming into the world He created had to be perfectly holy, as He is. So Mary was born without the stain of sin that we all inherited from the fall of man through Adam and Eve.

Because Mary was born in total grace, she had a pure desire to love and serve God, her creator. When she was asked by the angel to do a hard thing, conceive and bear a child, the son of God, she obeyed willingly and with great joy, the will of her creator. Her obedience blessed the world for all time. The child, Jesus, would offer eternal life to all people.

In giving herself to God to become his mother in human form, she gave herself to the entire human race as mother.

When the task of redemption was done, through the suffering and death of Jesus, and He had returned to his Father, Mary remained to be the mother of those he left to spread his good news. Mary, being human, had to die, but her Father did not abandon her to the fate of other humans. He returned her to himself in her uncorrupted body to spend eternity mothering us from heaven.

As Franciscans, we have a special devotion to Mary, our mother. St. Francis recognized the special connection that we have with Mary and through her, with God himself. Mary is the vessel of God's love for man. Thanks, Mom.

We don't hear much about Joseph in the bible. He is the perennial supporting player. Joseph was wrenched away from the traditional manly role of his society. He was asked by God to accept a pregnant wife, whose child was not his. He was forced to drag that pregnant wife to the ancestral home of his family to register for the oppressive occupying government.

He was required to assist in the birth of the child, in very primitive conditions. He had to participate in a way that men never did, in a culture where women helped women and men were excluded from such things.

He was required to become a fugitive and flee to Egypt for the safety of his family. He had to leave his business, dignity and social position for the welfare of this family.

Joseph is the model for all husbands and fathers. He is the example of gentle, manly strength, patience and fortitude. Without his acceptance, God's plan would have been more difficult to accomplish. It would have been hard to find another man to step in after the events were already set in motion.

Through scripture we know that he obeyed God's angel, thus becoming the ultimate, "quiet hero."



St. Joseph

### Hero

By Maggie Lippincott, SFO

Let's hail the quiet hero  
who never wins acclaim  
who spends his life in service  
Good Husband is his name.

A gentle man, yet strong  
who guides his young  
and ever plods along.  
Why is his praise not sung?

This ever faithful lover  
responsible forever  
who might have been a rover,  
if he had been "more clever."

But since he is so loving,  
he chose this simple life,  
one of sweat and sweetness  
bound to child and wife.



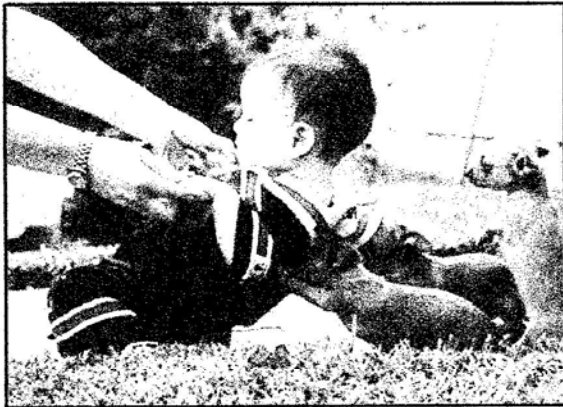
# EXPLORING

## Things Franciscan



✦ CNSA News & Views ✦

Lester Bach OFM Cap



### Helping Hands

This picture came to me through an e-mail. As I began to write this column it seemed to fit my article. Even the animals nudge the young man to get up and walk! A good Franciscan lifestyle!

Franciscan life requires a lot of helping hands to achieve the Franciscan spirit called for by the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit calls us to follow the SFO way of life, we are called to fulfill God's will by living the SFO Rule. It is quite a gift to know that the Franciscan spirit spells out what God desires of us. Lots of folks could be jealous of us since we don't have to guess how to do God's will. It is plainly written down in the Rule. We are expected to go from the Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel as well as many other things.

The Rule is clear on the attitudes we bring in relating to life and people. We strive for perfect charity in our secular state. We know that Christ is our inspiration and the Holy Spirit leads us. The people in our lives are to be treated with respect as well as with a courteous and gentle spirit. We never stand high above people but have a special concern for the lowly for whom we are called to create conditions worthy of people loved by Christ.

When we work we do it with honesty, giving full measure to our work and to those for whom we work

or whom we employ. Our Franciscan spirit recognizes the service that work provides for society. We believe it is also a way to imitate the carpenter of Nazareth. We share in the creation, redemption and service of the human community.

Prayer draws us close to the Trinity. Prayerfulness (contemplation) reveals our identity as Franciscans and is the soul of our lives. To neglect the spirit of prayerfulness would be a way to lose the "heart" of our life as Franciscans.

From being loved by the Trinity and developing love in our own lives, we reach beyond ourselves and the fraternity to people and all of creation. Franciscans are expected to see others as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ - which may be difficult - but is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. The consecration of SFO profession renews our baptismal promises to build the Kingdom of God.

This building process is guided by the SFO Rule which gives us the ways and means to love. The same Holy Spirit that called us to Franciscan life is present to enable us to live the SFO Rule. If we fail to respond to the call of the Spirit in the SFO Rule, we fail not only ourselves and the Franciscan Order, but also the Church, society and all of creation. Such failures should never be allowed to happen. Our community life is expected to offer support, encouragement, and direction in being faithful to the SFO Rule of life. Our sense of community invites us to a joyful spirit with a readiness to serve others with love.

Faithful Franciscans are dedicated to justice and working for peace without ceasing. It is part of our "heart" to regularly work for peace, to create a world where justice reigns and where people are accepted because they have a human dignity given them by God. Our purpose in building a fraternal and evangelical world is simply to create the atmosphere where the Kingdom of God can come to life. Even if we are





not always successful, we will always be faithful to our Franciscan call.

The basic foundation of a good society is good family life. We believe that good families support a good neighborhood and society. The formation of families - husband, wife, children and relatives - is a model for building and forming a social structure that supports a caring society. A caring society permits the building of the Kingdom of God that Jesus envisioned. Learning respect for one another in family life develops the attitude that spills over into respect for others who enter our lives. A spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for life at all its stages is vital to building the Kingdom of God.

We could add other elements of the SFO Rule, but here are a few ideas concerning the identity of Secular Franciscans;

+ Franciscans always show respect, even to people who disagree with them. We choose to listen to others as one way to show respect.

+ Franciscans seek to dialogue with people rather than dominate them. This attitude allows us to understand the position another person may take.

+ If we Franciscans fail in our respect for others we seek the ways of reconciliation, forgiveness and gentleness rather than maintaining anger, frustration, arrogance or anything resembling such feelings.

+ Franciscans seek to relate to others rather than cause separation. Trinitarian spirituality requires us to avoid anything that would separate us from others - *all the time!*

+ Acknowledging our human weakness, we learn to depend on the Holy Spirit to assist us in being faithful to the SFO Rule in daily life. We avoid any semblance of creeping infallibility in our opinions and ideas. Developing openness touches the poverty that we choose to practice, i.e. learning dependence on God - *Our Father ...*

+ We are aware of the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church and in us.

*The Holy Spirit builds up, animates, and sanctifies the Church. He prepares us to go out and bring others to Christ. He opens our minds to understand Christ's death and Resurrection. He makes present for us the mystery of Christ, especially in the Eucharist, and brings us to communion with God that we may bear much fruit. (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church - No 737)*

*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults - USCCB - Page 109*

*The people of God believe that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord who fills the whole world. Impelled by that faith, they try to discern the true signs of God's presence and purpose in the events, the needs and the desires which it shares with the rest of humanity today. For faith casts a new light on everything and makes known the full ideal which God has set for humanity, thus guiding the mind*

*towards solutions that are fully human.*

*The Church in the Modern World - Gaudium et Spes  
Vatican II - Paragraph 11*

+ Franciscans avoid a whole series of negative attitudes and perspectives; arrogance, a dominating personality, infallible opinions, refusal to forgive, talks or actions that degrade people, actions that separate people, gossip, accusations, angry words, refusal to dialogue, inhuman treatment of others, words and actions that depress others or diminish their worth, refusal to contribute at regular gatherings or always dominating discussions with personal opinions. Add other issues that come to mind.

Negativity betrays a lack of awareness of the identity of Franciscans who are called by the Spirit to build up the Kingdom of God. Usually "building up" will mean building up people who belong to the Kingdom and yearning to draw others to be part of the Kingdom. Evangelization begins with our personal conversion - every day!

*The Church expects from you, Secular Franciscans, a courageous and consistent testimony of Christian and Franciscan life, leaning towards the construction of a more fraternal and gospel world for the realization of the Kingdom of God.*

*Pope John Paul II - Address to the SFO Chapter  
November 22, 2002*

In 1975 and 1995 the Bishops of Appalachia wrote pastoral letters to their people who experienced poverty at its worst and hope at its best. These words (1995) apply well to our search for wholeness in life.

*But the culture of life,  
rooted in the power of the Spirit of Jesus who  
"was raised from the dead ..."  
(so) we too might live in newness of life," (Romans 7:4)  
also touches our very souls  
and leads us to new life where*



*\* despairing persons can begin recovery,  
\* wounded relationships can be healed,  
\* families can be strengthened,  
\* whole communities can be renewed,  
\* and the web of life can again flourish.*

*This Land is Home to Me (1975) / At Home in the Web of Life (1995)  
Appalachian Bishops - 1995 - Page 47*

Our present economic situation calls us to relationships that bring hope, actions that support one another in the midst of economic disasters, love that finds new expression in new situations, coming together as a community rather than suffering separately. The Spirit is giving us an opportunity not only to help others but to realize the vitality of our Franciscan calling - to heal the wounded, bind up the broken, and recall the erring (Legend of the Three Companions) - to be a community of love. This description of the Church (community of love) has been shared both by Vatican II and recent Popes.

# Faithful Living

## Letters for homebound Secular Franciscans and others

By Tom Bello, SFO  
National Vice Minister

*From our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI:*

Despite the fact that illness is part of human existence, we never manage to get used to it, not only because sometimes it comes to be burdensome and grave, but essentially because we are made for life, for complete life. Precisely our "internal instinct" makes us think of God as plenitude of life, and even more, as eternal and perfect Life. When we are tested by sickness and our prayers seem in vain, doubt wells up in us and, filled with anguish, we ask ourselves: What is God's will?

It is precisely to this question that we find an answer in the Gospel. For example, in the passage of today we read: "He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him." (Mark 1:34) In another passage from St. Matthew, it says: "He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people." (Matthew 4:23)

Jesus does not leave room for doubt: God - whose face he himself has revealed - is the God of life, who frees us from all evil. The signs of this, his power of love are the healings that he carries out: He thus shows that the Kingdom of God is near, restoring men and women to their full integrity in spirit and body. I refer to these healings as signs: They guide us toward the message of Christ, they guide us toward God and make us understand that man's truest and deepest illness is the absence of God, who is the fount of truth and love. And only reconciliation with God can give us true healing, true life, because a life without love and without truth would not be a true life. The Kingdom of God is precisely the presence of truth and love, and thus it is healing in the depths of our being.

Thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit, the work of Jesus is prolonged in the mission of the Church. Through the sacraments, it is Christ who communicates his life to the multitude of brothers and sisters, as he cures and comforts innumerable sick people through so many activities of health care service that Christian communities promote with fraternal charity, thereby showing the face of God, his love. It is true: How many Christians all over the world - priests, religious and laypeople - have given and continue giving their hands,

eyes and hearts to Christ, true physician of bodies and souls!

Let us pray for all the ill, especially for those who are most grave, and who can in no way take care of themselves, but depend entirely on the care of others; may every one of them be able to experience, in the solicitude of those who are near to them, the power of the love of God and the richness of his grace that saves us. Mary, health of the sick, pray for us. *His Angelus Address on Sunday, February 8, 2009.*

## THE APOSTOLATE OF SUFFERING

By Delia Banchs, SFO

### *The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross.*

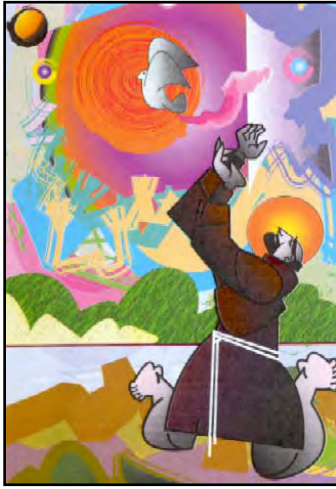
Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2015.

Brother Francis' apostolic experience continued from the very beginning of his conversion until his death, and for him, the whole world was the "theatre" of his apostolate! Following closely the example of the apostles, Francis sought personal holiness, giving glory to God and preaching conversion wherever he went. During the early years of his apostolate, Francis began by announcing peace, doing penance, fasting, serving the lepers and rebuilding churches. As the fraternity of friars grew, Francis' apostolate, like that of St. Paul (1 Thes.), became a service of ordinary work for his daily bread, of assistance to the poor, of continual prayer, and of suffering. This service or apostolate of suffering, due to lack of rest, illness, persecutions and interior spiritual anguish, began early in Francis' call to conversion.

During his imprisonment in Perugia in 1203-1204, Francis had his first serious illness. After his conversion, the itinerant life and malnutrition left him more susceptible to tuberculosis, anemia, stomach ulcers, liver and gall bladder problems. During his trip to Spain in 1215, he suffered from fevers, inability to speak for 3 days and a general physical collapse. After a series of eye infections beginning in 1219, Francis suffered from glaucoma and cataracts, which eventually left him totally blind by 1224. Francis was plagued by recurrent severe fevers from 1220-1221, possibly caused by malaria. In the fall of 1224, bearing the wounds of the Stigmata, Francis returned to Assisi giving thanks to God for granting him the grace to endure the constant pain and total blindness.

Often bedridden "by sister infirmities," his general declining health and bouts with depression, Francis had to depend more and more upon his faithful brothers Leo, Angelo, Rufino, John and Masseo. Despite his poor health, Francis continued to be faithful in his vocation, taking an active interest in the wellbeing of the Order and its ministry. (Continue on page 28).

# Franciscan Living



## Entitlement and Gratitude

By Francine Gikow, SFO, Staff Editor

“Please give me this Lord... God, please fix that... Take care of this problem... why did you allow this to happen? WHY ME?”

Have you ever prayed with those words? I sure have! We feel entitled to having God fix things that are beyond our control, and when He doesn't fix them to our satisfaction, we get angry, depressed and lose faith in Him. In other words, we feel entitled.

We see this entitlement in society when the already rich feel that they have earned the right to bend the rules (e.g. Bernie Madoff and the AIG scandal), or when people cut in front of lines because they have an important business meeting, or even when they ask for exceptions to a rule because they are so important!

As my kids were growing up, I realized how our society instills an “entitlement” mentality among our youngsters. We have all seen entitlement's effects: self-importance, selfishness, and pride. I wondered how to teach them gratitude.

Since entitlement is so insidious and pervasive in our culture, we fall into its trap and before we know it, we feel entitled in our spiritual life as well. How often do we complain about the unfairness of life? Why do I have a life filled with sorrows and crosses? Why me? Poor me!

We might also feel entitled because we are His special friends. After all, haven't we earned special treatment

since we pray so much and live exemplary lives? Why shouldn't He answer our prayers in the way we want? Then why did St. Theresa complain that if God treats his friends this way, then it is no wonder why He has so few?

Well, I hate to say it, but we earn...nothing! It is ALL GIFT! We do not earn our way in the spiritual life except by love and perseverance. We are nothing by ourselves, for as Francis has stated, “What you are before God that you are and no more.”<sup>1</sup>

Well then, why *not* me? Why *shouldn't* I get a life filled with sorrows and crosses? After all, don't I realize that I *am* getting specialized treatment? Those sorrows and crosses are there to refine my love so that I can love more perfectly. I am called by my profession to “follow Christ”<sup>2</sup> and that “Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to Him.”<sup>3</sup>

*“Likewise, even if you were more handsome and richer than everyone else and even if you performed wonders...all these things would be an obstacle to you and none of them would belong to you, nor could you glory in any of these things. But in this we can glory: in our infirmities and bearing daily the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*<sup>4</sup>

Isn't that a reason why I should be grateful? I am becoming closer to the Crucified! It is the love of the cross - the Crucified One who shares my troubles and my very life and I share in His!

St. Francis was a person filled with gratitude! He never took anything for granted. He revered the gifts God had given him and never attributed anything to his own efforts. Because of holy poverty, Francis relied totally on God for everything, so it is no wonder that Francis saw everything as GIFT! In reality, nothing is really ours - not our bodies, not our talents, or what we own. When we realize that all is gift, we become grateful. How can we *not* be grateful for all the good things that we receive? The secret is in seeing the Gift! All is gift; all is love! Gratitude follows.

*“...all good, supreme good, totally good. You who alone are good, may we give You all praise, all glory, all thanks, all honor: all blessing, and all good things. So be it. So be it. Amen.”*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Admon. XIX, 2.

<sup>2</sup> SFO Rule 1, #1

<sup>3</sup> SFO Rule 2, #4

<sup>4</sup> Admon. V, 7-8

<sup>5</sup> Praises To Be Said At All Hours: 11

# Poets are We...

## Life

By Tom Cloutier, SFO  
St. Elizabeth of Hungry Region

The trick is to see  
not just the cold, naked branch  
But the straining bud.

## Woodwork

By Stephen Kolter, SFO  
St. Katharine Drexel Region

He releases the pressure  
of the clamps and stands back.  
He knows the structure is sound  
but is always struck with marvel  
when many fragments solidify  
to become one.

Its all in the pressure.  
Glue is stronger than wood.  
Together, glue and pressure make the chair.  
Together, they build the gallows.  
Together, they hold the cradle in place.

The last brace removed, the Woodworker beholds  
This was built to last.

## Easter Ecstasy

By Gail Halada, SFO  
Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

Jesus lived. I lived.  
Jesus loved. I loved.  
Jesus labored. I labored.  
Jesus died. But I denied.

Jesus gave. I gave.  
Jesus grieved. I grieved.  
Jesus groaned. I groaned.  
Jesus died. But I denied.

Jesus lives! I live.  
Jesus loved. I loved.  
Jesus laughs. I laugh.  
He's alive! I realize.

Jesus lived FOR ME! Jesus lives IN ME!  
Jesus loved FOR ME!. Jesus loves IN ME!  
Jesus labored FOR ME! Jesus labors IN ME!  
For ME, he died! In ME, crucified!

The risen Jesus...alive and here! Inviting ME to HIM!  
I opened my heart. I said "YES!" to HIM.  
I welcomed the good LORD in! AMEN.

## My Season's

By Carolyn Bel, SFO  
St. Clare Region

Seasons of all colors  
I see them all tick away.  
And life with all of its strife  
I hug to me today.

I sit and ponder all the ways  
That life's been good to me  
I ask not why, but do accept  
And know they're not for free.

The beauty and the wonders fill  
My soul up to the brim.  
I shall not squander one more day,  
And all thanks I'll give to Him.

In life we're given an equal share  
Of pain, and joy to bear.  
And in the end we'll all be judged  
On how we love and care.

For now I'm grateful for the days  
All filled with beauty and life.  
I'll try to share my feelings and  
Accept the daily strife.

When at last I go to meet my God  
In heaven up above,  
I hope I'm judged on just how much  
I've shared with all, my love.

So look down kindly on me now  
As I'm filled with song and grace.  
So happy to be here and yet  
I long for that fairer place.

## The Fisherman

By Caroline E. Richbourg, SFO  
Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis

The Hound of Heaven,  
Francis Thompson called You.  
To me, You're a fisher of men.  
I was hooked by You, when young.  
In the depths of my years  
You have played me.  
Now I am old, still on Your hook  
Waiting to be taken into Your boat,  
A keeper at last!



# Little Weeds

## BALANCING ACT

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



We are an Easter people. But we must also be a Good Friday people. Because one without the other doesn't make sense. Easter without Good Friday is just a day to eat marshmallow chicks and bunny eggs; Good Friday without Easter is just one more example of man's inhumanity to man. But together they make sense.

Life, in general, is a balancing act. There's a toast that goes, "To happiness and tears." It's the same principal as Easter/Good Friday: one doesn't make much sense without the other. And, in the case of the latter, would we even recognize one without the other?

Francis had a pretty good balance. Oh, to the world he seemed poor; but he was rich (in the things that mattered). He took pains to make sure he kept things in perspective. Like, he put ashes on food, so he wouldn't enjoy it too much. Personally, I think that's a waste of good food (or in the case of lima beans, good ashes!). Though I should follow his example, what with being a bit of a glutton. Food is my "sin of the flesh" – and I have the flesh to prove it! But then again, I don't have that easy an access to ashes. (That's my excuse and I'm stickin' to it . . .)

Francis' idea of "pure joy" might leave something to be desired in our culture. But I think part of the idea is to make the best of any situation. I usually try to see the positive in a given situation, event, etc. It's not always easy. But I figure life will make me miserable enough if I don't help it. And as an elderly lady told me once (she'd heard it from *her* mother), "It don't happen to dead people!" So there's always that to be grateful for – i.e., if it's happening to you, you ain't dead.

Granted, there are times when not being dead is the only good thing you can seem to think of for your life. But those moments pass. And if you stay alert, you'll see just how much there is to be grateful for. Sometimes, that includes the bad stuff.

Every "downer" is something we can "offer up" as Sister used to tell us to do. Even if we just thank God it's not worse than it is. Because there's always something worse. So, in that light, even bad things are to be grateful for.

I've touched on gratitude in the past. It's a gift unto itself. So to feel grateful about something, no matter what, is a good thing. And it helps us keep things in perspective. And keeping things in perspective helps us keep that important balance in our lives.

The Baltimore Catechism taught us that God created us to know, love and serve Him in this life and to be happy with Him in the next. OK. It doesn't say we're supposed to be "happy" in this life – but it doesn't say we're supposed to be miserable either. And if we know, love and serve God as we should, we will be happy, or, at least, glad. And glad isn't anything to sniff at.

'Happy' is, I think, the one thing we all want; but what exactly comprises it is something else. However, I'm convinced balance is part of that happiness. Anyone who's eaten too much of their favorite food will tell you there can definitely be "too much of a good thing." And that is not something that will make you happy. Uncomfortable, maybe. Barfy, perhaps. But happy? Uh, uh.

Another way to keep balance is to remember that enough is as good as a feast. And that's not just for food. Whether you live in a hut or a 40-room mansion, chances are, you're not gonna be in more than one room at a time. So, at any given moment, how many rooms you have is moot. Right?

Balance. If you don't have it, you'll tip over. And if you don't have it in your life, you'll find that life tipping to one side or the other. And even if it seems good on the onset, it won't be for very long. For every up, there's a down; for every yin, a yang. And the sooner we accept it, the better our lives will be.



# Gospel to Life



Saint Francis by Jusepe de Ribera

## VISION OF HOPE

By Jay de la Cruz, SFO  
Blessed Junipero Serra Region

The darkest hour of the day is the one that precedes the breaking of dawn. When our darkest point comes, we hit rock bottom. There is nowhere to go from there, but up! Knowing this can give us a glimmer of hope in the darkest of times.

I recall seeing the video of Nick Vujicic, an Australian, who was born without arms and legs. As he bounced around the stage, it was easy to see that he finds joy and meaning in his life in spite of what was lacking. He talked about how Christ was in his life now, but when he was eight years old, he didn't want to have anything to do with God and was often angry and suicidal. At age fifteen Nick was given "insight," as he was reading John 9: 1-3, about a man had been born blind. When Jesus was asked why, he replied, "*So that the works of God might be made visible through him.*" He said that as he read this, "a wave of faith and peace came over him," knowing that he would be an instrument of God's work. Later on, he was strengthened by the words of Scripture: "*I know well the plans I have in mind for you, plans for your welfare, not for woe, plans to give you a future full of hope.*" Jeremiah 29:11 He said that we all have disabilities; some are physical. Some like fear and guilt are not. But Nick feels that fear and guilt can hold us back more than the lack of arms or legs. His advice to all of us is: *Just know that you are loved and everything is going to be all right.*

The word of God in the scripture can inspire us and even speak to us personally. God can always find a way to address our deepest concerns. He can use Scripture, homilies, religious videos, or prayer time to get through to us.

You may have heard about Dr. Ben Carson, born in 1951, who overcame poverty, racism, and a violent temper to become a world-renowned neurosurgeon. He was born in poverty, and raised by his single mother, with a third-grade education. His mother, Sonya, raised her two sons, working as maid, holding down two or three jobs at times to support the family. Ben and his brother often endured cruel taunts from his classmates because of their poverty.

If either of the boys brought home a poor grade on their report cards, Sonya quickly limited their TV time and required them to read two books a week. She also made written book reports mandatory. Later on when he realized that their mother was unable to read the reports, Ben Carson was moved and motivated by her efforts to give them to a better life. Before long, he moved from the bottom of his class to the top, with the resentment from his white classmates that went along with it. His mother used to say, "If you walk into a room full of racist, bigoted people, you don't have a problem, they have a problem."

He had a temper to be dealt with. He reached a turning point, when he nearly stabbed a friend to death because the boy changed the radio station. Terrified with his own capacity for violence, he locked himself in a bathroom with a Bible. He remembers reading from the Book of Proverbs: "*Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.*" He credits God's speaking to him through this Scripture that turned his life around and controlled his anger.

At a young age of 33, Dr. Ben Carson became the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at John Hopkins Hospital and with the successful operation on the Binder Siamese Twins, who were joined at the head, he gained international attention. He successfully operated in several delicate surgeries and, according to reports, performs 500 operations a year, for which he credits his "very, very, efficient medical staff."

Dr. Ben has become a well-known inspirational writer and speaker, advising young people that the most important thing they can do is to bring value to the world by improving the lives of fellow human beings. He has done this himself. With perseverance he gives us an example of how to triumph in life in spite of adversity. The key is hope and faith in God.



## Humming Birds and Seculars

By Joseph M. Smith, SFO  
Mt. St. Francis, Indiana

*We too expend much energy  
just trying to be spiritually fed.*

Taking time to observe some of the natural beauty in my own back yard has given me some insight into St. Francis' love of nature. This spring, my wife placed a hummingbird feeder on a large bay window at the back of our home. It took over a month for the hummingbirds to start feeding from the unfamiliar apparatus, but once they realized that it would cause them no harm, they have continued to feed throughout the day. We can learn much from these tiny birds that expend tremendous energy just to feed themselves. Sometimes, when trying to reach the feeder, the hummingbirds misjudge and hit the window, but "shake it off" and are soon back feeding normally. As Franciscans, we are tentative at times to try new ministries or to challenge ourselves to step out of our familiar surroundings. We too expend much energy just trying to be spiritually fed. We "bounce" from one project to another, never taking the time to reflect on the beauty of our current surroundings. Watching the antics of these spectacular little creatures is very entertaining. They challenge each other in mid air, suspended like miniature helicopters, and occasionally bump into one another. We also have our challenges and occasional bumps, but I am sure that our antics amuse our God, who continues to watch over us each day.

## A Different Hungarian Memory

By Gabe Harkay, SFO  
Immaculate Conception Fraternity  
San Diego, California

I read with real interest the article in TAU-USA on the General Chapter of the SFO, especially the group visit to Esztergom. Old memories were bubbling up...

In 1943, our military school was moved from Budapest to Esztergom to reduce the risk of exposure to probable Allied bombing. We were housed in a 3 story building about 200 miles from the hill of the Cathedral. Several times we provided an "honor guard" at the High Masses of the Cardinal.

The road in front of our building went through a tunnel under the hill. In the side of the tunnel, several old wine caves were excavated. These were our air raid shelters. At the sound of the air raid sirens (almost every day and night by 1944), over a hundred cadets would run up to these caves.

December 8, 1944, Esztergom, Hungary:

I heard the lieutenant trying to yell louder than the howling of the air raid sirens, "I give you two minutes to finish your lunch." He was still talking, when the air defense guns started their rapid firing on the hill close to our building. I jumped up and left the dining room, running, together with the other cadets of the combat engineers company of our military school, to get my full gear and the squad machine gun before heading to the air raid shelter.

On the third floor platform of the staircase, as I bent down to lift the machine gun off its tripod, a series of deafening explosions shook the building so hard that the floor jumped out from under my feet. I fell to the floor. With the instinct for survival, I lunged toward the stairs. Then there was the blinding flash of an exploding bomb in the botanical garden, right in front of the panoramic glass wall of the staircase, and the whole glass wall flew at me. The next thing I remember, I was sitting in the basement, my back against the concrete wall, gasping, but without a scratch. How I got there is a mystery. (Later, someone told me that it must have been my Guardian Angel who carried me down safely.)

I realized that if we had left our building as soon as the alarm sounded, most of us would have been on the street, running toward the ancient wine cellars under the mountain, which were our bombproof shelters. The bombs, missing our building, were exploding right on that street...

The sirens were howling again; the air raid was over. We staggered up the stairs covered with rubble. There was not one window or door left, but the reinforced

concrete structure of the building was still holding up. It's an eerie feeling to be *the* target. Hardly anybody talks. We helped with the rescue work until nightfall. We felt the cold winter air all night in the windowless building. We were just a small military unit in the city of Esztergom on the southern bank of the Danube River. There are some of our gunboats on the river, but we heard a report, in the morning, that Soviet armored troops had reached the north side of the river and the bridge across, although prepared for demolition, was still standing. We knew that under the cover of an air raid, Soviet troops might try to cross the Danube to Esztergom. That's why we went in full gear to the air raid shelter and the guard brought the squad machine gun as well.

But we are not a fighting unit yet; we are still a school; still in training. I had turned 16 in July.

[Gabe Harkay was born in Hungary. He was studying at the Technical University when Cardinal Mindszenty was arrested at Christmas, 1948. Because of Gabe's staunch Catholicism, the Communist student organization declared him a "henchman of Mindszenty" and an "enemy of the people." He fled to France on December 31<sup>st</sup>, and to Belgium a few months later. Completing his education, he became a mechanical engineer and, ultimately, settled in San Diego. He made his profession as a Secular Franciscan on November 15, 1964.]

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## A Spirituality of Solidarity

By Roger and Marilyn Yockey, SFO  
Poverello Fraternity, Kirkland, WA

"Are you Secular Franciscans?" We saw the couple sitting in a waiting area of the Los Angeles International Airport. The Tau around their necks and down their shirts prompted our question. "Yes, we are," answered Alberto. He and his wife, Maria, were born in Mexico, had lived many years in the United States and were going to Mexico City to visit family and friends.

We, also, were going to Mexico City on the same flight and then we were flying on to Oaxaca, Mexico, about 325 miles Southeast of Mexico City on a cultural immersion program of GATE (Global Awareness Through Experience). Two couples, four Secular Franciscans, all wearing visible Tau Crosses, and addressing each other as hermano y hermana, brother and sister. What a wonderful start to a journey of spiritual solidarity, being united, one in spirit.

GATE is a sponsored ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. For nine days in February of this year, we were part of a GATE program to Oaxaca led by Sister Marie Des Jarlais, FSPA, GATE Director, and Violeta Abitia, Assistant Director. They led thirteen of us, including five married couples, from the Midwest, the South and the West Coast on what was more a pilgrimage than a tour.

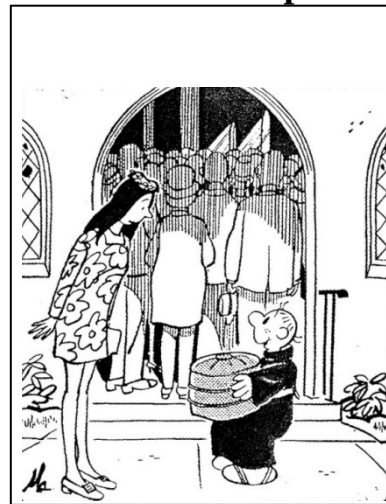
Yes, we ate the traditional cuisine, visited a huge convent and church of the Dominican Order in the Oaxaca, the capital city of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico. We visited archaeological sites of the Zapotecs and the Mixtecs, and toured botanical gardens. However, we did something else that marked us as pilgrims instead of tourists - we interfaced with weavers, potters, wood carvers, members of a women's roof tile corporation, a woman traditional healer/curandera, the buyers and sellers of wood, animals, food, clothing, and crafts in markets. In this poor, mountainous state of Southern Mexico, there were sixteen ethnic groups and we were introduced to the reality of life for the indigenous people of Oaxaca.

We heard about the Center for Integral Small Farmer Development (CEDICAM), an organization led by farmers, women and men, which have united small farmers to renew barren lands using centuries old traditional indigenous agricultural practices. We went to Nochistlan and saw the many trees planted on once-bare hillsides. We saw the miles of ditches to retain water and prevent soil erosion. We saw the greenhouses and the fish pond to bring variety to the diets of the people.

We enjoyed a meal of soup and tamales, and a delicious drink with the village people high in the mountains of Oaxaca. There was so much that we had been given by the indigenous people of Oaxaca through GATE. We were allowed to do what GATE fosters - "to approach a people as pilgrims, in deep respect for their culture and history." Or as CEDICAM points out in its work, we were able to be "walking with the people."

GATE also has cultural immersion programs to Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela, Chiapas, Mexico, and Eastern Europe.

## Brother Juniper



"We're outa of seats. Care to rent a HASSOCK?"

By Fred McCarthy, SFO



## Franciscan Action Network (FAN) at One Year

By Dan Mulholland, SFO



FAN got started one year ago this March, and it's had a very busy year indeed. FAN was formed to speak with one voice across the national Franciscan family (friars, sisters and seculars) and bring a Franciscan perspective in advocacy to the US Government with a spirit of healing and reconciliation to transform our world. Not a small task...

FAN got their Action Center set up and staffed with dedicated people in the office, on their Board and with their Action Commissioners for six geographic regions in the US. The SFO Action Commissioners are: Ken Beattie; Tom Bello; Dan Mulholland; Jan Parker; Stephanie Sormane; Carolyn Townes. Each Action Commission Region has a friar, sister and secular representative, who provide contacts and meet twice a year in Washington, DC: once in September and once in March right before the Ecumenical Advocacy Days, for which FAN has become a sponsor.

The recent FAN meeting looked at where FAN has been this last year and where it will be going next year. There is an air of excitement in Washington DC these days with a new President and a new Congress and hope to bring about change in spite of the current atmosphere of economic peril that has set in across our country. As a Catholic organization, FAN embraces a position called the consistent ethic of life, which seeks to defend and promote all life at all stages of life. The issues which FAN is tracking are Peace Making, Poverty and Human Rights, Care of Creation, Economic Recovery, and Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

To set up their network, they developed "a state of the art" website where Franciscans and Franciscan hearted people can join and be informed on the Franciscan perspective on many of these issues. FAN has published numerous articles this last year as well as white papers on Franciscans and the Financial Crisis. FAN has networked with a number of Catholic and Interfaith groups including the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, and the Alliance to End Hunger. FAN was one of the Catholic

social justice organizations that met with the incoming Obama Administration around issues of concern in upcoming legislative sessions. Two Action Commissioners, Fr. Pio Jackson, OFM and Sr. Sheila Kinsey, OSF represented FAN in the Fifth Franciscan Solidarity Seminar and the World Social Forum in the Brazilian Amazon.

To keep up their pace and prevent burnout of their staff, FAN needs more membership and support. FAN currently has 40 friar and sister organizations signed up, as well as, the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order. But individual memberships are also needed, which is easy to do from their website <http://www.franciscanaction.org>. Look for the blue box in the upper right hand corner. FAN currently has a membership of 1793 members and is hoping to get 3400 members by the end of this year. The site gives action alerts and is an easy way to contact your Congress person, or Senator via email forms on many issues of concern to Franciscans. Since 9/11, email and phone calls have become a preferred means of contact.

FAN will concentrate on Immigration Reform and Global Warming as two main issues this year. They have been working the hill with Fr. Larry Janezic, OFM on the Immigration Reform issues. One of the staffers, Peter, said it is amazing going there with a friar in habit, as people come out of the woodwork to say: "Hi, I'm a Secular Franciscan; I went to a Franciscan school; I'm a staffer for so-and-so and he's a big supporter; my aunt's a Franciscan sister, etc." Many issues can be discussed directly with congressional staff people in person, and they are there to listen to the people; they work for us...



Russ Testa

We had a very good meeting this year and helped Russ Testa, the FAN Executive Director, celebrate his 40th birthday. Here is a link to the pictures from the meeting: <http://picasaweb.google.com/dannymai3/FANYearlyMeeting#>

# 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.*



***Drive that thing!***

A hesitant driver waiting for a traffic jam to clear came to a complete stop on the freeway ramp. Traffic thinned, but the driver stilled waited. Finally, a furious voice from the vehicle behind him cried, "The sign says to yield, not give up!"

Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, "Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish Whiskey."

Miraculously, a parking place appeared. Paddy looked up again and said, "Thanks anyway, Lord. Never mind. I found one."

Teach a child to be polite and courteous in the home, and when he grows up, he'll never be able to merge his car onto the freeway.

DROVE TOO LONG  
DRIVER SNOOZING  
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT  
IS NOT AMUSING Burma Shave

AROUND THE CURVE  
LICKETY-SPLIT  
BEAUTIFUL CAR  
WASN'T IT? Burma Shave

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a broken fan belt and a leaky tire.

Auto mechanic's note:

"I couldn't fix your brakes, so I made your horn louder."

Bumper strip:

"Yes, this is my truck. No, I won't help you move."

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of the pastor's. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

"Reverend," said the young man, "sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."

The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.

A jumper cable walks into a bar:

The bartender says, "I'll serve you, but don't start anything."

My sister has a lifesaving tool in her car. It's designed to cut through a seat belt if she gets trapped. She keeps it in the trunk.

THINGY (thing-ee) n. (female vocabulary) Any part under a car's hood.

License plate on a red sports car: 2B18AGN.

A policeman spotted a woman driving and knitting at the same time. Driving along side her car he shouted, "PULL OVER!"

"No," she shouted back, "a pair of socks!"

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city, because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block ten times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses."

When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note: "I've circled this block for ten years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation."



## “Cruising the St. Johns River”

By Faith Libbe, SFO  
Staff Editor  
faithalibbe@juno.com



*“Seas and rivers, bless the Lord;  
praise and exalt Him above all forever.”* Daniel

With summer just around the corner, I recall a morning spent on the St. Johns River just a few weeks ago. The morning mist gave way to the rising of the sun and a gentle cool breeze. I realized this is a memory to be savored, as the heat of summer will soon set in!

The St. Johns River is the longest river in the state of Florida. A Catholic mission by the name of San Juan del Puerto was founded near the mouth of the river on Fort George Island, around 1578. In time, the river became known as Rio de San Juan, which translates to St. Johns River in English. The name has remained to this day.

The St. Johns River stretches 310 miles from Indian River County to the Atlantic Ocean in Jacksonville. We rented a little motor boat not far from Hontoon Island, near De Land, approximately 35 miles from Orlando. As we took off from the dock, the blue sky and gentle breeze made for a delightful morning on the water. A tributary surrounded by lush green woods on either side, welcomed us to get a closer look at the wildlife.

There is an abundance of water fowl along the river. We were blessed to view a variety of herons, which included a Great Blue Heron, a Little Blue Heron, a Tricolored Heron, and a Black-crowned Night Heron. There we also saw plenty of Anhingas (black duck-like birds), diving for breakfast and then flying to a quiet spot to spread their wings to dry.

I have since learned that the Anhinga needs to dry out their wings and feathers, because they are not waterproofed by oils like ducks and they can get waterlogged. It will perch for long periods with its wings spread to allow the drying process. If it attempts



to fly while its wings are wet, it has great difficulty getting off the water and takes off by flapping vigorously while “running” on the water.

In addition to seeing the Herons and Anhingas, we were also blessed to see an Osprey, some wild turkeys and many turtles along the shoreline. Last but not least, we saw many alligators sunning themselves and some swimming across the river!

Almost “jungle-like,” the lush green woods with its palms and Spanish moss beckoned me to share its beauty with you in our TAU-USA! I then began to think of St. Francis. I thought he would probably appreciate the beauty of the woods along the St. Johns very much. For I know Francis loved the beauty of the woods/forest because I have seen where he chose to pray in solitude...in the forests at the Carceri and LaVerna.

As I continued to think of Francis, I mused to myself what he would make of an alligator! All I could come up with was that he would probably smile at his fellow creature and say, “Peace and good Brother Gator!” ☺



*“Peace and good, Brother Gator!”*

May your summer be blessed by the beauty of God’s creation!

## Five Franciscan Martyrs Region



Clarice Marie Fourari, SFO

**Clarice Marie Fourari, SFO**, was professed at St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity in Apopka, FL on Feb. 1, 2009. Fr. Blase Romano, T.O.R. was the celebrant at Mass and Jeane Swaynos, SFO Minister, and Allen Ward, SFO Formation Director, led the profession ceremony. Clarice and her husband, Abdel, have four children. The youngest, baby Mina, will be with her on her Franciscan journey. Clarice brings the charism of St. Francis to her church ministries, besides being a full-time mom.



The Fourari family

**Queen of Peace Fraternity** in Ocala, FL and **St. Mark's Fraternity** in the Villages spent the day together on October 25, for prayer and Franciscan novelty. Together they shared a continental breakfast, prayed the Crown rosary, and enjoyed a skit on St. Francis in Gubbio.

## Fr. Solanus Casey Region

### Anne Seggerman's Golden Jubilee Living the Gospel Life

By Annabelle Sarno, SFO

Living the gospel life is a goal Secular Franciscans strive to follow. It encompasses being Christ-like, doing the work of Christ and being a servant for the Lord.

The Secular Franciscan Order is blessed to have a woman like Anne Seggerman who professed her Secular Franciscan vows fifty years ago in California and is currently an active member of the Holy Spirit Fraternity, Fairfield, Connecticut in the Fr. Solanus Casey Region. Anne lives the gospel life on international, national and local levels.

*"Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world..."* (SFO Rule 14) Anne Seggerman lives this rule. She founded and is president of the Fourth World Foundation, Inc., which is a non-profit, ecumenical corporation that promotes and strengthens man's spiritual, ethical and moral values. The foundation sponsors annual religious conferences and invites well-known speakers from the United States and other countries. It also develops Catholic faith through television, radio, books, and film productions. Anne has supervised research with Dr. John Jackson, who is a prominent research scientist for the Shroud of Turin authenticity. In addition to supporting the Turin Shroud Center of Colorado, Anne co-founded Turin Shroud Centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia.

Secular Franciscans are called upon to aid one another in their needs and if possible cooperate in works of charity. *"Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others."* (SFO Rule 19) Anne Seggerman aids others through her ministry to help people with disabilities and health issues. She has worked in Washington, D.C. to assist the National Council on Disability; the Committee on Housing for Handicapped Families, chaired by Jack Kemp; and the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

Her special skills and interests enable Anne to provide care, treatment and rehabilitation for acute and chronic schizophrenics and alcoholics. She provides care for learning-disabled children. Some of her affiliations have included: President's Reagan's Health Task Force; the Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center; Anuk, a mental health rehabilitation facility; the World Health Medical Group; and the National Health Federation. Anne is Chairman of the Board and Founder of the Huxley Institute for Biosocial Research and has rallied legislators to protect the availability of orthomolecular therapy.



In the inner city of Bridgeport, Connecticut, Anne assisted Youth at Risk; Bridgeport Urban Gardens; St. Anthony School; McGivney Center; and St. Martin de Porres Guild.

Always mindful of the need for a strong prayer life, Anne coordinated a Marian Movement of Priests Cenacle; headed the Bridgeport Diocesan Division of the Blue Army of Fatima; directed a National Day of Prayer in Connecticut; and founded a pro-life prayer group, the Star of the Unborn Cenacle.

Anne has received the following religious awards and honors for her many apostolic ministries: Commander with a Star in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre; Dame of Malta; and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

For Anne Seggerman, the most important Secular Franciscan formation begins after profession, when one actually lives the Gospel Life. She readily tackles charitable projects and has outstanding achievements because of her strong faith and devotion to the Lord. *"...Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."* (Matthew 17:20)

In Lent the Secular Franciscan Order thanked and congratulated Anne on her "Golden Franciscan Jubilee."

**Some Newly Elected Regional Executive Councils:**

**Fr. Solanus Casey Region**

Minister: Sally Haddad  
 Vice Minister: Mary Ann Julian  
 Formation Director: Maureen Haege  
 Secretary: Mary Welborn  
 Treasurer: Louis Mirabello  
 Councilor West: Mary Lou Scebelo  
 Councilor Central: Dorothea MacNeil  
 Councilor East: Anna Fulton

**St. Francis Region**

Minister: Sylvia Paoli, SFO  
 Vice Minister: Robert Herbelin, SFO  
 Secretary: Judith Mussatto, SFO  
 Treasurer: Carolyn M. Paxton, SFO  
 Councilor: Anthony Tuan Cao, SFO  
 Councilor: Robert L. Lopez, SFO  
 Councilor: John Kwon, SFO

**Our Lady of Guadalupe – Empress of the Americas Region**

Minister: Christine Imislund, SFO  
 Vice Minister: Arturo Villarreal, SFO  
 Secretary: Donna Hollis, SFO  
 Treasurer: Ernie Ramirez, SFO  
 Formation Director: Rena Xuereb, SFO  
 Councilor: Cathy Pierce, SFO  
 Councilor: Ruth Nevarez, SFO

**St. Margaret of Cortona Region**

Minister: Mary Thuman, SFO  
 Vice Minister: Claire Hoagland, SFO  
 Secretary: Teri Egan, SFO  
 Treasurer: Patrick Martin, SFO  
 Formation: Michael Huether, SFO  
 Councilor-MD/PA/DE: Mary Simmons, SFO  
 Councilor-DC Area: Ann Corro, SFO  
 Councilor-VA/WV: Mary Lou Coffman, SFO

**St. Thomas More Region**

Minister: Susan Simeone, SFO  
 Vice-Minister: William Neu, SFO  
 Formation Director: Michael Reidy, SFO  
 Treasurer: Robert Bundy, SFO  
 Secretary: Patricia Nikolaisen, SFO  
 Councilor: Paul R. Winter, SFO  
 Councilor: Rosemarie LeClercq, SFO



L to R: Susan Simeone, SFO, Minister of St. Thomas More Region, Brother Bob Brady, OFM National Spiritual Assistant, Patrick Mendes, SFO, National Minister, Anne Mulqueen, SFO, International Councilor, and Rosemarie LeClercq, SFO, JPIC Councilor of St. Thomas More Region

The Thomas More Region hosted a "Meet and Greet Event," where forty Fraternity Ministers and Executive Council Members welcomed the National Executive Council, who were having their Quarterly Council Meeting in Scottsdale, AZ on February 26-28.

**Mother Cabrini Region**

The Region held a **Candidates' Retreat:** "Following Christ with Francis, Today" on April 4 and May 2.

In March **St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity (Fox Valley)** members staffed a display table with promotional material about our Order at the "Here I am Lord National Vocational Conference" held at the St. Patrick Parish (St. Charles). The conference is the largest parish-based vocations conference in the US.

By Fr. Greg Friedman, OFM



### SFO Helping Hands - A Resource for Job Seekers

Do you need assistance  
in a  
job search?

Let us help...

By Sue Nelson, SFO

How can our Secular Franciscan group help those seeking employment during this economic downturn? During the summer of 2008, the question started coming up at formation meetings of the Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity in Edwardsville, Illinois. The conversation evolved into two workshops for job seekers in the St. Louis area, to be held May 17<sup>th</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup>. Championed by a professional recruiter, in formation, the group has developed 6 hours of highly valuable program content to offer to 120 job seekers. Workshops will provide tools and guide job seekers to resources for improved job search results. The workshops include:

#### Workshop 1:

*Resume Development*  
*Resume Search Techniques*  
*Critical Key Words*  
*Faith-Filled Job Search*  
*Career Profile Basics*

#### Workshop 2:

*Networking Channels*  
*Advanced Career Profile*  
*Partnering with HR Professionals*  
*Successful Interviewing*  
*Interactive Case Studies*

#### The stretch-goals for the project are:

1. Help 25% of the attendees gain employment as a direct result of workshop participation
2. Help 75% of the participants gain useful tools and resources for their job search AND a feeling of support from the community
3. Provide a program that has been professionally developed and targeted to the current job market
4. Develop a format that brings together job seekers and Human Resources professionals utilizing a highly interactive, small group format

A web site is under construction for this event. For more information, contact Pat or Sue Nelson at (618) 656-6261 or email: [susannenelson@charter.net](mailto:susannenelson@charter.net)

I have a dream. I imagine people seated around a radio - it's sometime in the late 1940s, and radio is still in its "Golden Age." Radio dramas attract a nightly audience. Among the shows are religious productions, starring Loretta Young, Bing Crosby, Ricardo Montalban. Audiences tune in across the country each week to listen. One of the shows is "The Hour of St. Francis." At the end of the program comes the announcement that this story "was brought to you by the Third Order of St. Francis, whose members pray with St. Francis, 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...'"

Lately, I've had a similar, but slightly different dream. It's Christmas 2009. People still listen to the radio - and to Catholic radio stations across the country. But they also hear Catholic programs streamed on their computers. Catholic podcasts are downloaded to iPods and other devices. Through Web sites and social networking, Catholics and those seeking faith are connected to the message of Christmas. They're listening to "A Franciscan Christmas," three hours of programming available free of charge to Catholic radio stations hungry for stories, music and inspiration for the season.

At the end of the program comes the announcement: "A Franciscan Christmas was brought to you by the members of the Secular Franciscan family across North America, who pray with St. Francis, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace..."

Could my second dream come true? The first dream was a mission and ministry done in collaboration between the friars of St. Barbara Province and the Third Order over a half-century ago.

A new collaboration might be possible today. Friars and their lay collaborators at St. Anthony Messenger Press in Cincinnati, Ohio, have inherited the innovative radio and film production ministry of our West Coast Franciscan family. Since the 1990s, Franciscan Communications has been a part of St. Anthony Messenger Press. The Press itself had its beginning in *St. Anthony Messenger*, first produced to provide inspiration to lay Franciscans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Today, "Franciscan Radio" is a ministry of this Franciscan team in Cincinnati. We already produce a national radio show for the U.S. bishops, *American Catholic Radio*, heard on many Catholic stations around the country, and on the Web at [www.FranciscanRadio.org](http://www.FranciscanRadio.org).

Our team has the dream of a new collaboration with Secular Franciscans to offer a "Christmas gift" to Catholics across the country. It would be three hours of Christmas programming with a Franciscan flavor.

(Continue on page 3).

# Classic Franciscan

## In Stitch and Song

By Julia Pearson, SFO



*Cindy and Jim Wesley, SFO  
on their 25<sup>th</sup> Profession Anniversary  
May 1, 2008*

Like a favorite Franciscan saint, Anthony of Padua, Cindy Wesley is a teacher. She recounts the story of Francis replying to Anthony's request to teach. Francis said yes, as long as it doesn't take away from prayer. Cindy teaches fourth and fifth grades - just 14 students - at the Manchester Elementary School. It is a small, rural school with four classrooms to serve grades K- 8, located three hours north of San Francisco, in redwood country. Living on Highway 1, Cindy drives by the ocean every day on her way to work. It was in her car on such a trip that Cindy had been pondering/praying about the time required for the position of Regional Minister of the Blessed Junipero Serra Region, which serves Northern California and Northern Nevada. The "still, small voice" of God answered her with a simple, practical question, "Why don't you consider job-share?" A special education teacher now takes Cindy's class on Mondays; and since the end of February a year ago, she has been the Regional Minister and her husband, Jim, has been the Regional Formation Director of Blessed Junipero Serra Region.

The voice spoke, and her heart listened, when as a 17-year-old, Cindy converted to Catholicism, while being raised in a Protestant family. She and Jim met later through church activities and have been married for 37 years. Jim retired after teaching science for thirty years to middle school students. Their daughters April, Sarah,

and Mary, have given them two grandsons and three granddaughters.

Singer John Michael Talbot said, "...one of the most Franciscan things you can do is apply your creative gifts to the way God is worshiped" (John Michael Talbot, The Lessons of St. Francis, Plume, 1998:105). With guitars and voices, Cindy and Jim have been local parish musicians for over 30 years. The haunting "Amazing Grace;" "This Alone," based on Psalm 27; and both versions of "Servant Song" are always fresh and new to them.

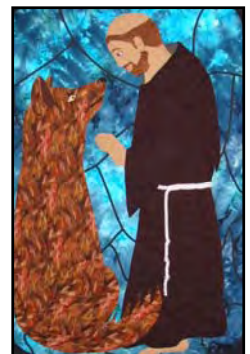
An accomplished quilter, Cindy uses fabric and needle to create religious art wall hangings reminiscent of the beautiful iconic and tapestry traditions. Eight panels make up her "Canticle." "The Rule" is a quilt measuring 5'x6'. Both pieces are hanging at the San Damiano Retreat in Danville, California. Cindy stitched, by hand, the quilt displayed at the Quinquennial in 2007, in Pittsburgh. A current precious piece in progress, requested by friars is called "Bonaventure." It will be hung in the St. Bonaventure Room of the main building of the St. Francis Retreat in San Juan Bautista, California, which replaces the building burned in a 2006 fire. Six of her quilts were lost in the flames.

Jim and Cindy joined the Secular Franciscan Order over 25 years ago. Continually inspired by St. Anthony's "love of God, his faithfulness of God," Cindy, like Anthony, also loves books. She happily recommends The Shack, by William P. Young; St. Anthony: Words of Fire, Life of Light, by Madeline Pecora Nugent; as well as authors Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton. She cites St. Francis' "The Prayer Before the Crucifix" as her comforting prayer. Her "lifeline," when Jim had a heart attack at the age of 52 years, and when her oldest daughter had thyroid cancer, comes from the Gospel verse of Luke 8:50. Jesus assures the father of the young girl who has died to not fear, but believe. In her own words, Cindy says that "*Fear is useless. What is needed is trust!*"

*Quilts hanging in St. Boniface Friary in San Francisco:*



*St. Clare*



*Wolf of Gubbio*

## Book Reviews



**John Dear on Peace**  
By Patricia Normile, SFO,  
Published by St. Anthony Messenger Press

After walking with Jesuit activist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee John Dear on a peace pilgrimage, Patti Normile was inspired by his tireless and courageous work for peace. Her great desire to spread John's message - the message of Jesus in the Gospel - led her to compile selections from Dear's impressive backlist of books and articles. In *John Dear on Peace*, Normile introduces the man, John Dear, and focuses on selections from his most relevant statements on living a nonviolent life. Each selection is followed by a brief reflection to engage us to act on Jesus' - and Dear's call to peace and nonviolence.

The book is an ideal resource for individuals, book clubs, Scripture study groups and faith sharing communities, *John Dear on Peace* will provoke thoughtful discussion and prayer and surely help anyone seeking insights on the many weighty issues facing us today.

PATRICIA PATTEN NORMILE, SFO, award-winning writer, received her master's in religion from the Athenaeum of Ohio. She is the author of several books, including *To Live as Francis Lived: A Guide for Secular Franciscans*. She is a wife, mother, grandmother and former teacher, chaplain and retreat director.

I have frequently been asked why I wrote *John Dear on Peace*. The answer is simple and at the same time complex. After meeting John at the board meetings of the San Damiano Foundation, I began to read his work. I realized that I had met a Jesuit with a Franciscan heart. John lives Jesus' words, "Put down the sword!" and "Peace be with you!" rather than simply speaking them. Living the words has cost him greatly. He has been imprisoned many times, yet continues to stand, speak and march, attempting to turn people's hearts from retaliation and vengeance to become seekers of active non-violence. I realized that many people would not read his twenty plus books plus countless articles. I approached him with the idea of a book of reflections based on his writing. That was the simple part: John readily agreed.

Then came the challenge. I would read, glean words of John's wisdom around various topics, weaving them together with my thoughts and examples from lives affected by violence. But as I wrote, I would stop for weeks as I questioned myself. Was I really capable of living the way of active non-violence? Could I live the Gospel? I had to be true to the message. I decided that I could only try to do my best and the writing proceeded. I still have a long way to go in becoming an active non-violence activist, but John has set me on the path. We invite you to join us. By Patti Normile, SFO

**My Liberated Life**  
By Thecla E. McCarthy, SFO  
Published by Publish America

"Our family - twelve in number: eight boys, two girls, and Mom and Dad - lived two years in Nicoya, Costa Rica. I wrote about this in the book, *10 Ambassadors to Costa Rica*," McCarthy explained.

Two years later, Alcoa gave them the opportunity to continue to share their lives with other families in a foreign country - Thecla's husband headed the training department for heavy equipment operators and mechanics at Suralco's bauxite mine in Suriname, a country on the northern tip of South America.

In this book, the children are still the ambassadors, thriving among the five distinct cultures of Suriname; some of their own stories are included. The older children began leaving home during that time - a new phase of Thecla's life began.

"Back in the States, my husband took short-term contracts in countries in Central America - time for us to spend exotic honeymoons traveling around in our small plane, seeing vistas of those countries I never saw before," she said. "Later, our children and their families gave me reasons to travel to Greece, Germany, Norway, Italy and Honduras visiting them. My lifetime desire to fly in an open-cockpit plane was fulfilled when I was eighty. What's next? I love my liberated life."

Thecla E. McCarthy is a member of the Society of Southwest Authors and attends their yearly conferences in Tucson. She is a wife, mother of twelve children, grandmother of forty-two, and great-grandmother of two. She still travels a lot thanks to her son, who works for United. She is an active member of a Secular Franciscan fraternity in Tucson and continues to edit their monthly newsletter. This is her second book.  
By PublishAmerica

**The Mass is Never Ended: Rediscovering  
Our Mission to Transform the World**  
By Gregory F. A. Pierce  
Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame 2007

This 126 page book contains 15 chapters divided into three parts: "Vocation and Mission," "The Mass as a Sending Forth" and, "The Spirituality of Work." At the end of each chapter there are questions for reflection and discussion.

Pierce states that "...all we lay people have to do is be aware that the Mass is designed to send us forth (back into the world)...to help us to accomplish this mission impossible..." He then explains how we do this especially through our work.

The book can be used for individuals or for group reflection. By A. F. Sue Fischer, SFO, Baltimore, MD





By Pat Brandwein-Ball SFO  
Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation  
Transition Chair  
Patbball76@yahoo.com

Our recent participation in the rituals of Holy Week is our witness to the Covenant of Reconciliation. And now the human race, freed from the slavery of sin and death, rejoices in the Risen Christ! Alleluia!

In the post resurrection scriptures, the disciples (note: disciples, representing all of us, not the apostles only) encounter Jesus in the ordinary circumstances of everyday: such as, Mary and “the gardener,” walking to a distant village, gathered in the upper room hearing the recount of events on the way, the 11 gathered with Thomas also present, after a fruitless night of fishing, the 11 again gathered. During this last event I mentioned, Jesus gives the command – *the mission* – “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

Once again, we are reminded of one of the underlying messages from the Exodus story. We are to go out of the “comfort” of our misery to a new and uncertain life. “Go out into the whole world.” Go out, indeed, recognize Jesus in the everyday people, the everyday events - the more deplorable the situation, the more urgently we must find the divine seed, as our Rule tells us, and be Christ in those circumstances.

I’ve received emails stating that while waiting for JPIC to put together “a program,” people are homeless, starving, suffering, etc. JPIC is an invitation to a mature understanding and authentic living of our Rule, with enthusiasm and gusto! The Vatican II and post councilor documents exhort the faithful, especially the lay faithful, to realize that the dignity of the person is paramount. The Church expresses concern for the great needs of the world. As Franciscans, living in the secular world, we must realize (make real) our way of life ... Chapter 2 of our Rule. How God reveals himself as poor (in all its varied definitions) is unique to each of us. This is an essential element of the Franciscan charism.

JPIC has repeatedly asked you to become knowledgeable of the documents and, therefore, of the teaching of the Church. Our “program” is to live these teachings in light of our Rule, to the fullest. If you see people hungry...fed them; if you see people in need of clothes...clothe them...the list goes on and on. As reflected in last JPIC article in TAU-USA, “Praying with Eyes Open,” our response to God’s great love for us is to open our eyes and actually see what appalls us...and not turn our backs. Go out into the world!!

### ***Logistics:***

1. In order to assist our awareness of the needs of others, often those outside our limited area, and to make known the concerns of USCCB, JPIC is seeking someone to accept the responsibility to act as moderator of SFOJPNet. This work was most energetically and lovingly shouldered by Carolyn Colburn. For personal reasons, she is no longer able to continue as moderator. The SFO thanks Carolyn for her many years of selfless service. Please contact me if you are interested.
2. JPIC contact information was requested from each Regional Minister. Twenty of the 30 responded. Some had no one appointed and had questions, but nonetheless, 20 responded. JPIC thanks them. The names and information given will be forwarded to Bob Herbelin to be included in your regional database and also will be added to SFOJPNet, if not already there.
3. From the questions emailed to me, it would seem that not all Regional Ministers were able to send out the Mission Statement and other pertinent documents given out at the October 2008 NAFRA meeting. JPIC will see that the computer committee has this information in order to make it available.
4. A more “official” JPIC team is in progress. Recall we are still transitional.
5. Please continue to email me ideas, insights, and concerns.

### ***Being and Doing:***

\*Discuss with your fraternity the meaning and origin of human dignity. (Hint: read and study, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, aka: Lumen Gentium; and Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, aka: Gaudium et Spes.)

\*What is the mission of the lay faithful and how is it to be accomplished? (Hint: Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, aka: Apostolicum Actuositatem; The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People, aka: Christi Fideles Laici.)

\*How does the SFO Rule “fit” into this picture given by the Church? (Hint: review the Rites of Baptism, Confirmation, and Profession. Now dig deeper!)

\*Have I been a blessing for someone today?



This is the year, the time and, wherever you are, it is the place to hear again about the legacy of Francis, his gift to us. We are not as well versed in story telling as we once were, when we relied less on electronic media and were able to craft the details into a story to rouse the senses and emotions. Is not that intention of the Gospels, to be more than just words read at Mass? Think about it, on the road to Emmaus (Luke), when Jesus explained the meanings of the Old Testament passages that related to the Messiah, what was the disciples' reaction. "Didn't our hearts burn within us?" When was the last time you felt that way about the Gospel? Removing the human dimension and ability to become passionate, in lieu of an electronic flash, makes it hard to understand, let alone get excited about, either the Gospels or the legacy of Francis.

*So just what did Francis leave us?*

So just what did Francis leave us? Many call it the "Life Project" or, in Latin, the "Propositum Vitae," but most of us might know it better as "Gospel to Life, Life to Gospel." It was really not new stuff; it was just Francis' way of putting life and passion back into the words and stories of Jesus. Today, 2009, we just might need another transfusion of life, ala the Poverello, to move us off our secularized approach to the Gospel and our own Franciscan Vocation.

Francis' plan was simple, he just asked the Pope for permission to live as Jesus and his disciples did: poor, humble, devoid of power and status, so that not even the structures of the Church might come between Francis

*Francis' plan was simple...*

and his relationship with God. Gospel to life, life to Gospel is just as simple, but, I fear, as "modern" humanity, we pride ourselves on being too sophisticated for such utter simplicity. So we just miss the boat. It has never been about us, our prayers, our actions, our perceived holiness or performance in ways sacred; it was only about allowing ourselves to stand naked before and enter relationship with God. At God's initiative no less. We really don't have a whole lot to do. The Holy Spirit prays in us, so we don't even pray without the Spirit's prompting us. Jesus is always ready to lead us into the dance of Life, in order to introduce us to the Father, and the Father just waits patiently and lovingly for us to say yes. God really does it all on our behalf, except the YES, that is; that's totally up to us and though we say we want that relationship, we seem to resist it with all our might, as if we become less free in God? Do we fear the transformation or that maybe we will cease to exist if we say yes? I mean look at all those who did say yes to God: the Blessed Mother, Francis, Clare, the Apostles, countless men and women throughout the ages. They all said yes and disappeared, didn't they???

Or maybe it is the transformation of our lifestyle, to have the best of both God and the world! Oops, wrong again. Our Franciscan Heritage is Trinitarian and Incarnational, so God and all creation are GOOD and useful, to be ordered and used properly. I suppose the problem is more about the question when is enough truly enough, and, please, I'm American, don't show me pictures of sub-Sahara Africa. I'll help after I take care of me first, after all charity begins at home. I know that is laid down somewhere??

Understanding the proto-rule and legacy of Francis is easy and too simple. It is about three movements. It is about God moving, bending down to us in poverty and humility, in humanity, i.e. the offer of relationship. Next, it's about us turning ourselves to God, i.e. relationship, and it is, finally, about our turning to our neighbors, another layer of relationship – simple, huh – Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel.

Relationship (God) – relationship (us) – relationship (neighbor), when these movements become our foundation, life can be transformed. Then the Gospel will cause our hearts to burn within us and the Legacy of Francis will live on and the Gospel will be lived and not be just a book to read.



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## 2009 LENTEN H2O PROJECT

By Kathy Taormina, SFO  
FYFA Fraternal Animator

In this ever changing world, how do we as Christian (more over) Franciscans, choose apostolates to participate in, which can mirror our hearts, minds and souls? Everyone seems needy, every cause seems just, and every apostolate seems to have merit. So how do we choose?

Do we choose apostolates with much press coverage; those with big name stars and even bigger budgets? Or do we look for the needs among the fringes; in places so dark, so poor, or so despairing that few people, much less the media, will ever tread? Do we choose far away lands, where much has been written about, where we may never travel? Or do we look, as Mother Teresa once said “in our own back yards,” for those who need us; for those places and people where we might actually be physically present to them in their time of need?

In 1999, I came across the **H2O Project** at the National Catholic Youth Ministers Conference in Pittsburgh, PA. The FYFA was a charter member of NACYML – the National Association of Catholic Youth Ministry Leaders. The project spoke to a Franciscan heart, especially the idea of being in *solidarity with the poor*, to “strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.” (SFO Rule, Article 13) We were not just to donate or “write out a check,” we were to fast and then use the money saved towards almsgiving to the less fortunate. What a concept! One that Francis and Clare had mastered in their lifetimes.

The H2O Project calls us to solidarity with the poor. To roll up our sleeves, to physically get involved, to (at times) get our hands dirty and to get our hearts yearning for a more equitable and just life for all!

This year’s recipient, The Canticle Café, in Detroit, Michigan, calls our awareness to the poor “in our own back yards.” It reminds us that right here in the USA, we have high unemployment, poverty, homelessness and an inaccessibility to clean drinking water. Since we are donating locally, the FYFA will travel to Detroit to participate in a Franciscan immersion experience this July!

*“Before ABC, NBC, CBS, or MSNBC news decided it was important enough to come here. Before Rosy O'Donnell started speaking out on national TV. Before Jay Leno promised to arrive to do a show, the FYFA responded for the poor in Detroit.”*  
*a Michigan-raised SFO*

On June 1, 2009, the funds donated to the H2O Project will be delivered to the Canticle Café. It will provide cold water, at no cost, to those who thirst during the hot summer months, where no public water fountains exist. Donations after August 1, 2009 will be held until the 2010 project. You can now donate year-round to the H2O Project!

The H2O Project is the means by which we gather these donations. It is the action and the method that is as important as the donations gathered. We cannot understand those who “need,” unless, at one time, we essentially “did without!”

You can still just write out a check, and believe me, the FYFA will take and use your donation...or you can actually participate with your whole person, heart and mind. You can fast, and use that money (which at other times you would have enjoyed for yourself) on another person, a person made in the image of God just like us!

It’s your choice. It’s your money. It’s your calling to solidarity! Join with the FYFA! Live our Franciscan vision!



## HINDUISM: 300,000,000 GODS AND ONE GOD

By Ed Shirley, SFO  
National Ecumenical/Interfaith Chair

In past articles, we have looked at Judaism and Islam. Because of our common Abrahamic roots, these religions are truly our siblings. However, the Church also teaches that other religions speak of God. In the next articles, we are turning our attention to the two great traditions of India: Hinduism and Buddhism. *Nostra Aetate* says that Hindus “contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust.” As with other religions, the Church urges us to enter into dialogue with Hindus.

Hinduism is a very diverse religion; in fact, it can seem more like a collection of loosely related “sub-religions.” There are Hindus who believe that God is Impersonal Being, and those who believe that God is Personal. There are Hindus who approach God through philosophical inquiry, those who approach God in loving devotion, and those who approach God through service to God and fellow humans (remember the Baltimore Catechism? “God made me to know, love and serve Him in this life, and to be happy with him forever in the next life.”) One Catholic scholar of Hinduism has said that Catholicism and Hinduism are the two religions that contain “all the archetypes,” overarching concepts and images, such as Divine Transcendence (God is beyond

our ability to understand or express), Divine Immanence (God is closer to us than we are to ourselves), God as supreme Truth, God as Love. Though our historical and theological roots are very different, we hold much in common.

Some Hindus seek God in the silence of deep meditation, while others sing devotional hymns to God and chant God’s Holy Names. Many combine these approaches (think Centering Prayer, the Rosary, devotion to the Sacred Heart and Holy Name of Jesus). Like Catholicism, Hinduism has what one scholar calls “the three M’s”: mysticism, monasticism and metaphysics (philosophy of being). These, in themselves, are rich grounds for dialogue.

*One of the most puzzling things about Hinduism for Christians is the statement that there are “300,000,000 gods,” usually followed by the assertion that there is only one God.*

One of the most puzzling things about Hinduism for Christians is the statement that there are “300,000,000 gods,” usually followed by the assertion that there is only one God. The number is symbolic, of course (who could count all those gods?), and is a reminder that God manifests Godself in countless ways. St. Bonaventure said that the Divine Word “contains” all the possibilities for Creation, and that each of those possibilities is stamped with God’s “footprint.” God is the center of each creature, and the fullness of Being that embraces the whole of Creation. We Christians, and especially we Franciscans, believe that each creature is a “sacrament” of God’s Presence (Brother Sun, Sister Moon). Just as there is no “rivalry” between someone who has a deep devotion to St. Anthony and someone with a deep devotion to St. Jude (indeed, even a devotee St. Jude will pray to St. Anthony when trying to find car keys), so, too, Hindus devoted to God as Shiva (divine energy) and those devoted to God as Krishna (divine love) dwell in harmony, and pray to other “aspects” of God when the need arises.

These are not perfect parallels, of course, but they can help give us some insight into the richness of Hinduism. There are, of course, some of the “odder” forms of Hinduism, their equivalent of snake handlers, but even that can help reveal the diversity found in this tradition. But in its more developed forms, Hinduism provides some rich possibility for interreligious dialogue, and the Franciscan spiritual and theological traditions are especially equipped for that encounter.





## A Little Bit of History

### Sanctification of the Sunday

By William Wicks, SFO - Historian

Frances and I hope to travel to Germany, in particular to Bavaria, sometime within the next few years. I promised Frances that I would not wear lederhosen.

While scanning through a German tour guidebook recently, I discovered, under the heading, "Practical Information," the admonition, "Visitors must also bear in mind that there is a compulsory and virtually total ban on trading on Saturday afternoon, Sundays, and on public holidays."

Perhaps there is some vestige of intention to keep holy the Sabbath; perhaps it started that way. But it is my personal belief that Europeans relish their leisure time, much more than we Americans do. It would be difficult to enact such a ban in this country at this time; we bestow unjustifiable deference to the false god, "consumerism."

However, at one time, during the fifties, such a program was carried out, by the Third Order, with some success.

At a board meeting held in Lemont, Illinois on September 22, 1953, Executive Secretary, Fr. Philip Marquard, OFM, proposed that the Third Order take up as a project, "Sanctification of the Sunday." All agreed that that was a truly Tertiary undertaking. The project was motivated by an address given by Pope Pius XII in St. Peter's square in March of 1945, in which the Pope reminded those present, "Keep holy Sunday, the Lord's day, as the faithful of Rome, your fathers have given example from the time of the Apostles."

"Third Order Members Seek to Stop Sunday Trade" read a headline in the Cincinnati Telegraph-Register. In Indianapolis, an effective campaign was waged, and the project was supported in the Chicago Catholic Labor Alliance publication.

Articles of support appeared in the publications: Catholic Digest; America; Work; The Register; Our Sunday Visitor; Franciscan Herald; The Way of St. Francis and St. Anthony Messenger.

More than 100,000 window posters, along with some 50,000 stickers, with the slogan, "Stop, Don't Shop on Sunday," were distributed nationwide. Pastors all over the country were asked to promote the campaign from the pulpit.

The campaign was particularly successful in the Chicago neighborhood known as "Back of the Yards," then, a square mile community with some 18 Catholic churches, approximately 100,000 residences, 95 percent of them Catholic.

In Cincinnati, the meat cutters union and the retail clerks union took up the cause. A bill was brought before the Illinois state legislature that would prohibit shopping on Sunday. In Cleveland, the diocese weekly began to pressure the city fathers about enforcing a local ordinance against Sunday shopping. Cardinal Mooney of Detroit, Cardinal Spellman of New York and Cardinal Stritch of Chicago issued pastoral letters.

The Third Order "Sunday" campaign lasted until 1962; it was a success in its time. But as you can see, it did not have a lasting effect.

But, what if today...?

I am sure that when we do get to Germany, the Sunday will be sanctified with visits to the many Baroque Bavarian churches, and the beautiful German Alps. They should be open for business on Sundays.

## Faithful Living

Continued from page 8.

"I worked with my own hands, and I am still determined to work; and with all my heart I want all the friars to be busy with some kind of work..." The Testament of Francis, 1226

**The Cantic of the Creatures**, written during Francis' final years, give testimony to his strength of will to persevere and dwell in a climate of grace - his perfect joy!

*"All praise be yours, my Lord...through those who endure sickness and trial.*

*Happy those who endure in peace; By you, Most High, they will be crowned."* The Cantic of the Creatures, 1224

St. Clare and St. Anthony, contemporaries of Francis, also endured many years of severe illnesses. Clare, bedridden for many of her final years, continued to be involved in the administration of her Poor Ladies, and received papal approval of her Rule just prior to her death in 1253.

*"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."* St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 12:1

All of us will experience times of difficulties and illness during our lives. Illnesses may even prevent us occasionally from active participation in fraternity life, yet, as Franciscans, we can take solace from the examples of Franciscan life as lived by the many blessed before us. We can offer our very selves and our sufferings to our Heavenly Father as our spiritual worship. If like our Brother Francis, we can compose a cantic of praise with our lives, whatever our circumstances may be, we will experience a climate of grace and perfect joy.

*"Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks, and serve him with great humility."*

The Cantic of the Creatures St. Francis of Assisi

Further reading: [St. Francis & the Cross](#) by R. Cantalamessa, OFM Cap. and Cardinal C. M. Martini, SJ

### Quotes:

*"Blessed is he who expects no gratitude,  
for he shall not be disappointed."*

William Bennett

*"I don't want to achieve immortality by making the Hall  
of Fame. I want to achieve immortality by not dying."*

Leo Durocher

## Integrity of Creation Our Precious Earth

By Joe Terlesky, SFO  
Lady Poverty Region

St. Francis and the Life Sciences agree that the creatures of the earth live in a dynamic relationship with one another. *The Cantic of the Creatures* sings of creation's familial, interdependent system. All of the elements have a particular role, all are related, and all have a part to interplay with each other. Biology and Ecology confirm this through scientific means. Francis celebrated these insights long ago, in medieval times. He recognized creation as good and lived out conscious relationships with the elements and creatures and had compassion toward them. His example inspires us to care for creation today.

Unlike other medieval saints, St. Francis was profoundly impacted by his encounters with creatures. The story of his preaching to the birds illustrates this point well. Most modern people are tickled to discover a saint who preached to creatures, but the most important lesson from this encounter is what happened after he preached to the birds and they flew away. Thomas of Celano wrote, "After the birds had listened so reverently to the Word of God, Francis began to accuse himself of negligence because he had not preached to them before. From that day on, he carefully exhorted all birds, all animals, all reptiles, and also insensible creatures, to love the Creator, because daily, invoking the name of the Savior, he observed their obedience in his own experience." It was after this encounter that he "woke up" and recognized that they were his brothers and sisters, as well. In the same way, we may ask, how do we relate to this richly diverse earth as brother and sister?

The relationship between Francis and the earth was horizontal, not vertical. He did not speak of being responsible for or managing creation. Francis and Franciscan theologians describe the earth and its diversity as *sacramental*.

Life on earth has intrinsic value, because it is created by God, not merely because of its economic worth. The vast majority of species appear to serve no genuinely functional purpose for humans. What value does a useless creature have in modern society where most things are ranked according to its economic worth? If an endangered species has no economic value, who will speak on behalf of its survival?

At its deepest root, our ecological crisis is derived from our belief that humans are somehow above or fundamentally distinct or superior to the rest of creation. This conceit is incompatible with a Franciscan viewpoint.

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