



TAU-USA

Publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States
Winter 2009 - Issue 65

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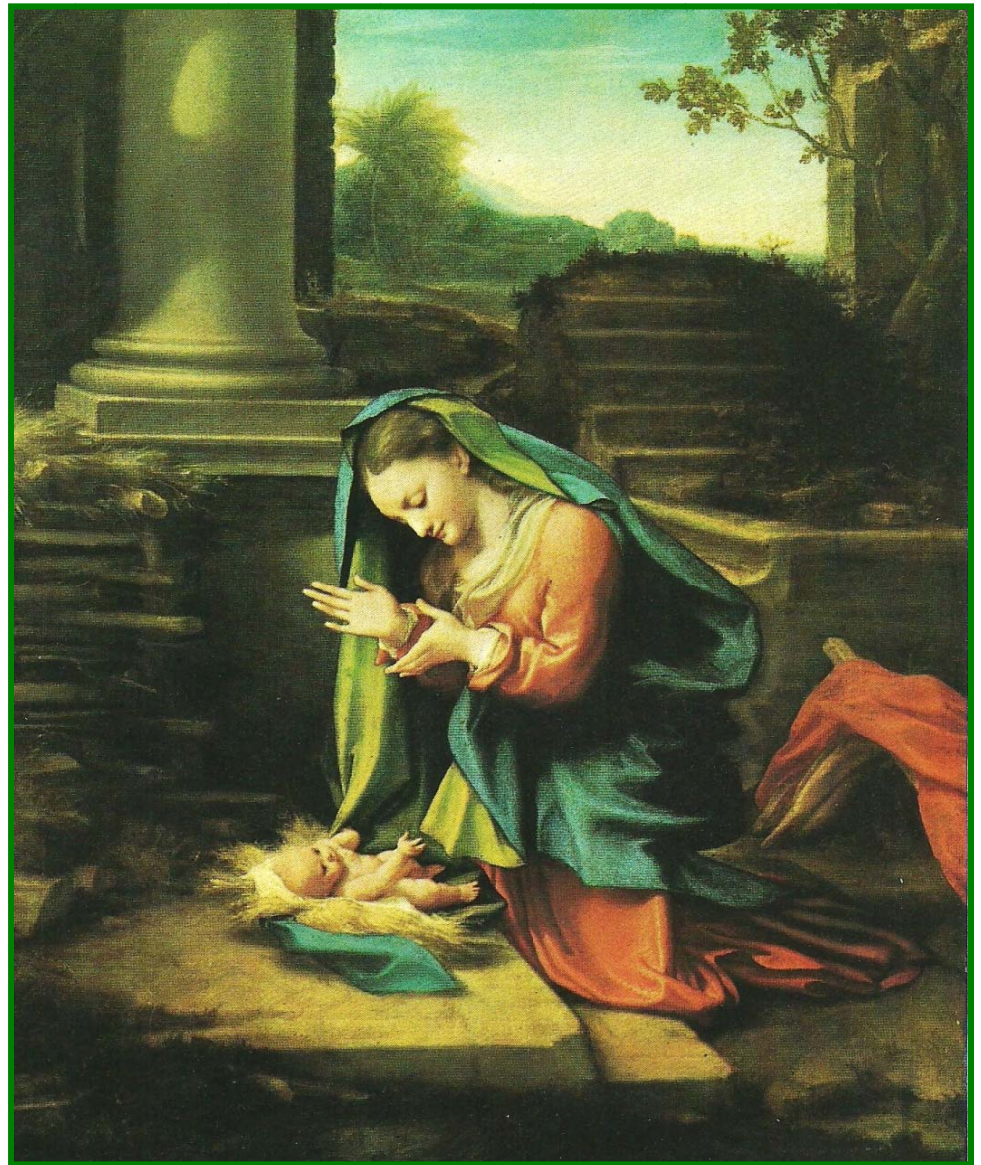
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Adoration of the Child

By Antonio Allegri Correggio

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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.

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

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

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

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

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Thanks. Frances

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National Chapter Fosters Troubadours of Peace and Joy

SPECIAL SECTION BY
Bob & Mary Stronach, SFO



The National Chapter took place Oct. 20-25, 2009 at the Inn at Rio Rancho, just outside Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The 2009 National Gathering and Chapter of Elections near Albuquerque was a joyous experience.

The joy began with the Peace Award and the music of the opening Mass. It was followed by the musical spurring of the international presider (who repeatedly called on the Holy Spirit).

The joy continued its crescendo with daily liturgies, hit a rousing level with an evening Mariachi band, and peaked with the installation Mass that was followed by Mexican-style dancers.

The gathering also was full of spiritual reflection and prompting, thanks to on-going formation sessions

and friars' homilies.

Some 75 people were in attendance, representing 14,700 Secular Franciscans across the country as well as the friar First Orders. Representatives from the Ecumenical Franciscans and Episcopal Third Order were there, too.

Members of the new Na-

tional Executive Council reported a lingering New Mexico "high." National Minister Tom Bello said he was waiting for the "high" to subside, but it hadn't a week later, when he emailed his heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the chapter.

"Thanks must begin with (Regional Minister) Chris-

2009-2012 NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM



Tom Bello
Minister



Elaine Hedtke
Vice Minister



Jan Parker
Secretary



Dennis Ross
Treasurer



Mary Bittner
Councilor



Michelle Kim
Councilor



Arturo Villarreal
Councilor



Anne Mulqueen
Int'l Councilor



Bob Brady, ofm
CNSA Pres.

tine (Imislund) and all her help from our host Region (Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas), from the packed shoulder bags at the beginning to all the music ministry from the Felician Sisters (of the Southwest) and the rousing entertainment the last two nights,” he said. He also expressed gratitude to the international visitors, Doug Clorey and Fr. Ivan Matic, OFM, who brought a sense of the worldwide Order to the chapter.

“It is an exciting time in the Lord,” Tom added, “a time of hope and blessing...”

Clorey, a Canadian who is the Order’s vice minister general, said something similar, calling the chapter a “sacred time,” a time “when the Holy Spirit will move among us,” “a time to recognize the giftedness of our community.” He brought the gathering to a rousing sense of fraternity through his own gift of music (playing the guitar and singing his own original songs).

General Spiritual Assistant Fr. Ivan, who traveled from Rome, Italy to witness the



Vice Minister General Doug Clorey, OFS, spurred a rousing session as he called on the Holy Spirit to guide the chapter. Doug presided over the elections.

chapter, called on Secular Franciscans to entrust themselves to Francis’ protection and to begin anew in the Gospel journey. He encouraged SFOs to live their vocations wherever they are, evangelizing in word and deed. Listening and praying are helpful in the process of

evangelization, he noted.

“Persevere in a contemplative, simple and joyful heart,” he urged.

At the closing mass, during which the new Executive Council was installed, Fr. Ivan grabbed a guitar and sang an Italian ballad about Francis’ Canticle of the Sun,

and later joined the Felician Sisters in a spirited display of joy during the recessional song -- while a long line of attendees waited to hug and congratulate each member of the new leadership team.

Like Francis of long ago, troubadours of peace and joy were aplenty.



During the installation mass, General Spiritual Assistant Fr. Ivan Matic, OFM, strummed a ballad, and invited participants to extend their arms to bless the new Executive Council.

New National Minister Is Deacon & Teacher from Virginia



Deacon Tom Bello, SFO
National Minister

INSTALLATION. From left: Doug Clorey, president; Tom Bello, Elaine Hedtke, Jan Parker, Dennis Ross, Mary Bittner, Michelle Kim, Arturo Villarreal, Anne Mulqueen.

Deacon Tom Bello, of St. Thomas More Fraternity in Arlington, VA, is the new National Minister.

Tom, who was professed in 1983, was elected Minister of his local fraternity in 1988 and again in 1992. He was elected to the regional council of St. Margaret of Cortona Region and served in a number of positions, including Regional Minister. For the past three years, Tom has been National Vice Minister.

He has been an ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) teacher for 21 years, and is a deacon assigned to St. James Church, Falls Church, VA. He and wife, Judy, have three children and reside in McLean, VA.

Other national officers are:

• **National Vice Minister Elaine Hedtke**, of Port Angeles, WA. She has been Regional Minister of Troubadours of Peace Region. Professed in 1965, Elaine served as Ecology Commission chair and Formation Director for her local fraternity. She was regional commissioner for liturgy and Regional Vice Minister before becoming minister. Most of her career has been as a law enforcement officer.

• **National Secretary Jan Parker**, of O'Fallon, MO. She has been Regional Minister of St. Clare Region. Professed in 1988, she helped to establish two local fraternities, including San Damiano Fraternity, where she is a member. Jan served on the National Formation Commission for three years. A musician, she co-wrote the theme song for the 2007 Quinquennial Congress. Jan is a full time pastoral associate and coordinator of music and liturgy at Immaculate Conception Parish.

• **National Treasurer Dennis Ross**, of Mentor, OH. This is his third term. Professed in 1986, Dennis was treasurer of St. Maximilian Kolbe Region from 1995 to 2001. He was Regional Minister from 2001 to 2003. At his local fraternity, Br. Jacopa, he was Minister. Dennis is a retired teacher. He and his wife of 39 years, Lynn, have six children and seven grandchildren.

• **National Councilor Mary Bittner**, of Ypsilanti, MI. She was Regional Minister of Divine Mercy Region for six years. At her local fraternity of St. Joseph, she has been formation team

member, secretary, Minister, and councilor. Mary is a research assistant professor at University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, MI.

• **National Councilor Michelle Kim**, of Scarsdale, NY. Professed in 2005, she has served as Formation Director of the NY Korean Martyrs Fraternity. Michelle is an adjunct professor at the State University of New York, Westchester Community College. She is involved with Franciscans International at the United Nations and is chair of the Eco-Spirituality Subcommittee, the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns, United Nations. She is married to Stephen Kim and has one daughter, Clara.

• **National Councilor Arturo Villarreal**, from El Paso, TX. He has served as Vice Minister of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas Region and was professed in 1981. He is member of St. Patrick's Fraternity in El Paso. He and his wife, Sofia, also a Secular Franciscan, have three children, Diana, Ben and Natalie.

• **International Councilor Anne Mulqueen**, of Baltimore, MD. This is her

second term. She has served as spiritual assistant to Padre Pio Fraternity in Maryland, is a member of the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity, secretary of the Duns Scotus Formation Trust Fund, and board member for the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life at St. Francis University, Loretto, PA. She and husband, Bill, have two daughters and two grandchildren.

• **Substitute International Councilor Michelle Kim** (see above).

• **Spiritual Assistant Br. Bob Brady**, OFM, president-in-turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA).

Diversity Coordinator

The chapter debated whether to revive the inactive Multicultural Committee. An ad hoc committee proposed creating a multicultural/diversity coordinator, who would collect information and materials, identify needs, heighten awareness, and communicate with regions. The position was approved, with an initial budget of \$1,000.

I was thirsty and you gave me drink

PEACE AWARD RECIPIENT DRILLED WELLS IN DROUGHT-STRUCK AFRICA

Don Ryder, a Secular Franciscan who spearheaded a life-saving water project during a drought in Africa, received the National Peace Award from the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order during its annual chapter held Oct. 20-25 near Albuquerque, NM.

Don, who is director of organizational development and safety for the city of Wausau, WI, co-leads the water project with Romey Wagner, also of Wausau. They raise funds and coordinate the drilling of wells to provide clean, fresh water for Maasai tribes in Kenya.

“The multi-year drought was devastating herds of cattle and the people whose livelihood depended on the livestock,” noted Ken Beattie, SFO, minister of Wisconsin’s La Verna Region, who nominated Ryder for the award. “The women had to travel up to 15 miles one way to find water in a dirty stream or water hole, and the men, likewise, had to drive their cattle for miles to find water. It was very disruptive to tribal and family life, and



Don Ryder, SFO, at Maasai Village in Kenya

contributed to disease and death. The water wells have allowed the people to be stationary and have a safer community. And the women, especially, have been saved from rape and murder while traveling by foot to a distant source of water.”

Peace Award Chair Deacon Tom Bello, SFO, added: “As Franciscans we all are called to be instruments of peace, so likewise we want to recognize and support individuals whose work impacts and

contributes to peace and justice in their communities or their nation or around the world.”

The award comes with a St. Francis trophy and a \$2,000 prize.

Don said he was humbled by the honor, but that it really belonged to everyone involved in the project. The first well, he said, cost \$65,000. They had to dig down 400 feet to find fresh water. Powered by a diesel engine, the well is now

providing clean water for between 4,000 and 5,000 Maasai and 100,000 head of cattle, he said.

A second well went on line in October 2009, powered by a windmill, he said. It cost about \$45,000. The well is already providing running water for a school, and they are in the process of laying pipe to a dispensary. “Our hope is that once the dispensary has running water, it will be upgraded to a hospital,” he said.

Don and his wife, Yvonne, have a long history of working with the poor and marginalized, Deacon Tom said. Before moving to Wisconsin, they volunteered at a California operation that ran a soup kitchen, temporary shelter and clinics. Then, in Wisconsin, they volunteered with church groups that visited Jamaica to help with construction projects and food and clothing. While in Jamaica, Ryder met a missionary priest from Kenya, who suggested that he might want to visit his home country. That led to volun-



BEFORE WELL: Maasai women fetch dirty water from stream.



AFTER WELL: Maasai women draw fresh, clean water.



Don and Maasai chief take drink together.



The well provides water for over 4,000 Maasai and 100,000 head of cattle.



Santa Fe Archbishop Michael Sheenan congratulates Don at the national chapter.

teering to help build a church and repair homes in Kenya, working with the Catholic diocese. While there he had the opportunity to visit a Maasai village.

After returning to the United States, Ryder received an email from the Vatican, describing the worsening drought. He emailed a contact in Kenya, who confirmed that the Maasai were particularly hard hit.

The thought kept coming to him that he should do something, he said, but he would dismiss it, thinking, "who am I, what can I do?" Finally, after praying about it for several days, he opened

the Bible and his finger fell to a passage in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus says, "I was thirsty and you gave me drink."

"Okay, God, I'll see what I can do, but I'm putting it in your hands," he recalled saying. "This is your project. I expect you to open the doors."

He told his parish priest about it, who said the parish would help. He told Secular Franciscans, and they jumped on board. His co-leader, Romey Wagner, stepped up. Soon they were getting speaking engagements to schools, churches, Rotary Clubs. A young cou-

ple donated \$2,000. School children collected coins.

Donations started pouring in from coast to coast, he said.

And the future?

"As my co-leader likes to say, we'll always be drilling a new well."

He added that anyone interested in donating to the Kenyan water project may do so through the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin (www.cfoncw.org). His fraternity, St. James Fraternity in Wausau, also maintains a fund for the project.

The annual Peace Award was revived in 2007 after a lapse of several years. The

2007 award recognized the work of Dr. Tony Lazzara, an American physician and Secular Franciscan who operates a clinic and shelter for ailing children in Peru.

The 2008 award honored Marie Dennis, a Secular Franciscan who directs the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and who is immersed in advocating on behalf of people marginalized by society, poverty, abuse, war, violence, and human trafficking.

Other previous recipients included, among others, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.



National Chapter participants posed for a group photo before doing an afternoon of sightseeing and then attending mass at St. Francis Basilica in Santa Fe.



Bolstered by frequent prayer and daily Mass, the National Chapter deliberated and conducted the business of the Order, discussed issues brought up by geographic groups, was inspired by on-

going formation talks, heard plans for the 2012 Quinquennial, passed resolutions on violence in Pakistan and on healthcare reform, and approved a \$216,000 budget for 2010.



U.S. Secular Franciscan Order Condemns Pakistan Persecution

Responding to reports of religious persecution in Pakistan, the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order condemned “the violence against the people of Pakistan” during its national gathering Oct. 24.

The national body, representing 14,700 Secular Franciscans across the U.S., unanimously approved a statement to be delivered to the ambassador of Pakistan in Washington, D.C.

“We exhort you to intervene and seek an immediate and peaceful resolution that includes religious tolerance and freedom to worship, as well as respect for all sacred texts,” the statement says.

“Religious tolerance should be a value for all societies. For our part, we will stay abreast of the situation and hold in prayer all of the people of Pakistan.”

Calling for Health Care Reform that Recognizes Human Dignity

The U.S. Secular Franciscan Order called for health care reform that protects life and recognizes human dignity during its national gathering Oct. 25.

The national body, representing 14,700 Secular Franciscans across the U.S., approved a statement that

says it is in union with Franciscan Action Network’s call for reform as well as in support of the Catholic Bishops’ position on health care.

“Our Catholic moral tradition teaches that every human being, from the moment of conception to natural death, has an innate

dignity that entitles him or her to certain rights and protections,” the statement says. “Included in these rights are the right to life and the right to have access to health care, which is essential to preserving human life and promoting human dignity.

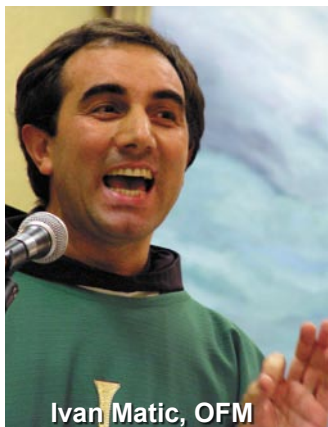
“We affirm that health

care reform legislation must be drafted to protect human life and dignity. A final health care reform bill must have respect for life at all stages of development, respect for consciences, affordability and inclusion of all members of society.”

Spurring the Spirit

Along with the Formation Commission's presentations, the friar spiritual assistants sparked spiritual stirrings, challenging attendees to go deeper, stretch further and persist in daily conversion.

We may have assumptions of who we are as Franciscans, but beware of "my way is the way," **Lester Bach, OFM Cap.**, offered



Ivan Matic, OFM

during his homily. That attitude can diminish respect for others, and "the minute we diminish respect, we lose." We need to remember we're going from being "I-centered" to "God/other-centered." To accomplish that, "inner conversion is absolutely essential, and it won't happen in a day."

The good thing is that "our Rule" shows the way to conversion... to reconciliation... to a change of attitude.

Kevin Queally, TOR, proposed in his homily that we need to look at the signs of the times, and today they're evident -- war, greed, selfishness, even discord within the church.

"It's up to us to try to embody the Gospel for our

times... to make the Gospel real... because we can make a difference in this world."

In his homily during the installation mass, **Ivan Matic, OFM**, said we were celebrating "the reality of love."

"Jesus called us to be with Him and to touch reality ... the reality of giving. I have to respond with all my presence like Jesus did."

With our Franciscan vocation, we should see Jesus through the eyes of Francis. "Francis listened to the word of God and then there was action." In order for us to act, we also need contemplation. "If I have a connection in prayer, I can see the needs of the people. I can see the presence of God... This is the reality of love."



Lester Bach, OFM Cap.



Kevin Queally, TOR

On-Going Formation With Franciscan Twist

From the divine economy to turning reality on its head -- those were some themes National Formation Chair Bob Fitzsimmons shared in his on-going formation briefings at the National Chapter.

He spoke of the economy of giving and receiving. God the Father gave everything to the Son, and the Son reflected everything back perfectly.

On the human scale, accept a gift for what it is -- something to enrich others. "Using your gifts for others is accepting God's goodness in your whole life and reflecting it back to

God, and that is true praise."

Speaking about the reality of our times, he noted that we like to consume things, the world is here to enrich us, so we can become independent and therefore we become our own gods. "This is basic sin." As Franciscans we can turn that image of reality around. We can esteem others more than ourselves. We can share our gifts without claiming ownership. We can live as guests. We can look at society from the bottom up. We can live as stewards, not owners.



An 8-foot high painting depicting Francis receiving the stigmata provided the backdrop for the chapter's liturgies. The local artist, Greg Baca, is in formation to become a Secular Franciscan.

Troubadours of Peace, Joy and More



A joyous spirit spurred lighter moments during the chapter. It was enhanced by upbeat liturgical music, and hit a rousing crescendo when the host region, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas, introduced a Mariachi band (Mariachi Nuevo Sonido) and then a Mexican dance school, the last two nights.

The Minister's Christmas Message

By Deacon Tom Bello, SFO
National Minister



Christmas Fresco from the lower church at Assisi
By Giotto

The holiday season is a time of sharing stories, and one of my favorite stories about St. Francis is the Christmas story at Greccio. What I did not know, until I heard the wonderful lectures by Brother Bill Short, OFM, (*St. Francis of Assisi: A New Way of Being Christian*) was that this Christmas story came after a time of great hardship for St. Francis and dissension even among his brothers. This Christmas story, thus, has a special joy because of the suffering St. Francis had experienced before.

Thomas of Celano, who, Brother Short tells us, probably knew St. Francis personally, decided to conclude his *First Life* of St. Francis with the consoling Christmas story of Greccio (Chapter XXX, 84-86):

“St. Francis’s highest intention, greatest desire, and supreme purpose was to observe the holy gospel in and through all things. He wanted to follow the doctrine and walk in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to do so perfectly, with all vigilance, all zeal, complete desire of the mind, complete fervor of the heart. He remembered Christ’s words through constant meditation and recalled his actions through wise consideration. The humility of the incarnation and the love of the Passion so occupied his memory that he scarcely wished to think of anything else. Hence what he did in the third year before the day of his glorious death, in the town called Greccio, on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ, should be reverently remembered.”

Francis instructed a citizen of Greccio named John, “I want to do something that will recall the memory of that child who was born in Bethlehem, to see

with bodily eyes the inconveniences of his infancy, how he lay in the manger, and how the ox and ass stood by.” “The day of joy drew near, the time of exultation approached. The brothers were called from their various places. With glad hearts, the men and women of that place prepared, according to their means, candles and torches to light up that night which has illuminated all the days and years with its glittering star. Finally the holy man of God arrived and, finding everything prepared, saw it and rejoiced.

“The manger is ready, hay is brought, the ox and ass are led in. Simplicity is honored there, poverty is exalted, humility is commended and a new Bethlehem, as it were, is made from Greccio. Night is illuminated like the day, delighting men and beasts. The people come and joyfully celebrate the new mystery. The forest resounds with voices and the rocks respond to their rejoicing. The brothers sing, discharging their debt of praise to the Lord, and the whole night echoes with jubilation. The holy man of God stands before the manger full of sighs, consumed by devotion and filled with a marvelous joy. The solemnities of the Mass are performed over the manger and the priest experiences a new consolation.

“The holy man of God wears a deacon’s vestments, for he was indeed a deacon, and he sings the holy gospel with a sonorous voice. And his voice, a sweet voice, a vehement voice, a clear voice, a sonorous voice, invites all to the highest rewards. Then he preaches mellifluously to the people standing about, telling them about the birth of the poor king and the little city of Bethlehem. Often, too, when he wished to mention Jesus Christ, burning with love he called him ‘the child of Bethlehem,’ and speaking the word ‘Bethlehem’ or ‘Jesus,’ he licked his lips with his tongue, seeming to taste the sweetness of these words.”

We all know that St. Francis had a great devotion to the Passion of Christ, but let us not forget that St. Francis also had a great devotion to the Child Jesus. In this Holy Christmas Season, let us renew our devotion to the Holy Infant.

Let us pray: “Holy Infant Jesus, shine upon us Your innocent love. Help us to seek no greater joy in this life than that of serving You. Impress upon our hearts the virtues of Your holy childhood: the innocence, the simplicity, the total trust in God our Father. You are the source of all life and of all holiness. Help us to be holy and innocent in life and in love.”

Let us renew our resolve to protect all human life, especially all our children, born and unborn.

May all the love, peace and joy of this Holy Christmas Season be yours now and throughout all the Holy New Year 2010.

Peace and Love, the greatest Good, Tom

**National Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order in the United States
October 2009**

STATE OF THE ORDER

**By Patrick Mendés, SFO
Former National Minister**

My dear brothers and sisters, as we gather once again in Chapter, I bid you welcome, peace and all that is good!

I begin a review of our demographics with my thanks to you, the Regional Ministers, for your careful completion of the Annual Report of the Regions, from which I draw the statistics. Their accuracy reflects your careful attention to detail and your dedication and that of your Councils.

Professed Brothers and Sisters: 14,722 – a decline of 1,089 from last year’s reported 15,811. It has been suggested to me that some fraternities are failing to report shut in or other brothers and sisters whose financial situation doesn’t allow them to contribute to the fair share. I hope that this is not a widespread practice. We need to remember that the responsibility of the “Fair Share” is that of the fraternity, NOT the individual. It is a failure against the virtue of justice to simply “lapse” those brothers and sisters who simply haven’t the where with all to contribute to the common fund or Fair Share collection.

Candidates: 1,245 remains steady with a slight increase of 37 over last year’s 1,208.

Inquirers: 898 reflecting an increase of 48 over last year’s 850.

Canonically established fraternities: 674; down from last year’s 718. Many older fraternities have been deactivated and this information has been conveyed to the National Executive Council.

Emerging Fraternities: 44 an increase of 7 over last year.

Newly forming groups: 36 representing an increase of 3 over last year.

While the number of professed, reported, has declined, the growth of emerging and newly forming fraternities is encouraging.

Spiritual Assistants: Total: 519; Friars: 286 (down from 314 reported last year); Sisters: 94 (an increase of 3); SFO: 70 (down from 80 last year); Other Orders: 3 (down from 6 last year); Diocesan clergy: 21 (down from 32 last year); SFO enrolled in Franciscan Family Connections: 55 (11 less than last year).

Fraternities with no spiritual assistant: 194 (an increase from last year’s 185). I am pleased to report that all of our Regions have at least one Regional Spiritual Assistant. Last year there were 3 Regions who had none.

As we review these statistics we see the need for additional brothers and sisters who have the necessary attributes and willingness to share their gifts, to enroll in the Franciscan Family Connections course. I do encourage you to seek out those persons in your regions and local fraternities whom you feel have those necessary gifts and actively

encourage them to enroll in the course and support their efforts.

Formation: With the directives regarding the standardization of the Formation Process internationally, coming down from our General Presidency, the Formation Commission, under the able and enthusiastic leadership of Robert Fitzsimmons, SFO, Commission Chair, has been working very hard to prepare the National Formation Manual, working on the various chapters/sections, as soon as they are received from the General Presidency Formation Commission.

Prior to the Directive from the General Presidency, the Commission held highly successful Formation Workshops. They were well attended and presented the best information available. The workshops were very well received and, in many instances, were attended by both the Regional Formation Councilor as well as the Regional Minister as I had recommended.

The Formation Commission is planning workshops in multiple areas of the country in 2011, when the Manual will be completed and materials are prepared. Meanwhile, the Chair of the Commission has presented workshops in various Regions around the country at their request. (See Formation Commission Chair’s annual report)

I am pleased to report that as I have made Visitation of the various Regions, they, too, are diligently working to update their Regional Formation Manuals and have held workshops within their Regions to keep local Formation Directors and teams as up to date as possible. I observe enthusiasm and a lot of energy exerted in these efforts. Congratulations to you all!

Though often not as highly visible but very important in our **on going formation** many of our Regions have had servant leadership development and spirituality workshops and conferences. They are to be commended for this important work in the development of solid Franciscan Spirituality and the fostering of future servant leaders for our fraternities at all levels.

A vital contribution to our on-going formation has been the Summer Seminar for Secular Franciscans, sponsored by St. Francis University in Loretto, PA. The Summer Seminar is in its second year and this year it was completely filled. While the program is developed for us, it is sponsored by St. Francis University and provided as their gift to us. The costs are kept very minimal and the presenters are skilled, dedicated and knowledgeable – and all have been Franciscans, Secular and Religious. I express my personal thanks and I am certain, yours as well, to the TOR Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Fr. Gabriel Zeiss, TOR, President of the University and to Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, who has been the driving force behind the Seminars.

Franciscan Youth and Young Adults: In their goal to be self-governing, the Young Adults serving on the National Committee have moved ahead slowly toward their self-governance model. They are ably supported by the Adult Advisory Team led by Kathy Taormina, SFO. For the first time, one of the young adults on the leadership team was able to be present at an NEC meeting and participate in our discussions as well as update us. We note with delight, the contribution of Manny Hernandez to our NEC meeting, in his

sharing of the young adults' vision and plans. Their annual H2O Project was once again very successful. (See FYYA Report)

Franciscan Action Network: National Vice-Minister, Deacon Tom Bello, continues to serve as Vice-President of FAN. The network continues to grow and has taken part in various peace, justice and integrity of creation initiatives. The members of our SFO who serve as FAN region representatives have given unselfishly of their time and talents and I thank them all. There continues to be some confusion and misunderstanding about the role of FAN. An excellent opportunity to answer questions and present the work of FAN could be at your Annual Regional Chapters or workshops. With enough advance notice, a FAN representative could be available to present to our Regions. FAN has done much in terms of advocacy training and explaining issues through its frequent webinars and on site presentations in various parts of the country. This vital organization enables every branch of the Franciscan Family to speak with a united voice. I have served on the Steering Committee since the inception and it has been both an education and a challenge to live the active articles of our Holy Rule more fully. (See National Vice-Minister's report)

Ad Hoc Committee on Re-Visioning of the Holy Rule: The Committee, Chaired by National Councilor, Patricia Brandwein-Ball, has completed their initial task. I have observed, in my visitation to the Regions, the various ways the Regions have implemented the concept and adapted their structures to address the re-visioning. It is important to note that various regions have taken different approaches to the implementation. This is an excellent use of their creativity and ingenuity, so that the concept is fully embraced and understood in a manner that fits with the personality, corporate culture, if you will, of the individual regions. A "cookie cutter" approach is not necessary – what works for a particular Region to make it a reality **is!**

Fraternal life: As I visited our Regions, I was filled with gratitude and joy at their vibrancy! Some Regions have a special event shared with other Regions, such as the program Franciscans Living in Community, which is comprised of several of our eastern Regions. They gather to celebrate their vocations and each other for an entire week of community and it is well attended. Another geographically large Region, gathers in annual chapter, with a delightful twist: The entire Regional membership is invited and in addition to the primary work of the Regional Chapter, there is ample time for spending time in fraternity. This gathering is always very well attended. More than half the membership of the Region was present when I visited.

In talking with the ministers and members of local fraternities as I made Regional Visitations, I learned that the fraternities are involved in a variety of ministries bringing to life our Holy Rule lived in its entirety. Their active works of mercy, reflecting the Beatitudes find them working in Shelters for the Homeless, food kitchens, clinics for the poor and marginalized, prison ministry, homes for battered women, ecological issues, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, making rosaries for the missions, prayer shawls for the sick and shut in, visiting and conducting prayer services in nursing homes,

visiting the shut-ins of their own fraternity, volunteering for the Missions, particularly in Latin America and Haiti as well as being very involved in the ministries of their respective parishes. They have also participated in the "Third Order" Masses of their respective dioceses.

Our regions and many of our local fraternities have at least an annual retreat and host a variety of workshops and days of reflection, all with the goal of deepening our spirituality and the lived experience of our charism.

Some of our Regions, such as Mother Cabrini and Bl. Junipero Serra, host a gathering for all branches of the Franciscan Family. Many of our fraternities work in a collaborative ministry with the Franciscan Sisters and the Friars which makes visible our Franciscan Family as a reality.

Summary: The National and Regional Formation Teams have worked diligently at staying attuned to the developments and protocols coming to us from CIOFS. Many of the Regional Formation Manuals have incorporated the information we presently have, nationally, into their local manuals and have taken steps, appropriate to their Regions, to hold workshops, and communicate electronically, as well as by surface mail and telephone, information as it becomes available. We have focused rather intensely on this particular area for the past year and longer.

We continue to be an active presence in FAN and more of our brothers and sisters are signing in as individual members, which doesn't require a membership fee, and learning more about those matters which are so important to us in light of our charism as Franciscans.

Our Communications at all levels appears more satisfactory as our national computer committee keeps making timely changes to the aged computer program which we have in place. Special thanks to all of the Regions who share their Regional Newsletter with me and the Regional Ministers.

TAU-USA continues to be engaging, current and informative, contributing to our on going formation and growth in our Franciscan charism. Special thanks to Frances Wicks, SFO, Editor.

Our Fraternal Life is vibrant as evident in all of the annual reports and in my observation at Visitations.

Our Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Committee is coming into its own with the young people gradually assuming responsibility for their leadership.

Vocations to our Order continue at a rather steady rate in the majority of our Regions.

The need for more SFO members to become spiritual assistants continues, but enrollment in Franciscan Family Connections is fairly good. I urge more people who are interested and qualified to make their intention and willingness to serve known.

In conclusion, we are a very healthy National Fraternity!

Looking ahead: We will continue to address the priorities for the Order as set forth by the General Presidency.

1. Formation: Our National Formation Commission and your National Executive Council have given intense and focused attention to this priority and we are doing well. As the Formation documents are received and translated, the Commission sets to work on them. (Continue on page 16).

EXPLORING

Things Franciscan



* CNSA News & Views *

Lester Bach OFM Cap

APPOINTMENTS

With many commissions and committees **on the national level**, it is a usual practice to have a spiritual assistant to the group. When that is the expected situation there is a process for appointing a SA to these groups. At a recent meeting of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) we clarified the process (September 13, 2009).

1. The **national group** that requires a Spiritual assistant recommends a SA for their group, including reasons for choosing the appointee. This recommendation is sent to the National Executive Council (NEC).
2. When the NEC has given approval for the appointment, they send the recommendation, together with their approval, to the CNSA for the appointment of the SA.
3. Upon receipt of the request and recommendation from NEC, the CNSA will make the appointment and notify the individuals involved. The normal term for such an appointment is three years.
4. The appointed spiritual assistant serves with a non-directive/non-managing style of service to the group and assists the group in being reflective of the Franciscan spirit.

* The responsibilities and duties of the SA to these **national groups** include the following.

- A) They **attend the meetings** of the group and assist in carrying out the *mission statement* of the group.
- B) They **offer guidance** to the group in matters moral, Franciscan, ecclesial, and fraternal.
- C) They **facilitate** prayerfulness and theological reflection with the group.
- D) In September of each year, they **submit an annual report to CNSA** on the work and development of the group.
- E) They **serve as a clearinghouse** for resources and ideas, with a **collaborative evaluation of projects** undertaken by the group. The SA also assists in the **evaluation** of other resources that bear on the goal of the group.
- F) **In collaboration with the group**, the SA may write articles for TAU-USA on the group's activities as well as participating in preparing workshops and retreats for the group and/or presenting programs for national meetings.

JUST THINK!

A boss tells people what to do and expects that they simply do it.

A leader empowers people to contribute what they have to offer to the common enterprise.

You are not leading until you are empowering someone else to serve.

Next to the words "Thank you" we believe the words "What do you think" are the most empowering words a leader can speak.

Servant leadership works because it is the right way to treat people.

Empowering the boss (leader) with a "Thank you" has equal importance, not because they are the boss but because they are a colleague. Its got to be genuine, though. ... The man or woman at the top of the organizational chart is just as much in need of being empowered as the mail room clerk.

Leaders need affirmation just like everyone else. Hopefully Franciscans will give such genuine affirmation to our servant-leaders.

Quotations are taken from the book: *Leadership: The Art of Empowering*. Keith Clark OFM Cap / Mike Panther. Available from: Monte Alverno Retreat & Spirituality Center - 1000 N. Ballard Rd - Appleton, WI 54911 - (920) 733-8526

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God, grant me the **SERENITY**
to prioritize the things
I cannot delegate,

The **COURAGE** to say "no"
when I need to,

and the **WISDOM** to know
when to go home!



INFORMATION

The General Chapter of the SFO, meeting in Hungary during November, 2008, gave its approval to the interpretation of article 89.4 of the General Constitutions. In a letter on September 29, 2009, the International Council of the SFO shared this information. Among the elements included in the letter are the following:

*b) considering that in defining the Assistant, being a priest is not a requirement, as his/her specific duty is not "sacramental" assistance, but **spiritual assistance**, the First Order and TOR can designate a brother or sister, who may not be a priest, to assist the SFO fraternity on condition that he/she is "suitable and prepared."*

In a further section, the letter clarifies some points about the appointment of a Secular Franciscan spiritual assistant to a local fraternity.

*b) To take on the task of Spiritual Assistant in a fraternity, the secular Franciscan must have been professed for a **minimum of 5 years**.*

*c) The secular Franciscan Spiritual Assistant **must not belong to the same fraternity** to which he/she is providing assistance because:*

** the bonds of friendship, fraternity & living together may prejudice his/her duty, especially for what concerns fraternal correction, preventing him/her to act with impartiality in his/her directions;*

** when applying the directions given by the superior (higher) level, the involvement in the same fraternity makes his/her work more difficult;*

** an Assistant belonging to another fraternity is able to have a clearer picture of the difficulties, problems and progress in the fraternity.*

*d) For the ministry of spiritual assistance, the secular Spiritual Assistant must be **suitable and well prepared**, that is:*

+ have the psychological capacity and conditions to carry out the responsibility that spiritual assistance entails;

+ have moral rectitude;

+ give testimony of authentic Christian life;

+ be faithful to the Catholic Faith and Franciscan charism;

+ give testimony of life in conformity with the SFO Rule and Constitutions.

e) The lay secular Spiritual Assistant must have solid Franciscan formation in view of his/her important role and influence in the fraternity, with a good knowledge of:

+ the Sacred Scriptures;

+ the Franciscan sources;

+ the SFO Rule and General Constitutions;
+ the SFO and Church documents to ensure that the fraternity does not lose its Franciscan identity.

f) The Secular Franciscan Spiritual Assistant does NOT have the right to vote in financial matters relating to the Fraternity he/she now assists nor will he/she have active or passive voice in these matters (Elections). (cf. Gen. Constitutions - article 77.1 and 2 and article 90.2)

Regarding "c)" which states that a Secular Franciscan NOT be appointed to his/her own fraternity, prayerfully consider the following possibility.

In individual cases, if very serious pastoral reasons make it impossible or very difficult to assign a Secular Franciscan SA from another fraternity, serious dialogue may allow for an **exception** to the norm! This is done only when there are serious reasons for an exception. Share your reasons with the Provincial Spiritual Assistant (or Minister Provincial) of the Province to which the fraternity is bonded (and who always makes the appointment). They can make the appointment based on a pastoral decision for an exception to the norm.

It is not science that redeems man; man is redeemed by love. This applies even in terms of the present world. When someone has the experience of great love in his life, this is a moment of "redemption" which gives new meaning to his life. But soon he will also realize that the love bestowed on him cannot by itself resolve the question of his life. It is a love that remains fragile. It can be destroyed by death. The human being needs unconditional love. He needs the certainty which makes him say: "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). If this absolute love exists, with its absolute certainty, then - only then - is man "redeemed," whatever should happen to him in particular circumstances. This is what it means to say: Jesus Christ has "redeemed" us. Through him we have become certain of God, a God who is not a remote "first cause" of the world, because his only begotten Son has become man and of him everyone can say: "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Saved in Hope (Spe Salvi) - Benedict XVI - Paragraph 26

A servant of God cannot know how much patience and humility he has within himself as long as he is content. When the time comes, however, when those who should make him content do the opposite, he has as much patience and humility as he has at that time and no more.

*Admonition XIII - The Undated Writings
Francis of Assisi - The Saint - Page 133*



Called to Serve

By Bob "Fitz" Fitzsimmons, SFO
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I thought I would begin by reiterating our Franciscan Spirituality, which is always a movement downward, a movement to littleness, to serving the other. As a Scripture person, I could have mentioned John's Gospel (13:5), where during the foot washing Jesus defines the true basis of Christianity as love & service (notice John does not mention the breaking of the bread, his important recollection is of service). Or from Luke (22), where we learn if we would be great we need to become the servant of all. But my thoughts drifted to a more theatrical, but visual, scene in "Brother Sun, Sister Moon," where Francis and the newly formed band of brothers are washing and feeding the lepers near Assisi. Becoming little by serving the poorest of the poor, extending ourselves to the other is the basis of our vocation. Jesus, much to our chagrin, just turns society on its head and defines true greatness, which is always found in serving without thought of reward. Jesus defines Truth as a Person (Himself) and, as a person, it is based on our actions and experiences of loving and helping, not on any set or ideas or mental exercises. Contemplation to Action = Gospel to Life.

So, over the years, where did we lose our spiritual way, replacing the wisdom and teaching of Jesus with society's relativistic norms and definitions? I can only speak for myself in saying I believe that we want a vibrant simplicity to calm our souls and a generous portion of earned comfort for our weary workaholic bodies. Basically, we want the best of both worlds and, in serving 2 masters, we are mediocre for both. Years ago I was blessed to meet John Powell, SJ at a conference in Germany and this quote from him has always stuck with me, "***The Gospel is not meant to comfort the afflicted, but to afflict the comfortable. So if you listen to the Gospel, [especially as preached in America] and feel comforted, you haven't heard the Gospel.***" We hear only that which affirms us and our way of life. Put into today's perspective, the more we seek the comfort of things, environments, our space, our activities or our retirements, the more we cease going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel and we cease embracing the radical Franciscan (Gospel) way of life. If Jesus came to upset the order of things, by choosing service to others, and Francis' goal was to follow in Jesus example, I can't see how we can get off the hook if we profess to follow them both!

Take, for example, how we often argue or condemn our own sisters and brothers over words and ideas and sometimes belief, [we are trained in this type

of dualistic thought]. You can pick any 2 sides of a discussion in any field: religion, politics, economy, etc. The battle is joined and, in battle, one must win, though in reality, generally, both sides lose by not seeing correctly and being able to affirm the validity of parts of both sides. Jesus doesn't reject this type of discourse or life because as the Beloved Son he has an edge, but because he contemplated the goodness of God. He learned to truly see, that God's graciousness (grace and mercy) embraces all creation, always, without reservation or limit. God's love is not based on "correct" doctrine or a winning argument. Francis also intuited this and, hence, spent time in the same form of contemplation. Teaching people how to see in this way is perhaps the greatest loss to our formation programs, enabling people to reach true spiritual transformation. We have gone down the road of babbling many words rather than true sight and transformation. Transformation reveals both the true self and our true giftedness.

In our dualistic thinking (right/wrong, or win/lose) we fall into the trap. There has to be a winner and a loser, a doing and a be-er. We prefer to be Martha types, doing doing doing, when Jesus constantly asks and encourages to see with a new set of eyes (the eyes of contemplation) where we can, finally, understand that Mary, indeed, has the better portion. These eyes, the eyes of Jesus, give us a healthy approach to all facets of Life, where we can finally allow God out of the box and God to be God.

It's remarkable that Jesus reveals a God who is OK with doubt and ambiguity and is very comfortable in letting the mystery be mystery, while we seem to desire a rigid structure of rights and wrongs. This God lavishes us with gifts and constantly refills us when we share them with others.

Our giftedness is not based on what we earn or accomplish, but on the goodness of the true source, which is God, and our willingness to share them with each other. Our gifts are only gifts when we use them to enrich each other, so all may have abundant life. Yes, it does require us extending ourselves beyond the confines of any religion, order, society, or group, because we professed to observe the Gospel and the Gospel goes beyond any church, society or set of ideas. Please accept the fact, every one of us is both unique and is gift to be placed at the service of all. That is Jesus' way, that is Francis' way.

The witness of both Jesus and Francis make the path very clear, service is very nature of our Order's life; its health, vitality and its ability to be good news for all depends on all of us answering our call to serve. All are gifted and loved and esteemed, but will all say "YES?" Be at peace and remember to love and serve!



**“TAKIN’ IT TO THE STREETS”
NATIONAL FRANCISCAN
YOUTH YOUNG/ADULT COUNCIL**

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 Facebook – YouFra America



During the last week of July, the FYYA Council ministered to the clients at the Canticle Café in Detroit, Michigan. The Canticle Café is an outreach service of St. Aloysius Parish, staffed by the OFM Friars, assisted by many SFOs. This is where the H2O Project monies were donated for 2009. Here are their stories...

When you picture a homeless person, a thousand images can come to your mind. That’s all an outside image though; try picturing the personality of a homeless person. That’s a little harder, isn’t it? We get so caught up in the image and never think about the person. Having the opportunity to serve in Detroit showed me not what the homeless look like, but who they are. They were kind, fun, empathetic, and very thankful. Never once, while serving coffee was I not thanked or smiled at. If someone was rude, someone else would apologize on behalf of that person. The kindness and company of many of these people was a humbling feeling. I went to Detroit to serve coffee and serve in the center. I went to see where the water from the H2O project was going. Never would I have thought I would have met such great people, who, even throughout all their hardship, still keep faith, hope and thanksgiving in their hearts. I couldn’t imagine a better place for us to choose to benefit from the H2O project proceeds. **By Ashley Hautman, SFO**



When I arrived in Detroit, I expected this volunteering would be similar to 'Catholic Worker' that I used to do in California. Tiring from jet lag, continuously pouring coffee, giving donuts, and talking to the guests for three days were harder than what I expected, however, they pleased me. Being an SFO made me to see all things as pleasure. I was surprised that many guests were poor because they were recently unemployed because of economic crisis. The H2O Project really helped them a lot. Bottles of water that we donated to the cafe were very convenient for the people who did not have places to stay. I will always remember the workers in the Canticle Café. Even though they had tough life in the past, now they all help others who need help.

맨처음 Detroit에 왔을때, 이번 봉사가 '전에 해 보았던 Catholic Worker와 비슷하겠다'라고 생각했었습니다. 시간차 극복과 끊임없이 나누어 줘야하는 커피와 도넛, 또 카페에 찾아 온 손님들과 예기를 나누는것은 생각보다 어렵고 힘든 일이었습니다. 하지만 제가 제속 프란치스칸이였기에 힘든 조차도 진심으로 기쁘게 받아들였던것 같습니다. 놀라웠던 점은 많은 카페 손님들이 실직을 해서 생활 유지비가 없어서 거리로 나온 이들이었습니다. 다행히 Youfra에서 진행하는 H2O Project가 이들에게 많은 도움이 되었습니다. 길거리에 나와있는 이들에게는 물병이 편리하게 쓰였습니다. Canticle Cafe에서 일하는 이들이 제일 오래 기억에 남을것 같습니다. 삶을 유독 더 힘들게 살아온 그들이지만 지금은 도움이 필요한 이들을 위해서 살아가고 있습니다. **By Cathy Kwon, SFO**

On Saturday morning, I went with Kathy Taormina and four members to bring water, socks and lunches to some of the homeless in Detroit. We all had backpacks that we used to carry everything. We found them in entries to elevators, along buildings by the river, benches and staircases. Everyone took the water, lunches and socks. We also told them about what the Canticle Café is about and invited them to come. Some had heard of the Café before and were very thankful for its existence. The smiles and thanks were all the blessings that I needed.

Going back to the Café, I helped a little with serving the coffee but mostly talked, really listened, to those who came in. They all had some good stories! I left very thankful for the experience and for the many blessings that God has given me. **By Dale Anesi, SFO**



When I arrived at Detroit for the H2O water mission trip, I knew there was going to be hot water for shower. I was not going to have to dig the ground like I did during the Honduras mission trip, but I never thought there were so many individuals suffering from hunger and thirst in the USA. I poured coffee and served donuts to the homeless and people who have jobs, but their income is so low they do not have enough money to purchase their breakfast. Being an SFO is a blessing to serve the poor and not to think about only me but other people who do not have the same life style or opportunities. I think about those people who do not have a place to sleep or something to eat. Now I make sure not to waste food and purchase just the things I need to live. I would like to thank every individual who supports the Franciscan Youth and the H2O Project, and ask you to continue donating water to those who are in need. God bless you all.

Cuando llegue a Detroit de la misión del agua (H2O), yo sabia que iba a ver agua caliente para bañarme. Yo no tenía que escarbar en la tierra para el agua, como lo hice en Honduras durante el viaje de misión. Yo nunca pensé que hubieran muchas personas sufriendo de hambre y sed in Los Estados Unidos. Yo he servido café, donas a los desamparados y personas que tienen trabajo, pero que sus ingresos son bajos, por lo tanto no tienen suficiente dinero para comprar sus desayunos.

Ser un terciario Franciscano es una bendición para servir a los pobres y no pensar solamente en mi, pero también en otras personas, que no tienen el mismo nivel de vida o oportunidades. Yo pienso acerca de esas personas, quienes no tienen un lugar para dormir o algo para comer. Ahora me aseguro de no malgastar la comida, sino comprar únicamente las cosas que necesito, para vivir. Me gustaría agradecerles a cada uno individualmente, a aquellos que ayudaron a los jóvenes Franciscanos y el proyecto de agua (H2O) y pedirles que continúen donando agua a los que tienen necesidad. Dios les bendiga. **By Manuel Hernandez, SFO**

State of the Order

(Continued from page 11).

The goal of the Commission is to have the up-to-date Standardized National Formation Manual completed and ready for implementation workshops in 2011.

2. Communication: We have effective communication nationally and communication with CIOFS is always timely, as done by our International Councilor, Anne Mulqueen, SFO.
Our Regions keep striving for effective and timely communication with the local fraternities and many are working on developing Regional newsletters and electronic communication.
3. Franciscan Youth: While the numbers are small in the USA, the youth are making strides, but much work is yet to be done and other avenues need to be explored for exposure of young people to the Franciscan Charism.
4. Presence in the World: We continue with our vocation awareness/recruitment efforts. As a National Fraternity we have considerable visibility and with our membership in FAN an active representation. The Franciscan Charism is being made better known but we still have a way to go.
5. Emerging National Fraternities: One of our Regions is currently shepherding a newly forming group in Antigua.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support of me and the National Executive Council. We couldn't have done our job without you.

I also want to express my personal thanks for your very warm welcome, fraternal hospitality and complete cooperation as I made the Visitations of your Regions. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the brothers and sisters of the National Fraternity.

I am forever indebted to the very gifted, unselfish and loving brothers and sisters who have served with me on the NEC. They have stood by me and supported me through the challenging and painful times and rejoiced with me in all of the good times.

My thanks also to the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants whose special gifts have made our NEC vibrant. Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap., whose gentle humor and wisdom, as well as his dedication to us and many contributions to our formation over so many years, is so appreciated. Fr. Steve Gross, OFM Conv., who is always thinking "outside the box" and challenging us to do so as well. Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, whose great organizational skills, practical wisdom and sense of humor made so many difficult tasks so much easier. Br. Bob Brady, OFM, current President-in-turn, whose quiet wisdom and laid back personality reminded us to rejoice in the day the Lord has made. Fr. Bart Karwaki, OFM Conv., who was President-in-turn when we began our tenure, will always be remembered and appreciated for his "no nonsense" and direct approach. He has a wonderful ability to "tell it like it is."

A very special thanks to all of the Regional Ministers who have walked the journey with me. You have inspired me, encouraged me, challenged me, and made me laugh. I couldn't have asked for better brothers and sisters.

My prayer for you as always is: May the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your life with His abundant blessings. Patrick

Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation

JPIC

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

Over the past couple of years we've reviewed aspects of living our Rule and how to reflect upon the issues of today in a fraternity on going formation setting. Moving on from there, it is past time to delve into the deeper exhortation of our Rule. Article 3 tells us that this "Rule adapts the SFO to the needs and expectations of the Holy Church in the conditions of changing times." How have we adapted to the needs of the Church? Are we even aware of what the Church considers the needs of the changing times of the world? There is that famous quote from Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The social teaching of the Catholic Church gives a resounding answer, "YES!" The Social Teaching of the Church is the wisdom that addresses this.

Seven themes of the social teachings: (From USCCB)

1. Life and dignity of the human person

"At the center of all Catholic social teaching are the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person. The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry." - The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response, U.S. Bishops, 1983

"Being made in the image and likeness of God the human individual possesses the dignity of the person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession, and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead." (CCC#357)

2. Call to family, community, and participation

"It is imperative that no one, out of indifference to the course of events or because of inertia, would indulge in a merely individualistic morality. The best way to fulfill one's obligations of justice and love is to contribute to the common good according to one's means and the needs of others, and also to promote and help public and private organizations devoted to bettering the conditions of life." - Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Council, 1965

The human person is both sacred and social. Everything in our organization of society affects human dignity. Marriage and the family are the core of society and require support and strengthening in all circumstances. With rights and duties to participate in society, all people together seek the common good. We are especially aware that the poor and vulnerable must be included in this participation.

3. Rights and responsibilities

It is agreed that in our time the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained. The chief concern of civil authorities must therefore be to ensure that these rights are acknowledged, respected, coordinated with other rights, defended and promoted, so that in this way everyone may more easily carry out their duties. For 'to safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person, and to facilitate the fulfillment of each one's duties, should be the chief duty of every public authority.' - Pacem in Terris: Peace on Earth John XXIII, 1963

Everyone has the right to food, shelter, work, medical care, religious freedom, etc. These are rights given by God because of our dignity as human beings. Along with rights, we are responsible for committing our efforts to ensure the rights of others are maintained. It is not enough to feel sorry for others, we are obliged to decrease what we have and give to others.

4. Option for the poor and vulnerable

As followers of Christ, we are challenged to make a fundamental 'option for the poor' – to speak for the voiceless, to defend the defenseless, to assess life styles, policies, and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor. This 'option for the poor' does not mean pitting one group against another, but rather, strengthening the whole community by assisting those who are the most vulnerable. As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response." - Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, U. S. Catholic Bishops, 1986

It is a basic moral test: how are the most vulnerable managing? Scripture tells us we must put the needs of the vulnerable and poor before our own.... and not just when it is convenient.

5. Dignity and rights of workers

Society as a whole, acting through public and private institutions, has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights. In addition to the clear responsibility of private institutions, government has an essential responsibility in this area. This does not mean that government has the primary or exclusive role, but it does have a positive moral responsibility in safeguarding human rights and ensuring that the minimum conditions of human dignity are met for all. In a democracy, government is a means by which we can act together to protect what is important to us and to

promote our common values.” **Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, U. S. Catholic Bishops, 1986**

Work is a way of participating in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community, not only a means of making a living. The work place must be a place where dignity is maintained and respected. Workers rights also must be upheld. These include (but are not limited to) the right to a fair and just wage, humane conditions, ability to organize and join unions.

1. Solidarity

*The solidarity which binds all men together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.” - **Mater et Magistra, Mother and Teacher, Pope John XXIII, 1961***

Each person is interdependent with all of humanity, collectively and individually we firmly commit ourselves to the common good. Solidarity comes forth from faith and is essential to the Christian view of social and political organizations. Pursuing justice and peace is the heart of solidarity.

2. Care for God's creation

*True stewardship requires changes in human actions - both in moral behavior and technical advancement. Our religious tradition has always urged restraint and moderation in the use of material goods, so we must not allow our desire to possess more material things to overtake our concern for the basic needs of people and the environment.” - **Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001***

Our care for creation is stewardship. All creation belongs to God. We are called to protect and use it in a manner that will last for all generations. Everyone has the right to clean water and air and to have places set aside to enjoy beauty of nature. There are ethical and moral dimensions to stewardship.

We are obliged to be knowledgeable of the breadth of these teachings. No one theme stands alone, each is interdependent with the others. Thus, the Church calls all people to build a just society while living holy lives amidst the challenges of today's world. Each of us is given a unique call to apostolic action derived from our particular gifts, prayer life, personality, and life circumstance. Each of us must work “together with all people of good will ...to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively.” (Rule, Art 14) Unless we work in concert with one another knowing that it is Christ who sends us into the world, our efforts become out of balance and even divisive. It requires a maturity of

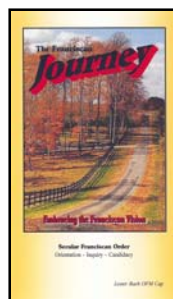
person, faith, and SFO vocation to overcome the pettiness in ourselves and to rise to the challenge given us by the Church to reach out with the love of Christ to all. “United by their vocation as ‘brothers and sisters of penance’ and motivated by the dynamic power of the Gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls conversion.” (Rule, Art 7)

Being and Doing:

In what way do your apostolic works reflect your relationship with God?

Check out Catholic Social Teaching on the USCCB website www.usccb.org

Research one of the seven themes that you know little about. How are you moved to respond?



New Book: A completely new formation book for orientation and initial formation is being published. The title is: *The Franciscan Journey – Embracing the Franciscan Vision* by Lester Bach, OFM Cap. It incorporates the recommended content from the SFO General Chapter in Hungary in 2008. A chapter on the Prologue and each of the articles of the SFO Rule are included together with quotations from the Constitutions/ Statutes, words of Francis and Clare, Church documents, SFO members and other Franciscan authors. It shares the Franciscan-Trinitarian spirituality vision. The book may also be used for ongoing formation purposes. Publication is slated for the first few months of 2010 by Smokey Valley Press (formerly Barbo-Carlson). As publication is finalized, further information (on costs, etc) will be available in TAU-USA

Save the dates! Franciscans International offers two programs in 2010: (1) from February 26-28 prior to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and (2) from May 1-2, prior to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), both programs at the FI New York Office. **The theme of the CSW and our program** is a review of the Beijing Platform for Action. Our speakers will also update us on trafficking and the world financial crisis and include a presentation on the spirituality of the Franciscan NGO. **The CSD program** will focus on climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, poverty, and human rights. Both programs will conclude with the NGO Consultation Day held on the eve of the Commissions. Application deadline is Dec. 15. For further information, e-mail Kathie Uhler at uhler@fiop.org or phone: 1-212 490-4624. N. B. The Annual UN NGO Conference will be held in Melbourne, Australia in September 2010; dates TBA.

Third Year Reflection

By Ed Shirley, SFO, Chair
Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee
elssfo@hotmail.com

I have been the chair of the Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee for three years, which brings me to the end of my term. I submit a report to the National Executive Committee several times a year, plus an end of the year report for NAFRA, but thought I'd take this opportunity to share some of the accomplishments and hopes for the future with you.

When I applied for the position as chair, I outlined a general plan: to continue to reach out to non-Catholic secular Franciscans, to reach out to non-Catholic Christians in general, and to reach out to non-Christians. The committee, under the leadership of Marcella Bina, had begun to forge relationships with Franciscans from other Christian lineages, and with them, had formed the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity. I am proud to say that those relationships have continued, and I hope have flourished. Together with representatives from the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans, I have met members from the United Church of Christ, Methodists, Episcopalians, a couple of Catholics—including a deacon—and one Baptist deacon from Waco, TX and the Third Order Society of St. Francis (Anglican; I have met members from the U.S., Caribbean and South America), we have designed a small Franciscan Office (Morning Prayer), to be used during “Francistide” (between the Feast of the Stigmata and the Feast of St. Francis), and an *Agapé* service, which we could celebrate in common, but that would avoid the problems of intercommunion. These are available through the NAFRA website. The JCFU also hopes to compose a common *Transitus* service that could be celebrated jointly with each other. At our meeting in May, we laid plans for planning a mini-conference on our common Franciscan heritage, and to invite the leadership from the three representative Orders. This is a follow up to a similar conference held several years ago. I have also had the privilege of attending one TSSF and two OEF chapter meetings as the representative from the SFO. As a result, I have been made an honorary member of the Texas Bluebonnets, the Texas regional level of the OEF.

I have been professionally involved in interfaith dialogue for the past two decades, and have always gone in my Franciscan skin, animated by my Franciscan soul. However, for the past three years, I have had the privilege of bringing official participation of the SFO. I participate in an annual, by invitation, Hindu-Christian dialogue co-sponsored by the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference, have spoken in many venues on Zen-Franciscan encounter (and will hopefully soon have a book published on the same subject), and have given a paper, by invitation, called “Seeking the Lower Path,”

about Sufi (Islamic) mysticism and St. Francis. That being said, we are at a crossroads of the SFO/Ecumenical /Interfaith mission.

I am writing this three weeks before NAFRA will meet in Albuquerque, and so do not know what the future of my service or the Committee will be. However, I can share a few thoughts of where I hope it will go. I know that Secular Franciscan commitment to ecumenical and interfaith encounters cannot be left to the Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee, much less the chair, nor can we be satisfied with our participation in the JCFU. These are all important first steps, but they can only be first steps.

Currently, for the annual meetings of each Order, the ministers of the other two, or their representatives, are invited to attend. For this to bear real fruit, this has to begin happening on regional and local levels. Find out who is in your area, and invite their ministers to attend your annual regional meetings, or an occasional local meeting. But let's dream; let's take it beyond merely visiting each other. Let's begin to pray the common Francistide Office in union with each other (much like we already pray the Office in union with each other, even if not in the same place). Perhaps we could end Francistide with a common *Transitus*: This does not mean inviting them to *our Transitus* services; it means inviting them to help plan and execute common *Transitus* services.

If you have question about how this might be done, contact me. That's what this office and this Committee are for. We would be very happy to conduct workshops on regional levels or for gatherings of two or three fraternities. We, as the SFO, cannot congratulate ourselves for “having a committee.” Imagine how our efforts in the realms of peace, justice and the integrity of Creation (now, there's an idea for a committee...) might be enhanced if we began to truly work “together with all people of good will” (beginning with fellow Franciscans, then fellow Christians and eventually brothers and sisters of other Traditions) to “build a more fraternal and evangelical world.”

The Catholic Church is dedicated to building these relationships on a variety of levels: religious leaders to leaders, scholars to scholars, practitioner to practitioner. As Franciscans, we have a very specific role to play in building these relationships. Just as we have the audacity to believe that we have something specific to contribute to the universal Church's mission of peace and justice, we should also have the audacity to think we have a specific contribution in ecumenical/interfaith relations. Francis is loved by Catholics and Protestants; Francis is loved by Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and Hindus. The Franciscan way resonates with the spirituality of Eastern Christians; it predates the Reformation, and opens its arms to mutual understanding with the “sultans” of other religions. This cannot be left to friars and Third Order brothers and sisters: most people of the world live secular lives, as do we. Now is our time.



Our National Newsletter Its History

By William Wicks, SFO

A good newspaper, I suppose, is a nation (al fraternity) talking to itself. Arthur Miller (paraphrased)

I have noticed that, during the past fifteen years in service to the SFO at the national level, the quantity and quality of communication has improved, say, exponentially. The use of the Internet, whether it be e-mail or websites, has been a vital tool in communication, and in bringing us together as local, and regional, and national fraternity. *I have noticed* that the quality of newsletters, in content and format, particularly at the regional level, have improved vastly over the years. The local fraternity newsletters have improved, and more fraternities have them – and they are also very good.

I have noticed that many of these newsletters rival commercial publications (including this one); the editors, now-a-days, take their tasks on as a ministry; artistic talent is integral to their work. All newsletters editors in this country deserve acclamation for this important work – they bring our Franciscan family together. However, the task of this writer is to present a brief history of our national newsletter.

The first national newsletter, titled NEWSLETTER (go figure), was published, in 1935, by Fr. Maximus Poppy, OFM, Executive Secretary, out of the Central Office. (See copy above) At that time, the Central Office was the center of communication for the national Third Order organization. The publication was intended to be a public relations tool as well as a means of communications. Following newsletters recorded discussions and decisions made at the national board meetings, and reported programs and projects that were taking place. Also listed, were the “in-turn” Provincial Commissaries (equivalent, in position, to today’s Provincial Spiritual Assistants, and equivalent, in authority, to today’s Regional Ministers), along with the Executive Board members.

Following is a list of editors of our national newsletter:

Fr. Maximus Poppy, OFM (1935 – 1946)

Fr. Philip Marquard, OFM (1947 – 1970)

Printed in Franciscan Herald and Forum
(1956 – 1964)

Third Order Intercom Published

Concurrently (1962 – 1970)

Elizabeth Ryder, SFO (1991 – 1992)

Patty Normile, SFO (1992 – 1998)

Mr. and Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO (1998 – 2003)

Frances Wicks, SFO (2003 – Present)

When the friars edited the newsletter (out of the Central Office), the printing costs were divided between the per capita contributions and the Third Order provinces with which the editors were affiliated. Between 1970 and 1991, no official newsletter was published by the national organization. Much of the news was included in the Franciscan Herald and Forum. Beginning in 1991, subscriptions to the newsletter were solicited at \$4.00 per year for four seasonal issues. At the turn of the century, there were approximately 2500 subscriptions.

In 1995, a survey was taken by Executive Council to determine how to improve the newsletter, with a request for entries for naming the newsletter. From 100 entries, the one offered by Ralph Schlueter, SFO, was chosen: TAU-USA – the name given the newsletter beginning with the fall, 1995 issue.

Responding to the notion that all Secular Franciscans should receive the national newsletter, the Executive Council decided, at a Council meeting held in Philadelphia in October, 2000, that, for this to happen, a national database would have to be created. It was also decided that this database should be set up on the internet, thereby making it accessible for updating by a designated local or regional fraternity member, and that database security is of utmost importance.

A request for proposals was sent out and a private firm was contracted for \$8,000. Also, to cover the cost of the printing and mailing of the newsletter, a “fair share” increase to the Regions of \$4.00 per capita was approved by the NAFRA Council. It should be noted that the original database has been modified quite extensively by the Computer Committee. The database administrator is Bob Herbelin, SFO; and Randy Heinz, SFO is the subscription coordinator.

Today, approximately 15,000 newsletters are mailed quarterly, at a cost of less than 70 cents each. Also, the content of the newsletter is posted, subdivided into categories, on our NAFRA website by Dan Mulholland, SFO. The editor is grateful for the contributions of her staff of talented writers, the inspirational contribution of the national leaders, those representing the various SFO organizations and the regional newsletter editors for information about their region’s activities. Many deserve thanks for their contribution that makes TAU-USA a very informative and enjoyable Franciscan newsletter.

Read all about it – in the TAU-USA



FAN Action Commission Feels the Spirit in the Windy City

**Group gathers in Chicago to chart
aspects of FAN's organizing endeavors
September 14, 2009**

**By Rev. James Hoffman, OFM,
FAN Action Commissioner**

SEPTEMBER 8-9, 2009

Chicago, IL- We, FAN Action Commissioners, together with the FAN Action Center Staff, gathered to share our experiences at our bi-annual two day gathering at The Cenacle Retreat Center in early September. Our time together, which consisted of shared meals, meetings, and prayer, helped us discern positive directions and challenging dimensions of FAN's growth and clearer ways the Action Commission can contribute.

One question that we often hear, and which we reflected on at length, is: "In whose name does FAN speak?" In reality, FAN speaks in the name of its individual and institutional members whose insights we garner for charting the organization's course. Institutional supporters of FAN realize their grassroots members are not always comfortable making phone calls or engaging in direct action with Members of Congress.

Another concern that was raised was how to counteract the misinformation being disseminated about FAN's priorities as these relate to the issues of health care reform, compassionate immigration reform, and climate change. As congregations confront dwindling membership, FAN is a resource for individuals within these communities; persons can maintain an active civic engagement commitment while they serve in other ministries. FAN's website connects many resources that have information about various social justice issues and events.

We spent significant time prioritizing and reaffirming our tasks as Action Commissioners. Presently, the Action Commission views its main priorities as: (1) helping to build FAN's base of individual members through outreach to Franciscan-hearted persons, (2) inviting new institutional members to contribute to the support of FAN, (3) encouraging institutional members

to identify their key members in the various regions of the country, and (4) animating better communication with the institutional members.

We recognized that a core activity of each Action Commissioner is to have a sense or pulse of what is happening in strategic areas of our regions (since the entire region is often too large for this to occur easily), and to readily develop a sense of the issues among the local Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted. Although it is difficult at times for us to find time to keep in touch with the Franciscans, Franciscan-hearted people, and other Action Commissioners in our region (because of our full-time ministries elsewhere), it is important that we maintain these relationships to help build our network. Likewise, we need to take time to learn where local and national elected officials in our areas stand on FAN's issue priorities. This helps us to serve as advisers to FAN's staff on civic engagement issues.

At the 2007 Baltimore meeting that started the initial group of institutional supporters on the path to the realization of FAN, there was a desire to know and understand how U.S. policy is affecting the lives of people in the world. U.S. policies often have a direct impact on many millions of people outside the borders of our own nation. FAN needs to consider policy issues in a way that better incorporates these perspectives.

Finally, we all left Chicago with some homework. Action Commissioners will try to identify local leaders and Franciscan-hearted activists in our region by the 2010 Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, DC. We hope to hold training sessions for the identified leaders in each region, which will be done utilizing a combination of local leadership, web conferences, in person visits, and other communication means.

Contact Information:

FAN Webmaster
info@franciscanaction.org

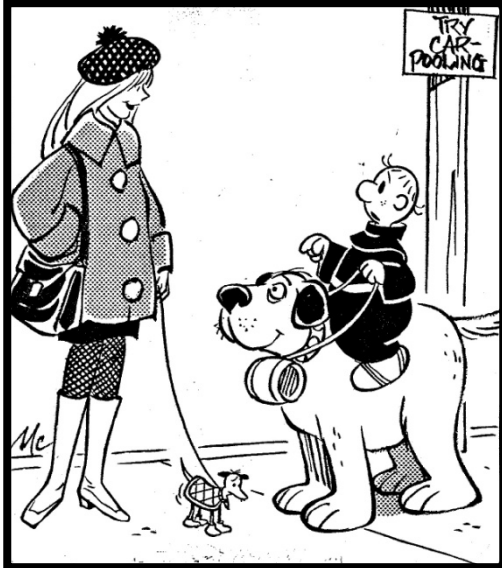
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Quote:

Peace is not the product of terror or fear.
Peace is not the silence of cemeteries.
Peace is not the silent result of violent repression.
Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all.
Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity.
It is right and it is duty.

Archbishop Oscar Romero

Brother Juniper



“Feeding him costs a mint, but it sure beats walking.”

By Fred McCarthy, SFO

+ Fred McCarthy, SFO +

1918-2009

Our dear brother, Fred McCarthy was called to eternal life on Oct. 26th. He has been a Secular Franciscan for 71 years and was 91 years old. His creation, the Brother Juniper comic strip was first published in 1958, and ran in over 100 papers for 31 years.

Fred resided in Delray Beach, FL. We send condolences to his family and friends, Regional Minister, Hans D. Huemmer, SFO, Rev. Thomas K. Murphy, OFM, and the entire Five Franciscan Martyrs Region, as they give thanks to God for Fred’s wonderful Franciscan life.

He leaves behind a most beloved wife, Lilly, numerous friends, and the Brother Juniper Collection at St. Bonaventure University, his alma mater.

Environmental Tip

By Sr. Janet Corcoran, OSF,
The Green Franciscan Sister

Green Travel: Hotel and Motel Tips

Each year there are over one billion room stays in approximately 54,000 hotels and motels throughout the United States. When you travel, seek a hotel that is eco-friendly and as such, participates in green lodging efforts; for example, the Green Hospital Association listing, Green Lodging Program, Green Seal, or Green Leaf certification programs.

During your hotel or motel stay, the following 10 environmentally friendly actions may assist you in reducing, reusing, recycling, and conserving the goods of our sister, Mother Earth.

Inform the lodging that it is not necessary to change your sheets and towels for more than one night’s stay there. You may wish to bring a packet of safety pins and small colored beads and attach a bead to each towel using a designated color for each person. Before checkout, remove the pins and beads.

Close the drapes in your room to keep the sunlight out in areas where the temperature is hot, and open the drapes to let the sun warm your room on chilly days. This action will save energy usage.

Turn off lights, air conditioning/heat, radio, television, and any other appliances when not in your room.

To save energy, use only one lighting fixture at a time when possible.

Reduce the amount of water used for cleaning your teeth or showering/bathing. For example, when brushing your teeth, only turn on the water to wet your brush and then turn the water off while brushing. Have a glass filled with water for rinsing your mouth and to wash the toothbrush. This action alone could save a pint of water or gallons of water. When showering, turn the water on to get wet, turn the water off to lather, then turn the water back on to rinse oneself. For example, by limiting your shower time, a one or two-minute reduction can save many gallons of water.

Utilize the containers placed within the lodging for recyclables.

Bring your own containers for drinking as it saves the use of the lodging’s glasses or cups. Save the soap, shampoo, or other amenities provided by the lodging and donate them to the local agencies that assist the economically disadvantaged in your community.

Utilize the electronic checkout system of the hotel found on the TV in some lodgings. You can view your bill, approve it, and reduce paperwork.

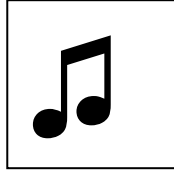
Give suggestions to the hotel on other ways they can reduce, reuse, recycle, and conserve the resources of our sister, Mother Earth.

May we seek in our day-to-day actions to live out our Franciscan lifestyle by reducing, reusing, recycling, and conserving the goods of our sister, Mother Earth.

Little Weeds

Make Me an Instrument

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



We're all familiar with the Peace Prayer of St. Francis. We know what an excellent "game plan" it provides: you pattern your life according to that prayer, and you can't go wrong. But I have a feeling most of us think it refers to how we should deal with others – particularly the first part. Well, until we apply it to ourselves, we won't be able to apply it to others quite as well as we should . . .

WHERE THERE IS HATRED, LET ME SOW LOVE. Any hatred you run into should be replaced with love. But how far do you have to go to run into hatred? And does it have to be out-and-out hatred? Grudges, bitter feelings, these fall under the same umbrella. And there may be some of them lurking about in your own soul. As humans, we are going to have these feelings on occasion; as Franciscans, we must combat them and sow some love.

WHERE THERE IS INJURY, PARDON. Franciscans can get hurt, too. When we do, we react like anyone else. Which means we have some pardoning to do. But we can't expect someone else to pardon their trespassers if we aren't willing to do the same ourselves. If the hurt inflicted was unintentional, why should it be dragged out? And if it was intentional, the person inflicting it is probably hurting somehow, too. In any event, pardoning keeps something bad from getting worse.

WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, FAITH. I doubt (!) we doubt God too often. But our faith in ourselves and others can be pretty shaky sometimes. Doubt can erode any relationship – yes, *you and yourself* is a relationship – one that affects your other relationships. There isn't anything sadder than someone's trying to share a faith they don't have.

WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, HOPE. Despair is doubt run amok. Doubt is "maybe," despair is "certain." Looking at what's going on in today's world, I must admit there are times when giving up seems the only logical reaction. Unfortunately, a lot of people do react that way, with a "what can one person do" mindset. OK. No one person is going to solve the world's problems. But as Goethe said (if I remember correctly), if everyone sweeps in front of their own door, the world will be

clean. So hang in there. Nothing sows hope in other hearts as much as an obvious amount of it in your own.

WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, LIGHT. This is a toughy. Exactly what is meant by "darkness"? Sadness? No (if only because it's covered in the next paragraph!). Doubt, despair? Forms of darkness, to be sure. But, again, as they're mentioned separately, it would seem that "darkness" represents some other quality in this context. OK. If Christ is the "Light of the World," perhaps this "darkness" is an absence of Christ. True, most of us will seldom, if ever, run into someone who hasn't at least heard of Him. But for a great many people, He's just a name. Part of our calling as Franciscans is to remedy that. Again, we don't have to go far: Christ must be an integral part of our lives if we are to "show" him to others. He must be more than a name, the "target" of our prayers, or a far-off entity to Whom we pledge allegiance. Christ is our Brother and our Friend. Each of these titles implies mutuality == if He is our Brother, we are His brother/sister; if He is our Friend, we are His.

WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY. Easy, right? It ain't easy to sow joy when you're miserable. So joy must be in your life, in your soul, if you're going to sow it anywhere else. True, we all have down days; it's just a question of coping with them so they don't become the rule rather than the exception. Even if it takes medication! Joy is not rowdy or ostentatious. Yes, you will have silly-grin days. But most of the time, your joy is going to be more of a contentment, satisfaction, or "warm glow" – but y'gotta have it to sow it.

And if you have the first part of the prayer down, the second part will just flow. Because peace, like charity, begins "at home."

To Our Readers:

Have a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful Franciscan New Year!

May the Lord bless you with joy, health and prosperity, as you celebrate the sacred feasts of Advent and Christmas and always.

You have certainly been a blessing to us by your kind words and thoughts and we ask the Lord to bless you and keep you safe.

Frances Wicks, SFO, Editor
On behalf of the entire TAU-USA Staff

First Place Poetry Contest Winner:

The Woods

**By Judith Ryerse, SFO
St. Margaret of Cortona Region**

My backyard woods, a joyful praying place.
Birds choirs rejoicing while insects scurry.
Thick canopy shadowing everything
 above the dead leaf carpet.
Endless green brush strokes with touches of brown.
Feeling God's love, living in security,
Oblivious to the rest of the world.
A daily escape from an empty house.
My woods, a place to hide
 and yet be seen.

The nearby woods, a stark and dismal place.
Dove choirs mourning while faceless bodies brood.
Shadows of filthy blankets and worn tarps
 draped above the cold damp earth.
Dignity robbed people sit in dirty gloom.
Outcasts questioning God, living in fear,
No place in self-righteous society.
Daily, their humanity slowly dies.
Their woods, a place to hide
 and remain unseen.

Special: Made by God

**By Margaret Hunkeler, SFO
Our Lady of Indiana Region**

Every leaf, every flower,
Every animal, every bird,
Is a masterpiece of God's goodness.
Every sunrise and sunset,
Each cloud and every storm –
A masterpiece of God's wisdom.

Every river and valley,
Each mountain and continent –
A masterpiece of God's power.
Every newly conceived preborn
 So minute in the womb,
Is a masterpiece of God's love.

Why cannot humanity
Recognize its eternal Maker?
Why cannot all human beings
Respect the gift of life in an infant,
Fashioned in the image and likeness
 Of God?

Holy Mary

**By Maggie Lippincott, SFO
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Empress of the Americas Region**

Holy Mary Mother of God
did your hair turn gray?
Did it turn a shocking white
 on that awful day?

Did the sight of him up there,
your one and only son,
the lively little boy you held
 when he was so young?

Did the horror chill your blood
as you watched him there?
So much sorrow – so much grief
 surely grayed your hair.

I'm a mother and I know
the stress that sorrow brings
when joy of children turns to pain.
Then must hope have wings.

A Leaf in Winter

**By Gary Simpson, SFO
St. Clare Region**

A solitary leaf
Rasps its way across the frozen landscape
So brittle from the cold
It would shatter on a dream.

Corrections from the last issue:

“Heartprint” should read as follows and the author of “Just Because” is unknown at present.

Heartprint

**By Cathy Pierce, SFO
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Empress of the Americas Region**

Sweet and loving
Ardently longing
Christos
Reconciling to the
Ear of the Father
Daily

Humble compassion
Eternally flowing
Around those
Requesting the heart-blood
Triumphant



Adoration of the Child
By Antonio Allegri Correggio

What shall we offer You, O Christ?

Not only are human beings who are made in God's image and likeness called to prepare the Lord's coming and to welcome Him into the world which He made, but all of God's creatures are invited to join in the reception of their Master.

The liturgy proclaims that the whole of creation necessarily participates in the incarnation of its Creator and Lord, and that without this activity and voluntary participation, the Master literally could not come. The incarnation of God's Son is a cooperative effort. It is a collaboration between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit on the one side, and all of the angels and animals and elements on the other, with human persons at the center as the main mediators between heaven and earth, being those for whom the world was made and to whom it is given. There can be no coming of the Son of God, no incarnation of the Divine Word, no birth of Jesus unless everyone and everything cheerfully and gratefully join into the act. This is not only true 'physically' in history, but it is also true 'mystically' in our spiritual lives.

The Christmas celebration in Greccio depicts in frescoes, St. Francis kneeling before an empty manger, inviting, as the early biographers of his life suggest, that we collaborate with the Holy Spirit, as did Mary, and give Him birth in our lives of good example and love. One of the beloved songs of the Eastern Church Nativity season is sung at Vespers on Christmas Eve. Those who

are familiar with the liturgy, especially the children who are just becoming aware of its beauty and power, often wait for this hymn and rejoice when they sing it for it tells in the most touching way the all-embracing participation of creatures in the Creator's coming:

*What shall we offer You, O Christ,
Who for our sake has appeared
on the earth as man?
Every creature which You have made
offers You thanks.
The Angels offer You a song.
The heavens, their star.
The wise men, their gifts.
The shepherds, their wonder.
The earth, its cave.
The wilderness, the manger.
And we? We offer You a Virgin Mother!!!*

How wonderful it is to contemplate the celestial and cosmic cooperation involved in the coming of the Lord. And how significant it is to see what we humans have to offer. We provide the earthly mother without whom God's Son could not be born as a man. And little did any child of Adam and Eve realize to what glory human beings would come when one of their own, called the 'new Eve' would become truly "Theotokos" (birthgiver of God), by giving birth to Jesus the Messiah. By Fr. Thomas Hopko, [The Winter Pascha](#)

A Prayer at Christmas

Hail and blessed be the hour and the moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight in Bethlehem, in piercing cold! In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of our Savior Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother.
Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego near Mexico City in 1531 and left her image on his cloak. She is Patron of the Americas. Feast Day: December 12.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, mystical Rose, make intercession for our Holy Church, protect the Pope, help all those who invoke you in their necessities, and since you are the ever Virgin Mary and Mother of the true God, obtain for us from your most Holy Son, the grace of keeping our faith, sweet hope in the midst of the bitterness of life, burning charity, and the precious gift of final perseverance.
Amen.

(Christmas prayers are from the [Catholic Family Prayer Book](#), Edited by Jacquelyn Lindsay, Our Sunday Visitor Inc. 2001).



Sisters of the Faith
By David Lindsley

Fraternity: Holy Unity

By Francine Gikow, SFO

“Secular Franciscans, therefore, should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity. The faith of Saint Francis, who often said *“I see nothing bodily of the Most High Son of God in this world except his most holy body and blood,”* should be the inspiration and pattern of their Eucharistic life.”¹

Did you notice in the Rule, that as a means of encountering the living and active person of Christ, the “brothers and sisters” are listed *first* even before Sacred Scripture, the Church and liturgical activity? Maybe it was placed there because many of the early Franciscans were illiterate. Maybe, as the old saying goes, “charity starts at home.” However, it should cause us to pause in the way we consider living in communion with Christ.

Franciscans have always been encouraged to live in “Holy Unity.” Celano speaks about the early fraternal Franciscan practice of holy unity, of mutual charity, in unity of spirit: “...as living stones, gathered so to speak, from every part of the world they *grew into a temple of the Holy Spirit*. How ardent their fraternal love was...a real explosion of their spiritual

¹ Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, Ch. 2 #5.

affection...Having despised all earthly things and free of any selfish love, from the moment they turned all their heart’s affection into the bosom of the community, they tried with all diligence to give even themselves to meet all the needs of the brothers.”²

The early Franciscans’ love for others, and their expression of it, grew out of their love for God and their unity and love for each other within their fraternities. This spirit of love in the early Franciscan fraternities attracted others to Christ - the early Franciscans not only preached the message of God’s love, they lived it! How attractive this must be for others! How convincing a message of God’s love!

We also see this “Holy Unity” referenced in the prologue to the Rule of the Poor Clares, given to them by Father Francis, when the rule is confirmed by Cardinal Rainaldo, as “According to [this form of life] you should live together in unity of spirits...”³ The Poor Clares are to show in the unity of their cloistered life with each other, the same unity of the Trinitarian love among Father, Son and Spirit which we share in our life with God.

As Pope John Paul, in *Vita Consecrata*, writes: “*Fraternal life, whereby consecrated persons strive to live in Christ with one heart and soul, is put forward as an eloquent witness to the Trinity. It proclaims the Father, who desires to make of all humanity one family. It proclaims the incarnate Son, who gathers the redeemed into unity, pointing the way by his example, his prayer, his words and above all his death, which is a source of reconciliation for a divided and scattered community. It proclaims the Holy Spirit as the principle unity of the Church, wherein he ceaselessly raises up spiritual families in fraternal communities.*”⁴

Yes, Pope John Paul was speaking to us, also! As professed Secular Franciscans, we are consecrated to God with the same consecration as our religious brothers and sisters! Our consecration should witness the unity of the Trinity to others. We, too, must strive for this “holy unity” in our fraternity life.

Therefore, we are not just called to be united with Christ interiorly or even with those we serve, but we are also called to be united with this same Spirit with our brothers and sisters in fraternity. It is through this unity of Christ’s love in our own fraternities that we are able to convincingly go out to share God’s Spirit with others.

² 1Celano 38-9.

³ Prologue to The Form of Life of St. Clare of Assisi, in *The Lady: St. Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* edited and translated by Regis J. Armstrong, New City Press, New York, NY, 2006.

⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, 37.

Classic Franciscan



Rock DeSpain, SFO

Let Us Begin, Rock!

By Julia Pearson, SFO
Human Interest Editor

"Let us begin, for up to now we have done nothing," St. Francis challenged his brothers as he lay on the cold ground with Sister Death waiting quietly near. Roscoe "Rock" DeSpain, Jr., a twenty-first century Franciscan, finds the Little Poor Man's words a fitting call and guide to radical conversion when he rises with each new morning.

The Franciscan spirit has always been the home for Rock's soul. A cradle Catholic, he was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and grew up with a brother and two sisters. His grandmother, who lived with the family for some time when he was young, was a Secular Franciscan. Catherine O'Farrell was professed in her native Ireland, and Rock has memories of his grandmother, colored with her fraternity meetings, prayer and church life.

In adulthood, the pain of his first marriage ending took Rock on a path away from, and then close to, the warm security of his Catholic faith. He met his wife, Jan, on November 28, 1975, and they were married on the same date a year later. Both were divorced Catholics and made the decision to go through the annulment process, providing the time for healing from their earlier divorces. Their combined children blessed their new family: Wendy, Christine, Patricia, Kathleen, and Rock

III. When their son passed away, his widow, Imelda, has been another daughter in the DeSpain fold. Rock felt his deep love and belonging in the Franciscan gospel life when his eyes flooded with tears upon hearing the prayer of St. Francis sung in church, knowing that "this is what I want to be."

The evolution of his spirituality and growth as a Franciscan continued after Rock and Jan moved from Illinois, where he had spent most of his life as a contractor, to California, in 1989. Starting in 2000 and ending in January of 2009, he served three terms as Regional Minister of the St. Francis Region in Southern California. During visitations in the region with the Regional Spiritual Assistants, Rock could see the spirituality in the articles of the SFO Constitution. He also felt his point of view broadening from a legalistic to a more pastoral one, saying that "the Holy Spirit is out there before your eyes."

In June of 2003, at a 25 year anniversary celebration of the Rule, Fr. Mike Higgins, TOR, then General Spiritual Assistant, urged Seculars to "take spiritual ownership of your own order." Heeding this call, Rock was among the fifteen students in the first class for lay Spiritual Assistants, taught by Fr. Steve Gross, OFM Conv.. The class was completed in June 2006, and, in July, Rock was certified as a lay Spiritual Assistant and then assigned to the local fraternity, San Damiano Fraternity in Palm Desert, California. From 2006 to 2008, Fr. Steve Gross delegated Rock to take his place as pastoral visitor five times each year. In May of 2008, the SFO Minister General, Encarnación del Pozo, sent a letter to all the National Councils, giving a practical interpretation of lay Spiritual Assistants. This led to a Mass of Installation, in January 2009, for three Secular Franciscans to become lay Regional Spiritual Assistants. Rock views the Ministers Provincial as twenty-first century Franciscan visionaries: Fr. Melvin Jurisich, OFM - succeeded by Fr. John Hardin, OFM, Fr. Matthew Elfhoff, OFM Capuchin, and Fr. Christopher Dietz, OFM Conventual. From her eternal home, Catherine O'Farrell surely looks down and sees her grandson as part of this circle.

Quote

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain.

(Jim O'Neill's JP Paper)

Regional Roundup

Please send Regional News to Frances Wicks, SFO, Editor.



Blessed Junipero Serra Region

“The Franciscan family...unites all members of the people of God - laity, religious, and priest, who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi.” Article 1 of the Rule

On September 5, Franciscans in the Region gathered to celebrate the **800th anniversary of the approval of the Franciscan way of life by Pope Innocent II.**

Close to 400 Franciscans from all parts of our family attended: Franciscan Priests, Brothers, Sisters and Seculars; Franciscan Anglican Friars, Sisters, and Seculars; Affiliates; Franciscan Youth; and “Franciscans at heart.”



Bob “Fitz” Fitzsimmons, SFO and Bob Brady, OFM

listen to and act on the Gospels, the more we become in tune with God’s will for us.

Bob Fitzsimmons, who currently serves as the Formation Chair for National, opened our day with the question “What is this legacy we follow?” St. Francis asked, “Who are you, oh God? And who am I?” Franciscans are still asking that question, 800 years later. We must live without chasing anything other than God. The more we empty ourselves and



Fr. Kenan Osborne, OFM

Father Kenan Osborne, OFM, theology professor emeritus at Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley remarked that the Rule as seen by St. Francis and St. Clare was **“To observe the Gospel - period.”** He suggested we ask daily, “How can I observe the Gospel today?” To know God intimately, we should spend time reading three important 'books' - the books of Creation, the Gospels, and our Inner Heart. When we do, we will hear God speaking to us.



Sr. Maria Elena Martinez, OSF

Sister Maria Elena Martinez, OSF, a Sister of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, encouraged us to stand firm in our beliefs, with a generous and humble attitude, like St. Clare. Sister reminded us that Jesus reaches through the messiness of our lives into the deep core of who we are, embracing our “not yetness.” We can transform our world by loving others with the same respect.

These are only a few thoughts gleaned from a day full of inspiration. Father Augustine Kim told our Korean brothers and sisters to “Trust in God’s love and just go forward like Junipero Serra did.” Gathering our Franciscan family together provided a step in that direction.



Regional Minister Cindy and Jim Wesley, SFO and the choir

Blessed Junipero Serra Region continued:



Blessed Giles of Assisi Fraternity of Twain Harte, CA celebrated its first profession, as an emerging fraternity in Blessed Junipero Serra Region. The profession occurred during the 11:00 AM Mass on Sunday, September 20th.

In the above picture being professed are **Shirley Dodson, SFO** and **Sara Ingalls, SFO**, (who is hidden by Shirley). The others, witnessing the profession are Sharon Gianelli, vice minister, Kathleen Molaro, minister Little Portion Fraternity, Mary Mazotti, spiritual assistant, Chuck Brewer minister, and Fr. Ken Laverone, OFM, celebrant.

The sponsoring fraternity is Little Portion Fraternity in Auburn, CA. At present there are twelve members in Blessed Giles with some inquirers about to be received.

Tau Cross Region

After many years of thinking about a regional picnic, the dream became a reality on Aug. 22nd. Despite a gloomy and dire forecast, the day started with a huge rainbow, and we knew that God was smiling upon us. In fact, the over 56 Franciscans gathered on the Feast of the Queenship of Mary and celebrated the day with nary a drop of rain. The organizers, Frank Harnos, Gene Gurney and Peter D'Amato, started it off with coffee and Dunkin' donuts. Master Griller, Jack Hack took over the brick bar-b-que and grilled the hot dogs and hamburgers to perfection. All the fixin's were there as well as music, soda and salads.

Some joined in for a round of bocce. The children enjoyed the playground. We also thank Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap., our Regional Spiritual Assistant, and Fr. John Murphy for joining us. Everyone enjoyed the company, as we shared our stories under the covered pavilion. How could we not? When Franciscans come together for fellowship, it is guaranteed to be a good

time! Eight fraternities (New Pentecost, Poor Clares, Bl. Raymond Lull, St. Michaels, Holy Child of Jesus, Bl. John XXIII, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, and Our Lady Queen of Angels) were represented.

Divine Mercy Region

Roger Ensign, SFO is the new regional minister of Divine Mercy Region.



L-R: **Marge Lanzi, Candidate, Raymond Sox, SFO, Minister, and Sandra Harrington, SFO, Secretary of Solanus Casey Fraternity**

On the feast of St. Clare (Aug. 11), the Solanus Casey Fraternity of Roseville, Michigan celebrated the 800th Anniversary of Franciscan Order and the 5th Anniversary of their fraternity.

Fr. Ronald Victor, Pastor of St Athanasius Parish, was the celebrant of the special Mass. Marie Amore, SFO, from the Troubadours of St. Clare Fraternity was guest speaker. She spoke on the history of the Franciscan Order. Organist, Christine Duffy and her husband assisted in the celebration by leading the congregation in joyful music. A reception followed in the parish hall.

Fraternity members from St Bonaventure, St. David and Troubadours of St. Clare attended the festivities. Family and friends were in attendance. The celebration offered a renewal and strengthening of their Franciscan commitment for those present.

La Verna Region

A new chapter of our SFO family is being formed at Cardinal Stritch University, in Milwaukee Wisconsin. This is a Franciscan University, and a new cell is being formed from the Portiuncola Fraternity in Franklin Wisconsin, with the assistance of Paul Salerno and Ken Beatie, our regional minister. Presently, there are six to eight students in the inquiry stage, which includes instructors, former students and current students. It is thrilling to have new candidates interested in becoming Secular Franciscans, as you know that recruiting has

always been a slow process, and so many of our current members in all of the La Verna Region are older more mature adults. Our spiritual director and chaplain at the University, Fr. Jim Gannon, OSF, noted that the community responds so well, and continues to pray together as a community, participates in communal prayer, individual prayer, and further studies in Franciscanism. Paul Salerno says "this is an exciting time in the church because we have a hunger for spirituality and many find the Franciscan way of spirituality as a way to feed their souls." Barb Spies, a communication arts professor, is interested in this life style, and has done much reading about the Secular Franciscans. Jude Longrie, a current student at the University in the Lay Ministry Program, and professed SFO member, is glad to have a fraternity much closer to her home, as she was traveling 140 miles just to get to the closest SFO chapter for monthly gatherings and studies. The Region looks forward to this active and vibrant new cell.

St. Clare Region



In September, St Francis of Assisi Fraternity of St. Louis, MO sponsored an art and essay contest for the pre-kindergarten through 8th graders at St. Francis of Assisi School in St. Louis, MO. In celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Franciscan way of life, we wanted to encourage the children to learn more about Francis and Clare through their own talents. It was a huge success! There were 396 participants, both enrolled students and PSR students, with a wide variety of talents. We received unique artwork with good imaginative skills, a manger scene made of straw and cut-out pictures and the essays were well researched and quite interesting. Some of the subjects of the coloring pages for the younger ones were St. Francis and the wolf, the San Damiano Crucifix, receiving the stigmata and St. Clare and the Blessed Sacrament. As prizes they received T-shirts, crib sets, and statues. All who

contributed received bookmarks or holy cards. The winners were announced on October 5 to commemorate St. Francis's feast day on October 4. We pray that this contest will serve as an apostolate to encourage parents and parish members to consider learning more about St. Francis and Clare, becoming Secular Franciscans and planting early seeds in the children also.

Holy Trinity Region

Three newly professed Seculars in St. Stephen's Fraternity in Hamilton, OH are:

Diane Blume, SFO (11-30-09)

Mary Richter, SFO (6-28-09)

and Ray Richter, SFO (6-28-09)

Our Chapter's recent project is reporting the "St. Francis Pledge" information to parishes at the local level. We have created the "St. Francis Corner" segment that is published in Queen of Peace and St. Julie Billiard's monthly newsletters. Included in these articles is information on the "Pledge" and simple environmental tips. Our hope is to have our church communities understanding and involved in environmental issues which impact future generations and also the poor.

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region



+Fr. Leon Dicks, OFM Conv,+

Fr. Leon Dicks, OFM Conv, who was Spiritual Assistant to the region for many, many years, has gone to his eternal reward in heaven. He died on the feast of St. Francis, Oct. 4. His wake was on Oct. 6, at St. Francis in Staten Island. The funeral Mass was on Oct. 7, at St. Francis in Staten Island as well. His service to the Region will be remembered. He was a devoted Regional Spiritual Assistant, since regionalization created the Blessed Kateri Region. He stepped down in March 2005 at the age of 79. While celebrating his last regional council meeting, he offered the parting words: *"I call myself a Secular Franciscan – because my heart is with the Secular Franciscans."*

Our Lady of Guadalupe – Empress of the Americas

On Oct. 21-26, the Region hosted the National Fraternity for the Chapter of Elections in New Mexico. Regional Minister Christine Imislund, SFO and her multitude of helpers shared their culture and hospitality to make it an unforgettable event. The fire of the Holy Spirit was passed from Patrick Mendés, Former National Minister to Deacon Tom Bello, National Minister and a ready and able National Executive Council. Honored guests were Doug Clorey, Vice General Minister, who presided at the elections and Fr. Ivan Matic, OFM, General Assistant, the witness for the Church.

John Mares, SFO, of Jesus the Morning Star Fraternity, celebrated 70 years as an SFO on Oct. 4. See “Our Stories” in the next issue for John’s story.

Juan de Padilla Region



**The Holy Eucharist Fraternity
Independence, Missouri**

A New Fraternity Canonically Established or A Second Generation from Our Lady of Sorrows

In 1910, Our Lady of Sorrows Fraternity began at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Kansas City, Missouri, under the direction of the Franciscan Friars from Cincinnati, Ohio. In 2003, this fraternity, now located in Olathe, Kansas, undertook the task of forming a new fraternity in Independence, Missouri. On Sunday, October 4, 2009, after a Mass celebrated by Father Felix Petrovsky, OFM Cap, the Secular Franciscan Fraternity of the Holy Eucharist, Independence, Missouri, received its final signature confirming its canonical membership in the Secular Franciscan Family of the Juan de Padilla Region.

This fraternity currently has 49 professed members and 15 inquirers who come from 25 parishes from the metropolitan areas of Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas. The first group made its profession during the Year of the Eucharist. There have been four classes of profession to date. Two members of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Eucharist, Sisters Josephine and

Dorothy, serve as Spiritual Assistants. The photo includes some of the members of the fraternity, as well as Father Felix Petrovsky, OFM Cap, Regional Spiritual Assistant, and Frank Carpinelli, Regional Minister, Juan de Padilla Region (front row, left).

The “passion” for the gospel has deepened as they spread an “infectious joy” that comes from a union with the Most High and Glorious God who still calls to His people: “Rebuild My Church.”



The Breitenstein’s, SFO

Angeline (Jeanne) and Paul Breitenstein celebrated sixty years of being professed in the SFO on August 8, 2009, at Mass in their parish, where they renewed their commitment. They were professed in St. Elizabeth Fraternity, Kansas City, Kansas, on August 7, 1949. They are still active members of St. Elizabeth Fraternity (now located in Leawood, KS), coming to almost every gathering and fraternity function. An amazing couple!



Anthony Effertz, SFO (front row, center)

Anthony Effertz, SFO celebrated 25 years of being professed in the Secular Franciscan Order on September 26, 2009. He had professed in St. Francis Fraternity, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on September 29, 1984, and is now a member of the St. Elizabeth Fraternity, Leawood, Kansas. Several fraternity members, their family members, and two Franciscan Sisters from the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Eucharist from Independence, Missouri, helped him celebrate at a Mass in his parish where he renewed his commitment.



My Child by David Lindsley

HUMOR PAGE

By Dolores Cullen, SFO

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

WHAT'S CUTER THAN KIDS?

The fundamental job of a toddler is to rule the universe.

A first-grader came to school one winter morning proudly sporting a shiny new pair of boots. "Mary," her teacher said, "Where did get you're your new boots?"

"At the store," Mary answered.

"Which one," the teacher asked.

Mary looked down at her boots, puzzled, and said, "Both of them."

The math teacher saw that little Davie wasn't paying attention in class. She called on him and said, "Davie! What are 2 and 4 and 28 and 44?"

Little Davie quickly replied, "NBC, CBS, HBO, and the Cartoon Network!"

Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said.

When my grandson Billy and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use, Grandpa. The mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."

TEACHER: Phyllis, your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

PHYLLIS: No, sir. It's the same dog.

As Ricky waited for his mother to come out of the grocery store, a man approached him and asked, "Son, can you tell me where the Post Office is?"

Ricky replied, "Sure! Just go straight down this street a couple of blocks and turn to your right."

The man thanked the boy kindly and said, "I'm the new pastor in town. I'd like for you to come to church on Sunday. I'll show you how to get to Heaven."

Ricky replied with a chuckle. "Awww, come on... You don't even know the way to the Post Office."

The one thing children wear out faster than shoes is parents.

Little Danny swallowed some coins and was taken to a hospital. When his grandmother telephoned to ask how he was, a nurse said, "No change yet."

TEACHER: Millie, give me a sentence starting with 'I.'

MILLIE: I is...

TEACHER: No, Millie. Always say, 'I am.'

MILLIE: All right. 'I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.'

My young grandson called to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him "62."

He was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

Never underestimate a child's ability to get into trouble.

First grade fan letter:

Dear God,

I think the stapler is one of your best inventions.

Ruth M.

A pastor asked Tim if he said his prayers every night.

"Yes sir," the boy replied.

"And, do you always say them in the morning, too?" the pastor asked. "No sir," Tim replied. "I ain't scared in the daytime."

Little Rita had just finished her first week of school. "I'm just wasting my time," she said to her mother. "I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk!"

A Sunday school teacher said to her class, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But, there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?" One little boy blurted out, "Aces!"

Little Howard went to church for the first time. As he was leaving with his parents, the minister asked how he liked the service. "I liked the music," he replied, "but the commercial was too long."

Grandma was in the bathroom, putting on her makeup, under the watchful eyes of her young granddaughter as she'd done many times before. After she applied her lipstick and started to leave, the little one said, "But Gramma, you forgot to kiss the toilet paper good-bye!"

On my way home one day, I stopped to watch a Little League baseball game in a park near my home. As I sat down behind the bench on the first-base line, I asked one of the boys what the score was. "We're behind 14 to nothing," he answered with a smile.

"Really," I said. "I have to say you don't look very discouraged."

"Discouraged?" the boy asked with a puzzled look on his face. "Why should we be discouraged? We haven't been up to bat yet."

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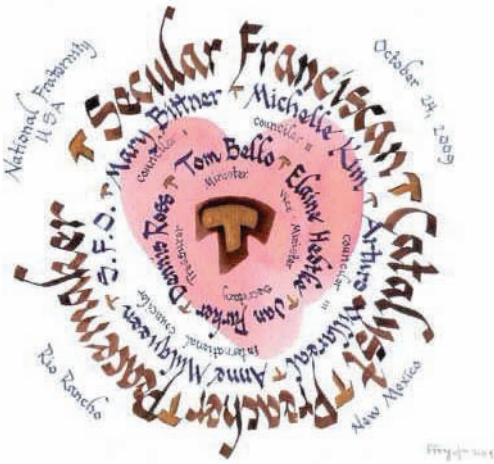
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