

TAU-USA

Newsletter of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States
Winter 2007 - Issue 57

A Christmas Message For You

As we celebrate the love of God become incarnate, the National Executive Council and I, wish you all the blessings of Christmastide.

May we rejoice in and reflect the love of our God from whom all good things come.

May we be true "Epiphany people" manifesting the love of God to one another and to all we meet in humble service and with joyful hearts.

May we be open to the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our Order, as we enter the New Year with joy and hope.

May the Holy Infant Jesus, bless us all abundantly and bring us to a new year of gladness and fraternity with one another and with all of God's creation.

The peace and joy of Christmas fill your hearts now and throughout the coming year.

Patrick Mendés, SFO



Innocence
By William Adolphe Bouguereau

TAU-USA

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

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

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

- Articles should not exceed one page in length (single spaced) in Times New Roman size 11 font.
- Material received after the deadline for a particular issue will be considered for other issues.
- Please send all submissions for possible publication in WORD format, as an e-mail attachment or mail to Editor Frances Wicks (address is on top left of this page).
- Please understand that all articles may be edited for length and clarity.
- All letters received become property of the editor.
- TAU-USA does not accept ads.

All professed members of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States receive the TAU-USA without charge. It is the responsibility of the Regional Ministers to ensure that the addresses of professed members, who wish to receive it, are in the Data Base. Please send the names, addresses, and fraternity names of newly professed members and all address changes and subscriptions to Marjo Gray.

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

Circulation exceeds 15,000 copies.

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



Dear Readers,

Merry Christmas and Happy
New Year!

Wishing God's best
for you and yours on these holy
days and onward...

*From all of us to
all of you.*

*Fr. Lester, Mary & Bob, Julia,
M. Marko, Francine, 4 Dolores,
Faith, Delia, Fred, Sandy,
Dan, Clare, Bob, Marjo,
and Frances*



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**State of the
Order
of the
National
Fraternity
of the SFO
in the
United States
October 2007**



**By Patrick Mendés, SFO
National Minister**

My report and my impressions of the State of the Order are predicated on the replies from 28 of the 30 ministers, who responded to the regional survey.

Statistics:

At the end of 2006 there were **15,293** seculars.

Formation:

Worthy of note have been the “On the Road” workshops led by a team from the National Formation Commission. Perhaps of vital interest and most noteworthy, among the work done by the Commission is the updating of the Workshop guidelines and the strengthening of the first pillar, Discernment, which is paramount for the people in initial formation.

The texts used for Initial Formation continue to be those very popular and proven texts: *Come and See; Catch Me a Rainbow, Too; Fully Mature in the Fullness of Christ* and of course, the Holy Rule and the General Constitutions and Sacred Scripture.

In Ongoing Formation, we have seen *Pick More Daisies* gaining wide popularity as well as the *Writings of Francis and Clare*, and the very popular *To Live as Francis Lived*. Other popular texts for Ongoing Formation include *Essential Documents of the SFO*, *Making Present the Charism* and sparkling newcomer to this year’s report, *The Virtues* by Fr. John Sullivan, OFM along with his entire series prepared for the SFO.

Who and where we are:

Looking further at where we are, we see that there is much activity in all of our regions, relating to the Works of Mercy. Regardless of the “structure” of the apostolic commissions, we see that they are being lived vitally in a variety of ways such as feeding, clothing and sheltering the poor and homeless, ministry to the imprisoned, various pro-life activities and ecology efforts, as well as serving as lay

missionaries in South America and a variety of peace and justice related activities, and very certainly the brothers and sisters are active in the ministries of their home parishes.

Our major success this year was the Quinquennial Congress. Though it was not without controversy, the 430 plus participants in their evaluations rated the conference between 4 & 5, with 5 being the highest ranking. Most impressive was holding the conference in a hotel with excellent handicap accessibility. Over the past 48 years as a Secular Franciscan and that is a lot of Quinquennial Congresses, I have never before seen as large a number of our physically challenged brothers and sisters present. In addition to such amenities as air conditioning, so important for those with heart and respiratory conditions, was the fact that everything from housing to conference rooms and dining were all under the same roof.

The hotel setting offered us a unique opportunity to be present to the world. We are Secular Franciscans and a number of guests who approached us, learned from and about us. It was inspiring. We bore the witness of presence and welcome seeing all we met as “brothers and sisters, children of the same Father.”

Our Youth and Young Adult Commission raised significant funds for the “Water Project.” Thank you, for supporting our young people in this important effort. Eleven Regions report having youth “groups,” but as yet, we have no YOUFRA fraternities established. The Youth and Young Adult Commission has done an excellent job of publicizing the YYA possibilities and bringing the young people together, for National gatherings and have served as guest speakers and participants in local Franciscan youth activities. This has essentially been a “top down” ministry – appropriate and necessary in the formative stages. This needs now, to become a “bottom up” ministry – local, to Regional to National.

Franciscan Action Network:

This new initiative, sponsored by the OFM Province of the Holy Name, Office of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, is still in its infancy. National Vice-Minister, Deacon Tom Bello, SFO, has served on the Steering Committee from the inception. I have served as “back up” whenever Tom was not available. We will look at this further, as we look at our challenges and opportunities.

The Challenges and Opportunities:

(Most cited by the Ministers surveyed)

- Lack of Spiritual Assistants
- Training Servant Leaders
- Uniform formation of Formation Directors

Availability of ongoing formation and growth in Franciscan Spirituality – especially for those fraternities, regional and local, who have no Spiritual Assistants.

Strengthening and emphasis on **living the Rule**.

Respect for each other's spiritual journeys.

Formalizing our Youth groups.

Helping our brothers and sisters to understand the purpose for the Fair Share Contribution and their responsibility in this regard. (Article 25 of the Rule.)

Issues regarding liability insurance.

Goals:

Strengthen the overall formation programs.

Suggested Approach:

The Formation Commission has updated and strengthened the "On the Road" workshops, which are "form the formator" programs and will be offering them in various locations. I strongly encourage the Formation Directors and Ministers of all of our Regions to attend one of the workshops.

These are presented with the intention that the Regional Formation Directors would replicate the workshops for the local formation directors of their respective regions. I strongly encourage the Regions to put a process in place, so that new formation directors are prepared in the same manner so that there is continuity in the formation process. I would also encourage the Regions to have an annual formation directors workshop, where they can share their experiences, learn from one another and have ongoing support from the Region. I encourage the Regional Formation Directors and the National Formation Commission to communicate and dialogue more frequently. Emphasis is placed on dialogue. Are we sharing our ideas, successes, bumps in the road?

Formalize the structures of the identified youth groups into youth Fraternities.

Suggested Approach:

A close collaboration with the Regional YYA Chairs and the National Commission. Guidance and support on the formalizing of youth fraternities would come from the National level to the Regional level and from the Regional level to the local level. Movement in terms of collaboration, should be fluid, between the groups. This suggests a much closer working relationship between the Regional YYA Chairs and the National Commission.

Actively encourage those brothers and sisters, so qualified, to take the Spiritual Assistant Training Program and serve those fraternities in need.

Suggested Approach:

With the help of local spiritual assistants, identify potential lay spiritual assistants. Meet with them and identifying their gifts, discern with them, the possibility of undertaking the studies and the ministry.

Determine how we will best collaborate with the broader Franciscan Family in light of our Apostolic Commissions, especially Article 15 of the Holy Rule, but not excluding articles 16 -19.

Suggested Approach:

Determine from the work and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Commissions, the structure and approach best suited to living our Rule. Make a decision as to whether or not we will join with the other members of the Franciscan Family in the FAN.

Make known the opportunities available to our brothers and sisters for their ongoing formation and growth in Franciscan spirituality, especially those who have no spiritual assistants.

Suggested Approach:

Give greater publicity and explanation of the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life, distance learning program. This program is seriously under utilized by our brothers and sisters.

Make known and promote the new annual workshops created and designed solely for the SFO, by St. Francis University, in Loretto, PA.

Invite neighboring regions to your Regional workshops.

Recognize and respect the brothers and sisters whose spiritual journeys and perspectives are not the same as ours, avoiding "labeling"

Suggested Approach:

Dialogue, perhaps using the RESPECT guidelines.

Regional Retreats with themes of building fraternity and dialogue.



Let us give thanks for our successes and in the spirit of Francis, "may God show us what is ours to do" and guide us in the doing. And may the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings!

Impressions

By Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv.
CNSA President-in-turn



Art by Giotto

The Stabat Mater Speciosa is considered one of the seven greatest Latin hymns of all time, and one of the tenderest. It is based upon the Gospel account of the birth of Jesus. The hymn was composed in the late 1200's by Blessed Friar Jacopo of Todi, that Franciscan genius who composed *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*. The following selection of verses from the hymn *Stabat Mater Speciosa* is not less noble than the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, for Mary stands by the crib of her child as she did at the side of his cross...and we are there too!

*By the crib wherein reposing,
with His eyes in slumber closing,
lay serene her infant-boy.*

*Stood the beauteous Mother feeling
bliss that could not bear concealing,
so her soul o'erflowed with joy.*

*When with laughing heart exulting,
she beheld her hopes resulting
in the great birth of her Son*

*Who would not be glad surveying
Christ's dear Mother bending, praying,
playing with her heavenly Child.*

*For a sinful world's salvation
Christ her Son's humiliation
she beheld and brooded o'er.*

*Virgin of all virgin's highest,
prayer to thee thou ne'er denyest,
let me bear thy sweet Child too.*

*Let me bear Him in my bosom,
Lord of life, and never lose Him,
since His birth doth death subdue.*

Find a copy of the fresco of St. Francis celebrating the Nativity – as is portrayed by Giotto in the upper Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. Notice that the depiction is taking place in the sanctuary of the church. St. Francis is kneeling before the manger, holding the infant Jesus while the friars sing, the men within the sanctuary focus on the altar and the women peer into the sanctuary from outside of it. Notice that the man directly behind St. Francis, John of Greccio, is deeply engaged in reflection on the marvel of it all. Such was the intent of the artist...namely, to appeal to the viewer's experiential sense-memory to deepen their spiritual engagement (and perhaps transformation) through absorption in the details of the image. There is no 'Mary' or 'Joseph' figure in Giotto's fresco...for like the last two stanzas of the above hymn, and in response to the teaching of St. Francis, we are "the spouses, brothers, sisters and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ"...when "we carry Him in our body" and "when we give birth to Him through a holy life...by example."

A Blessed Christmas to all!





Our Stories

“Hiking Mt. Tremoggia”

By Faith Libbe, SFO

I was recently blessed to go on pilgrimage to Assisi. From Assisi we traveled to Rome for a few days. During this time, I had the rare opportunity to drive outside of Rome and go hiking in the mountains. I looked forward to hiking with my friend and also the opportunity to further process and reflect on walking in the footsteps of St. Francis.

The day began with Mass in Rome and a beautiful drive to Gran Sasso National Park. This National Park includes the highest mountains in continental Italy south of the Alps and is part of the Apennine Mountain chain. Could Francis, himself, have traveled through this beautiful region of Italy, I mused to myself?

After a picnic lunch, we began our hike to the peak of Mt. Tremoggia. The trail’s Difficulty Rating was an “E” (Escursionistico). “E” rated trails are: long in length, generally well marked, requires physical input and a sense of orientation. They can offer a variety of terrain (woods, meadows, screes, etc.) with “non problematic” open areas ...sometimes with snow patches, but not posing any danger. Does not require special equipment, other than raincoat, firm shoes, water and a friend ☺.”

Almost immediately I discovered that an “E” trail requires **a lot** of “physical input”! The portions of the trail that were very steep, necessitated frequent stops to catch my breath. My hiking companion,

eager to reach the top of the mountain, kept us on track, offering encouragement and patience as needed. It took 3 ½ hours to hike 2.9 miles to the top of the mountain.

It was thrilling to reach the top of Mt. Tremoggia! But, our original plan to relax and take in the beauty of God’s creation from this vantage point, had to be cut short. We saw traces of snow and immediately felt the chill! We rested ever so briefly, but between the chill and the growing sound of thunder (weather can change in an instant in the mountains!) we had to begin our descent down the mountain.

Clouds rolling overhead, a gentle rain began to fall. We put on our ponchos and proceeded along the trail. The rain shower made for a slippery trail. We had to be very careful of each and every step on the slick and rocky terrain.

Progressing down the mountain, we could never have dreamed of what we were about to experience next. A beautiful white dog (a sheep guard dog) seemed to appear from out of nowhere. An animal lover, I had no sooner said, “Ahhh look at the dog...” when in an instant, there appeared an entire pack of white dogs heading for us, barking and growling. My friend said to me ever so calmly, but firmly, “Just keep walking and do not look at them.” We linked arms, kept walking, and although my eyes were closed, I was acutely aware that the dogs had begun to encircle us. Gripped with fear, I remained calm (by the grace of God alone) and prayed silently yet ever so fervently in spirit. All of a sudden, the voice of a shepherd shouted a command and in an instant the dogs were gone! We proceeded, greatly relieved, and made it back to the car safely. It only took us 1-½ hours to hike down the mountain!

Our hiking adventure was not without its challenges, yet we both seemed to be in an incredible place of peace. The drive back to Rome turned out to be magnificent, as the sun began to set behind the Apennine Mountains. To this day, I give thanks to God for the incredible experiences on Mt. Tremoggia and for keeping us safe. I thank God for both the blessings and the challenges along life’s journey...and for the beautiful companions He provides along the way!

“Yes, in joy you shall depart, in peace you shall be brought back; Mountains and hills shall break out in song before you, and all the trees of the countryside shall clap their hands.” Isaiah 55:12

Our Stories

Our Best Kept Secret

By Ann Mayo, SFO
annbmayo@hotmail.com

You've probably heard the saying that the Secular Franciscan Order is the best kept secret in the Catholic Church. The Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life (ICFL) might just be the best kept secret within the SFO in the United States. But it is high time to let the secret out!

My name is Ann Mayo and I became Catholic in 2003 at the parish of St. Theresa in Farmville, Virginia and was professed as an SFO in 2004 in the Companions of Francis and Clare Fraternity in Rocky Mount, Virginia. I have since moved to Texas and live as a member in the Immaculata Fraternity in Arlington. My spiritual path seems to always have been Franciscan and the courses at ICFL really helped me in making the decision to become Catholic and to seek out a fraternity. The first reader/instructor that I had was very responsive to my spiritual journey and helped me to not only think about the course, but to probe it for the lived Franciscan experience.

I have continued taking courses and am aspiring to complete the ICFL certificate in Franciscan studies. The courses have lots of room for you to muck around academically and intellectually or to take a more focused approach in your spirituality and charism or to do a combination – it really is up to you, the student, what you want to get out of the courses and the readers/instructors are very responsive to your needs.

Time, time, time – you probably think you don't have time for this...I often think this, even after starting a course! But I assure you that you probably do have the time. When you register, you have a year to complete the course...however; I have not yet completed any course in a year. I have always been allowed an extension and have completed most of my courses in a year and a half. You need to work towards your goal and don't give up. Be patient with yourself: life is always happening, even to the



readers/instructors. And the life happening can be part of the fodder for your reflection in the course – after all, we are Franciscans living in the contemporary world.

I did look at other Franciscan programs, but found the ICFL to be the most flexible, the most affordable, and to suit an SFO best. I have not been disappointed. The academic quality is there, but you don't have to be a super scholar or read Medieval Latin. You can just be who you are, letting God speak to you through the materials.

There is now such a variety of courses that are offered, I greatly encourage anyone who is interested in growing spiritually in the Franciscan charism, learning about a particular topic, or wanting to get some basic academic credentials to take a course. The certificate program has also been made more flexible by reducing the required credits to 15 and by leaving the entire choice of courses taken up to the student.

Courses include:

- Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World
- Franciscan Spirituality
- Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings
- Franciscan Prayer
- Franciscan Servant Leadership
- St. Francis of Assisi: An Introduction
- The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation

For more information, see the ICFL website www.francis.edu/icflhome.htm or contact Diane Rombouts, ICFL Coordinator (email: icfl@francis.edu or phone: 814-472-3219).

Regional Roundup

Queen of Peace Region



The Morton's then...

1957 was a good year...

Karol and Richard Morton celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on Sept. 7, 2007. Richard is a past National Minister and a member of the Spirit and Life Team. Both Karol and Richard were professed in March, 1970.



And now...

La Verna Region

Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap, celebrated 50 years of being a priest of the Capuchin Order on September 4, the anniversary of his ordination. He says that 1957 was a fine year. The Capuchins are celebrating 150 Years of service.

Five Franciscan Martyrs Region



Dr. Tony Lazzara, SFO, has been awarded the 2007 NAFRA Peace Award for his missionary work in Peru, where he runs a home for the destitute, sick and abandoned children on the outskirts of Lima, called "Hogar San Francisco de Asis." Dr. Tony is an example of the virtues of humility and total self-giving. He gave up a medical practice in pediatrics at Emory University to go to Peru to help the children. Gerry Straub produced a DVD entitled, "The Patients of a Saint," which profiles Dr. Tony and his work (sandamianofoundation.org). Dr. Tony writes a monthly newsletter regarding the ministry on his website: (villalapazfoundation.org).

Solanus Casey Fraternity had a "Day of Reflection" on the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary on November 17, at Our Lady of Lourdes in Venice, Florida.

Holy Trinity Region

The region is planning a Spiritual Pilgrimage to Assisi with a papal audience for Sept. 2008. Fr. David Vincent from Our Lady of Mercy fraternity, Springfield, OH, will lead the tour. Lillian White, sfo-pax@mindspring.com is coordinating it. So far 20 people will be going.

On November 17th, the feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the region gathered at St. Anthony Shrine friary, in Cincinnati, OH to celebrate. They attended Mass and shared a meal together.

Brother Dominic Lococco, OFM, Regional Spiritual Assistant, celebrated his 50th Anniversary with the region. **1957 really was a good year!**

Franciscans of the Prairie Region

The Region sends *Armed Forces Prayer Books* (Catholic Edition) to our servicemen. For more information contact: Sue Nelson, Regional Minister at susannenelson@charter.net

St. Margaret of Cortona Region

Theresa Egan, ortygia77@verizon.net is coordinating a Franciscan pilgrimage for the region planned for Oct. 2008. The places to be visited include Padua (for the shrine of St. Anthony), Assisi, its holy places, as well as Gubbio and Cortona, and San Giovanni Rotonda to visit the shrine of Padre Pio. The major churches of Rome will also be toured.

St. Francis Region

The Regional Gathering was held on October 20th at St. Francis Korean Catholic Center in Torrance, CA. Presenters were Richard Prindle and Lucky Lynch from Eric Law's Kaleidoscope Institute. They facilitated talks in four languages, English, Korean, Vietnamese and Spanish. There were Power Point presentations in each language. Each language group heard Lucky and Rick's presentations in their own language, and then shared in groups of ten, using the RESPECT guidelines and Mutual Invitation techniques. It was an outstanding day!



Groups sharing at the Annual St. Francis Regional Gathering



Richard Prindle, Lucky Lynch, and Regional Minister Rock De Spain, SFO



Facilitator, Lucky Lynch with Peter Nguyen SFO, Armando Lomeli SFO, and Augustine Lee, SFO



William Wicks SFO, Bob Herbelin SFO, Lucky Lynch and Sylvia Paoli SFO



PEACE PRAYER FRATERNITIES

By Carolyn Colburn, SFO

Members of the SFO pray continuously for peace. Peace is always in our hearts and on our lips. Although not written by St. Francis, the Peace Prayer attributed to him perfectly expresses his understanding of the attainment of peace.

One hundred seventeen Secular Franciscan Fraternities in twenty three Regions across the United States have joined together in saying the Peace Prayer of St. Francis at some point in the monthly fraternity meeting with the special intention of peace in the Middle East. The Peace Prayer Fraternities receive statements of religious leaders who speak out for peace. Any fraternity who wishes to be added to this list can do so by contacting me at colburn@sonic.net.

Our list is not the only Secular Franciscan Peace Prayer List. Rita Sophia Karvonen, SFO is a member of Il Poverello Fraternity in Sebastopol, CA. After reading a book called *Daughter of Persia* by Sattareh Farman Farmaian, Rita was inspired to write to the author. She answered, and they began to exchange letters. Rita Sophia sent the Peace Prayer of St. Francis and Sattareh responded with a prayer that she and her family pray:

Shazdeh Abdul Hussein's Prayer

O God of our Fathers,

Protect our children and our families from atrocities, give us peace and help us to raise our children as you wanted us to do, pious and helpful to all humanity.

Give our people and our country peace and justice and help us to have faith and hope.

Help us to provide for our families and not to fail in our responsibilities.

Through her many contacts around the world, Rita Sophia has sent the two prayers from the two cultures to Friars, Sisters, and Seculars all over the world and into many different Orders on all the continents, from the jungles to her native Switzerland. Her group says the Peace Prayer of St. Francis and Shazdeh Abdul Hussein's Prayer each time they pray for peace. If you would like to find out more about Rita's group, you can contact her at ritasophia@comcast.net.

POETRY CONTEST WINNER

The Confession of Pietro Bernadone

By Dr. Kenton S. Miller, SFO

I have a Secret,
Silent as a seed
And locked
Inside a box,
Inside a vault,
Inside the fortress
Of my heart,
And even my beloved,
With all her woman's ways
Of intimacy
And faultless intuition,
Does not guess
The darkly patterned mystery
Of its contents.
I would be a fool, of course,
To spell it out
For all to see and judge,
To sully the merit of its truth
With vain pretense
Of ignorance,
Or with ridicule and laughter.
Yes - a fool -
But still I must Confess
Or else
It will consume itself
And vanish,
Hidden then forgotten
In my vanity.
Forgive me Father
for I have sinned:
I peered once into the blackness
Of my soul
And found a vortex
Of deception there
So deep and dark
That neither reason nor religion
Could penetrate its grim perimeter.
But here's the greater horror:
I accepted that Mendacity
As Truth,
Built my World around it,
And tried to pass it
To my children.
Thus old men should learn to pray:
"Extinguish me, Lord, for
I am Sin!"

CLASSIC FRANCISCAN



From Raphael

FOUND IN A TAILOR SHOP

By Julia Pearson, SFO

God calls the very good and He also calls those He has to keep His eyes on. God knows who to choose ... a priest told Sister Alma Louise.

Sister Alma Louise Kohnen has been with the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis in Oldenburg, Indiana, since she was 17 years old. When asked what her favorite Franciscan story is, she said with delight and without hesitation, "Mine!" She was born 96 years ago and grew up a real tomboy in Newport, Kentucky, with two older sisters and two younger brothers. It was gambling, she recalls, that made Newport known as "Sin City," though she also speaks fondly of the Pied Piper clock of Newport fame. Her baptismal name was "Florence," but everyone called her "Babe." She attended Corpus Christi High School and took the commercial course of study, but quit before getting her diploma so that she could go to work. Getting a work certificate in Cincinnati, Ohio, Babe Kohnen began employment in the tailor shop located on Fourth and Pike Streets. She worked in the men's coat factory, while a friend, Dorothy, worked upstairs making men's pants. It was through Dorothy that Sister Alma Louise first considered a vocation as a Sister of St. Francis. "I was called in November." Dorothy entered the convent on December 8, 1928; and "Miracle! December 27, 1928, Sister Alma Louise entered." Dorothy, however, quickly returned home, but Sister Alma Louise stayed. "I'm related to St. Paul. He

was knocked down and blinded," she comments on the quickness of her own call to vocation. Within the walled convent, she was a postulant for seven months, then a novice for two years. There were fifty sisters in the novitiate, some as young as 14 years old. It was during her novitiate that she completed high school. In 1929, the Novice Mistress, Sister Mary DeSales, chose "Alma Louise" to be her new name, and she was informed of this by Reverend Mother Clarissa. In 1934, she made her final vows for life. Sister Alma Louise was twenty years old when she began teaching children. Taking classes on Saturdays, some in Oldenburg and others at Marian College, she also observed teachers at Holy Family School. She graduated in June, 1945, from Marian College with a BS in education.

A beloved teacher in the public schools in the hills of rural Indiana for 29 years, Sister Alma Louise would have as many as four grades in one room. An additional 19 years were spent teaching in parochial schools. There were no shortcuts for giving lots of individual help to her students, many who came from poor and troubled backgrounds. With the wisdom born of 48 years in classrooms, Sister Alma Louise believes that teachers would benefit from experience in the elementary grades before teaching high school.



Raphael

She loves the Memorare prayer, but also feels God's presence beyond vocal prayers: "Just you and God," and a deep appreciation for the Holy Eucharist. Her hands stay busy making beautiful cards and seasonal decorations as she prays for family, friends, former students, and her Community.

Reflecting on her 96 years, Sister Alma Louise says "When you get older, you can look back and trace your vocation and see God's hand moving through your life."



From Raphael

**NEW ADOPTIONS
FROM
NATIONAL
FRATERNITY
COUNCIL
MEETING
OCTOBER 2007**

The following MOTIONS were carried at the October 2007 NAFRA meeting:

1. that the National Fraternity (NAFRA) join Franciscans Action Network (FAN)
2. to accept the recommendations of the ad hoc committee on the Commissions to restructure the Apostolic Commissions to one Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committee.
3. to give a total of \$1500 to this year's Peace Award recipient, Dr. Tony Lazarro, made up of voluntary donations and money from the NAFRA treasury
4. to add a line item of \$2000 to the Peace Award to be funded by the Fair Share Contributions
5. to add a line item to the 2008 budget for FAN of \$4000 to be funded by the Fair Share contributions
6. to increase the Fair Share contribution in 2009 from \$10 to \$12 per person

**FRANCICAN ACTION NETWORK
(FAN)**

This RESOLUTION regarding our contribution to FAN was unanimously adopted on October 6, 2007: Be it resolved: The National Fraternity of the SFO seeks to raise at least \$15,000 through the voluntary donations of our regional brothers and sisters as our first year's contribution as we join the Franciscan Action Network. The suggested minimum donation is \$1 per member to be sent to the National Treasurer.

**CHANGE FROM:
APOSTOLIC COMMISSIONS
(FAMILY, WORK, PEACE & JUSTICE,
AND ECOLOGY) TO:
JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF
CREATION (JPIC) COMMITTEE**

This is the **PROPOSAL** of the ad hoc committee on the Commissions, as revised and approved on October 5, 2007: The structure of the Apostolic Commissions will cease in its current form. In its place will be a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) team (up to 4 persons) with a keen awareness of Articles 14-19 of the SFO Rule and of the social issues before the USCCB.

NEC expects regional fraternities to collaborate with the JPIC team and to disseminate information to the local fraternities.

NEC expects the regional fraternities to consider a JPIC person or team focus.

Appointments: JPIC team members will be appointed by the NEC after the review of resumes. The term of service is three years with a second three-year term possible. (Same as the current Commission process.) One of the team members will be appointed as chair.

See page 11 for a presentation of the process of the findings of the Ad-Hoc committee, and the committee recommendation statement offered to the National Fraternity Council for approval.



From Raphael



From Raphael

**From the
Apostolic Commission
Model**

**To the
Justice, Peace, and
Integrity of Creation
Model**

By Pat Brandwein-Ball, SFO
National Councilor

In the mid 1980's, many parishes formed commissions to encourage responsibility and greater participation of the laity (liturgy, family, peace and justice, etc). The Apostolic Commissions of the SFO formed as a natural outflow from the parish. You may recall that our formation program is based on the RCIA model. The Apostolic Commission format emphasizing Articles 14-19 of the SFO Rule was championed by Fr. Matthew Gaskin, OFM, Provincial Spiritual Assistant of Holy Name Province, National Spiritual Assistant, and Spiritual Assistant to the National Formation Commission. During that time the National Directive Board (now NAFRA council) voted to accept his proposal. The Apostolic Commissions were established.

Over time the "structure" of commission teams overshadowed the spirituality; each article (14-19) stood on its own without the underpinning of the entirety of the Rule. Apostolic works are certainly a vital aspect of life for SFO members. However, after two All Commission Conferences, living those articles of the Rule still was not understood as flowing out of conversion, as worthy fruits of penance, or of our becoming "united more intimately with the life and missions of the Church" (Rule and Constitution). We had difficulty integrating the meaning of those Articles into our Way of Life and, by and large, the Apostolic Commissions became a burden of structure upon the fraternities. This was not for lack of effort on the part of the commission chairs. We thank them for their many years of dedication and work.

Apostolic Commission issues were discussed for many years. At the NAFRA annual meeting in October 2006, the Regional Ministers and NEC passed a motion to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to Re-vision the Apostolic Commissions.

Our task was not simply to create a new structure but rather to re-integrate Articles 14-19 into our lived expression of the Rule. Article 3 states that the current Rule "adapts the Secular Franciscan Order to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times." This is the mandate to re-evaluate our efforts and structures in order to serve the Church and all people as fully as possible.

Through prayer and study, the Ad Hoc Committee discerned that a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) model, would, at this time, best serve the SFO in fostering greater understanding and living of the Gospel. The proposal was accepted by all voting members at the NAFRA Chapter, October 2007. JPIC encompasses family, work, ecology, peace & justice.

To quote a portion of the proposal document, "*While remaining autonomous, this change in title and structure will give the SFO, a closer partnering with other entities in the Franciscan family and the Church. Team appointees may be members of broader organizations, able to participate in discussions/setting priorities as appropriate, and obtain feedback from NAFRA to help formulate participation in those other organizations.*

Team members will serve as resource persons to all SFO's in the US, responding to questions/concerns and clarifying the Franciscan response to societal issues. "Living By Faith" and Catholic Charities Action Alerts are examples of the resources and information that would continue to be available.

The current mission and vision statements will be rewritten into one statement giving a deeper understanding of our apostolic life. There will be one web site."

Now the greater challenge begins. We are not taking the work of many and giving it to a few. The intention is to renew the vision of who we are called to be. "In the spirit of conversion, they should live out their love for the renewal of the Church, which should be accompanied by personal and communal renewal. The fruits of conversion, which is a response to the love of God, as works of charity are the interactions with the brothers and sisters" General Constitution, Article 13.2.

APOSTOLIC COMMISSIONS FAREWELL (1984 – 2007)

By William Wicks, SFO, National Historian

Fr. Matthew Gaskin, OFM (at right) of Holy Name Province gave birth to the Apostolic Commissions at a National Directive Board meeting held in October 1984 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Fr. Matt recommended that there be five commissions set up to study, animate and guide Secular Franciscans in the five areas reflected in paragraphs 15 through 19, of chapter two of our Rule - *The Way of Life*. These were: Justice, Peace, Work, Family, and Life. It was then moved, seconded and approved that Commissions be set up in each of the following areas: Justice, Peace, Work, Family, and Environment. The structure evolved to four Apostolic Commissions; Peace and Justice became one Commission. Environment became Ecology.

The Rule of Pope Paul VI was promulgated in 1978, six years prior to the Commissions' beginning. The intention of the formation of these commissions was to encourage transition from the Leonine Rule (of 1883) that *did not* call the Tertiaries to apostolic activity, but directed them mainly toward the devotional; the goal, then, was self sanctification.

The Apostolic Commissions called attention to actively living out our SFO calling in the world, through participation. This Commission structure was encouraged, where practical, at every level of fraternity.

National Commission Chairs were appointed, and Commissions were formed. Each Chair and commission member dedicated their time to educate themselves, and Seculars at all levels of fraternity, on issues related to the "apostolic" articles of the Rule, and to encourage leaders to promote activities in these apostolic areas. These Chairs were gifted Seculars who became dedicated to promoting the apostolic element of the Way of Life embodied in the Rule. They deserve to be remembered as significant contributors to the successful transition from the "old" Rule to the "new" Rule, in all of its fullness.

Commission Chairs who served at all levels of fraternity deserve to be recognized. Listed here are the National Apostolic Commission Chairs who have



Fr. Matt Gaskin, OFM

served since the beginning. May all who read this feel a sense of gratitude for their servant leadership.

Commission Coordinator: Vice Minister Mary Mazotti, (1990/1999); Carol Gentile, (1999/2005), Jane DeRose Bamman (2005/2007)

Commission on Peace and Justice: Fr. Matt Gaskin, OFM and Bill Niggemeyer, (1985/1986); Don Purvis (1987/1989); Ron Michieli (1991/1995); Jim McIntosh (1996); Dan and Sarah Mulholland, (1998/2002); Carolyn Colburn, (2006/2007)

Commission on Family: (Marie Amore, (1985/1987); Gloria Shriver, (1988/1993), Carol Gentile, (1994/1998); Jaime and Sonia Bernardo (1999/2002), Richard and RoAnn Fetkovich - acting (2003); Ken and Kim Flanagan, (2004/2007)

Commission on Work: Cynthia Loudon, (1985/1988); Joseph Halka (1989/1992), Allen Jordan, (1993/1994), Ed and Mary Zablocki (1995/2001); Pauline Cahalan, (2001/2005), Sally Hadad, (2006/2007)

Commission on Environment: Fr. Camillus MacRory, OFM Cap. (1985/1986), Anneta Duveen, (1987/1988); John Conroy, (1989), **Ecology** Justin Carisio, (1990/1992, 2001), Charlie Spencer, (1993/1998); John Poppliers 1999/2000); Jane DeRose-Bamman, and Bill Fontenot, (2002/2004); Fred Young (2005)



From Raphael

WELCOME TO THE FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK

By Deacon Tom Bello, SFO
National Vice Minister

At the recent annual NAFRA gathering in Belleville, IL, following a presentation by Russ Testa, whose contact in

formation is given below, the National Fraternity voted 34 to 3 to join the Franciscan Action Network. More detailed information of this effort to speak with one voice across the national Franciscan family will be provided in subsequent issues, but the general outline of the Franciscan Action Network follows.

What is the Franciscan Action Network?

Inspired by the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi and the long heritage of men and women who follow in their footsteps as present day disciples of Jesus Christ, the Franciscan Action Network is designed to bring a coordinated and effective voice to matters of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in our world. The particular focus of the Franciscan Action Network's advocacy is the U.S. Government and related Washington, DC based institutions (e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States...). The advocacy topics will be both international and domestic in scope. In these arenas, the Franciscan Action Network hopes to bring a spirit of healing and reconciliation as they advocate for the transformation of the world, as inspired by the Spirit of God.

Who is the Franciscan Action Network?

The strength of any network dedicated to social transformation is the people and institutions that comprise it. At present, the Franciscan Action Network is made up of recognized Franciscan entities (with clearly elected leadership) based in the U.S. that chose to be associated with the efforts. These entities are both Catholic and Ecumenical, representing the broad reach of the Franciscan message. These entities are congregations and provinces of religious men and religious women, regions of Franciscan seculars, and ecumenical partners, building upon Francis' spirit of crossing

"borders" to join in the common invitation of God to transform the world.

How does FAN function?

The Franciscan Action Network is composed of three interrelated parts, each inspiring and supporting the other in a relational Franciscan style:

Members of the FAN: The backbone of the Network is the friars, sisters, Secular Franciscans, Ecumenical Franciscans and the men and women with whom they minister. At present, membership in the FAN is attained through the leadership entity being a part of it. The members of FAN will seek to animate the grassroots of their ministries and places of service to be advocates of transformation. At the same time, by nature of the relationships of service to persons who are poor or marginalized, the members have a unique and privileged perspective to share in articulating the change we seek.

Action Commission: this Commission is comprised of a representative body of the FAN membership entities. The Commission serves as a recognized group of leaders who will work to help the larger FAN formulate and focus the issues of advocacy for transformation, as well as to enhance the communication conduits of the Network.

Action Center: The Action Center is based in Washington, DC, with staff trained and dedicated to help the FAN achieve its goals of social transformation. The staff of the Center will monitor and advise the course of the strategic decisions of the Network to attain maximum effectiveness. This will necessitate having a Washington, DC presence, but even more importantly, working with the members and the Action Commission of the FAN to help them develop the skills for greater impact in public advocacy.

How do I get more information?

Contact the interim staff support:
Russell Testa, JPIC Animator
Holy Name Province
6896 Laurel Street, NW
Washington, DC 20012
202-541-5245
JPIC@HNP.ORG



Franciscan Living

Franciscans: Agents of Love

By Francine Gikow, SFO

Have you noticed how mean spirited the world has become? Instead of discussing issues in a mature, gentlepersonly way, partisan debate has become an exercise about who can out shout, intimidate, and belittle the most. We are marvels at the “put downs” “shut ups” and slights which make us feel powerful at the expense of others. It has become acceptable for us to “hit below the belt” in taking cheap verbal shots toward our opponent in order to increase our chances of winning our point. We accept and condone rude behavior amongst ourselves, so of course, our youth will mimic that behavior and more.

I fear for the upcoming presidential election. It may degenerate into a dirty verbal fistfight which obscures the real issues, panders to the hate mongers among us and hurts the chance of compromise and power sharing after the election. Everyone has seen the vitriolic sound bites of both the right wing and left wing - liberal or conservative. At any one time, both sides have been guilty of mean spirited attacks on each other which have polarized our society even further. We have been known to blame victims and exploit the elderly, crippled and children to make our points. In other words, we *use* people, words, and actions to aggressively attack. Our society is at war!

However, into this crazy world, we as Franciscans are expected to be counter cultural, and love. Francis instructed all of the brothers to preach with their deeds¹ and they should “remember that they gave themselves and abandoned their bodies to the Lord Jesus Christ. And for the love of Him, they must make themselves vulnerable to their enemies, both visible and invisible, because the Lord says: *Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.* (cf Lk 9:24)²

Francis’ deeds were always filled with courtesy, being mindful of the seed of the divine in everyone. Francis looked at a leper but found Christ crucified! He saw an enemy and found a fellow brother created by the same God. Francis actively sought out the divine manifested in humanity and nature. Because Francis loved God, he loved those whom the Lord loved into being. He saw God’s love and goodness in everyone. No wonder people loved Francis - he responded to them with loving eyes.

However, Francis did not leave his loving to those who were put in his path or even those who were nice or contributing members of society. Francis, in his Testament, instructed us to actually *search out* the lepers in our society and follow his example.³ Regis Armstrong states: “Francis articulates an incarnational approach to

Christian life, one that demands an ongoing search for the ‘lepers’ or ‘enemies’ of life and, having found them, to go among them, to show mercy to them, to see them as friends, and to offer one’s very being to them.”⁴ In fact, those who unjustly afflict upon us distress and anguish, shame and injury, sorrow and punishment, martyrdom and death, we *should love greatly* because they bring upon us the change to possess eternal life!⁵

In other words, we are to be outreach workers to each other. As we minister to those who are not loved, we suffer, and because of this suffering in our lives, we are challenged to more intimately follow Christ in self denial. We begin to love as Francis loved - through the eyes of Christ as we discern the seeds of the divine in everyone. Francis saw opportunity, whereas we see strife and suffering.

How do we love as Francis loved? He showed us how...with patience and nonconfrontation. In the Early Rule, Francis told us to go among the Saracens and “not to engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God’s sake...”⁶

There is a story about Francis in prison, which demonstrates how to do this. While Francis was in prison, there was an arrogant and unbearable knight whom everyone avoided. The other prisoners ostracized this man but not Francis! Francis reached out to this person, so lovingly and with such patience, that eventually the nobleman was changed by Francis’ love.⁷ Isn’t that how God loves us? Francis was able to demonstrate God’s love to this man.

So why is it so hard for us? Many times in this society, we do not have patience. We expect immediate results in this fast food instant gratification society. We are not used to standing in love with such patience. We tend to give up on people and judge that they are not responding. Yes, they are not responding to us in the way *we* want them to! We are trying to control them again!

Instead, we need to look with the eyes of God - the God who loved that individual person into being. God not only loved that person, but he made him as he was created - with that personality, with those weaknesses, with those irks. God has not given up on us, so why should we give up on others?

Francis’ love won over the admiration of the Sultan Malik al Kamil. His love won over the fellow prisoner. His love won over many companions to his way of life. Don’t we have enough proof of what love can do?

⁴ Regis Armstrong, “If My Words Remain in You...” in *Francis of Assisi: History Hagiography and Hermeneutics in the Early Documents*, ed. By Jay Hammond. Hyde Park N.Y.: New City Press. 2004. p. 70.

⁵ Early Rule, Chap.22,3-4.

⁶ R.J Armstrong, J.A. Hellman, W.J. Short, “The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Founder*. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press 200. p. 243.

⁷ Early Rule, Chap.16, 6.

¹ Early Rule, Chap. 18,3.

² Early Rule, Chap. 16, 10-11.

³ Test.1-3.



Little Weeds



KISS (not the band)

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

If I had a philosophy of life, it would have to be something George Burns once said: You have to get older, but you don't have to get old. That so resonates with me. I've never been as old as other people my age. (Emotionally and psychologically, I'm downright retarded!) And I can still find enjoyment in the simplest things. Simple is good.

Remember when you were a kid? Black was black, white was white, and grey was the color of grammy's hair. But by the time you got out of high school, if you gave it any thought, you'd've come to the conclusion that the only black-and-white left was a Dalmatian or two. Did life really get that complicated? Or did we simply complicate it ourselves? (Pardon my oxymoronic moment.)

The simplicity of Franciscan life has always appealed to me. And the heart of that simplicity lies in Francis' childlike attitude toward God. I don't think there was much grey in his life; but I also think he could accept the grey in others' lives. He simply embraced people where they were. Much as a small child does.

On the other hand – the grown-up hand – you may say, “Nothing's black and white. It's all grey.” Certainly, many situations have ramifications that add a dinginess to the proceedings. There's always that big BUT. However, we can overthink things to the point where we're tempted to give up rather than solve the problem. Sorta damned-if-y'do/damned-if-y'don't.

There are many complex issues facing us today. They cry out for our attention. And they have to be dealt with, even if they will never impact you personally. Because, in the long run, they *do* impact you personally. If you're a human being, a member of humanity, a resident of this planet, they impact you personally.

Some of it has to do with separating the sin from the sinner. On the B&W side, you want to wash your hands of the whole thing; on the grey side, you might bend over backwards trying to be fair. But if you bend over backwards to be fair, you'll just end

up being unfair in another direction. So that's not very good either.

The simplest thing is compassion without compromise. Don't stop loving the sinner; but don't stop hating the sin . . .

Your friend said she's considering an abortion. Compassion dictates you hear her out and then offer alternatives. But non-compromise dictates that though you continue to care for her, you not go into “under the circumstances” mode where you somehow seek justification for such a solution. It's not easy. Anytime you mix mind and heart, it can get murky. Grey. Knowing your own mind and heart does make the path clearer cut when dealing with others.

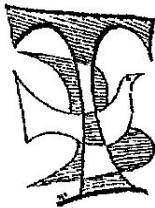
But simplicity isn't just for dealing with others. It's for life in general. Ours is a cluttered world. Information being thrown into our heads right and left, so many things we're being encouraged to obtain, mountains constantly being made out of molehills. What's really important? What can be tossed? It differs from person to person. But one can set some guidelines.

I find when something goes wrong, I usually ask myself, “Did anyone die?” If the answer is “no” (it has been so far . . .), I pick myself up and keep on truckin', putting the unpleasant behind me. It's simple, it's also logical. Why hang on to bad feelings? Or worse yet, let them hang on to you? “Let go, let God” makes so much sense here.

Every necessity began as a luxury. But not every luxury becomes a necessity. Indoor plumbing? Good call. Sneakers that cost \$400? Wrong answer. To some, the computer would seem to fall in between, but it's fast becoming a good thing to have. Keeping in touch with friends and family has never been easier; and given the fact that friends and family have a tendency to be all over the place, that's marvelous.

I think a lot of simplicity is common sense. (Oooh, another oxymoron!) Knowing the difference between needs and wants can answer so many questions. (Yes, you *need* the indoor plumbing; no, you only *want* the sneakers.) Also, accepting the fact that multi-tasking is NOT always the way to go, can save you some grief. (If that phone call can't wait, pull over to make or take it.)

If you're really stuck for an answer, there's always “What would Jesus do?” Or, to make it easier, “What would Francis do?” Jesus had the divine thing going for Him. But Francis was just people. Like us. He began rich, so you know his life was cluttered, too. But look how nicely he neated it up!



EXPLORING Things FRANCISCAN

+++ CNSA NEWS & VIEWS +++

Lester Bach OFM Cap

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Celebrating
The 800th anniversary of the Rule of 1209
CNSA and partners will present a
Spiritual Assistants' Congress
For Regional, and Local Spiritual Assistants,
September 23-26, 2008
St. John's Center (for Youth & Family)
44011 Five Mile Road – Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 414-1111
Fly into the Detroit airport.

Arrive on Tuesday, September 23rd by 5:00 PM. The program ends after breakfast on Friday, September 26th.

Contact for payment and registration:

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

The Congress will have ongoing formation for spiritual assistants at all levels. We encourage spiritual assistants to set this time aside for the SA Congress. Join us, as we collaborate in ways that can enrich our service to the SFO.

A team of the four members of the CNSA will collaborate with four Secular Franciscans to present a program for all spiritual assistants.

CNSA Members – travel paid by the Conference of Provincials of each branch of the Order/TOR. (Room and board by CNSA treasury)

Provincial spiritual assistants – payment made by the respective First Order/TOR province that they serve.

Regional spiritual assistants – paid for by the Region that they serve and /or other contributions that can be developed.

Local spiritual assistants – paid for by the local fraternity that they serve and /or other contributions that can be developed.

CNSA CHANGES

As is usual in this world of ours, change is common. For CNSA that has meant two changes in our team ministry.

- Fr. Bart Karwacki OFM Conv** has been wearing so many hats that he is finding it difficult to give attention to each ministry in which he is involved. Something had to give to avoid burnout. We will miss his presence and insights and reluctantly accept his resignation from CNSA. Thank you for your continuing service to local fraternities and to the ministries of your Order.
- Fr Stephen Gross OFM Conv** has joined us to replace Bart. He will serve out the second year of the term as President-in-turn for CNSA. Steve is well known for his service and love for the SFO.

Sarah Mulholland SFO has served us with much dedication as our CNSA secretary. She, too, found that trying to be secretary to the NEC and to the CNSA got to be too big a burden. We thank you much for your spirit and service, Sarah. You have served us marvelously well.

Elizabeth Allen SFO will replace Sarah as CNSA secretary. No need to explain her competence. Welcome aboard, Elizabeth!

A young man questioned Jacob:
"How can we find our way to heaven?"
"We find our way to heaven," said Jacob,
"By caring about those who live on earth."
"And if we don't care," asked the young man,
"what then?"
"God does not threaten us," said Jacob,
"Except with the lack of compassion
we show others."

Jacob's Journey – Noah ben Shea – Page 109

The Rule and Eucharist

By Lester Bach OFM Cap

The SFO Rule and Constitutions provide insights about the role of the Eucharist in Franciscan life.

Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ. (SFO Rule #8)

The brothers and sisters should love meeting God as His children and they should let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do. They should seek to discover the presence of the Father in their own heart, in nature and in the history of humanity in which His plan of salvation is fulfilled. The contemplation of this mystery will dispose them to collaborate in this loving plan. (Constitutions – Article 11.3)

The Eucharist is the center of the life of the Church. Christ unites us to himself and to one another as a single body in it. Therefore, the Eucharist should be the center of the life of the fraternity. The brothers and sisters should participate in the Eucharist as frequently as possible, being mindful of the respect and love shown by Francis, who, in the Eucharist, lived all the mysteries of the life of Christ. (Constitutions – Article 14.2)

1- *The Eucharist is the center of the life of the Church.* Franciscans belong to the Church. The Eucharist is the center of Church life of which Franciscans are a part. All Catholics recognize the Eucharist as the center of their lives. Why? Because of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist and the proclamation of the gospel Word.

Catholics are called to active participation in the Eucharist. At Mass, we are an assembly of believers called to be a community joined in the praise and worship of God. (United States Catechism for Adults – USCCB – Page 225)

Our lives reflect the influence of this sacred meal. There are a number of meal stories in the New Testament. Prayerful reading shows Jesus not only teaching but also pointing out ways to live. When Jesus spoke/acted at meals, he asked his friends to imitate him. (E.g. servant leadership in John 13:3-17. Other meal lessons can be found in Luke 5:27-32, Luke 14:1-6, Matthew 26:6-13 and other texts).

2- The SFO Rule focuses on Christ: *following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the*

inspiration and the center of his life with God and people. Christ the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life he has come to give abundantly (SFO Rule #4).

Catholics are expected to let the Gospel infiltrate their lives, attitudes, judgments, relationships and perceptions. Franciscans have a special call to make the Gospel come alive in their lives.

3- A fraternity Eucharist for special occasions (Profession, jubilees, and special feasts) seems realistic. But generally we are called to participate with the larger Church (parish). E.g. Profession at a parish Eucharist could give witness to the parish of our commitment to the Franciscan way of life.

Church celebrations help us realize that we are not in this ministry alone nor in isolation. We have professed a Rule that requires us to bring our Franciscan spirit to the Church and the world. We need to be present to both the Church and the world to achieve this goal. Frequent participation to parish Eucharistic celebrations will help us fulfill the Rule and Constitutions.

4- Eucharist deepens our sense of sacrifice is *doing what is holy*. *Doing what is holy* requires the same loving self-giving that Jesus shows on the cross. Working within the fraternity and the larger Church community, we *do what is holy* and give flesh to the gospel vision of Jesus in our world.

Without the Church, the SFO would not exist. Francis' dedication to the Eucharist and the Church changed his life. The Rule challenges us to a similar daily conversion! (cf. SFO Rule #7)

5- Ongoing formation should be a major part of the regular gathering. It offers practical ways and means for members to influence the world by living the SFO Rule. Good interaction about how to live the Franciscan way of life is an important ingredient of the regular gatherings.

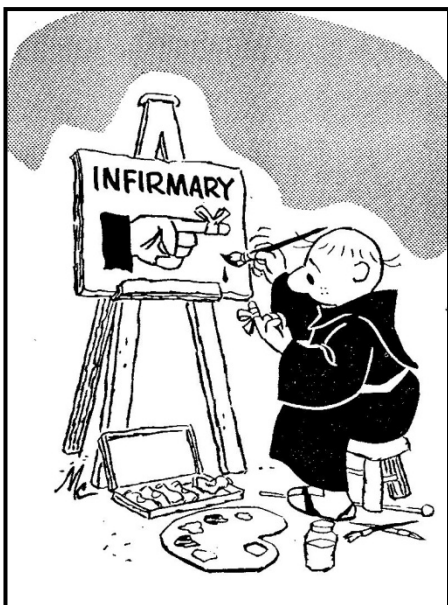
While the Liturgy of the Hours is important, using a variety of prayer forms at gatherings can offer models for prayer. A fraternity can begin to die when it lacks growth and/or increased dedication to our Franciscan way of life. Wise use of ongoing formation and prayerfulness can keep this from happening.

Christ came to take away our sins, not our minds.

Humor Page

By Dolores Cullen, SFO

Brother Juniper



By Fred McCarthy, SFO

WHAT'S UP, DOC?

A woman goes to the doctor for her yearly physical. The nurse starts with certain basic items. "How much do you weigh?" she asks.

"About 115," she says.

The nurse puts her on the scale. It turns out her weight is 152.

The nurse asks, "Your height?"

She says, "5 foot 8."

The nurse checks and sees that she only measures 5' 3". She then takes her blood pressure, and tells the woman it is very high.

"Of course it's high!" she screams, "When I came in here I was tall and slender! Now I'm short and fat!"

A distraught patient phoned her doctor's office. "Is it true," the woman wanted to know, "that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so," the doctor told her.

There was a moment of silence before the woman continued, "I'm wondering just how serious my condition is. This prescription is clearly marked, NO REFILLS."

At an Optometrist's Office: "If you don't see what

you're looking for, you've come to the right place." A man slowly hobbled into the doctor's office, bent almost double, grasping a cane in one gnarled claw. Another patient asked, "Arthritis with complications?"

"No," the man replied, "do-it-yourself with cinder blocks!"

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. Mark Twain

I used to eat a lot of natural foods, until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

Two doctors and an HMO manager die and line up together at the Pearly Gates. One doctor steps forward and tells St. Peter, "As a pediatric surgeon, I saved hundreds of children." St. Peter lets him enter. The next doctor says, "As a psychiatrist, I helped thousands of people live better lives." St. Peter tells him to go inside. The last man says, "I was an HMO manager. I got countless families cost-effective health care." St. Peter replies, "You may enter, but," he adds, "you can only stay for 3 days. After that, you can go down below."

Please note: Most corporations do not accept doctors notes for sick days. If you can go to the doctor you can come to work.

A young doctor was just setting up his first office. His secretary told him there was a man to see him. The doctor wanted to make the man think that he was successful and very busy. So he told his secretary to show the man in and at that moment he picked up his phone and pretended to be having a conversation with a patient.

The man waited patiently, until the "conversation" was completed. Once he hung up, the doctor asked, "Can I help you?"

"No," the man replied, "I'm just here to connect your telephone."

Psychiatry students were in their Emotional Extremes class. "Let's set some parameters," the professor said. "What's the opposite of joy?" he asked one student.

"Sadness," he replied.

"The opposite of depression?" he asked another student.

"Elation," he replied.

"The opposite of woe?" the professor asked a young woman from Texas.

The Texan replied, "Sir, I believe that would be giddyup."



IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR!

By Fr. Richard Trezza, O.F.M.
S.A. National Formation Commission
Art by Raphael

Perhaps you're already heard the above Christmas song a few times this season. It suggests to us that the season we are in ... the "holiday" season (whatever that is); the "Winter Festival" (and whatever that means) is the "most wonderful time of the year." Well, as you know, they're absolutely correct. The songwriters and merchandisers all know why it is the most wonderful time of the year – and so do we. We're both very excited about it but for different reasons. Actually, we both help each other to celebrate this special time

You are reading the Christmas issue of TAU-USA. Unless you are in total denial, this newsletter is competing with all sorts of Christmas songs, the writing of the obligatory Christmas cards, the purchasing of presents which assist us in our celebrations and the culinary preparations which bring us cheer.

Christians share those sentiments with the yearly task of convincing people that "Jesus is the Reason for the season." As Franciscans, we have the obligation of making that religious sentiment a reality by being the people we say we are and by the living out of the permanent commitment we make to our Franciscan way of life.

On July 7 of this year, Pope Benedict XVI, by means of his 'motu proprio,' *Summorum Pontificum*, has made it possible for the celebration of the 'extraordinary form' of the Mass; that is, the way

Mass was celebrated during the time of Vatican II in 1962. One of the endearing characteristics of that form of Mass, was the recitation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John at the end of the Mass. This was called the "Last Gospel" because there had been another Gospel proclaimed at an earlier time during the Mass. If you are old enough to remember, when the priest got to the words, "...et Verbum caro factum est..." (and the Word was made flesh), everyone in the church genuflected. We still do this when we recite the Creed at the Christmas Mass.

For us it IS the "most wonderful time of the year" because we call to mind that "Verbum caro factum est!" The prologue to John's gospel opened up for us the Divine plan of salvation. It reminded us that the Mass which preceded it, was all about Jesus, the Logos of God, becoming one of us. He came as the Light which enlightens all people. Jesus reveals God to us in a most unique way. In that revelatory act, Jesus was rejected by His own. But to those who would receive Him, He gave the power to become children of God. This same Prologue is now the Gospel of the Mass on Christmas Day for Cycles A, B and C.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, a great spiritual writer, would say that Christmas is not an event within history but is rather the invasion of time by eternity. As Franciscan Christians, what kind of invaders are we? By our lives, do we invade our time with the presence of the Divine? If we personally find ourselves wanting in this area, we should not blame those stores and commercials which celebrate Christmas for money. At least they remind us of the Mystery, even if they don't speak that religious language. But they do put the feast before us ... in our faces. Maybe they are waiting for us to relieve them of the boredom which comes from having to trump the commercialism of the year before. Maybe they too wish to settle into the Mystery of knowing that God has become one of us. Let us translate "It's the most wonderful time of the year" for them and allow them to know why, by the way we come to know Jesus in the manner and style of Francis of Assisi, whose most eloquent sermon may have been his silent gazing upon the crèche in Greccio.

(Fr. Richard is the Provincial Spiritual Assistant for Holy Name OFM Province. He is also the SA for the National Formation Commission. He serves as Regional SA for St. Elizabeth of Hungary and Our Lady of the Angels Regions. He resides in East Rutherford, NJ).



1st INTERNATIONAL YOUFRA ASSEMBLY, SPAIN 2008

By Timothy Taormina, SFO (Age 19)
franciscanyouthusa@hotmail.com

Representatives from around the world gathered in Barcelona, Spain recently to make important international decisions regarding the formation and structure of YouFra (Franciscan Youth) around the world. They gathered from June 28 to July 5, 2007.

From the four corners of the Earth came intelligent, optimistic, and driven leaders who were well versed and educated in the inner-workings of their respective National YouFra programs...and then, there was me.

I was sent with the simple goal to observe and take notes of the great examples those other countries gave as to how to efficiently and successfully run a YouFra program. What examples they were! Some countries have had YouFra for countless years and their members number in the thousands, and yet there were others, like us, who had just begun the process of attracting youth to the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare. There were national presidents of YouFra, long standing members of SFO, the Council of Spiritual Assistants, the CIOFS Presidency, and the Minister General of the SFO...and then there was me. I was sent to learn what I could about how we, the United States, could have a thriving YouFra. The events that took place during that week in Spain were as enjoyable as they were educational, and I will never forget what I saw, heard, and did.

We had whole days focused on the learning sessions, and these sessions all started with a presenter. Among the presentations were topics such as "Young People in the Church," "The Importance of Fraternal Animators," "The Growth of NiFra (Niños Franciscanos, Young Franciscans) Groups", and a presentation from "Franciscans International" from Geneva.

"Young People in the Church" was presented by Monsignor Miquel Delgado Galindo, from the Vatican Pontifical Council for the Laity. He reminded us of the importance of youth by citing what Pope John Paul II had

done during life. Pope John Paul II, more than any church leader before him, had realized the clear importance of youth in the church. If it is true that Christian, and even Franciscan formation should never end, then it is also true it should begin as soon as possible. Because of this, it is important to attract youth to have a closer relationship with not only God, but with St. Francis and St. Clare.

The importance of Fraternal Animators was one of the most significant discussions we had, especially because it related so closely with the YouFra's bond with the SFO. A Fraternal Animator, as defined by the YouFra is, the SFO who seeks to foster, communicate, and advance the YouFra's knowledge of God within the human, Christian and Franciscan dimensions of their lives.

The strength of a YouFra group can only be measured by the strength of its bond with its SFO parent fraternity. However, the reverse is true also. The Secular Franciscan Order as a whole can only be strong if it has a strong bond with Franciscan Youth. Let me rephrase this: because every SFO is required by their Profession to the SFO Rule and the Constitutions to promote the appropriate growth of Franciscan Youth, an SFO fraternity can only be complete if it does everything it can to promote and encourage youth to grow closer to St. Francis and St. Clare.

The characteristics and functions these Fraternal Animators must possess are a youthful spirit, an above average amount of energy, and an immeasurable amount of *passion*. They must have passion not only for being Franciscan, but for working with youth. We concluded that these are most likely the most important people to the YouFra groups, and to the SFO as well, because they represent the physical bridge between the two respective entities.

Franciscans International gave a great presentation about their work in the United Nations as they further the international obligations nations have concerning human rights. They even "borrowed" a video from the USA FYYA's website about how essential water is to life. This was a showcase example of how YouFra can have an active role in the larger Franciscan family.

We, the USA FYYA, initiated and participated in the H2O Project. A project that gives time and money towards building wells in areas of the world in which water is a hard to find resource. What you see here, and the same can be true with established YouFra fraternities, is that a large part of these group's time can be devoted towards actual actions taken to better their community. YouFra is "formed" by action.

As great as all the items discussed at this International Assembly, it means nothing to us as a nation as of now, because we have no formal structured YouFra. Because of this circumstance, I will withhold presenting the detailed proposals because of what I propose now: ***"The goal of the United States of America, with International support, should seek the very best method to promote the growth and maturing of YouFra and the strengthening of its bonds with the SFO."***



Human Castle

We proceeded into the heart of Barcelona on an excursion. As soon as we got to the city square, a tower made of people was already being constructed. These famous “human castles” of people were some of the most amazing things I’ve ever seen, and also, as explained by Xavi Ramos, a great analogy for the Franciscan Family. Because every person of the castle is important, so is every part of the Franciscan family. It starts with a great foundation, like the SFO, and as it is built higher and higher, the ages of the people get younger and younger, like the YouFra proceeding to NiFra.

We took a pilgrimage to one of the most beautiful holy sites in the world: the Benedictine Abbey of Santa Maria de Montserrat; which is home to the famous Black Madonna. The church itself gave truth to words “house of God,” because other than the Black Madonna, the decoration and architecture made me value my sense of sight ever more. We hiked various trails of the mountain itself, and the views were unbelievable.

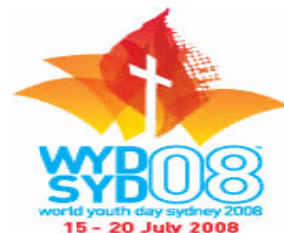
The life-long bonds I made with other people, the stories I shared and listened to, the interesting people I’ve met, and the things I have learned from this International Assembly will never be forgotten. My only hope is that by sharing with others what has happened will help make YouFra in the United States something to be proud of. But it doesn’t stop with me, or the work of the Youth/Young Adult Commission. It starts with *everyone* in the Franciscan family, from friars to every SFO, from newly professed to National Minister.

The question asked of us is what does it take to create YouFra fraternities? And my question to all is this: What are you willing to do to help create these YouFra fraternities? Are you willing to give your time and effort to be a Spiritual Assistant? A Fraternal Animator? Or even the easiest: are you willing to share with a youth or young adult the life of St. Francis of Assisi? Because when it comes the Franciscan family as a whole, when you

measure the strength and vitality of the family, when you ask what is the most important part; the answer should be community, that every part is essential to being family. Every part is equally important and the strength of one is seen in the strength of the other, because if one is lacking, if one person of the human castle is too weak and not supported by another, the whole thing will fall, and everyone will fail. **Everyone!**

Note: For the unabridged article visit our web site at www.franciscanyouthusa.com.

**FRANCISCAN
WORLD YOUTH DAY
JULY 12-14
WORLD YOUTH DAY
JULY 15-21
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**



In 1985, Pope John Paul II instituted the first World Youth Day in Rome, Italy. Since then, it is celebrated throughout the Dioceses of the Church every year, with every two or three years being an International celebration.

In 1997, the Secular Franciscan Order began calling together the Franciscan Youth (YouFra) of the world together within this international gathering. We have gathered in Paris (1997), Rome (2000), Toronto (2002) and Vossenack, Germany (2005).

Once again Franciscan Youth will gather, this time in Sydney, Australia. The Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission will represent the SFO~USA at these gatherings, sending two delegates.

This is an open invitation for Franciscan Youth from the USA to participate in this celebration. The FYYA can travel with an additional group of six young adults on this pilgrimage.

The estimated cost of this trip is \$2,800.00 per youth. This cost will cover airfare, the Franciscan WYD room/board, the WYD room/board, transportation in Sydney and limited health insurance.

The young adults must be between the ages of 18-26 (as per our Statutes) and will travel with Kathy Taormina, SFO, FYYA National Chair as their coordinator.

For more information, Contact Kathy at www.franciscanyouthusa.com, click World Youth Day, or kltsfo@frontiernet.net.

January 1, 2008 is the deadline for applicants on a first come-first serve basis. A \$500.00 deposit is required to reserve.



MULTICULTURAL
COMMITTEE



**Many Cultures/Through
Francis/in Christ**

By Barbara Smith, SFO
Committee Member
1003 S. Main Street
Greensboro, GA 30642
barblaines@bellsouth.net
706-453-7715

To the Lord: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! and to the Quinquennial Congress Planning Committee: Thank you. We are happy to have been a part of the Quinquennial to serve you our sisters and brothers. Our committee has received many wonderful and favorable comments for which we are most appreciative. We are particularly grateful to the Holy Spirit for leading us in this direction and for making everything come together so beautifully. How magnificent is our Lord. We also thank Sonia Bernardo, who said, "We have definitely achieved our goal of increasing the level of consciousness of our brothers and sisters to the cultural diversity within the Secular Franciscan Order of the United States."

Diversity is a gift that we have received and taken to heart from a Franciscan perspective. Yes, the seed was planted in the hearts and minds of all levels of our Order and it is now time to reflect on how we can nurture and integrate into our lives the deeper understanding and experience that we were privileged to be a part of at the Q. We trust that all will be motivated to share with their local and regional fraternities, as well as the national fraternity, in the celebration of their multicultural diversity and that the SFO Servant Leadership will animate and guide the local fraternities in their celebration of our Franciscan diversity. How will this make us better Secular Franciscans? What impact will this have on our Franciscan journey? We experienced and witnessed the impact that our awareness had on us, when the analogue of the "iceberg" with its external factors (what we can see, touch, taste, smell and hear) above the water and the internal factors (what we do not see i.e. values, customs, traditions, behavior and

thought patterns) below the water was presented to us. We came to understand, appreciate and bond in a deeper way as Secular Franciscan than we had ever bonded before. We are truly becoming more of a child of God, as we come to know our own internal/external iceberg. As we grow in this work, hopefully, we will be able to help our brothers and sisters do their own iceberg work.

Trusting, we will carry this "iceberg" analogy in our hearts, we can extend an invitation to the initial and on-going formation people to implement this multicultural vision.

We can educate ourselves by building on the foundation that includes Sacred Scripture, Church teaching, the SFO Rule, the Constitutions and Ritual, the richness of the traditional Franciscan perspective on our way of life and the available resources on multicultural issues.

We can also continue and encourage the vital and reciprocal dialogue begun among us and experience a more vibrant community life, which will make us "joyful and ready to place ourselves on an equal basis with one another" (SFO Rule Art. 13). These are goals of our committee.

Whatever we discover in our internal/external work with the "iceberg," take it to Jesus and He will help us let go of our bias, prejudice, false judgment and intolerance in our world. This is the season of change. As we see the colors and falling leaves, we can ask our Lord to help us to let go just like the falling leaves.

We have made an important beginning, but we still have much to be and much to do. Let us go forward. May the Lord's Peace be with each of you.

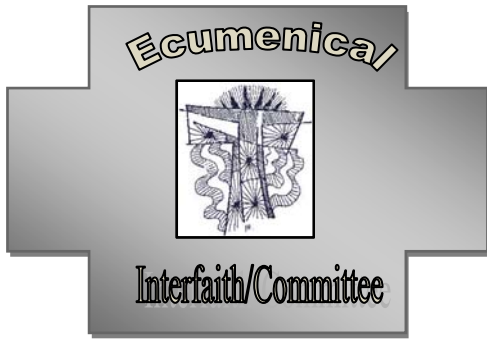
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ANNETA DUVEEN, SFO
Past National Minister (1975-1981)
1924 to 2007

Our very dear sister Anneta Duveen went to be with the Lord on Sunday, October 28. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

A funeral Mass for Anneta took place at The Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York on November 1, 2007 (All Saints Day). Barbara O'Neill, SFO, was the NAFRA representative for the Order at the funeral.

See the next issue of TAU-USA for a memorial to Anneta.



Our Larger Franciscan Family

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

I often meet Secular Franciscans who are very interested in ecumenical and interfaith issues, but are not sure where to begin. After all, for the most part, we are neither Church officials nor professional theologians. What can the rank-and-file Secular do to help further the mission of dialogue? The quick answer is: plenty.

When I applied for the position of chair of the Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee, I said that St. Francis is like Sarah Lee cakes: "Everybody doesn't like something, but nobody doesn't like St. Francis." Hindus, Buddhists, even atheists find themselves drawn to the Poor Little Man of Assisi. This is even more apparent when we dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other Christian Churches.

It is not surprising, then, that people of other denominations have felt a call to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis. Some of those Christians have gathered into Franciscan Orders, united by a common Rule and way of life. I have had the privilege in the past year of meeting fellow Franciscans from the Third Order Society of St. Francis (Anglican Church) and the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans.

The TSSF, like the SFO, is composed of lay people and secular (diocesan) clergy. They vow a Rule of Life that calls them to on-going penitence and regular participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. They promise to celebrate the Divine Office, to practice personal prayer, to study the Scriptures and Franciscan writings. They live a life of simplicity and self-denial. I quote from their Rule: "Prayer is the root from which our lives and ministries grow and are nourished," and "The Eucharist is the heart of our prayer." I don't know about you, but that sounds vaguely familiar. They also promise to make a personal or common retreat once a year. I know that most of us also do this, but they are actually *expected* to. Perhaps this is something we could learn from them.

The Order of Ecumenical Franciscans began because people were participating in TSSF formation programs, but could not profess because they were not Anglican. Though it was first organized under the United Church of

Christ, it is now composed of Christians from every which background you could imagine. I was privileged to participate in their annual chapter in St. Louis this past summer. I met Episcopalians, United Church of Christ members, and Quakers. I also met one Baptist deacon. I also met a priest of the Ecumenical Catholic Church, a spin off from the Old Catholics, who continue to maintain apostolic succession, much like the Orthodox, though not in communion with Rome.

Because of its ecumenical nature, the OEF has a broader understanding of community, though they share a common faith in Christ and a common commitment to following the Gospel in the footsteps of Francis. Precisely because of their ecumenical nature, they have had to learn (and are still learning) to agree to disagree on many things. I, personally, found this inspiring. As SFOs, we share not only our Franciscan Rule, but also a common ecclesial communion, but sometimes we are not as open as we could be to legitimate differences in our own midst. What could we learn from these wonderful Franciscans who, by their very nature, have had to learn to live with diversity?

Together, the SFO, TSSF and OEF have formed the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity. Each order sends 2 representatives to the Committee. Since it has a "third order flavor," these are the only groups now on the committee. We have heard there are other Franciscan third-order-type groups, but we haven't found them, yet. I met with this committee in Chicago in April, and discovered that though we had differences in doctrine (the OEF representatives were Ecumenical Catholic Church and United Church of Christ—so there were differences even there), our common Christian faith and common commitment to the Way of Francis helped us to transcend those differences. We worked together, we prayed together, we played together (I especially remember the evening where I sang old Baptist hymns with an Anglican priest and an Ecumenical Catholic priest!)

Together, we have planned future meetings, mini-conferences, and have come up with proposed liturgies for common Franciscan gatherings: a Little Office to be prayed between the Feast of the Stigmata and the Feast of St. Francis, and an Agapé service (since we cannot share a common Eucharist), patterned after St. Francis' own practice of blessing bread and sharing it with his friars. These liturgies can be found on the NAFRA website. We hope soon to have a common *Transitus* service that mentions all three Orders.

I have been named an honorary member of the OEF Texas chapter, and will meet with them October 20. I also have been given contact information for local TSSF members. You can do the same. You can find out more about the Orders, and get contact information, from their websites: www.tssf.org (TSSF) and www.franciscans.com (OEF). Our regional and local fraternities can meet with members of these Orders, and celebrate our common Franciscan life. If you would like to have contact information in your area, feel free to contact me at elssfo@hotmail.com.

Book Reviews

Our SFO History – Volume I

A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States Volume I 1917 – 1942

By William Wicks, SFO

The history of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States begins with the immigration of friars and Tertiaries from Germany during the second half of the 19th century. However, even before that time there is evidence of the friars forming Third Order fraternities among the Native Americans, and early Spanish settlers. Volume I of *A History of the Secular Order in the United States* covers, mainly, the time of the beginning of the forming of a national Third Order organization, up to the time of the Second World War.

Serious consideration of a national organization began at a meeting of friars of Sacred Heart (OFM) Province, and Tertiaries, in Teutopolis, Illinois, in 1917. The plan was supported unanimously at the first Quinquennial Congress held in Chicago in 1921, and was consummated by the approval of a national constitution in 1922. A Prologue includes a short history of immigration of Franciscans to this country and presents the positive effect of Pope Leo XIII's encyclicals on the growth of the Third Order, one of which embodies the Leonine Rule of 1883. Volume I encompasses the time of the first five Quinquennial Congresses, the fifth held in Pittsburgh in 1941. An Appendix includes encyclicals related to the Third Order promulgated by Popes: Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI.

This history serves two purposes. One, it presents an overall story of events that, one after the other, have contributed to where we are today. It is our history presented. Two, it gives honor to those friars who dedicated themselves to lead us to where we are today. It is their history presented.

The story of the beginnings of our national organization is a glorious one. I hope that I have done it justice.

Book may be ordered from:
Barbo-Carlson Enterprises
Box 189, Lindsborg, KS 67456 or
bevbarbo@kans.com

Reflections of a Secular Franciscan Books I & II

By Ruth Vogel, SFO
(January 21, 1910 – May 26, 1998)

By Dennis Mallon, SFO

The writings of Ruth Vogel, SFO, are now available in two paperback books. Her first book titled "Reflections of a Secular Franciscan, Book I" is a collection of writings dedicated to inquirers, candidates, and professed Franciscans. Her writings were used in formation by her fraternity, and other fraternities and seminars in the Southern Region. Ruth wrote many articles for other Franciscan publications, as well as the "Franciscan Herald."

In her first book, for candidates and ongoing formation, Ruth brings to light her reflections on the "The Secular Franciscan Order," where she traces a brief history of the Order; describes basic requirements such as the importance of Meetings, Commitment, Life Style, and the Rule. In the second chapter, "Reflections on St. Francis and His Early Companions," Ruth's focus is on his conversion (metanoia)," The First Chapter of Mats, The Carceri, The Tau cross and the San Damiano crucifix. In the final Chapter, The Franciscan Way of Life, she offers her thoughts on such topics as Obedience, Penance, Humility, What is True Love, Formation, and Franciscan poverty.

Book II is a collection of spiritual writings, some in verse form, under topics: Jesus, Son of God; Mary Mother of God; Lent and Easter; Holy Scripture; Meditations; the Christmas Season; God's Creation and her Trip to Assisi.

In a note she wrote to our Lord she said, "Dear Lord Jesus, I would like so very much for you to tell me what you want me to do with the rest of my life, in what way I can serve you best? I must assume that since I am firmly established in this Franciscan role of instructing others in the Franciscan way, that this is the way which I must channel the most important part of my life — this role of bringing your living presence to the members of my fraternity and others where possible."

Ruth Vogel's books are available through Lulu Publications (Lulu.com) as follows: Enter in the search box for books the number 155927 for Book I and 792928 for book II. For more information contact: Dennis Mallon, SFO at denmarpar@numail.org or www.secularfranciscans.org

**SAVE THE DATE!
SUMMER SEMINAR FOR SECULAR
FRANCISCAN ORDER**

There will be a seminar offered at Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania this coming June. It is explicitly for members of the Secular Franciscan Order. It is scheduled to begin on Thursday evening, June 26, 2008 and end on Sunday around Noontime, June 29, 2008.

The topic this year will be:

***“Development of Lay Leadership
in the Secular Franciscan Order.”***

The presenters will be:

**Fr. Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR
Anne Mulqueen, SFO**

We, at Saint Francis, are excited about hosting members of the SFO here at the university!

Saint Francis University and its President, Fr. Gabriel Zeis, TOR, have been very eager to offer something useful to the SFO. It is hoped that if this seminar is successful, there will be a seminar held each summer. Topics and speakers would be chosen with the cooperation of the National Executive Council. No seminar would be held in the years that there is a Quinquennial scheduled so as to avoid competition or repetition. The Seminar is endorsed and strongly encouraged by the National Executive Council.

More information will be coming on the seminar, and registration forms will soon be ready. The cost will be (approximately) \$210 for a single room, \$170 double occupancy, with all meals included. (This is the early registration price.) If you are planning to fly into the area, please book flights that come into Johnstown, Pennsylvania. If you have any other questions, contact: Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR
814-472-3367 (daytime) or
e-mail kqueally@francis.edu

ASSISI MUSIC FESTIVAL RETREAT

Sacred and Secular Music

First two weeks of July in Assisi, Italy

For information contact:

John Michael Fox, TSSF (violinist)
jmfoxtssf@yahoo.com 865-235-8078

NEW: FRATENITY WEBSITE & BLOG

Our Lady of the Pearl emerging fraternity in St. Joan of Arc Region Website: www.ourladyofthepearl.com & Blog: <http://littlescribe.blogspot.com>

**RECRUITMENT FOR
MULTICULTURAL
COMMITTEE CHAIR**

The NAFRA Executive Council is soliciting applications from SFOs interested in serving as the Chair of the Multicultural Committee.

Applications are due by February 1, 2008. The Executive Council intends to select the new Chair by March 1, 2008. The three-year term for the new Chair will begin upon appointment. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the mission of the Multicultural Committee;
- be willing to communicate their passion and desire to promote the work of the Committee to others;
- provide a summary of some of their ideas to promote the Committee;
- be able to write four articles for the TAU-USA newsletter yearly; and
- be able to attend one four-day national meeting yearly.

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in applying, send your resume along with a letter responding to the above criteria and a copy of your certificate of profession by February 1, 2008 to:

Sarah Mulholland, SFO
National Secretary
19590 Hollygrape Street
Bend OR 97702

**RECRUITMENT FOR
ECUMENICAL/INTERFAITH
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The National Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee is soliciting applications from SFOs interested in serving on the committee.

The term of service is three years, with the possibility of a second three-year term.

Contact: Ed Shirley, Committee Chair
512-794-0546 (evenings) or
e-mail: elsfo@hotmail.com

Interest must be expressed by Jan. 15, 2007.



**Chapter of the National Fraternity
Council of the SFO in the United States
October 2-7, 2007
Our Lady of the Snows Shrine
Belleville, IL**

By William Wicks, SFO



The leadership of the national fraternity gathered for their annual meeting, October 2 through 7, at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois - the largest outdoor shrine in North America. The Shrine was an ideal prayerful setting, for a gathering of approximately 60 Franciscans, to conduct the business of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.



Those present were welcomed by National Minister, Patrick Mendés, SFO, pictured at left, Other Executive Council officers are Deacon Tom Bello, SFO, Vice Minister; Sarah Mulholland, SFO, Secretary; Dennis Ross, SFO, Treasurer, and Councilors: Pat Brandwein-Ball, SFO, Mike Carsten, SFO and Clare McCluggage, SFO; Formation Commission Chair, Theresa Baker, SFO and Anne Mulqueen, SFO, International Councilor. Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv. is the President-in-turn of the CNSA, friar assistant to the Executive Council.

The inaugural liturgy was celebrated in the main Shrine church, Most Reverend Robert J. Hermann (at right), Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, presiding. In his homily, Bishop Hermann spoke of the special guardian angels that are with us for special times in our lives, October 2nd being a memorial feast of Guardian Angels. Liturgical music for the Mass was rendered beautifully by the choir of Immaculate Conception Church of Dardenne, Missouri.

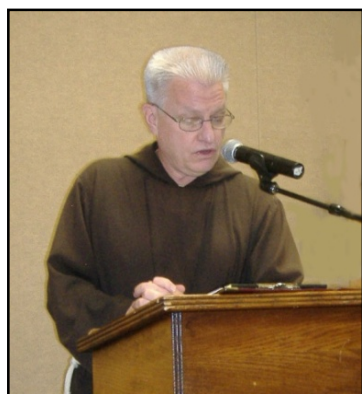


St. Clare region, Jan Parker, SFO, minister, and Franciscans of the Prairie region, Sue Nelson, SFO, minister, hosted the gathering. Barb Morgan, SFO, of St. Clare region planned the day away. Sue and Jan and Barb are pictured on the left. The overall planning, and the carrying out of the plans, for the event proceeded very smoothly. This allowed for the SFO business to be conducted in a timely manner. Much credit goes to those three, and their teams, for making the event both productive and enjoyable. They are true servants.

Just prior to the opening of the meeting, the newly elected regional ministers were indoctrinated as to what to expect during the meeting time and were introduced to the members of the national executive council. Regional minister Elaine Hedtke, SFO of Troubadours of Peace regional fraternity, facilitated the event. Pictured on the right, they are: Stephanie Sormane, SFO (Mother Cabrini), Mattie Ward, SFO, (St. Katharine Drexel), Mary Frances Charsky, SFO, (Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha), and Frank Vargo, SFO, (Our Lady of Indiana).



The meeting was officially opened on the morning of October 3rd, by National Minister, Patrick Mendés, SFO, who chaired the meeting. Business began with roll call, approval of the agenda, and the approval of the minutes last year's meeting. Treasurer Dennis Ross, SFO, presented the proposed budget to the Council to be considered for approval after a time of deliberation.



The opening business session was followed by a *Washing of the Feet* ceremony, facilitated by Fr. Frank Grinko, OFM Cap, pictured at left. Fr. Frank presented an inspiration talk on reconciliation and love. Then he facilitated the Washing of the Feet: the executive council members being first to wash each others feet. Pictured on the right is National Minister Patrick Mendés washing the feet of (R to L) Councilor Clare McCluggage, SFO,



Vice Minister Deacon Tom Bello, SFO and Secretary Sarah Mulholland, SFO. Holding the towels is Formation Commission Chair, Theresa Baker, SFO. Members present were invited to participate by having their feet washed, and then, in turn, washing another's feet.

At the afternoon business session, Formation Commission Chairperson, Theresa Baker, SFO, announced a summer course on leadership offered by St. Francis University, conducted by Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR and Anne Mulqueen, SFO, and Theresa also invited those present to participate in the Distance Learning Program offered by the Institute of Contemporary Franciscan Life (ICFL), also out of St. Francis University.

The business session continued with a review of reports by Executive Council members, Commission Chairs, Committee Chairs and Service Persons that were mailed out weeks prior to the meeting. As part of his CNSA report, Fr. Steve strongly suggested that the regional ministers take seriously the need to train more lay Spiritual Assistants. Then, those in attendance were asked by the Chair if there were any questions regarding the reports that were mailed. No questions were offered – because, it is assumed, the written reports were very clear and comprehensive.

A comprehensive State of the Order address was presented by National Minister, Patrick Mendés, SFO. (See page 1). After a break, Councilor Clare McCluggage, SFO, reported that 430 attended the Quinquennial Congress held in July in Pittsburgh. She continued with a presentation on the Congress theme: Multiculturalism. The presentation was followed by table sharing on Diversity using the Mutual Invitation technique.

Councilor Pat Brandwein-Ball, SFO, Chair of an ad-hoc committee created to study the possible reconstruction of the Apostolic Commissions, addressed the Council on the results of the committee's findings: the committee recommended that the four Apostolic Commissions be replaced by one committee with one Chair and up to four members. A motion was made and seconded to approve recommendations of the ad-hoc committee, and after discussion, the motion passed. Further work is to be done by the committee to formulate a mission statement, and to invite application for membership. See page 11 for further information.

In the evening, the group traveled to St. Anthony of Padua Church in St. Louis to celebrate the Transitus jointly with the friars and religious sisters. There was, as traditional, a Dominican presence. Prior to the ceremony, a guided tour of the Church was given by parishioner Mike Mount. The Transitus service, facilitated by Fr. Frank Grinko, OFM Cap., was begun with a beautiful rendition of the song "Troubadour" by Jan Parker. The service continued with appropriate readings and veneration of a relic of St. Francis.



Following the Transitus liturgy, the Peace Award was presented (at left) to Dr Tony Lazarro, SFO, who left a very successful medical practice in the U.S. to help the poorest of the children of Peru. Dr. Lazarro was nominated by Carlos Calderon, SFO, of Five Franciscan Martyrs Regional Fraternity. He spoke briefly about his ministry in Peru. An inspiring testimony by vice minister, Deacon Tom Bello, SFO was then offered. The evening was concluded with an outdoor "taste of St. Louis" reception that included Gooney Butter Cakes, Gus's Pretzels, Ted Drewes Frozen Custard and Toasted Ravioli.

Thursday, October 4th, the feast of St. Francis, was celebrated in true Franciscan fashion – see pages 30 and 31.

Friday, October 5, began, as every day of the meeting, with prayer. Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, followed the prayer with a Formation session. He spoke on bringing life to the words written in our Rule, interiorizing them. He challenged, "What will the following of your Rule allow you to become?"



Following Fr. Richard, Russ Testa, Director of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, (JPIC), Holy Name Province, was introduced. He gave a promotional presentation, inviting the Secular Franciscans to “join the journey” with other members of the Franciscan family in a newly forming Franciscan Action Network. (F.A.N.) would provide a unified Franciscan voice to issues that challenge our common Franciscan character. The Franciscan Action Network is described very well by Deacon Tom Bello, SFO on page 13. The Geographic Groups (one pictured at left) were asked to discuss this invitation and present their consensus decision to the body the following day.

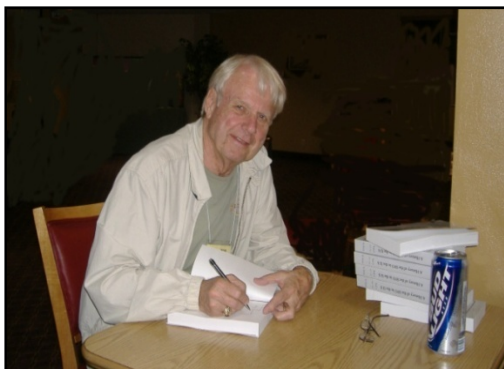


Representatives of those of other faiths who share our Franciscan Charism were recognized by national minister, Patrick Mendés, SFO. They are: Rev. Joan Verret, TSSF representing the Third Order Society of St. Frances – Anglican Communion, and Sr. Paula Clare Clouse, OEF, representing the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans. The picture at left shows: Ed Shirley, SFO, Chair of the Ecumenical Committee, with Rev. Joan, Patrick Mendés, and Sr. Paula Clare.

In the afternoon, two Power Point presentations were given by Kathy Taormina, SFO, Chair, Youth and Young Adult Commission - the first a presentation of the Y/YA gathering coincident with the Quinquennial Congress, and the second of the International JUFRA gathering held in Barcelona, Spain, put together by a member of the Y/YA Commission who attended the gathering. At right is a picture of Kathy presenting National Minister, Patrick Mendes, with a rosary, a gift in commemoration of that event from our youth representative who attended the gathering in Barcelona, Spain.



In the late afternoon, the Eucharist was celebrated at the Shrine Chapel, Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv. presiding. In his homily, Fr. Steve exhorted us to listen to, and follow, the Lord’s individual calling for us, and not be limited by our attempt to emulate exactly the lives of St. Francis, St. Clare or Sts. Louis or Elizabeth.



During the Friday evening social, Bill Wicks, SFO (pictured at left) held a book signing of his Volume I of “*A History of the Secular Franciscan Order, 1917 – 1942.*” For more information on the book, see page 24. The socials offered a break from the intense business sessions. Beverages and snacks were served. Official SFO Troubadour, Ed Shirley, with banjo, lead a sing-a-long. Baseball and football aficionados watched TV, competing for the remote.



An ongoing formation presentation opened the Saturday morning session. Formation Chairperson, Theresa Baker, SFO, shown at left, provided a creative, interactive sharing experience. Prints of various Giotto paintings, with challenging questions relating to the painting, were handed to each person seated at each round table. Participants meditated on a questions offered by Theresa, as related to the print. Response to the questions was shared at the tables and, then, to all present.

After the formation session, the business session began: the first order of business was the acceptance of the invitation to the SFO to join the Franciscan Action Network. A motion was offered and seconded in favor of joining. Discussion was requested, and the motion was discussed in depth. Following discussion, the motion passed with a large majority in favor.

The next item on the agenda was an Open Forum. This process included presentation of items of interest to individual members of the Council that had been listed on the black board throughout the meeting. The items listed were discussed by members of the Council.

Due to the approval of the motion to restructure the four Apostolic Commissions, replacing them by one committee, JPIC, and the approval of the Secular Franciscan Order joining the Franciscan Action Network, (FAN), the budget was rearranged to support these new endeavors. Money previously assigned to the Apostolic Commissions was redistributed to cover the expenses required for JPIC and FAN. Also, included as a budget item is the money necessary to purchase comprehensive insurance that will cover the Order at all levels of fraternity. A motion to approve the modified budget was made, seconded, and passed.

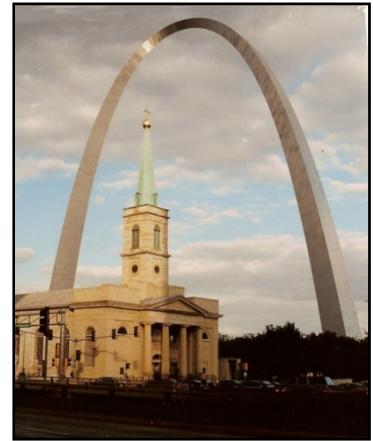
Evening Mass was celebrated at the Shrine chapel, Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM, presiding. Former National Minister, Teri Devlin, SFO, who served the Order in the early eighties, was a guest at dinner, as was Chris Hassett, SFO, former national secretary. After dinner all were entertained by the talented Gospel Choir (below) conducted by Ferd Cheri, OFM, composed of students of Althoff High School of Belleville, Illinois.



CELEBRATING THE FEAST



The feast of St. Francis was celebrated in true Franciscan fashion. Just about everyone purchased tickets for the “day-away,” taking a break from the packed business agenda. After breakfast, a bus took us all to the Shrine of St. Joseph, in St. Louis, for Mass, Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM presiding. Prior to the Mass we all enjoyed a guided tour of the church

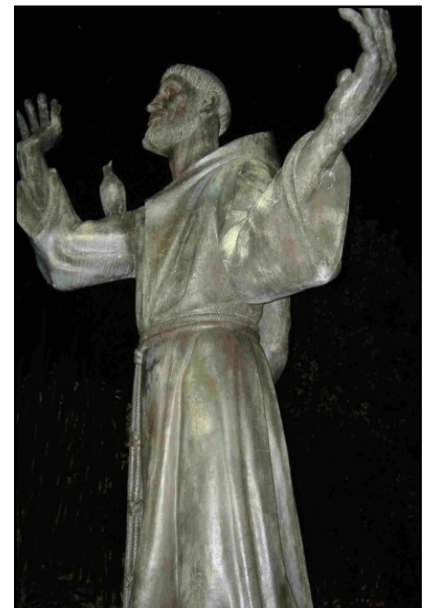


connected by a miracle attributed to St. Peter Claver, one of the two required miracles for sainthood. The tour was conducted by Ralph Ellenbrock. After Mass, a memorial service was held for those departed Franciscan brothers and sisters; the ceremony included regional ministers placing a memorial white carnation in a vase, then naming those recently departed who belong to their region.

After the time at St. Joseph’s, the bus took us all to the basilica of St. Louis of France (the old cathedral) in view of the St. Louis Gateway Arch. After touring the Basilica, box lunches were enjoyed on the lawn in view of the Arch.

The next stop was Grant’s Farm, a historic home of General Ulysses Grant, and presently the home of the famous Clydesdale horses. The property was purchased by the Busch family and made into a wonderful tourist attraction: a wild animal reserve, a Brat Haus, a little bit of beer history, and, of course, Budweiser beer. As you can tell from the pictures on the following page, it was a very relaxing time.

The bus then took us to the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. A tour of the Cathedral was conducted by Mary Wainscott, SFO, with beautiful organ music playing in the background. The Cathedral, with its Byzantine design, is famous for the mosaic depiction of religious events. Strolling through the Cathedral, looking up and around, was an overwhelming experience. In 1912, installation of mosaics in the interior began. Completed in 1988, it contains 41.5 million glass tesserae pieces applying over 7,000 colors. Covering 83,000 square feet, it is the largest mosaic collection in the world, and was created by 20 different artists.



That evening, we all enjoyed dinner at a restaurant on The Hill, the Italian section of St. Louis. At Zia’s, the food and fellowship were wonderful.

But the end is not yet. The bus driver, encouraged by the hosts, drove through Forest Park, where he was encouraged to stop at a statue of Louis IX of France, our patron Saint, and then a statue of St. Francis. We all got out to take pictures. The bus drive finally took us back to the Shrine Hotel. What a wonderful way to celebrate the feast!

Memorial Service at the St. Joseph Shrine



Left: (L-R) Dennis Ross, SFO; Fr. Didacus Dunn, OFM Cap.; Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM; Deacon Tom Bello, SFO; Fr. Frank Grinko, OFM Cap. Center: Altar of St. Joseph Shrine Right: Barbara O'Neill, SFO, reading names of deceased of Tau Cross Region



Mosaic Icon of Christ
Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis



Stained Glass Window depicting the Ascension
St. Anthony of Padua Church, St. Louis

Scenes from the Tour of Grant's Farm



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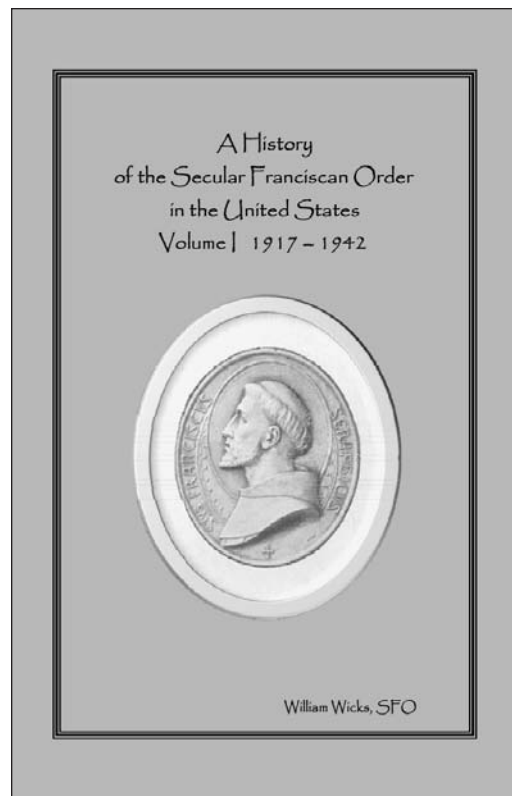
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