



TAU-USA

Newsletter of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States
Issue Number Forty-five ~ Winter 2004



Our
hearts
are ready
and
waiting.
Come,
Lord
Jesus,
and
have a
Happy
Birthday
with
us!



TAU-USA WINTER 2004 ISSUE 45

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
SECULAR FRANCISCAN
ORDER IN THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA**

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TAU-USA is a vehicle of communication within the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. Our mission is to provide an effective, appealing forum for presenting information in the areas of Ongoing Formation, Regional and National Fraternity news events, and the sharing and promotion of the Franciscan vision and spirituality in an uplifting, Franciscan manner. This publication is intended to allow the National Fraternity to disseminate information to the regional and local levels of fraternity, and also to allow Seculars throughout the country to communicate with one another, fostering a sense of community nationwide.

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue TAU-USA is Jan. 15, 2005. Please submit articles to the Editor. Permission to copy all material printed in TAU-USA is granted, except where the copyright is specifically reserved to the author or artist. In cases where copyright is not reserved, please credit TAU-USA and author, if noted; care must be taken not to distort the author's intent by adapting or editorializing the article. All correspondence sent to the editor becomes the property of the editor, and may be published in TAU-USA. Please state in all correspondence whether you wish to have your name withheld. Submissions to the newsletter are welcome. To increase the likelihood of your submission being printed, the following guidelines are offered: Please ensure that articles do not exceed 250-400 words; Please understand that articles may be edited for length and clarity; Submissions received after the deadline for a particular issue will be considered for the *following* issue. In the Franciscan interest in ecology, please try to send submissions in WORD format (e-mail or floppy disc), instead of on paper. Professed members of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States receive this newsletter without charge.

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**LORD JESUS, BLESS OUR READERS, NOW AND
FOREVER. AMEN.**

**Grant them peaceful, Franciscan
lives in You.**

**Pax,
Frances**

**Peace & good will from our hearts
to yours in the Heart of Jesus.**

May the Lord bless all our readers with His abiding presence, this Christmas and always. Thank you for reading the TAU-USA, and for encouraging all of us. You are certainly people of good will!

Peace and hugs, **Bob & Mary Stronachs, SFO**

Blessings to all who read the TAU-USA - May you experience Christ's presence in your lives more fully this Christmas and throughout 2005.

Peace and good, **Vickie Klick, SFO**

Blessings for peace, joy, and good health at Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Peace and good, **Patrick Mendés, SFO**

Blessings of this Holy Season to you and yours, now and in the New Year. Peace be with you! God Bless America.

Blessings and love, **Sandy Neal, SFO**

Christmas and New Year blessings from the Lord be yours! **Bob Herbelin, SFO**

Blessing to you and your household from "Our Great God."

Peace and good, **Ken Beattie, SFO**

Blessings to All of God's Creatures in the Animal Kingdom of God, who were the first to see Him in a humble stable in Bethlehem. And may His light always shine in all of our hearts.

Peace and Love, **Ray Smecker**



Fred Mc Carthy, SFO

Greetings from Brother Juniper, who lives in Florida. "A Blessed Christmas to all!"

Blessings to Francis' beloved sons and daughters, and may Our Heavenly Father grant to you and yours His choicest graces, during this Holy Season and into the New Year 2005!

Pax et bonum! **Delia Banchs, SFO**

Blessings to all of us, who walk on this Franciscan path. May this season of hope renew our confidence in God's love for everyone on this earth.

With my heartfelt hope for peace, **Marjo Gray, SFO**

The God whose love brought Him to earth in Jesus looks for us to return that love in our Franciscan lives. Shalom, **Lester Bach, OFM Cap**

Blessings to all our readers, for you give us purpose and inspiration. And of course, blessings to all of our loved ones, and to those that we have difficulty loving, because the world is beautiful place with us together.

Peace and love, **Julia Pearson, SFO**



Minister's Insights

By Carol Gentile, SFO
National Minister

Vital Reciprocity

Embracing our way of life will give birth to authentic Vital Reciprocity!

A well-known psychologist stated that “Any commitment that is authentic has two elements.” First element: You are half sure, not knowing exactly how totally your commitment will affect your life. Second element: You are entering this commitment wholeheartedly, entirely and unconditionally. Living a commitment will involve six stages, according to Richard T. Knowles in his book Human Development and Human Possibility: Erickson in the Light of Heidegger, pp 130-137.

The first stage is the **Call**. This is a response to an invitation. We are called to come out of our preoccupations and concerns. For example: your call to serve as a Secular Franciscan, a priest or a married person, as a brother, or friar. The second stage is the **Declaration**. The declaration is the exchange of vows. For example: Profession for a Secular Franciscan, ordination for a priest, wedding vows in marriage. Now, we feel that our commitment is permanent. We are almost positive that we will keep this commitment without sacrifices. The third stage is **Involvement**. We, now, find that the commitment involves more than what we thought it would. For example: You might be saying, “If I knew then what I know now, maybe I wouldn’t have accepted this responsibility to serve in this capacity.” The

fourth stage is **Purpose and Meaning**. At this stage there is an increased sense of purpose and meaning to the commitment. For example: You realize, at this very moment, that you must walk your talk. The fifth stage is the **Struggle**. There is a real sense of personal struggle. You doubt the commitment and feel like you are losing control. For example: your struggles in the Order, crisis facing our religious today, family issues, etc. All commitments involve sacrifice, suffering, self-discipline, and loss of control.

Whoever loves father or mother, son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me. He who will not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me.

Matt. 10: 37-38

Every commitment will take you to a place where you would rather not go.

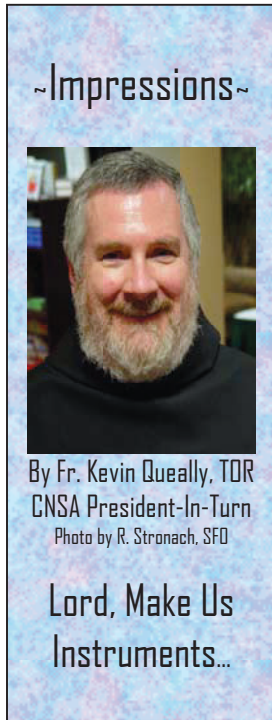
I tell you solemnly: as a young man you fastened your belt and went about as you pleased; but when you are older you will stretch out your hands, and another will tie you fast and carry you off against your will. John 21:18

The sixth stage is **Divine Identity**. Those who remain faithful will experience feelings of satisfaction, worthiness, a sense of fit with life. **Commitment is no longer what I do but rather who I am.** Those who remain faithful to our Lord will have the strength to bear witness, talents beyond reach, wisdom above and beyond and will be able to experience unconditional love.

This Divine Identity is to see through the eyes of Christ, to hear as He would hear us, to touch as He would touch us and to speak as He would speak to us. This is the identity that Christ had intended for all of us.

What does this way of life have to do with our Franciscan brothers and sisters?

We are all embracing the same charism, the same Gospel, the same Lord, the same Francis and Clare! Continue on Page 10.



No matter which candidate you supported in the national elections this year, it is probably very clear to most of us that our Nation is deeply divided. Here is not the place to discuss particular issues, but rather I want to focus on the general climate in our Nation. This division is often reflected in our Church and in our Order. We find ourselves disagreeing among ourselves as Franciscans, and there are reports of instances where things have gotten very tense in local fraternities. If we are to be sisters and brothers, following

Christ in the way of Francis, we must find ways to be reconcilers, peacemakers. Must we be so hard-headed and closed minded about our own points of view that we cannot try to find reason or right or truth in the other person's opinion? This, my brothers and sisters, is not Franciscan. Perhaps we are motivated by the purest and most admirable intentions. Perhaps our point of view makes all the sense in the world! Still, it is possible to for reasonable people to disagree! When we become so divided as to not find reconciliation and respect among ourselves, something is very wrong!

A better way is possible and we can find it in our Franciscan way of living the gospel. It takes much work and openness to the Spirit. Even in the Rule, we find ourselves called "brothers and sisters of penance." (SFO Rule, Article 7) In the same article, we are called to "conversion." We all want to "bring the gospel to life," in the sense of making it a living document in all we say and do. In living out our profession, we are meant to reach beyond ourselves. If we are so divided, how can we offer reconciliation to the divided world at large? My own novice director, oh so many years ago, was fond of saying, "*Nemo dat quod non habet.*" (A translation from the Latin would be, "No one can give what he [or she] does not have.") If we are deeply divided among ourselves and not willing to recognize and accept the differences as

a sign of a healthy community or fraternity, how can we hope to bring peace and reconciliation to the world?

Maybe our fraternities could look at ways of conflict resolution. It might do us good to talk openly and respectfully about our differences, making sure that there is a family atmosphere of acceptance and support and love as we listen to each speaker. Even the Rule calls us to that respect "...because each bears the imprint of the Most High." (SFO Rule, Article 18) Can we do this in our own fraternities? It is a challenge for us to model within our own Order what we say we are praying for and working for: peace, justice, family, work and ecology. By the way, the names of three of the four apostolic commissions are "hidden" in the text! (And I don't mean in the final summary line.)

**Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR,
New National Spiritual Assistant**

Fr. Kevin born in born in Yonkers, New York. He lives in Loretto, PA and is Campus Minister there at Saint Francis University. Father was ordained a priest in 1977, at Saint Francis University. He is the Regional Spiritual Assistant for the Lady Poverty Region, which has fraternities in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Maryland. His special interest is Peace & Justice. He has been involved in this for many years, for the friars on the Provincial, National and Inter-national level. From 1995 to 2001, he was on the IFCJP (Inter-Franciscan Justice and Peace Commission) in Rome. This commission includes representatives from the OFMs, OFM Caps, OFM Conventuals, SFO, the International Franciscan Conference TOR (which is the organization of all those following the TOR rule) in addition to the TORs.

When asked about long term goals as National Spiritual Assistant, his answer was, "I am approaching the office of president-in-turn, as one of service to NAFRA and to the Spiritual Assistants. My predecessor wrote "the book" (called Catch Me a Rainbow!), so I follow someone who is well-liked and well-respected. If I can participate in NAFRA meetings, as any Spiritual Assistant participates in a fraternity meeting, I will feel I have begun to fulfill my role of service." His first plan of action was to go to the NAFRA meeting and learn what is happening in the National Fraternity.

Lynne's Funeral on All Souls Day:



**Lynne Murray, SFO,
Former Regional Minister
'Ohana 'O Ke Anuenue Region**

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

I returned last night from Maui, after attending Lynne's funeral. It was a fitting day to have her funeral on All Souls Day.

She truly had a beautiful send-off. The church was filled with her friends and family. Father Tom gave a wonderful homily and there were many people who came up and gave tribute to our dear sister. The choir was beautiful and sounded like a choir of angels. Three of her children were there and they were quite touched by the people in attendance. Three Franciscan Sisters from St. Francis Convent in Manoa were there also.

I thank you all for the prayers offered for her soul.

Peace,

Joanne Kahaloa, SFO, Regional Minister
'Ohana 'O Ke Anuenue Region, Hawaii

The last time many of us saw Lynne was at the NAFRA gathering in Santa Barbara. She came attached to an oxygen tank determined to be with her Franciscan brothers and sisters, as it turned out, for the last time. This crazy *gutsiness* defined Lynne during the last few years of her life. Those close to her know that she lived a challenging, but full life. She was real, she was transparent, and therefore, fun to be with. Lynne lived in the "up" country of Maui, at about 4,000 feet. All the cats on the island found their way to her home, and she took care of them all. I prefer to remember her the way she was when her Region hosted the West Coast Week of Community on Oahu. The picture shown was taken there. We will miss you, Lynne. You have a special place in our heart. Lord, welcome Lynne into your heavenly kingdom, you'll love her. What am I saying!—You already do.

By Bill Wicks, SFO

After the Death of a Friend

By Sister Patricia Proctor, OSC 2004

I no longer live in time,
I have slipped away
and melted into days of eternity.
I walk with my hand in God's hand
and my heart in God's heart.
My hope stretches far beyond
the limits of this hour
and rejoices with gladness
at new life
ready to burst
from the hull of past memories.
No matter that pain and sadness
touch this day, I shall not linger here
for I have slipped away
and melted with God
in prayer that touches my loved ones and
holds them near.
With hope, my heart sings,
knowing that time,
this day and the morrow,
is but a moment's touch in God's reality.
Joy will bloom anew
and I shall with gladness sing
and laugh with shared memories
in the timelessness of eternity.

WORDS :

"IT'S ABOUT PAUL"

The book begins:

In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing. We lived at the junction of great trout rivers in western Montana, and our father was a Presbyterian minister and a fly fisherman who tied his own flies and taught others. He told us about Christ's disciples being fishermen, and we were left to assume, as my brother and I did, that all first-class fisherman on the Sea of Galilee were fly fisherman and that John, the favorite, was a dry-fly fisherman. So, we are led to believe that this book is about religion and fly fishing and the ties (pun intended) between them. However, the book is about Paul. We all know a Paul: a child, a brother or sister, a friend - someone who we love that really needs help, but either won't accept it, or the help we offer is not what is needed.

The biographical book, *A River Runs Through It*, was written by Norman Maclean, Paul's older brother in the book. Maclean was over 80 year old when the book was written, his first.

More from the book:

Sunrise is the time to feel that you will be able to find out how to help somebody close to you who you think needs help even if he doesn't think so. At sunrise everything is luminous but not clear. ... Yet even in the loneliness of the canyon I knew there were others like me who had brothers they did not understand but wanted to help. We are probably those referred to as "our brother's keeper," possessed of one of the oldest and possible one of the most futile and certainly one of the most haunting of instincts. It will not let us go.

A River Runs Through It, Norman Maclean, The University of Chicago Press.

AND MUSIC:

"MIRACLE"



Jay, 18 days old

Singer Celine Dion and artist Anne Geddes combine to produce a celebration of new life. Celine's CD *Miracle* includes songs that celebrate babies. The effort was most likely inspired by her love for her newborn son. The booklet that comes with the CD includes pictures of Celine with babies, a teaser for purchasing the hard cover book, which incidently includes a DVD and CD. In the small booklet Anne writes: *Each new life is truly a miracle. I photograph babies to portray and promote the absolute promise of a newborn, the powerful potential of a child to be an extraordinary human being.* Celine writes: *I've always been a huge fan of Anne's. Long before I became a mother, I admired and appreciated the beautiful way she photographs babies.* If you enjoy babies and flowers, you will love the hard cover book; a unique celebration of life.

Among the songs on the CD are: *Brahms' lullaby*, *Beautiful Boy* written by John Lennon - you may remember it as a song by the father to his son in the movie *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *What a wonderful world*, *A mother's prayer*, *The first time ever I saw your face* and, my favorite, *In some small way*. The picture above is a sample of what is found in the book.

By Bill Wicks, SFO

The Animal Kingdom of God



Ray Smecker in his barn

Brandy's Christmas Gift from the Magi

"The righteous man regards the life of his beast."
Proverbs 12:10

William Sydney Porter, better known as O'Henry, was known as the master of the short story. He has left us a litany of stories, including one of his most famous, "The Gift of the Magi." My favorite childhood Christmas toy was the Christmas Crèche. My favorite English Proverb states, "When a manger is empty, horses fight." My favorite old Arabian Proverb states, "The air of heaven is that which blows between a horse's ears." And a favorite line in poetry is John Keats, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever: Its loveliness increases, it will never pass into nothingness..."

...My very rich friend and his wife pulled into our driveway and parked their shiny black luxury car out in front of my Morgan horse "Brandy's" stall. They exited the car and walked over to me, and my dying horse, who had his head tucked under my caressing arm. "How is he doing?" my dearest friends asked sympathetically.

..."Not good, the Vet gave him medication and said he's dying. The vet and his wife will be back to check on him again this evening. He said that his heart beat is too high and he's not a miracle worker." My friends hugged Brandy, my horse, and they started to cry.

...That evening my vet and his wife and my dearest Amish friends and neighbors all came to

minister to Brandy.

..."He's in more pain," said Gary, our vet. See the redness around his eyes...and his heartbeat is not down...and..."

..."Do everything...save him, Gary," I pleaded. "I'm doing the best I can Ray...I'm not God... We can take him down to the New Bolten Clinic...fool hardy though, he's 25 years old. Don't put him through it," argued my vet.

..."I Don't care...it's not that far...I owe him...I'll never be able to pay him back," I pleaded.

..."Look, see how thick his blood is. His kidney's are shutting down. We should just put him down."

..."Treat him," I blasted back in earnest. So out came the IV's and bottles and the tenderness from everyone and they all immediately tended to my beloved horse, Brandy. The barn looked like an emergency care unit. "This will help the pain...and this will..." Gary continued to mumble as I grabbed at each hope and medicine bottle.

"There is a chance we can save him, but it's ever so slight," said the vet. All of my dear Amish friends, and Gary and his wife, and my friend and his wife and my wife, Megan, all ministered to my beloved friend - Brandy...

..."That's all I can do for him Ray, the pain is gone. The IV's were administered and his heart beat has come down a little. We'll see if he makes it through the night?"

..."OK. I'm staying with him tonight," I said.

And they all pleaded, "No let him sleep...he needs to sleep. If you stay in here with him tonight, he'll only get worse," they all argued. So we all hugged him and said good night. As we exited the barn, Brandy lifted his head high and sent out a thundering whinny and then tucked his head under my outstretched arm. "I think he is thanking us," said my Amish friend.

..."Or saying good-bye," I whispered somberly and closed up the stable.

...We all entered his stall together the next morning. "I've been on the farm all of my life...seen hundreds of dead animals," said my Amish friend John..."I've never ever seen anything like this...why he looks alive not dead." "Oh my, it looks like he died praying," said my Amish friend's wife, Katie.

..."Yes" said my friend and his wife, "he looks like a beautiful statue." "He looks like a

Continue on Page 16.

Our Stories!



The Critter Connection

By M. Marko, SFO
Brother Jacoba Community
St. Peter's in the Loop, Chicago

A lovely thing happened at church this evening: a dog came to Mass. Don't you just love it? A blind lady came to Mass with her dog. Seeing a critter in church always give me the "happies."

As they walked by, it looked up at me with big, gentle eyes. I wanted to hug it and tell it was a good dog, and that God and I loved it very much. But I didn't. When a seeing-eye dog is on duty, it's not to be treated like a regular pet. Then, too, I was distributing Communion at the time...

There are two kinds of folks in the world: people persons and animal persons. I am definitely of the latter ilk. The first person I was ever attracted to was St. Francis. Solely,

because he always seemed to be in the company of bunnies and birdies. I knew very little about him, except that he always wore a long dress and he was a sissy. I didn't care; the bunnies and birdies had sold me.

As time passed, I learned a bit more: a) it wasn't a long dress; and b) he was from a place called Assisi. I also learned the significance of the critters. It was then that I learned that he was the Patron Saint of Animals. How cool, I thought. "Saint" is nice; but "Patron Saint" is definitely a good career move. Then I learned that he was also the Patron Saint of Ecology, which includes all things natural but (in my book) non-human. Francis was my hero! And then I learned the best thing of all... I found out that I could be a Franciscan without becoming a nun. Yes! I could join my hero's family and not have to live with a bunch of women. Oh, it was time to commence the dance of joy. But, as I learned even more about Francis, I came to see that there was a fly the size of a 747 in my ointment. True, he was an animal person. But he was also (gasp!) a people person. What was I to do? I was in too deep to get out. And I didn't want to get out. But this people thing, it's always been a stumbling block for me. Don't get me wrong. Some of my best friends are people. And my Franciscan community is the greatest. It's both a blessing and a privilege to be part of them. But all those other people out there...

To this day, when I pass someone walking their dog, I smile and murmur greetings to the dog; but I usually don't notice the person at the other end of the leash. Note: I don't *ignore* the person. After all, ignoring someone is just an inside-out way of acknowledging their presence. No, I don't ignore them. I simply *don't notice* them. And that was Dives' sin against Lazarus, wasn't it? He didn't ignore the poor man at his gate; he just did not notice him. I could see that I had much work to do on this people thing.

Then a thought came to me. What if I tried to treat people like animals? It may sound harsh. But in my case, it's a major step in the right direction. Because I'm so good with animals. I love them all; I'm kind to them, gentle, courteous, considerate, caring, polite, and pleasant; I want what's best for them and to see them happy; they make me smile, both inside and out. That's how Francis was with people, right? So I know I'm on the right track.

It's not going to happen over night. But now that I have a plan, there is hope. So if you should run into me at a Franciscan function somewhere, and I either don't notice you or do and react somewhat testily, keep in mind that God isn't through with me yet. On the other hand, if I scratch you behind the ears and offer you a sausage, know that, at least, I'm *trying*...

Regional Roundup

By Sandy Neal, SFO, Regional News Editor



Anniversaries:

Ed and Mary Zablockie, SFO of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region celebrated their Twenty-fifth Wedding Anniversary at the Mother House of the Franciscan Sisters in Buffalo, renewing the original vows, which they had composed for their wedding day.



Mary Jane Proulx, SFO

Mary Jane Proulx, SFO, of St. Bernard's Fraternity in Fitchburg, MA, celebrated her 60th anniversary as a Secular Franciscan. She entered the Little Franciscans of Mary at Bay St. Paul, Quebec around the year 1941. She was professed as a Secular Franciscan while there, on September 7, 1944. Family circumstances required her to return home, but her heart and soul have remained Franciscan her whole life. She is a founding member of the Associates of the Little Franciscans of Mary in Worcester. As an SFO, she has held the positions of Minister, Formation Director, and Councilor at Large. Mary Jane has

been walking in the footsteps of St. Francis and living the Gospel for 60 years. She continues to be an inspiration to the people in her life.

Delia Banchs, SFO, celebrated her 25 Profession Jubilee Anniversary with Mass and Reception at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Dallas, Texas on November 6, 2004.

Kelley Toombs, SFO, celebrated her 50th anniversary as a Secular Franciscan with Little Flock Fraternity in Fair Hope, Alabama.

Carlos Agon, SFO, is celebrating 68 years, Sophia Balski, SFO is celebrating 49 years, and Walter A. Urban, SFO, is celebrating 34 years as professed Secular Franciscans. All are members of St. Joseph's Fraternity in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Elizabeth Beliviau, SFO is celebrating 66 years, Teresa Weeks, SFO and Dennis Mallon, SFO are celebrating 49 years, as professed members of Little Flowers of St. Francis Fraternity in Ormond Beach.

Sr. Fidelis Hart, OSC, former spiritual assistant to St. Teresa of Avila Fraternity, was honored in New Orleans, as she celebrated seventy years as a professed religious and fifty years as a Poor Clare. Ties with Second and Third Order go back for more than a century in New Orleans. When the Friars asked Mother Bentivoglio to leave New Orleans, it was the local tertiaries, who arranged for the return of the sisters. Sr. Charlene Toups, OSC, is the current spiritual assistant to the fraternity.

Troubadours of Peace Region

Marie Hoffman, SFO, was professed on March 19, 2004.

It has been her life long dream to be a Secular Franciscan. Fr. Bachmeier was the friar present for Marie's promises to God.

Two have completed the Life Giving Union Correspondence Course for the position of Spiritual Assistant for the Secular Franciscan Order. They are Denise McClain, SFO, of San Damiano Fraternity of Sequim and the Port Angeles area in Washington and Gerald J. Schneider, SFO of St. Francis of Rogue Valley Fraternity, Medford, Oregon. *(Regional News Editor's Note: Having taken this course myself,*

I can give my heartfelt congratulations to each



and every one of you, who have stepped up and given of yourselves in this way. It was one of the hardest things that I have ever done. Sandy Neal Holy Trinity Fraternity's Canonical Establishment took place in the Tri-Cities area of Washington. The fraternity has sixteen Professed members, three Candidates and two Inquirers from the areas of Pasco, Kennewick and Richland.

Mother Cabrini Region

The Region celebrated their 10th Anniversary and the feast of their patron on November 14, 2004 in Chicago.

Tau Cross Region

The recipient of the Tau Cross Region Family Award for 2004 is the Gerard and Gertrude Crean Family. Gerry and Gert have belonged to St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity for 30 years; their son Mark for 19 years. The faith and Catholic values are a part of life for their seven children, who continue to practice their Catholic faith and are active in the Church. The award will be presented to the Crean Family at the Fall Gathering at St. Joseph's Church, Babylon. Two fraternities, St. Bonaventure Fraternity, which now meets at St. Thomas Church in West Hempstead and St. Mary, Queen of Angels, which meets at Queen of Angels Church in Sunnyside, are celebrating their 50th anniversaries this October. The fraternities have weathered many changes over the years. St. Bonaventure has moved its meeting place several times, but the continued commitment to the Franciscan way of life remains. At least ten fraternities in Nassau and Suffolk can trace their roots to St. Bonaventure Fraternity.

Holy Trinity Region

Prayers of thanksgiving are offered for the life of Rod Potts, SFO, Former Regional Minister, and condolences are sent to his family and the Seculars, who suffer his loss.

Representatives from various Fraternities meet regularly to plan joint activities to serve the needy. They collect food, which is donated to the local food pantries and safe, non-military toys which are given to the disabled children of St. Joseph and St. Aloysius Orphanages.

Professions: Judy Kramer, SFO, Peggy Roy, SFO, and Rick Fannin, SFO from St. Leonard's Fraternity and Dale Bennett, SFO, from Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity, are newly professed members.

Lady Poverty Region

At their August 24th meeting the Regional Council, approved the establishment of a Newly Forming Group, Pope John XXIII to be sponsored by the St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity in Pittsburgh. The Eastern Cluster met for their summer gathering on Saturday, August 7, 2004, in Loretto, PA. There were forty-four Secular Franciscans, and three TORs present.

St. Francis Region

Patty Church, SFO from San Juan Capistrano Fraternity was nominated Catholic Woman of the Year, representing St. Timothy Parish in Laguna Niguel, CA. In the San Damiano Fraternity Jeffrey Clark, SFO, and Charlotte Cifre, SFO, organized a barbeque for the grape pickers in June. Members of the fraternity took hot dogs and salads to Mission San Felipe de Jesus in Mecca for a "fiesta." They also brought clothing, towels and soap for the workers. In May, the fraternities joined together to buy, prepare, and serve food for a barbecue at Isaiah House for the Homeless.

St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Pismo Beach, CA, celebrated twenty years, as a fraternity with members renewing their promises at Mass and having a fraternal dinner on November 5, 2004.

Ohana 'O Ke Anuenue Region

The ministers of Hawaii have found a way to conduct Regional meetings, without the cost of flying to another island. On July 24, 2004, they conducted a successful video Regional conference with five fraternities from Oahu, the Big Island, and Maui, connecting with one another. It was amazing. The people in Hilo were able to communicate and contribute to the conference discussion on Maui via the video. This conference by video was published in The Hawaii Catholic Herald with a picture of Joanne Kahaloe, SFO, Regional Minister and Ken Amaral, SFO, as seen on the video with an article by Ron Drum, SFO of Hawaii.

Ministers Insights continued:

Can we contribute to each other's spiritual growth? The answer is an emphatic YES!

Recently, I was asked to present to the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. In preparing for my presentation, I decided to do a random sampling with the Local Ministers, Regional Ministers, National level and other leaders on the question given to me to respond to by the CNSA. **"Is what the Spiritual Assistants do with and for you (the SFOs) contributing to your own - and their own - spiritual growth? If not, what can we do?"** The SFOs who had been surveyed answered the question differently at different levels. The results indicated that at the local level and regional level, most of the ministers believe that Spiritual Assistants contribute to their (SFO's) spiritual growth but generally denied that they contributed significantly to the spiritual growth of the Spiritual Assistant. On the national level, they were more positive about their contribution.

Perhaps, we need to secure a few opinions from our religious brothers and sisters. Let's examine the concept of **"Vital Reciprocity."**

What is meant by **"Vital Reciprocity?"**

According to **Lester Bach, OFM Cap**, "One definition of 'vital' is *essential to life*. One definition of 'reciprocity' is *mutual exchange*. Hence, when we speak of *a vital reciprocity* between the First Order/TOR and the SFO we are speaking about a *mutual exchange* that is *essential to the life* of the whole Franciscan family. Our Franciscan family, through a common *mutual exchange*, helps promote what is *essential to the life* of our Franciscan charism. The implications show themselves in the various ways our documents require this mutual relationship."

Benet A. Fonck, OFM states, "Speaking as a friar who worked with the Seculars for 32 years, here is how my Franciscan spirituality has been enhanced:

1) The Seculars have given me time and time again an authentic, vivid, and credible witness to true prayer, simple living, and oneness with the Church.

2) The Seculars have given me an expanded, but nonetheless real, experience of 'life in fraternity' and 'fraternity in mission.'

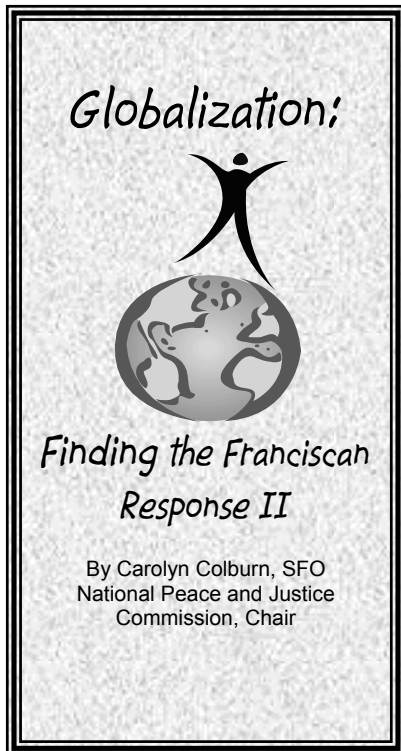
3) The Seculars have provided for me, time and time again, a lived experience of unity of the Franciscan charism: the complementarity between religious and seculars and between clergy and laity, the collaboration between all parts of the Family to make the charism of Francis and Clare present and operative in the Church, the challenge of thinking and doing 'outside the box' regarding the understanding and application of the charism and its ensuing spirituality.

4) The Seculars have given me the opportunity for deep appreciation for the secular/lay vocation in the Church and for the great holiness of those called to this way of life; this appreciation leads to hearing/seeing my own story in the story of others; such listening leads to modeling; such modeling moves me toward deeper holiness myself."

According to **Richard Trezza, OFM**, "It's time to take 'Vital Reciprocity', 'Mutual Symbiosis' and 'Dynamic Interaction' out of the dustbin of cutesy and clever phrases and allow them to breathe the new life they were meant to breathe into the Franciscan movement of this millennium."

In a recent article, *The Franciscan Family, "Life-giving union with each other" in the vision of the Poor Clare Sisters*, **Sr. Antonella Perugini** states that "I am profoundly convinced that what unites us is quantitatively and qualitatively much more than what distinguishes us from one another; but it is, nevertheless, true that the distinctions do exist and, in their complementing, constitute a reciprocal richness and contributes to making complete and, thus, more authentic, the face of Franciscanism."

Who is in denial...not our religious brothers and sisters!!!!!!!



As Franciscans, we are called to respond to globalization in human terms. The Holy Father has spoken many times about the need for the process of globalization to conform to the principles of solidarity. By this, he means that globalization should serve the needs of the poor as well as the affluent.

It is possible for Secular Franciscans to help give globalization a human face. One aspect of globalization, that we can understand and about which we can have a voice, is trade agreements between nations. Agreements between countries that differ vastly in power and wealth often end up helping the wealthy country at the expense of the poor country. It does not have to be this way. It is possible to make agreements that will be of equal benefit to the citizens of both countries.

Trade agreements that the US makes with other countries must be ratified by our legislature. Here is where Secular Franciscans can participate. We need to let our elected officials know that we understand the harm that an unjust agreement can do to a poor country. We expect our trade negotiators to consider the basic human rights of workers in both countries, as well as the effect on the environment.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was negotiated ten years ago between the US, Mexico and Canada. It has had severe consequences for Mexican farmers and small business owners. The US can export American corn to Mexico. The subsidies we pay our farmers allow the corn to be sold for less than it costs Mexican farmers to grow corn. The result has been cheaper prices for corn for people living in the cities. However, Mexican farmers, who once supplied the cities, can no longer sell their corn. Many have had to leave their land and go north to find work.

Another aspect of the treaty allows large corporations to operate in Mexico. Small shop owners in Mexico have been put out of business when large corporations like Wal-Mart have opened stores in Mexico.

At the present time, our government is negotiating treaties with other countries in Latin America, looking forward to a large agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), to be completed in 2005. These treaties are modeled after the terms of the

NAFTA treaty. An interim agreement has been signed with five countries in Central America, the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Because the treaty is modeled after NAFTA, the US Catholic bishops and the Catholic bishops of Central America are so concerned about the harm it could cause to farmers and small businesses that they met together and issued a joint statement that is available on the website of the US bishops:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/jointtradestatement.htm>. They ask that the terms of the treaty be renegotiated to protect Central American farmers, workers, and the environment. Secular Franciscans who want to help can let their elected officials know that we understand and support the position of the US and Central American bishops.

Another aspect of globalization that concerns the US bishops is outsourcing of jobs. Workers who lose their employment because their jobs go to low wage countries need to be helped by our government until they can find other work or be trained to do different work. According to Catholic social teaching, government assistance to persons deprived of employment through no fault of their own is a basic human right. (John XXIII *Pacem in Terris* #11) Displaced workers and their families should not be pushed into poverty. Secular Franciscans can let their elected officials know that we support the US bishops. In this way we exercise our preferential option for the poor.

Globalization:



A Peace & Justice Issue

Carolyn Colburn, SFO
NAFRA Peace & Justice Chair
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By Ray Hardwick, SFO
National Peace and Justice
Commission Member

As we reflect on the effects globalization has on the poor in this country and others as well, we should keep in mind what the poor want from us is understanding, not contempt. Not annoyance. Not even pity! No charity please! Perhaps, something else. They want to be accepted as people!

An example is Gary, a 22-year-old homeless person. "My name is Gary. But no one wants to know. I am homeless and everybody's stereotype. Sitting in my doorway, I am all things to all passers-by. To one, I'm a dropout, avoiding life's responsibilities. To another, an alcoholic or a junkie, frightening and disease ridden. To another I'm mentally ill. Or an aggressive beggar. A criminal, perhaps.

To none am I an individual, and that's what really hurts.

Homelessness is blamed on many things. But your callousness is your responsibility. I'm not just a 'homeless person,' I am an individual. I'd like to talk to you, or anyone, about that, but no one is brave enough to tell me their name."

Clearly, many people in the developing world, and also in the developed world, feel misunderstood by images commonly held of them.

- *What are your usual images of people living in poverty?
- *Where do these images come from? Why are they so common?
- *What elements of dignity does the young man quoted above demonstrate?
- *What factors do you think are necessary for a person to experience his/her own dignity?
- *What does our faith teach us about human dignity?
- *How do I develop my own human dignity when I recognize the dignity of others, including those in poverty?

Globalization:



A Formation Issue

By Teresa Baker, SFO
NAFRA Formation Co-chair
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Globalization: The Retelling of a Parable

Parables are meant to be open-ended and challenge our sensibilities. During the summer session at Boston College in 1991, Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez, a priest from Peru, did just that. He gave a totally different rendition of the Parable of the Tenants found in Matt. 21:33-40. The landowner is God

Almighty. The vineyard is the earth and all its riches, most of which lie right here within the bounds of the United States and the other developed nations. We have become the tenant farmers.

In due season, God sends his "slaves," the persons of the underdeveloped nations, to collect his produce. We do not respond appropriately; we do not share with them. Again, God sends other persons of the undeveloped nations to collect his produce, and we send them away also.

The questions Fr. Gutiérrez posed left us pondering, "Will we, of the developed nations, recognize the heir, the Son of God, when he comes? If we do recognize him, how will we respond to him? How will we give an account of our behavior? Or will we kill him, deny his presence in our lives, so as not to have to share what we have come to believe is ours by right?"

We, in the United States, have been given much, and, as we are reminded in Luke 12:48: "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded."

How are we responding to the needs of the less fortunate in our neighborhood or around the globe? Are we giving in like amount to what we have received? Or are we hoarding, burying the gifts of God, tilling them underground, so as not to have to share them? How can we give a just accounting of our behavior? Are we responding as Francis did, more concerned for those who have less than we

do? Explore your answers with each other. Choose a situation, global or local, and decide on a course of action to deal with it.

Globalization:



An Ecology Issue

By Bill Fontenot, SFO
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I read somewhere that within each developed nation/society/civilization, there is a sort of evolution of environmental perceptions and associated actions which follows this pattern:
Colonization – Where newly arrived colonists take their cues from indigenous peoples regarding how to best live on and from the region’s natural resources, resulting in sustainable lifestyles.
Development – Where succeeding generations, now well situated within the environmental framework of the new land, and having their basic needs met, move on toward building wealth through extraction and processing of the region’s natural resources, resulting in demonstrably unsustainable economies and environmental degradation.
Environmental Enlightenment – Where succeeding generations come to understand the unsustainable abuse heaped upon their natural surroundings in the name of development,

and take steps to reverse it, resulting in a gradual restoration of ecological integrity to their natural resource base. It seems that the U.S. has finally tiptoed through the threshold of Stage Three in this process (we have much work left to do!), but what of our neighboring countries? What about these “poor cousins” of ours who are at the threshold of Stage 2 on the Environmental Perception Evolutionary Scale, who are now negotiating trade agreements with us? Will it be business as usual, as we greedily and blindly attempt to optimize our economic position, selling them anything and everything we can, with the knowledge that such practices might well interrupt or even destroy their own sustainable systems of producing goods and services? Will it be business as usual, as we greedily and blindly attempt to buy anything and everything from them, encouraging them to unsustainably abuse their own natural resource base in an effort to “make hay while the sun shines.”
Among other things, these new trade agreements carry new possibilities for the U.S. to base its economic dealings with its developing “cousins” from a more just standpoint which would serve to strengthen rather than dilute the environmental integrity and sustainability of all concerned. Now more than ever, we need wise oversight to take these dealings on a case-by-case basis, understanding from our own sad environmental history that “doing right” by our poorer

neighbors” – both human and non-human -- should serve as the overarching theme.

Globalization:



A Work Issue

Pauline Cahalan, SFO
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By Teresa S. Redder, SFO
Work Commission Member
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*Do our daily work efforts have a global impact? If we answer that question too quickly, we may not fully appreciate our contributions to global interdependence.

As SFOs, our Work Commission is vital toward building the visible solidarity that serves the common good and values the human dignity of every person. If we esteem work with the attitude of Christ, our values **DO** influence the global arena to see Christ in every human being! Our attitudes can become dull, complacent, or stale. Good fraternal dialogue asks us to leave our comfort zones—to probe and be transformed.

*How much do we know about CAFTA? What are the five countries? (Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, & Honduras) Do we remember their recent 20-year history? *If our work is to be a sharing in the service of humanity, we must banish our*

own fear and ignorance to build a more fraternal and evangelical world.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) made a recommendation, in October 2003, to the US Trade Representative on the negotiation of CAFTA. From firsthand experience, CRS knew that developing countries were vulnerable to economic crises, sharing concerns about labor, the environment, immigration, small farmers, women, children, small businesses, and immigration.

*How can our values influence our Congress on trade agreements?

*Is the human person at the center of all US economic activity?

*What values must guide national and international work efforts to decrease the growing gap between rich and poor?

In the US bishops' Labor Day 2004 statement, Cardinal McCarrick wrote about "global trade that works for all," emphasizing respect for each human being. With a strong reminder that global solidarity is never about winners and losers, he quoted Pope John Paul II: "*All must **work** so that the economic system in which we live does not upset the fundamental order of the priority of **work** over capital, of the common good over private interest.*"

*What values conflict when prioritizing work above capital, not just for our own country, but also for developing countries?

*Why is CAFTA vulnerable to placing private interests ahead of the common good?

As we leave fraternal dialogue, let us work purposefully in our secular dialogue, knowing that Gospel values may be rejected or challenged there. Globalization with solidarity will require faithful voices attuned to charity. Holy Spirit, enkindle our hearts and minds for this challenge!

Quote:

By Dan & Sarah Mulholland, SFO
Former Peace & Justice
Commission Co-chairs

"We must not dismiss the 'other,' or only see them as the 'enemy,' because whoever they are, they too are children of God. They are our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors—and we are told to love them."

Globalization:



A Family Issue

By Richard Fetkovich, SFO
NAFRA Family Commission Member

*What is your personal experience on human dignity?

*As family, how do we see the dignity of the human person today?

*How can families share with neighbor communities?

*What is your personal experience on human dignity?

*As family, how do we see the

dignity of the human person today?

*How can families share with neighbor communities?

*How does your family respond to globalization? Could we, as a family, fast for one day?

*Is your parish aware of globalization?

*Is your Franciscan fraternity aware of the need for globalization?

*Do you individually or as a fraternity support organizations, such as Amazon Relief and other Franciscan family apostolates to improve globalization?

*Do you bring up and discuss issues in the news regarding globalization and solidarity?

*Why do we need to globalize? Are we committed as a family, and as SFOs, to the common good?

*Does scripture speak to us of globalization?

*Does everyone have the right to life, liberty, and security of person?

*Do we act in the spirit of brotherhood to the people of third world countries, and in our own communities?

*If the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society, how can we gain protection for it by society and the state?

Quote:

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.

By Thomas A Kempis,
Imitation of Christ

Globalization:



A Youth/Young Adult Issue

By Kathy Taormina, SFO
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As the youth of today, we cannot sit idly by and keep silent about the things occurring in our world. If we, as youths and young adults, do not take a stand and let our presence be known, and our views be heard, we will inherit a world not of our making, and not in line with the spirit of the living Christ! We must show our love and concern for others through our actions and our lives.

If we are 18 years of age, are we registered to vote?

Moreover, *do* we vote, regularly, and do we vote with research/knowledge of the candidates?

*How can we keep our nation from turning to violence to solve some of its most difficult problems—abortion, the death penalty to combat crime; euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of age, illness, and disability; and war to address international disputes? What can we actively do, right now, where we live, work, or attend school?

*How will we address the tragic fact that more than 30,000 children die every day as a result of hunger? Is there a

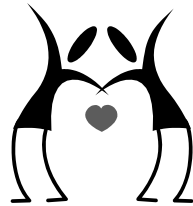
program locally where we can volunteer to help stop this tragedy in our own areas, such as a food bank?

*How will we address the growing number of families and individuals without affordable housing? Can we participate in a local “Habitat for Humanity” house-raising?

*Do we value and appreciate the homes we live in, do we voice this thankfulness?

*If we are 17 years of age, do we donate blood as the “Gift of Life”?

Franciscan Unity



By Marcella Bina, SFO
Ecumenical Committee Chairperson
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MY LITTLE PORTION FRIARY WEEKEND

Tucked away in the rustic country side along the North shore of Long Island is the Little Portion Friary, home of the Franciscan Society of St. Francis of the Episcopal Church.

This facility, built in 1928, has been the meeting place for the annual chapter of the Third Order Society of St. Francis (TSSF) for 30 years.

In early October 2004, 22 Tertiaries and guests were present for this chapter meeting of the TSSF Province of the Americas. The chapter opened

with a quiet day of prayer, meditation, and reflections presented by Brother Christopher, a monk of the New Skete Community in New York. Then, each day’s chapter schedule included morning, noon, and evening prayers with the friary brothers in their chapel.

The special guest at this chapter was the Anglican Episcopal TSSF Proctor, Gordon Scruton, who noted that the primary contribution of the TSSF to their church is to live the charism of the Order and to be a leaven in the midst of a polarized society, especially in areas of peace and justice.

Rev. Masud Ibn Syedullah, TSSF, Minister Provincial, presided over this chapter. Fr. Masud noted five areas of concern which called the community to prayer and to action:

1. They sponsored a Medical Mission in response to the desperate health care needs of the Amerindian people of the interior of Guyana.
2. They began a process to admit a religious community in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion into the TSSF in Brazil.
3. They stood together as Franciscan witnesses for peace and non-violence in Union Square, N.Y. during the week of September 11-17, 2004.
4. They deepened ecumenical relations by becoming an equal partner in the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity.
5. They addressed the responsibility and relationship the TSSF has to the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church in the U.S.

Other reports for the chapter were sent to the secretary prior to the meeting and distributed electronically to all attendees. Oral reports merely highlighted and updated the written ones. Since the group was small the sessions were relatively informal and discussions free flowing.

When time allowed, members strolled the lovely grounds of the friary, prayed along the Labyrinth, read in the library, and, yes, socialized each evening. Bowls of fresh fruit and filled cookie jars were always available.

My weekend with the TSSF was a rich experience. I was impressed with their commitment and spirituality, and I realized how much we SFOs have in common with our Anglican/Episcopal brothers and sisters, as we share the real experiences life with a Franciscan vocation.

The SFO Archives

By Sharon Deveaux, SFO
National Archivist
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I have recently returned from my third and last visit of the year to the Archives in New York. I am happy to say that our Archives are generally well organized and the actual cataloging can begin, some of which I can start at home here in California. I also discovered that there exists a document dated 1910, which makes it the oldest one I have found so far, but there may be something even older out there somewhere!

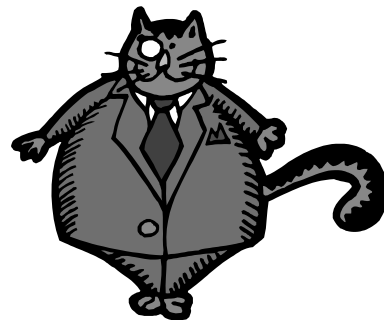
Here are some preservation guidelines which may be helpful to those of you who oversee the important papers and photographs of your region or fraternity as well as your personal family archival material:

1. Do not use paper clips, pins, staples or rubber bands.
2. Unfold and flatten all papers, letters or documents.
3. Use a soft pencil to identify photos and materials, NO felt pens or ballpoints.
4. Watch for signs of bugs, fungus and mice.
5. Clearly label all boxes and file folders that contain archives.
6. Do not use 3-ring binders; they take up too much space.
7. Avoid storing materials in damp basements and hot attics, especially photos.
8. Identify all photos with names, dates and events. (See #3)
9. Use archival acid-free boxes and folders for storage.
10. For archival boxes. etc. www.lightimpressionsdirect.com is an excellent source.

Animal Kingdom continued:

Michelangelo statute – head tucked and angled downward on his arched neck...front feet stretched out ceremoniously and crossed”
...“He looks like he is praying” repeated my wife Megan...
And I stood there crying, remembering those breaths from the air between his ears---
- looking up into the heavenly view above, but now it was over and he had left me standing in a humble stable—

looking down at him— in a prayerful position...he had left me standing in a simple stable in his humble stall remembering that my favorite Christmas toy was the Christmas Crèche ...and he now had given me his gift - Brandy had shown me why...
Christmas Crèche. I remembered St. Bonaventure's story of St. Francis and the Christmas Crèche and how ...The man of God (St. Francis) stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy...
...My favorite Christmas Toy is still the Christmas Crèche. My favorite horse will always be Brandy...and my favorite line from Keat's, “A Thing of Beauty is a joy forever...”*Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast...”*



Charity

*There is so much good
in the worst of us, And
so much bad in the best of us,
That it ill behoves any of us
To find fault with the rest of us.*

Unknown



Lighter Side of Life!

Ken Beattie, SFO, Humor Page Editor

☺ Catholic Horses

Ken was a conservative practicing Protestant from Santa Anita, but he loved to sneak away to the racetrack. One day he was there, betting on the ponies and losing his shirt, when he noticed a priest step out onto the track and bless the forehead of one of the horses lining up for the 4th race. Lo and behold, this horse -- a very long shot -- won the race.

He was most interested to see what the priest did the next race. Sure enough, he watched the priest step out onto the track as the horses for the fifth race lined up, and placed a blessing on the forehead of one of the horses.

Ken made a beeline for the window and placed a small bet on the horse. Again, even though another long shot, the horse the priest had blessed won the race. He collected his winning and anxiously waited to see which horse the priest bestowed his blessing on for the 6th race.

The priest showed, blessed a horse, Ken bet on it, and it won! He was elated! As the day went on, the priest continued blessing one of the horses, and it always came in first.

Ken began to pull in some serious money, and by the last race, he knew his wildest dreams were going to come true. He made a quick stop at the ATM, withdrew big money and awaited the priest's blessing that would tell him which horse to bet on.

True to his pattern, the priest stepped out onto the track before the last race and blessed the

forehead, eyes, ears and hooves of one of the horses.

He bet every cent, and watched the horse come in dead last. He was dumb-founded. He made his way to the track and when he found the priest, he demanded, "What happened, Father? All day you blessed horses and they won. The last race, you blessed a horse and he lost. Now I've lost my savings, thanks to you!!"

The priest nodded wisely and said, "That's the problem with you Protestants... you can't tell the difference between a simple blessing and the Last Rites."

☺ Mergers:

In the wake of the Exxon/Mobil deal and the AOL/Time Warner implode, be aware of the next expected mergers so you can get in on the ground floor and make some big bucks. Watch for these consolidations in late 2004 and make yourself a bundle.

- Polygram Records, Warner Bros, and Zesta Crackers will join forces and become: **Polly, Warner, Cracker.**
- 3M will merge with Goodyear and issue forth as: **MMM Good.**
- Zippo Mfg., Audi Motor Car, Dofasco and Dakota Mining will merge to become, of course: **Zip Audi Do Da.**
- Federal Express is expected to join its major competitor, UPS, and consolidate as: **Fed UP**
- Fairchild Electronics and Honeywell Computers will become: **Fairwell Honeychild.**
- Grey Poupon and Docker Pants are expected to become: **Poupon Pants.**
- Knotts Berry Farm and the Nat'l Org. of Women will become: **Knott NOW.**

Canticles in Life

By Julia Pearson, SFO
Human Interest Editor

The great theologian executed by the Nazi regime, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, defined a Christian as “someone who shares the suffering of God in the world.” As a social worker for twenty-six years, Secular Franciscan Ella Vinci has personally helped many men, women, and children in the painful struggles of family trauma, domestic abuse, grief/bereavement, addictions of many faces, and divorce recovery.

Receiving a master’s degree from Indiana University, her career began in 1978, as a counselor/family therapist for Catholic Services. In 1991, she started her own private practice, with an office at the Benedictine Inn, a retreat center in Indianapolis. This allowed her flexibility to mother her own small children, Sophia and Angela. Sophia is now a college student and Angela is in high school. Hearth and home are also family to their three dogs: Socks, Lady, and Puppy (“We kept thinking we were going to find Puppy a home, so we didn’t give her a ‘real’ name.”)

Ten years ago, the Midtown Mental Health Center developed a program that brought mental health services to the public schools. Ella joined them and spends her mornings working with first through fifth graders, as well as a few kindergarteners. Ella exclaims that you can see the face of the suffering Christ in these young people, little ones who have no experience of feeling that they are cared for, who have only role models in their lives that express anger and despair.

Her one great desire is that the children she sees have stable home lives. She speaks movingly of a Bi-polar little boy trying to grow up in a home where both parents are also bi-polar, with domestic violence hurting everyone. This little boy has no role models who care for or about him as a distinct individual.

Ella celebrates with her young clients when joy comes to their lives. She speaks with a warm smile about three young sisters who were removed from their family home three years ago. Bruises and other signs of abuse had prompted an investigation, and it was discovered that these children had been used by their own parents to go out and ask people for money and food. The little

girls were placed in a loving foster home, and now the foster parents are legally adopting the children.

Handling anger is a skill that is incorporated in teaching conflict resolution to the school children. Peer mediation training is provided, so the students are actively involved when troubles arise between them.

“To do therapy, you must take care of yourself.” Ella’s daily spiritual discipline includes quiet prayer, seeking to discern what Christ wants in the stillness and silence. “I pray everyday that I can be a loving presence to other people.” She seeks healing for herself before she goes out to meet with others. Experience has taught her that anger and resentments in her own life can block the openness desperately needed by her young and old clients.

Ella was professed as a Secular Franciscan in 1987. She was the formation director for the Sacred Heart of Jesus Fraternity in Indianapolis, Indiana from 1988-1998. She is again currently serving in that role. The Franciscan lifestyle has given her a “structure to operate in.” She explains, “I have really treasured my fraternity. Their lives are a true witness.” She feels that SFOs try to sanctify their days - to see experiences in a positive, Gospel light. Ella feels deeply the generosity of spirit in everyone - “I’ve never had a day that God didn’t touch me through others. There is so much encouragement around us.”

Ella didn’t mention that buzzword “burn-out” at all. All her clients are blessings to her. “I always get the clients I need. When there is an issue I am dealing with, in comes a client who has the same issue.” She prays before meeting with a client with a particularly heavy concern. Experience has shown her that there is purpose and learning from God in every trauma. Everyone, especially the wounded, have something they can teach about healing and living in God’s purpose.

Ella is inspired by others in the field of Psychology. She is especially touched by John Bradshaw, a recovering alcoholic and now a counselor himself, Bradshaw expresses the need for people to deal with issues riddled with shame. He feels that people are healed when they know they are really cared about. During one difficult morning, Ella wrote the following Canticle of the Human Experience.

Canticle of the Human Experience

By Ella A. Vinci SFO

Sacred Heart of Jesus Fraternity

Oh Lord you are wise and all things wonderful.
You have gifted us with our humanity, which gives us
a path for our hearts to grow along. Blessed is the
growth in our spirits, which allows us to unite with
You, when our journey is at an end. Blessed are the
lives we live, as a prayer to you. Blessed are the
thoughts, which you give us. Blessed are the creations
you make through our hands. Blessed are the
possibilities you enable us to dream and achieve for
you. Blessed are the feelings you gift us with so that
we may truly learn to care for you and one another.
Blessed are the sorrows of life which teach us how to
live and how to love. Blessed are the painful losses
and separations we endure for love of you, as they
teach us our need for one another and for you. Blessed
are the endings and the beginnings of all problems,
heartaches, and fears, as they remind us that we are
nothing, endure nothing without your presence in our
hearts. Blessed are the joys in life that you give us for
they cause us to feel the pleasure you feel when we
love and feel. Blessed are the successes of our lives as
they remind us of your divine hope in humanity and the
gifts you give us to achieve with. Blessed is the joy of
human love, which you allow us to feel for one
another. Blessed is the love of parents for children.
Blessed is nature in our lives as it all demonstrates to
the divine proportions of your love and artistry.
Blessed is color, wind, water, fire and earth as they
nurture our lives and our spirits. Blessed indeed is the
moment of our death, Lord, as it brings us home to
you.

American Dream

By Richard Hurlzeler

Sacred Heart Fraternity,

Tyler, Tx

I rest in the peace of the patio, as the soft wind swishes
through the green oak limbs above. My mind soothes
in a soft percolating rhythm. Suddenly, a harsh blaring
intrudes—an alien noise aborts all tranquility. Near the
fence I see it—a leaf blower. Contemplating mood is
shattered, displaced by this mechanical drone.
Irritating jabs pulse through my spirit like a wailing
ghost. What harsh resonance! Who is the cause of
this? And then I see him. Angular native features,
born of a culture thousands of miles to the south, a
migrant works the machine to earn his daily bread.
And slowly, beneath the din, I begin to hear a more
gentle Latin tempo, the beat of a people earning their
way north and up, so that someday they may sit in the
cool of a patio to savor musical airs.

The Stone

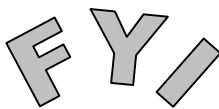
By Anne Morrow Lindbergh

There is a core of suffering that the mind
Can never penetrate or even find.
A stone that clogs the stream of my delight,
Hidden beneath the surface out of sight,
Below the flow of words it lies concealed.
It blocks my passage and will not yield
To hammer blows of will, and still resists
The surgeon's scalpel of analysis.
Too hard for tears and too opaque for light,
Bright shafts of prayer splinter against its might,
Beauty cannot disguise nor music melt
A pain, undiagnosable, but felt.
No sleep dissolved that stony stalagmite,
Mounted within the unconscious caves of night.
No solvent left but love. Whose love? My own?
And is one asked to love the harsh unknown?
I am no Francis who could kiss the lip
Of alien leper. Caught within the grip
Of world unfaith, I cannot even pray.
And must I love? Is there no other way?
Suffering without name or tongue or face,
Blindly I crush you in my dark embrace!

Hear the Silence Hear

By Jack Reilly, SFO

The wind kissed my cheek.
The sun smiled with love.
I did not feel.
I did not see.
I did not hear.
I did not know you.
One day, in total darkness,
One day, in complete silence,
One day, when I felt nothing,
A gentle voice from deep in my heart said,
Simply – I Love you.
And the world became your temple,
And I prayed.



NAFRA Statement on Sudan

We the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, meeting in Plymouth, Michigan, on October 23, 2004, pledge our solidarity with all of our sisters and brothers of the Sudan suffering the horror of genocide and the injustices of war, oppression, famine and forced exile.

As members of the human family, we fully believe that the sanctity of all human life and the inherent dignity of the human person must be the foundation of all social action.

We completely affirm the July 28, 2004 letter from our National Minister Carol Gentile to the United States Secretary of State Colin Powell, in which she stated our support of his labeling the situation in the Sudan as 'genocide' and his calling for immediate intervention in the Sudan and coordination of an international mobilization of humanitarian aid for all the displaced people.

Together with those suffering in the Sudan, we cry for an end to genocide, war, oppression, famine and forced exile.

We call on the international community to intervene directly to relieve the suffering of our sisters and brothers of the Sudan."

NAFRA Family Commission Chair

The NAFRA Executive Council is soliciting applications from SFOs interested in serving as the Chair of the National Family Commission. Applications are due by Feb 15, 2005.

Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the National Family Commission;
- be willing to communicate your passion and desire to promote the Commission to others;
- provide a summary of some of your ideas to promote the Commission
- be able to write four articles for the TAU-USA newsletter yearly; and
- be able to attend at least two four-day national

meetings yearly.

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in applying, send your resumé, along with a letter responding to the above criteria, and a copy of your Certificate of Profession by February 15, 2005 to: Jane DeRose-Bamman, SFO, Coordinator of the Apostolic Commissions 737 Valverde Dr S.E. Albuquerque, NM 87108 505-254-0512, janedbsfo@msn.com

NAFRA Work Commission Chair

The NAFRA Executive Council is soliciting applications from SFOs interested in serving as the Chair of the National Work Commission. Applications are due by Feb 15, 2005.

Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the National Work Commission;
- be willing to communicate your passion and desire to promote the Commission to others;
- provide a summary of some of your ideas to promote the Commission.
- be able to write four articles for the TAU-USA newsletter yearly; and
- be able to attend at least two four-day national meetings yearly.

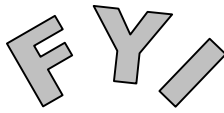
If you meet the above criteria and are interested in applying, send your resumé, along with a letter responding to the above criteria, and a copy of your Certificate of Profession by February 15, 2005 to:

Jane DeRose-Bamman, SFO
Coordinator of the Apostolic Commissions
737 Valverde Dr S.E. Albuquerque, NM 87108
505-254-0512, janedbsfo@msn.com

NAFRA Ecology Commission

Bill Fontenot, SFO, Chairperson, is requesting submissions for the anthology on nature tentatively titled, ***Franciscan Voices: Recording the Landscape of Creation.***

Please send original prose (1,000 words max), poetry, art work (pen & ink), and black & white photography. Purpose: to gather Franciscan (1st Order/TOR, 2nd Order and Secular Franciscan) views on nature.



This is a gathering of perspectives on nature in the urban, suburban, rural and wilderness settings. It is an opportunity for those of us at the ACC to continue our journal exercises and also an opportunity for all Franciscans to contribute their views. You may wish to focus on environmental degradation, restoration, biology, ecology, philosophy, literature, or theology. Be creative!

Please send submissions in MS Word to: Fyoung@up.net or copies (originals cannot be returned) to: Fred Young, SFO, 208 N. Florida St. Laurium, MI 49913

Books with Franciscan Appeal

Angel in the Waters-is a PRO-LIFE book for children. Review on <http://wwangelinthewaters.com/onlinebook/coverpage.htm> Published by Sophia Institute Press, PO Box 5284, Manchester, NH 03108. To purchase in bulk: 1-800-888-9344 orders@sophiainstitute.com

Below are six books published by: Franciscan Press, Quincy University, 1800 College Avenue Quincy IL 62301-2699, Add \$5.00 for S&H

Called to Follow Christ - \$15.95 - coordinated and edited by Fr. Benet A. Fonck OFM, is a detailed commentary on the Rule, which attempts to go to the core of the SFO Rule, while applying it to contemporary circumstances.

Called to Rebuild the Church (\$16.95) - is a spiritual commentary on the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order prepared by Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap which becomes a valuable resource for applying the SFO Rule in everyday circumstances.

Called to Live the Dynamic Power of the Gospel - \$13.95 - is a commentary on the SFO Rule from a unique perspective: the long experience and the depth of vision of the late Fr. Philip Marquard, OFM, who helped and gave dignity to the poor, marginalized, and homeless.

Called to Proclaim Christ - \$12.95 - by Fr. Benet A. Fonck, OFM, is a simple collection of short

reflections on the impact of the SFO Rule upon selected daily circumstances.

Called to Make Present the Charism - \$12.95 - is a commentary on the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order from the rich and multi-colored perspective of the footnotes of the Rule. The text is written by Secular Franciscans and Franciscan friars and edited by Fr. Benet A. Fonck OFM.

Called to Build a More Fraternal and Evangelical World - \$15.95 - is a concordance for the Rule of the SFO. Benet A. Fonck OFM has prepared a quote from the Gospels, from the New Testament, from the Old Testament, from the Psalms, from the writings of St. Francis and St. Clare, from the Franciscan resources, from the Vatican II documents, from the writings of the Holy Father, and from the prayers of the Church to complement each article.

Ven A Ver (Come and See in Spanish) will be available in late Spring 2005, Barbo-Carlson

Websites with Franciscan Appeal:

- *TAU-USA- www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa.html
- *All Commissions- www.nafra-sfo.org/ACC/
- *NAFRA Family Commission- www.sfofamilycomm.org
- *NAFRA Youth/YA Commission- www.franciscanyouthusa.com
- *NAFRA Work Commission- [www.nafra-sfo.org/work commission resorces/index.html](http://www.nafra-sfo.org/work%20commission%20resorces/index.html)
- *Tau Cross Region- members.aol.com/taucrossreg/tauhome.html
- *La Verna Region- www.rc.net/sfo/laverna
- *St. Margaret of Cortona Region- stmargaretof cortona.homestead.com/StMag1.html
- *St. Francis Region- www.stfrancisreg.org
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- *Five Franciscan Martyrs Region- www.franciscan-sfo.org
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- *Queen of Peace Region- www.queenofpeaceregion.org
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- *Divine Mercy Region- www.divinemercuryregion.org
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NEWS & VIEWS

*Reports - Information - Recommendations - Reflections
For spiritual assistants at all levels.*

Lester Bach OFM Cap

+ LIFE-GIVING UNION +

In 2003 CNSA revised the program for preparing spiritual assistants to serve local fraternities. It is a year-long correspondence course called LIFE-GIVING UNION. It is available for \$5.00 from Barbo-Carlson Enterprises (cf. Back cover of TAU-USA). Applicants contact the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the Province to which their fraternity is bonded. Then simply follow the directions on pages i-iv of LIFE-GIVING UNION.

1. Friars, diocesan priests and deacons, members of Franciscan (and other) religious Orders and SFO members can apply. Friars, at the very least, should read the book to acquaint themselves with the role of a spiritual assistant. Spiritual assistants are to be *suitable and well-prepared*.

2. Whoever applies should serve a fraternity upon certification. CNSA recommends they not serve their own fraternity. However, at times, pastoral considerations may make it necessary.

3. The costs for the course are borne by the applicant. Fraternities can help with the costs, which includes other books and resources.

4. Fraternities presently without a spiritual assistant can plan for their future by selecting competent people to take the course. Choose candidates for SA very carefully. SFO applicants should be professed for at least 5 years.

+ *The principal task of the assistant is to foster a deeper insight into Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the secular Franciscans. Make certain an applicant can fulfill this role!*

(Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO - Article 13.1)

+ *The appointment of the Assistant is made in writing and for a limited time, which accumulated cannot be more than 12 years.*

(IBID - Article 15.3)

+ The spiritual assistant on every level is a voting member of the council. *Only in economic matters and in elections at any level does he or she not enjoy the right to vote.*

(IBID - Article 12.3)

+ CHANGING OF THE GUARD +

On October 17, 2004, Kevin Queally TOR, began his two year term as President-in-turn of CNSA. His address is:

Kevin Queally TOR
P.O. Box 600
Loretto, PA 15940
(814) 472-4559
kqueally@francis.edu

+ ANNUAL MEETING +

The annual meeting of Regional and Provincial Spiritual Assistants was held at Libertyville, IL September 14-17, 2004. About 30 Franciscans were in attendance. Two speakers, John Vaughn OFM and Carol Gentile SFO, National minister, shared their insights with us.

TALKS:

John Vaughn OFM invited us to sharpen our image of church and realize how important are the actions we take in working with the SFO. Fundamentally our assistance is based on our relationship with the Trinity and the prayerfulness that leads us to discover God's presence in Jesus and one another.

Carol Gentile SFO shared the results of a wide-ranging survey of SFO members concerning their view of spiritual assistants. She stressed that when the friars share their faith and their stories, they help build vital reciprocity and strengthen the Franciscan family relationships.

ISSUE:

Ritual: We discussed the issue of revising the *Ritual of the SFO*. The Ritual serves the entire SFO worldwide. It would be a long-term project to revise the Ritual and get approval for it. We felt that the possibility of developing healthy adjustments is already possible without revising the Ritual. The Ritual states in its *Foreword*:

... it is within the competence of national councils to supplement and enrich the ceremonies by incorporating appropriate expressions of their

cultures and peoples.

Franciscan communities who use this book are urged to enrich their local celebrations with signs, symbols, gestures, music and whatever practices are appropriate to enhance the spirit of prayer of their worshipping community.

It is already possible to adjust the prayer in the Ritual to local needs without revising the Ritual. (Fraternities are free to develop a wake service, since the Ritual does not have one). **What cannot be changed is the formula for permanent profession.**

ISSUE:

Altius Moderamen refers to the relationship the First Order and TOR has with the SFO. *The purpose of the Altius Moderamen is to guarantee the fidelity of the SFO to the Franciscan charism, communion with the Church, and union with the Franciscan family, values which represent a vital commitment for the Secular Franciscans.* (SFO General Constitutions - Article 85.2)

The major superiors of the Franciscan First Order and TOR fulfill the *altius moderamen* through:

- A) The establishment of local fraternities.
- B) Pastoral visits to the fraternities.
- C) Spiritual assistance to the SFO fraternities.

The Minister Provincial often delegates these tasks to a *Provincial Spiritual Assistant*. The *Provincial Spiritual Assistant to the SFO* represents the Minister Provincial in issues concerning the SFO. That may include appointing of a *regional spiritual assistant* as well as appointing *local spiritual assistants* to fraternities bonded to his province. Regional spiritual assistants fulfill the responsibility for a pastoral visitation of fraternities.

The present lack of friars makes it difficult to serve the SFO at all levels. In discussing changes in the manner of assigning spiritual assistants, we recognize alternate ways of fulfilling the *altius moderamen*. Here is the concluding statement from our meeting at Libertyville, IL (September 16, 2004):

1. We reaffirm fraternal ties between the First Order/TOR and the SFO in the selection and appointment of local SFO Spiritual Assistants.

2. Transfers of *altius moderamen* to another province should already be taking place to insure better opportunity for assistance by the friars.

3. We affirm our preference that the Regional Spiritual Assistant (RSA) should be a friar. Qualified Secular Franciscans should be trained and mentored to collaborate with, and even replace, the friar RSA.

CNSA will collaborate with the SFO in developing ways and means to accomplish these tasks. Working together we will deal with issues of spiritual assistance at all levels of the SFO.

+ REFLECTION +



... You are called to give your contribution, inspired by the person and message of St Francis of Assisi, in speeding up the advent of a civilization in which the dignity of the human person, co-responsibility and love will be a living reality (cf Gaudium et Spes - 31ss).

You must deepen the true foundations of the world-wide fraternity and create everywhere the spirit of welcome and the atmosphere of brotherliness. Commit yourselves firmly against all forms of exploitation, discrimination and marginalization and against all attitudes of indifference towards others.

If you are truly spurred on by the Spirit to achieve the perfection of charity in your secular state, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity.

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

+ FINALLY +

This column is a resource for spiritual assistants. It would be helpful to hear from spiritual assistants and others with their questions and comments. Obviously, some editing may be required.

Spiritual assistants, through their assistance to Franciscan fraternities, can stimulate Franciscans to influence our world. A prayerful spirit will enable us to accept the challenges of today that have an impact on our Franciscan way of life.

Lester Bach OFM Cap
4123 Monona Drive
Madison, WI 53716
(608) 222-6238
lbofmcap@aol.com

Part II Secular Franciscan Life Today ¹

F. Javier Orozco, SFO

Most High, ²
glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart
and give me
true faith,
certain hope,
and perfect charity,
sense and knowledge,
Lord,
that I may carry out
Your holy and true command.

Image Two: “Enlighten the darkness of my heart”

If you are like me, human, then this second line is not so bad; there is something honest about it. The recognition that our dignity is “high” and “glorious” should not erase the fact that in our humanity we can be broken and darkened. Most of us know all too well our sin or sins; most of us know all too well how hard it is to remain virtuous day in and day out; most of us know how easy it is to lose patience, to get angry, to grow envious, to seek the wrong things for the wrong reasons, in short, we are familiar with the “darkness of our heart.”

But as Franciscans, our prayer does not end with this sense of doom; on the contrary, our Franciscan life should point to the hope found in the word “enlighten,” since in it we affirm that *we do not stand-alone in our darkness* or sin. On the contrary, as secular Franciscans, we are or should be quite aware of the grace found in God. “Enlighten the darkness of our heart” is both an affirmation of our human brokenness and an

affirmation of our “need for God.” In our Franciscan life, today, it is this latter “need for God” that has to be affirmed over and over again. It is all too easy for us who are in the ‘world’ to lose sight of the need for God. The temptations are many: consumerism, materialism, capitalism, ageism to name a few—all competing for our attention, all telling us that we don’t need God!

So, as Franciscans, we walk in the world not as those who are above the world, as somehow better than the rest; on the contrary, we are in the world, mindful of our own sinfulness and thereby mindful of our need for grace. Our journey as Franciscan, then, is a journey in hope and joy. As Franciscans, we know from our Christian and Franciscan tradition that joy and hope go hand in hand. In fact, joy, is one of the major characteristics of our Franciscan life: joy not as some form of cheap consolation or psychological denial of reality, but as a disposition that speaks of our confidence in grace; we know that we cannot do it alone, and that we don’t have to do it alone. We are a Franciscan community, as we walk in grace. Franciscan life today cannot pretend to be a life lived in isolation of others, no matter how different we may look from one another in our cultures or practices. Our Br. Francis knew this all too well when he reached out to those whom he was most afraid of; he knew that it was only in the embrace of the one afflicted with leprosy that true communion is found. And so it is with us today, his followers, we too know that there is no ‘other’ that is not my brother and sister—no matter what color of skin or physical condition they have.

Most importantly, Franciscan life today has to visibly include our continual repentance and our continual turning to God; our forerunners knew this dependence on God well—for they were named: “Brothers and Sisters of Penance.” *Penitential*: as the Latin translation of the Greek word suggests: a constant need for ‘change’ or ‘renovation of mind.’ Note that the meaning of ‘penance’ is not some morbid punishment, but a genuine desire to renew our minds and heart and to turn our eyes to the light of God. As the prayer suggests: to be “enlighten” by grace in our sin. Make no mistake, the ‘darkness in our heart’ can be pretty pitch black, but as St. Paul reminds us: where sin abounds, grace abounds even more.

See the next issue of TAU-USA for Image Three.

¹ This paper was presented at a Chapter of Ministers for the Mother Cabrini Region of The Secular Franciscan Order held on Saturday May 15, 2004.

² *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents; Volume I: The Saint*. Edited by Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., J.A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv., William J. Short, OFM. New City Press, 1999.

BOOKS – BOOKS – BOOKS

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Paz, Frances Wicks, SFO, Editor

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