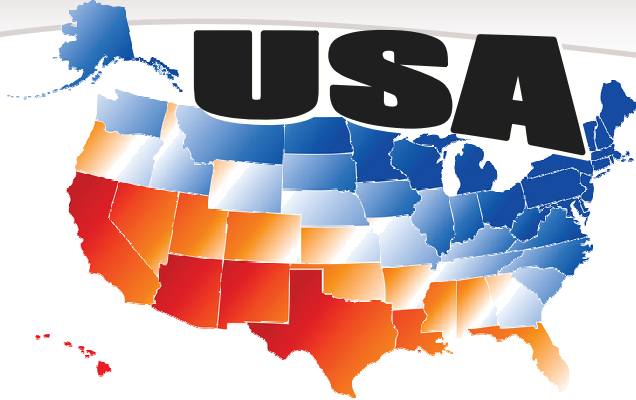


Newsletter

TAU- USA



2009—2012

NATIONAL FRATERNITY
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

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Most High, all powerful, good
Lord, Yours are the praises,
the glory, and the honor and
all blessings.

To You alone, Most High,
do they belong
and no human is worthy
to mention Your name.



Dear brothers and sisters in St. Francis,

I begin this letter with a deep and heartfelt apology for the delay in getting this double issue newsletter out to you. The reasons need not be expounded though I will ask for your empathy before being judged too harshly. What is of greater importance is that our newsletter is now in your hands and that you find it to be both informative and entertaining. This issue hosts two special section highlights.

The 2011 NaFra Chapter recap with day by day coverage spotlighting keynote presentation events. As Tom Bello so notably states in his current *Letter from the National Minister*, during the Chapter, “we prayed and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass together; we formed together; we shared, ate, laughed and learned together; we did what business was ours to do together”. For those of you who couldn’t attend the Chapter, this issue brings the event to you. For those of you who did attend, this issue will be a reminder of a wonderful fraternal week that was shared.

The other section highlight I call to your attention is the upcoming 2012 Quinquennial, an event that only happens once every five years — a special gathering of our entire Nation! The Quinquennial speakers will provide history and perspective to help Reawaken and Focus the *Call of our Vocation*. You will also become part of special small group fraternities who will share what their insights mean to a Secular Franciscan today. These Insights which will then be presented to the National Council to further discern and consider how to make the message real.

If you have already registered, we thank you and ask you to pull out the centerfold brochure and pass it on to someone else with an invitation to attend. If you have not yet registered, please do so now. Every member of the Secular Franciscan Order is called to participate in some way. We urge YOU, yes YOU, one member from every fraternity in the United States to make every effort to come and share alongside your wonderful Order’s International, National, Regional and Local fraternities at every level, and to hear the Holy Spirit’s call to renew and claim the gift of our Franciscan Call.

With thanks and blessings, *Anna*

CELEBRATING THE 8TH CENTENARY OF
THE CONSECRATION OF ST. CLARE
April 16, 2011—August 11, 2012

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"ON THE CARE AND FEEDING OF OUR FRATERNITIES"

In the Gospel of John, this story appears after the Resurrection and seems very warm and intimate on the one hand; but on the other, not really necessary. I mean, Jesus has already risen from the dead. He has appeared twice to His disciples after the Resurrection. "This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to His disciples after being raised from the dead." (John 21:14)

What is left to teach the disciples? They now understand, don't they, that Jesus is the Messiah and that He has come to earth to save us from sin and death by suffering and dying Himself on the Cross and then rising on the third day? He has done all of that. They have seen it, but more is apparently needed.

"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He then said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' Peter was distressed that He had said to him a third time, 'Do You love Me?' and he said to Him, 'Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You.' [Jesus] said to him, 'Feed My sheep.' " (John 21:15-17)

Okay, you're right:

With the Lord, there are no wasted moments; and in John's Gospel, as in each of the Gospels, there are no passages that should be overlooked as seemingly unnecessary.

For example, why were some of the disciples returning to a previous occupation of fishing for fish when the Lord had already called them to be "fishers of men"? (Mark 1:17)

Had they lost faith? Did they think they needed to return to business as usual?

And what is the Lord trying to teach Peter, the first "minister" of the first "fraternity" of the first "observers" of "the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

(*Secular Franciscan Order*, Rule 4)

<http://www.nafra-sfo.org/sforule.html>



As I look back as your elected minister on our National fraternity in 2011 and look forward to 2012, this Gospel suggests four lessons that I have learned and would like to share with you.

One, the Lord wants us to follow Him by keeping His commandments and remaining in His love; (see John 15:9,10; see *Secular Franciscan Order Rule Prologue, Chapter 1*), but,

Two, even if we fail badly and deny the Lord three times, lying that we don't even know Him, the Lord will not fail us or stop loving us; rather, He will give us ample opportunity to redeem ourselves, to turn from sin and be converted to Gospel living.

"Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily."

(*Secular Franciscan Order, Rule 7*)

What is implicit in these first two lessons is the explicit third lesson;

How do we keep the Lord's commandments and remain in the Lord's love? By our love!

How do we often fail to respond to the Lord's unending, unconditional love?

By not loving enough.

Why else would Jesus ask Peter three times, "Do you love me?"

After a threefold denial of Him before His Crucifixion, the Lord expects a threefold Confession of love for Him from the first "minister" of the first "fraternity" of the first "observers" of "the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

After all, at the heart of the Old Testament Torah, the first five books of the Bible, is the great Shema, "Hear, O Israel" (Deuter 6:4); and at the heart of the great Shema is love: "you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Similarly, when tested by the scribes about what is the first of all the Commandments, Jesus answers,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31)

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Thus, love is the third great lesson of this Gospel story; love is the answer to the Lord's expectations of us in lesson one and how we should respond to the Lord's love in lesson two.


Lesson four is how we should manifest our love. "Feed My lambs." "Tend My sheep." "Feed My sheep." (John 21:15-16)

How does one show love to the Lord? By the care and feeding of the Lord's flock. The one "assignment" that Our Lord gives to Peter, the leader of His initial fraternity of disciples; once Peter satisfactorily answers the question, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" is to care for and feed the Lord's flock. (John 21:15-17) Note, please, love of the Lord comes first, then necessarily follows the care and feeding of the Lord's flock.

Finally, how do we manifest that care and feeding of the Lord's flocks?

By taking care of our fraternities. Thus, I wrote in my 2011 Annual Report and spoke in my 2012 Vision of our Order:

"Perhaps no aspect of the Secular Franciscan life should be of more concern to those called to leadership than the vitality of the fraternity, be it local, regional, national or international"

http://www.nafra-sfo.org/meetings_and_resources.html 

So how do all of us called to leadership, called to the training and nurturing of leaders, provide for the vitality of our fraternities?

Article 92.1 of the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order states:

"The purpose of both the pastoral and fraternal visits is to revive the evangelical Franciscan spirit, to assure fidelity to the charism and to the Rule, to offer help to fraternity life, to reinforce the bond of the unity of the Order, and to promote its most effective insertion into the Franciscan family and the Church."

These are the Constitutionally mandated "life signs," the specific "signs of vitality"

—that International Visitors must check when they visit National,

—what National Visitors must check when they visit Regional,

—what Regional Visitors must check when they visit Local,


—what Local Visitors must check when they visit a new or emerging group.

These are the measures of how we all should be caring for and feeding our fraternities.

I have written in this publication about the four "signs of vitality" for every single Franciscan gathering, whether an Annual Chapter or an "ordinary meeting":

"Prayer, Formation, Fraternal Sharing and Necessary Business, and in this order!"

(TAU-USA Winter 2010 Issue 69)

http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/winter10_minister_winter10.pdf 

We need time to pray, to reform ourselves & our fraternities, to know & love each other better and to conduct whatever necessary business we have to do.

Perhaps the key word here is time: it takes time to build and be a Franciscan family at any level.

Please, leaders, allow enough time to ensure the vitality of your fraternity. We at National, met from Tuesday, October 25 to Sunday, October 30, 2011.

We plan to gather the entire National membership at our Quinquennial from Tuesday, July 3 to Sunday, July 8, 2012.

Did your Regional or local fraternity gather even once in 2011 for an entire weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday morning?


Do you plan to do so in 2012? How can you build the vitality of your fraternity on a few hours a month?

Is this what you would expect from your own family?


Often, I fear we sacrifice the vitality of our fraternity life to save time and money.

I followed up this past year with an article entitled, "The Primary Focus and the Four Marks of a Vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity,"

(TAU-USA Spring 2011 Issue 70)

http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/spring11_minister_spring11.pdf 

In this article, I stated that: "Spirituality, Formation, Family and Witnessing all for the sake of 'the salvation of souls' (Canon 1752, Code of Canon Law)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P70.HTM 

Primary Focus and Four Marks of a vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity.

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These are precisely the reasons why prayer, formation, fraternal sharing and only as much business as is necessary offer us the four purposes of a fraternal gathering, and I prayed in the article and every day that God will

“give us the grace, the Living Presence of Christ and the Fellowship (now Communion) of the Holy Spirit when we gather to worship, to form, to share, to witness in Christ’s Name, always striving to keep our fraternities and our souls alive and focused on salvation.”

As Spirituality is the initial and essential element of fraternity, then that Spirituality and love of the Lord must be witnessed out in the world, not put under the bushel basket of the fraternity gathering.

Therefore, in the same article I wrote, “We are to be a ‘community of love’ (*Secular Franciscan Order, Rule 22*) to all in the world. As Blessed Pope John Paul II told us directly at the Xth General Chapter in 2002,

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

<http://www.ciofs.org/per/2005/lca5en14.htm#b>



These aspects of vital fraternal living were the focus of our National Meeting in October 2011 in California. We prayed and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass together; we formed together; we shared, ate, laughed and learned together; we did what business was ours to do together. These aspects of vital fraternal living will be our focus for our 2012 Quinquennial Gathering of all the Nation.

I urge YOU, yes, YOU, one from every fraternity in the United States, to make every effort to join your wonderful Order’s International, National, Regional and Local leadership at the 2012 Quinquennial to be held at the Holiday Inn Chicago North Shore Skokie Hotel.

<http://www.nafra-sfo.org/q2012.html>



We have secured this hotel for only \$87.00 a night (if you order before June 9), with free shuttle service to and from Chicago’s O’Hare Airport, based on scheduled routes.

We will start with 5:00 Dinner and 7:30 Opening Liturgy with Bishop George J. Rassas, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Chicago; on July 3, enjoy a wonderful July 4 Picnic and Fireworks Display, and depart after breakfast, Morning Prayer and Closing Remarks on Sunday, July 8, 2012 all for only \$275, all meals included, if you register before June 1.

This happens only once every five years, and we will focus on building the vitality of our fraternities at every level.

Our keynote speaker and major presenter will be Sr. Iliia Delio, OSF, a renowned author on Franciscan Spirituality, with well-received books on St. Clare, St. Bonaventure, the Humility of God, the Emergent Christ and Franciscan Prayer.

The theme for our Congress is **Why Francis? Claim the Gift.**

Other presenters include noted speaker, author and Professor at the Berkeley Theological Union, Friar William Short, OFM and two of our own Secular Franciscans: Patricia Brandwein-Ball, a former Regional Minister and National Councilor; and Edward Shirley, Professor and Theologian at St. Edward University in Texas and National Ecumenical Chair.

Please come and introduce yourself to me as we continue this discussion on the care and feeding of our fraternities at every level.

I would be honored to meet and talk to you. If you cannot be with us, your personal prayer and holy life contribute greatly to the care and feeding of all our Franciscan flock.

Peace, with love and prayers,

TOM





by
 FAITH LIBBE, OFS
 FEATURE EDITOR

“WORLD DAY OF REFLECTION,
 DIALOGUE AND PRAYER
 IN ASSISI” OCTOBER 27, 2011

PART 2 IN A SERIES

My companions and I arrived in Assisi on October 22nd and savored 4 full days of walking in the footsteps of Francis and Clare before attending the World Day of Peace on October 27th.

We were blessed to pray and meditate at such holy sites as the Basilicas of St. Francis and St. Clare, St. Mary of the Angels (built over the Portiuncula) San Damiano, the Carceri, and LaVerna. We will share our experiences of visiting these holy sites in the next edition of *TAU-USA*.

For now, we will “fast forward” to the day that gathered pilgrims from all around the world, like us, to unite as one for peace and justice in our world.

The event would include a morning program at St. Mary of the Angels and an afternoon program at the Basilica of St. Francis. As Pope Benedict XVI and his delegation were on their train from Rome heading to Assisi, we were plotting our course of action for the day, over an early breakfast. We discerned as a group to forego the morning program and make our way to the Basilica of St. Francis in plenty of time for the afternoon program.

To arrive at the Basilica of St. Francis hours before the afternoon program began, proved most prudent, as the crowd of pilgrims began to grow larger and larger. Through much perseverance and a sheer blessing from God, we ended up with a perfect spot to view the event. The event was to take place on a stage on the piazza (square) of the lower Basilica of St. Francis and we managed to secure our spot on the piazza of the upper Basilica. This would prove to be a perfect vantage point overlooking the entire event!

For hours we held our ground, standing in the same position. Any discomfort we felt, gave way to sheer joy as Pope Benedict and his guests began to arrive! Pope Benedict and his guests were seated in chairs arranged on the perimeter of the stage. Our Pope sat in the center surrounded by some 59 guests from all kinds of faith backgrounds. The guests represented the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu Taoist, Sikh faiths and also represented were agnostics and atheists.



All were welcome in the city of our seraphic father, Francis...in his city of peace. Seated in the audience were some 250 “observer participants” from all around the world. Then there were all the pilgrims like us and locals on the upper piazza like us, in the streets, and watching from the windows of homes.

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As the program began, we were all welcomed with the following words, "Greetings to all from all over the world...as pilgrims of truth, pilgrims of peace, we are united as one single family of people from all over the world from different backgrounds." It is still very hard for me to put into words how I felt being a part of this historic, blessed event...it was a peace, a joy, an exhilaration like no other experience. It was blessed beyond words. After the greeting there was a beautiful choreographed presentation called, "Hopes for Peace" which included song, dance and singers holding oil lamps as symbols of peace. It was all very beautiful and moving.

The ceremony continued with remarks from Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for inter-religious dialogue. He affirmed that the hope for peace had been revived by this Assisi gathering and exhorted everyone to be "witnesses and messengers of peace". Shortly thereafter 13 of the guest participants approached the microphone and gave their personal reflections and solemnly renewed their own commitment to working towards peace. The last to speak was our beloved Pope Benedict XVI who passionately spoke the following words, "VIOLENCE NEVER AGAIN! WAR NEVER AGAIN! TERRORISM NEVER AGAIN! IN THE NAME OF GOD, MAY EVERY RELIGION BRING UPON THE EARTH JUSTICE AND PEACE, FORGIVENESS AND LIFE...LOVE!" I could not have felt more proud of our Holy Father, or more blessed to be part of our beloved, universal Catholic Church that he represented.



After Pope Benedict spoke, there was a moment of silence to afford all gathered an opportunity to pray for peace/desire peace in their own personal way. How powerful our combined prayers must have been on that day, united as one global family desiring peace and justice for all the world. I experienced a surge of hope, great peace and joy in such oneness. I could not help but think that our Lord must be smiling during this event. Yes, how pleased our Lord must have been to see so many of His children praying and desiring peace in Assisi, combined with all the others participating across the globe from wherever they were, with the same desire! As for Francis, he was probably not only smiling too... but dancing!

After this beautiful time of silence and prayer, there assembled in single file youth from across the world, as well as many local Franciscan friars and sisters with lit oil lamps in hand. They approached the stage and each stood in front of the Pope and his guests and handed over the oil lamp. Pope Benedict and his guests arose, oil lamps in hand...the flames of the lamps flickering in the wind representing peace which has to be protected and conserved. It was so beautiful. Yes, the flickering oil lamps were a symbol of the "ardent desire for peace, an earnest desire for peace" for all the world.

Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, then invited participants to exchange a sign of peace in order to seal the commitment they had just pronounced. Then out of the blue, a group of Franciscan friars on a balcony overlooking the stage set free beautiful white doves that flew into the Assisi sky.



In the midst of such beauty, one of the white doves actually landed on the hand of one of Pope Benedict's guests and stayed there for quite some time! Now, could this have been a "miracle of sorts"?! And, how could it not remind us of our seraphic father Francis? After witnessing this extraordinary event, it is no longer a stretch to imagine Francis preaching to the birds on this very soil perhaps with doves landing on his outstretched hand. All and all, this serves as a beautiful depiction of the connectedness of God's little creatures and man. Yes, we are all related as we have the same Heavenly Father!

To conclude the program, Pope Benedict thanked the organizers of the Assisi gathering, making special mention of "the many young people who have made the pilgrimage, proof of the fact that many members of the new generations are committed to overcoming violence and discord, and promoting justice and peace."

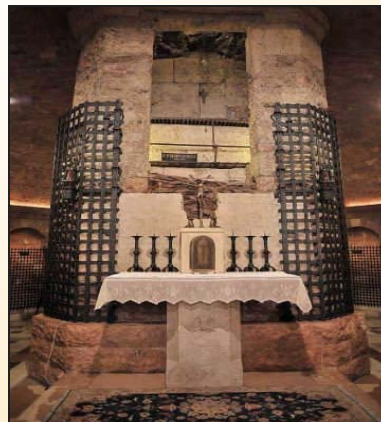
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Pope Benedict also said,

“Today’s event is an image of how the spiritual dimension is a key element in the building of peace. Through this unique pilgrimage we have been able to engage in fraternal dialogue, to deepen our friendship, and to come together in silence and prayer. After renewing our commitment to peace and exchanging with one another a sign of peace, we feel even more profoundly involved, together with all the men and women from the communities that we represent, in our common human journey. We are not being separated; we will continue to meet, we will continue to be united in this journey, in dialogue, in the daily building of peace and in our commitment to a better world, a world in which every man and woman, and every people, can live in accordance with their own legitimate aspirations. From my heart I thank all of you here present for having accepted my invitation to come to Assisi as pilgrims of truth and peace and I greet each one of you in St. Francis’ own words: May the Lord grant you peace.”

During the closing hymn, Pope Benedict and the delegations descended into the lower Basilica of St. Francis. Those of us on the upper piazza, viewing this portion on a big screen, watched as Pope Benedict knelt on a kneeler before the tomb of Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lutheran leader on either side also kneeling...all the others stood behind our Pope in silent prayer and/or meditation.



HOW PROFOUND THAT THIS WAS TAKING PLACE BEFORE THE TOMB OF OUR ST. FRANCIS! As a Franciscan, it continues to touch me deeply, giving me much to ponder and reflect on.

Pope Benedict and his delegations were soon on their way to the train station in Assisi to board the train back to Rome. As the pilgrim crowd began to go their separate ways, the Lord painted the Assisi sky with such a breathtaking sunset.

It still touches me as I write this, recalling that beautiful sky as our group walked through Assisi on our way back to our religious guest house. From the day I read about this world event in Assisi, I dreamt of being a part of it. I am so grateful to God and my travel companions for making my dream of being a part of this historic event come true.

But, where do I go from here?

As a follower of St. Francis, I am called to carry on his “way of peace” and to be a “bearer of peace” in our world.

This *World Day of Peace in Assisi* so beautifully embodies the following words that we are called to live; in Article 19 of our Secular Franciscan Rule:

“...Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon...”

**Oh Lord, please make me
Your instrument of peace!**



OUR CHARISM

WHAT A GIFT!

by

BOB FITZSIMMONS, OFS

CHAIR, NATIONAL FORMATION COMMISSION

By setting things up the way we did, we offer you the most flexibility we could think of, loose leaf so you could rearrange the topic sequence; cross references to correlate materials with some of the ones you already use; power-points to assist with presentations and handouts; and finally lesson plans with goals and objectives.

But let's face it, formation and formation materials will always be a work in progress and you will continually need to keep it fresh and alive and current with the volumes of unfolding Franciscan scholarship. In other words, use what you need, when you need it and how you need it; combine your resources and add large amounts of community, hospitality, prayer, discussion, discernment, and activity — remember the Gospel life is a life alive in imitation of Christ and His actions. Formation and Franciscan life must include heart, head and hands!

THE "FUN" MANUAL HAS NOTHING I CAN USE!


Hard to believe that the TOPICS now required by CIOFS, and written about in all our major formation materials have no benefit to some fraternities. There are many contributing ideals that go into forming a Franciscan person, ideals that require understanding and competency in a number of areas we need to become Franciscan people.

These foundational topics are our basic building blocks.

The time and place of the "lone ranger" fraternity formation, self-developed in its entirety and totally independent of all current formation materials no longer has a place. You can certainly add on some of your own specialized Franciscan experiences, but not to the exclusion of everything else. Formation is a function of the whole Order and every professed Secular at all levels of fraternity. That's why we are stressing specific topics and asking fraternities to develop formation teams, the burden can no longer be on ONE professed brother or sister.

Too much Scotus, too much Incarnation, not enough Aquinas, not enough Crucifixion! Wow, all I can say is, no offense to Aquinas, but the focus of Franciscan formation needs to be Franciscan! (Our Tradition, theology, Spirituality and Charism).

(Continued on page 9)



Thinking back over all the events of the past year, I am exceedingly thankful with the enthusiasm that the "For Up to Now" (FUN) formation project has been embraced.

As I and the rest of the current National Formation Commission winds down and prepares to pass the baton to the new commission, I am hopeful that we have provided something for you all that is truly useful and will enrich all; those seeking to enter our Order, those already professed for many years, and those who have and will step forward to help form, inform and transform new men and women into Franciscan people.

I offer you all my prayers, as poor as they are that you will do what is yours to do! In my travels to various regions, there are a few universal questions that seem to still be lingering, so let's speak about them:

HOW DO WE REALLY USE THE FUN STUFF?

It seems folks when first given the manual have an *OMG* (Oh My God) moment. That's OK, hang in there, is it really easier than you think.

The TOPICS in the manual need to be discussed, unpacked and understood as part of initial formation and I dare say important for ongoing formation as well, but the FUN Manual is first and foremost a resource collection of Formation Short Stories, designed to give the formation team more insight and background to help them inform the Franciscan person.

The support material, like the cross reference materials on the CD, is there to help you combine portions of all the most current formation texts that we use.

No one resource does it all, but taken together they combine to form a pretty good base of knowledge that can make the discussions more dynamic and hopefully open the doors of the heart for deeper transformation.

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Most of us have been very well trained in our faith, either through Catholic schools, RE classes or even RCIA. In fact this is the first foundation in learning and living our Faith. In the Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit has raised up many different charisms/spiritualities, all of which serve a needed role in the Church. We focus on the Franciscan because that is our Charism and OUR CHARISM is our gift to the Church.

Some Orders are called to teach, some to preach or be great apologists and defenders of the Faith. I think Blessed John Paul II said it best about our unique gift to the Church. In following the vision and legacy of Francis,

"The Church expects from the unique Franciscan Secular Order a great service to the cause of the Kingdom of God in the world today ... so as to present yourself to the world as a "community of love"

*(Secular Franciscan Order, Rule art 26)
John Paul II, 22 November 2002*

That's what all this formation is for and our Charism is all about, that we, the Secular Franciscan Order may serve the Church by becoming "a community of love".

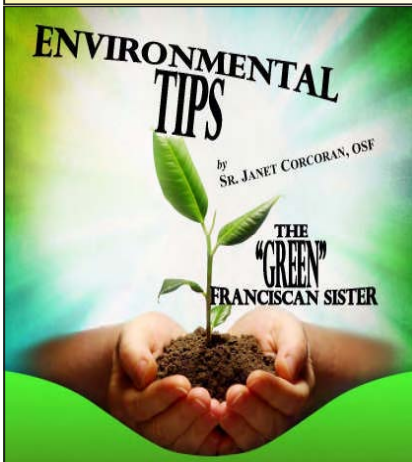
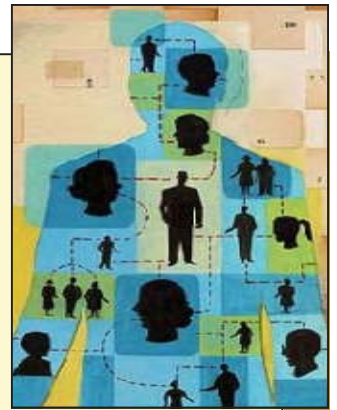
That we might learn to love all, especially those we don't agree with.

Love all because the Father loves all, and become the bridge-builders that can live with dilemma and mystery and in doing so become like Francis, bringing many to Jesus.

I am overjoyed that this project is well received by so many and that we are so deeply committed to carry forward the legacy of Francis!

Pace all,

Fitz



THE "GREEN" FRANCISCAN SISTER

In our day-to-day life there are many ways to be environmentally friendly. In this tip, I will share information regarding greeting cards, which have quite a history. It is usually reported that the sending of greeting cards dates back to the ancient Chinese who sent them to family and friends to celebrate the New Year. Also, the early Egyptians used papyrus scrolls to send their greetings.

In the U.S. in 1856, Louis Prang, a German born immigrant, a biographer, who had a business near Boston, is generally credited with the creation of the first greeting card industry. Since that time, greeting cards have become a profitable business as billions of cards are sent each year, according to the Greeting Card Association. In your purchases of greeting cards, seek to purchase environmentally friendly ones as they save water and energy, reduce waste, protect natural resources, and reduce pollution. One may select 100% recycled content (the higher the post-consumer content the better), and which are printed with vegetable inks. Also, look for the Forest Stewardship Council certification on the back of the paper. Another preferable purchase is tree-free cards as they are made from sustainable resources, up to 100% post-consumer recycled paper, and utilize soy based ink. They, too, are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified. This tree-free paper saves energy, trees, and has a low carbon footprint. There are many creative reuses for greeting cards. If the card does not have anything written on the back of the front cover, cut the card in half and reuse the front half of the card. Some ideas are the following:

- Write a message on the back of your greeting card and re-gift.
- Cut the front of the card into a rectangular or square shape and punch holes in the corner for string or ribbon and use as a gift tag.
- Save received cards for arts and crafts usage for children throughout the year.
- Use the clear backing of the cards for shopping lists, notes, etc.
- Cut out the picture or message on the received card in a 2" by 5" strip, laminate it if needed, and use as a bookmark.
- Reuse the front of your greeting card by cutting it to fit into a tag on your luggage. Then write your personal information on it.

Some people are sending their cards via email, which is an eco-friendly action. When one chooses to purchase a greeting card(s), always seek to make the "green choice" and reuse them when possible, for in so doing one is environmentally friendly and demonstrates, like St. Francis, a respect for our sister Mother Earth.





CNSA

News & Views

Fall - 2011

Lester Bach OFM Cap



653

There are about 653 SFO fraternities in the USA. Ordinarily there should be about 653 Spiritual assistants.



158 +

It's true! Annual reports (2011) have made it clear! There are about 158+ fraternities without a spiritual assistant.



Twould seem that something is amiss? Shouldn't someone be training new people to be Spiritual Assistants?



CNSA

provides a SA training program (since 1996).

The first training program was called: *Life-Giving Union*. The present name is *Franciscan Family Connections*
Revised edition - 2011

cf. A number of regions have a course syllabus which can link with *FFC*

EXHORTATION OF ST. FRANCIS TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF PENANCE

... *Oh, how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them because the "Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them." (cf. Isaiah 11:2) and he will make "his home and dwelling among them" (cf. John 14:23) and they are the sons of the heavenly Father (cf. Matthew 5:45), whose works they do, and they are the spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 12:50).*

We are spouses, when by the Holy Spirit the faithful soul is united with our Lord Jesus Christ, we are brothers to him when we fulfill "the will of the Father who is in heaven." (cf. Matthew 12:50).

We are mothers, when we carry him in our heart and body (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:20) through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to him through a holy life which must give light to others by example (cf. Matthew 5:16).

Oh, how glorious it is to have heaven! Oh, how glorious it admirable Spouse, the Holy



a great and holy Father in is to have such a beautiful and Paraclete.

Oh, how glorious it is to have Son, loved, beloved, humble, desirable above all: Our up his life for his sheep, (cf. John 10:15) and prayed to the Father saying:

such a Brother and such a peaceful, sweet, lovable, and Lord Jesus Christ who gave

"Oh holy Father, protect them with your name (cf. John 17:11) whom you gave me out of the world. I entrusted to them the message you entrusted to me and they received it. They have known that in truth I came from you, they have believed that it was you who sent me. For these I pray, not for the world (cf. John 17:9). Bless and consecrate them, and I consecrate myself for their sakes. I do not pray for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word (cf. John 17:20) that they may be holy by being one as we are one (cf. John 17:11). And I desire, Father, to have them in my company where I am to see this glory of mine in your kingdom" (cf. John 17:6-24)

Prologue to the SFO Rule

Reflecting on the words of Francis and the Gospel can guide the vision of Francis in our lives. But simply reading the words or pondering the ideas is not sufficient. The Holy Spirit invites us to **give flesh to the vision** of Francis in our daily life in the Church and the world. When people argue or refuse to listen to each other; or separate from one another; or ignore the truth; or refuse to dialogue with others who disagree with them - something of the vision of Francis is lost. Dialogue may not be easy but it is necessary.

Anger, resentment, frustration, fear, and security-needs do exist in our lives. How we deal with them reveals something about the depth of our Franciscan vision. We use prayer, dialogue, consultation, or other means to keep negative feelings from dictating our reactions to people and situations. Personal "conversion" is the result when we make our Franciscan vision visible.



When we are faithful to the Franciscan vision JOY enters our lives. Joy is a heart-quality, more than just "feeling good." It is not a momentary flash that quickly disappears. It is not merely being in good humor or being happy over some temporary achievement. The SFO Rule states that Franciscans should be: *Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.* (SFO Rule - #19). Joy is expected to be a common quality in Franciscan life.

Joy requires a peaceful spirit in our heart. It is *not* a spirit that must always be right or can never acknowledge being wrong. Joy requires a recognition that God is working in our lives. We are aware of being loved by the Trinity. We are "somebody" to God. The Trinity's love is faithful regardless of how we respond to God. *God is love* (1 John 4:8). God cannot stop loving us.

Anger, resentment, unforgiveness, frustration, hatred, bigotry, prejudice, stubborn dogmatism, domination, injustice, refusal to change, a know-it-all attitude, rash judgment - all of them diminish joy. Add a negative attitude about our own identity; the lack of quiet reflective time; or constant worry - and our ability to be joyful will shrink. Such qualities diminish joy. Negative attitudes make it difficult to *bring joy and hope to others* in daily life! Yet the SFO Rule calls us - *to bring joy and hope to others* (#19).

Joy can blossom when we are at peace with ourselves and the world; when we forgive people and discover a new spirit of freedom; when we rejoice at another's good fortune; or realize that the Trinity loves us every moment of our lives; or when we smile at personal inconsistencies and change them. Joy comes when gospel values and ideals take root in our lives. Joy blossoms when we are faithful to the entire Franciscan vision in the whole of life. (cf. *The Franciscan Journey* - Lester Bach OFM Cap - Page 292 ff).

I have said that St. Francis deliberately did not see the woods for the trees. It is even more true that he deliberately did not see the mob for the men. What distinguishes this very genuine democrat from any mere demagogue is that he never either deceived or was deceived by the illusion of mass-suggestion. Whatever his taste in monsters, he never saw before him a many-headed beast. He only saw the image of God multiplied but never monotonous. To him a man was always a man and did not disappear in a dense crowd any more than in a desert. He honored all men; that is, he not only loved but respected them all. What gave him his extraordinary personal power was this: that from the Pope to the beggar, from the sultan of Syria in his pavilion to the ragged robbers crawling out of the wood, there was never a man who looked into those brown, burning eyes without being certain that Francis Bernadone was really interested in him; in his own inner individual life from the cradle to the grave; that he himself was being valued and taken seriously, and not merely added to the spoils of some social policy or the names in some clerical document. Now for this particular moral and religious idea there is no external expression except courtesy.

Saint Francis of Assisi - G.K. Chesterton - Image Books -Page 96-97

"... If you're too much focused on the dream, on the contemplative thing, on the vision, it can easily lead to self-absorption and navel-gazing. And that's why I'm so attracted to Francis, because he didn't do that. He took that dream, that vision, and he acted upon it. ... if you're too much on the journey, and it's not sustained by a contemplative side somehow, that gets to be very superficial. The journey itself becomes more important than the end, the point to which you are hopefully journeying. ... a journey is happening, a breaking out of self-absorption and into an encounter with the other. You need to balance the two: time in prayer and time in journeying." (Quote by Murray Bodo OFM)

St. Francis for seekers - Barbara Beckwith (about Murray Bodo OFM)
St Anthony Messenger - October, 2011 - Page 19



CNSA's Web-site

(In process)

<http://www.nafra-sfo.org/CNSA.html>

NAFRA-SFO.org
/CNSA.html

It's possible you didn't know this.
NOW YOU DO!



Attention, SA's!

CNSA has a serve-list for SA's.

Join the list by e-mailing your e-mail address and name to:

CNSA-members@yahoogroups.com

or to:
Dan Mulholland at:
dannymai@aol.com



SA's role in Fraternity life

Local SA's share in the formation sessions of the fraternity (initial & ongoing). SA's work with the formation team, but are NOT in charge!

SA's give their "spiritual assistance" in a collaborative spirit.

This spirit should also inspire their contributions at council meetings and fraternity gatherings.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

by

EDWARD L. SHIRLEY, OFS
CHAIR, ECUMENICAL/INTERFAITH COMMITTEE

I have been asked to address the question of who, exactly, are these “other Christians,” those who live and practice their Christian faith outside of those Churches in union with Rome (the Catholic Church). I wrote about this several years ago, but I think it bears repeating, and hopefully, I will say things in a new way.

Christian denominations are like branches of the family tree. However, there are branches that stem off of branches that stem off of other branches: like large families, some members are more closely related than others: there are parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We might think about these groups as clans: groupings of denominational families.

The Christian family can be grouped in many ways, of course, and different people might group us differently. For example, while Catholics see the Orthodox as “sister Churches,” sharing the seven Sacraments, Apostolic Succession, and the use of images in worship (though the Orthodox do not use three-dimensional images), the Orthodox are quite likely to think that Catholics and Protestants look more like each other than either looks like the Orthodox.

Why? Because they can clearly see the Western attributes that seem so foreign to traditional Orthodoxy. Protestants who confess the Nicene Creed, for example, are likely to say that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son,” while the Orthodox, using the original wording of the Creed, confess that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father.”

Are Anglicans more similar to the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church (looking very Western), or are they more similar to the Orthodox: bishops, priests, deacons, and no pope? Many times, what similarities we see depends on what similarities we are looking for. Let’s take a look at one way of understanding Christian Churches: “high,” “middle” and “low” Churches.

By “high,” “middle” and “low,” we do not mean higher or lower class, higher or lower value, or even higher or lower dedication to the Gospel. By these words, we mean a combination of the structures of the organization, common worship (e.g., liturgy) and beliefs about the sacraments.

In this schema, Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Lutherans tend to fall into the “high church” clan. If Catholics went to an Anglican (in this country, Episcopalian) or Lutheran service, they might find they know every liturgical response (at least, until the latest change).

Catholics and Orthodox celebrate seven Sacraments, or “Holy Mysteries,” and though there are differences of opinion in the Anglican Church, many Anglicans, also, practice seven.

Lutherans, on the other hand, accept two sacraments as instituted by Christ—baptism and the Eucharist—though they also celebrate other rites that are not ranked as Sacraments (including marriage, ordination and confession). All of these Churches practice infant baptism, believe that sacraments are vehicles for grace, and that Christ is really present in the Eucharist.

The Orthodox and Catholic Churches separated in the 11th century, while Lutherans and Anglicans have their origins in the 16th century Reformation, for very different reasons.

“Lower” Churches have a less structured service, usually composed of hymns, spontaneous prayers, and focus on preaching the Word. Sometimes, these Churches identify themselves as “Evangelical,” from the Greek word for “Gospel,” but Evangelicals do not all agree theologically. Some Evangelicals believe in the literal inspiration of the Bible, and identify themselves as “fundamentalists.”

However, not all Evangelicals are fundamentalists. Lower Churches include Baptists, Nazarenes, Church of Christ, and Pentecostals.

Even here, there are differences among them: among Baptists, Southern, American, General, and Free Will, and others; and among Pentecostals, Assembly of God and United Pentecostal, and others).

Baptists include Jerry Falwell and Martin Luther King, Jr.; Fred Phelps and Tony Campolo, representing very different understandings of the Gospel.

(Continued on page 13)



(Continued from page 12)

Typically, in lower Churches, only baptism and Communion are celebrated as sacraments (sometimes called “ordinances”), though they also celebrate ordination, marriage, and among Pentecostal Churches, anointing the sick and other charismatic gifts.

Lower Churches practice “believer’s baptism,” which is usually understood as a sign that you have accepted Christ as your Savior, and Communion is understood to be a memorial meal, remembering Christ died for our sins. Baptists are often traced, historically, to the early 17th century in Amsterdam, while modern Pentecostal Churches had their roots in late 19th century revival movements.

Middle Churches, like the name implies, fall somewhere in between. Presbyterians, Methodists and United Church of Christ are typical middle Churches. They have a simpler liturgy, sometimes very informal.

They celebrate two sacraments, baptism and Communion.

Unlike most of the low Churches, they practice infant baptism, and like high Churches, believe that baptism is actually a vehicle for grace. Though they do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist in the Catholic sense, they do hold that through receiving Communion, you are really encountering Christ spiritually. Presbyterian Churches have their roots in the theology of John Calvin, a 16th century Reformer, while Methodists trace themselves back to the work of John and Charles Wesley, two 18th century Anglican priests.

The United Church of Christ is the product of unification movements among the Evangelical and Reform and Christian Churches in 1957 (and these two Churches being the results of earlier unification movements).

This is only a very general introduction to our larger family. There are many, many other members of the family, and many differences among them.

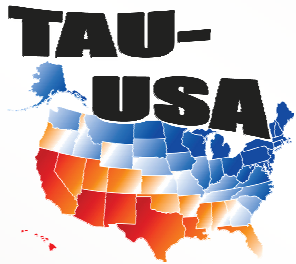
In fact, it is important to remember that there are probably as many approaches to Methodist belief and practice, for example, as there are Catholic approaches (after all, Franciscans and Dominicans do not agree on everything).

However, whatever differences there may be, they all believe in the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, and are trying to understand the implications of that belief in their lives.

I hope this very short and general introduction helps to inspire you in your own dialogue with your spiritual kinfolk.



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ORDINARY MAN DOING UNORDINARY THINGS

Article by
DIANE HALAL, OFS
St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity

ESSAY BY CAYMAN ROJAS

**“START BY DOING WHAT’S NECESSARY; THEN DO WHAT’S POSSIBLE;
AND SUDDENLY YOU ARE DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE.” — St. Francis of Assisi**



I found these words unique because I live my life by these words and St. Francis did as well. Living a life of little education and little responsibilities is a life full of temptation and foolishness. This was the life St. Francis was given to live and was able to turn around. Through the grace of God and a life changing experience was St. Francis guided to the light of Jesus Christ, and a life full of service to the world. We mourn over the lost of this inspiration, but we rejoice in the legend he left behind.

If we had the chance to experience St. Francis in our life today, our world would receive a man full of guidance and help. St. Francis would be fulfilling his life’s destiny by preaching to the poor, aiding the wounded, and praising God’s creation. St. Francis preached without using words. This means by his actions he shows Christ to people. He would go around and spread the word of Christ to everyone. He would heal the wounded that have been hurt from disasters such as earthquakes, tornados, and floods. He would teach the value of education to children who do not have the ability to learn. Africa, India, and the Middle East are all places St. Francis would be.

However, just because a country is rich does not mean it isn’t poor in ethics. In the United States there are people who put money above all things and forget their Creator. St. Francis knows what it feels like to be in their position. He would help the people who are lost and away from God. Lastly St. Francis stood for the value of God’s creation and how much we must respect it. He would tell us all to love every creature from the smallest ant to the largest whale. He would talk about the importance of recycling and the benefits it had on our Earth. He would also talk about our view on each other. He would tell us to look beyond the wealthy man or the woman’s beautiful face. Show respect to the homeless mother or the unborn children.

This quote from St. Francis sums up what he would be telling us today:

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.” (St. Francis of Assisi.)

St. Francis talks about the value of life and its sacredness and that is what St. Francis would be doing today.

Suzanne DeVaney, St. Hedwig School Principal, Mrs. Sarah Visser, Cayman Rojas, Contest Winner, Diane Halal, OFS, Minister, St. Maximilian Kolbe Secular Franciscan Fraternity.

“What would St. Francis be doing in the world today” was the topic of a recent essay contest for eighth graders at St. Hedwig School. Mrs. Sarah Visser, their 8th grade teacher, supervised the essay writing and submitted 47 essays to the local St. Maximilian Kolbe Secular Franciscan fraternity which sponsored the essay contest in an effort to interact with youth.

Cayman read his winning essay to the audience during the Academic Awards ceremony, and received the prizes of \$25 and a Reference 3-Book Desk set.





ANNE MULQUEEN, OFS
 INTERNATIONAL COUNCILOR, USA
Amulqueen.icusa@gmail.com

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:7)

In this letter I want to share with you both my experiences in Brazil and what I learned at the XIII General Chapter held in Sao Paulo, October 22-29, 2011.


First, let me tell you a little about my experiences. It began the evening of October 21, with an overnight flight from Dulles Airport to Sao Paulo. Since the time difference between Northern Virginia and Sao Paulo is only two hours, I was able to sleep most of the 9-hour flight. A promising beginning, but little did I know how packed the days and the evenings would be. Good thing I slept!

The Chapter began on the afternoon of Saturday, October 22, with Mass and a rather lengthy *State of the Order* address from our Minister General, Encarnación del Pozo –“Encarnita” as she is affectionately known.

Early Sunday morning we boarded three buses for a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida—a three-hour bus trip from the retreat house. About an hour into the trip my bus blew a tire and since we had no spare, we waited three hours by the side of the road for help to arrive. It was Sunday and no one was readily available. We were too late for Mass at the Basilica where we were supposed to join the other International councilors. Eventually we met them for lunch and a inspirational visit with the Poor Clares. Fortunately, we were able to visit the National Shrine on our return trip to the retreat house. It was a graced time of prayer. There were no crowds, and we were able to pray and gaze upon the statue without being moved along.

When we returned to our bus, the battery was dead—a bad connection. About an hour later, the bus driver managed to *jury-rig* the battery connection with a strip of metal from a coke can. We arrived home after midnight, exhausted but exhilarated. Although nothing went as planned, everything turned out according to God’s plan.

Space does not permit me to tell you the miraculous story of Our Lady of Aparecida. If you are interested go to:

<http://www.marypages.com/LadyAparecida.htm> 

The rest of the days were filled with daily Mass, morning and evening prayer, plenary sessions, work group sessions, wonderful meals and socials. Mass and prayer times were an experience of heaven while keeping my feet planted firmly on the ground. The socials lasted until the need for sleep was greater than the need for fun.

And finally, the evening of October 29 I flew home and into my arms of my husband Bill.

Since it is my privilege and also my responsibility to keep you informed of all that happens at the International level of fraternity, I will share with you what I learned during my time at Chapter.

My dilemma is how to give you all the information I received in a limited amount of space. What I will do is condense the *State of the Order* address given by our Minister General Encarnita and, wherever possible, I will direct you to websites that will give you more depth.

Statistically speaking, we have 66 constituted national fraternities worldwide, 42 emerging national fraternities, and 3 nations with an OFS presence.

The priorities of the General Chapter 2008, were reviewed, and we were given an update of the progress in each of these priorities. In order of importance they are:

- (1) Formation
- (2) Communication
- (3) Franciscan Youth
- (4) Presence in the World
- (5) Emerging Fraternities

Encarnita made it clear that these priorities were not only binding on the Presidency, but also on all the fraternities in the world at all levels and for each Secular Franciscan.

Further, she exhorted the international councilors to be well-informed and aware of their role and to assume responsibility for these priorities, along with their National fraternity and the International presidency.

In regard to **Formation**, the Presidency is implementing a five-prong approach:

- (1) Formation for Formators
- (2) Ongoing Formation Monthly Dossiers
- (3) Manual for Initial Formation for Candidates
- (4) Formation for Secular Spiritual Assistants
- (5) Formation of Fraternal Animators for YouFra.

Every member of the Presidency has some responsibility for developing these resources.

(Continued on page 16)



(Continued from page 15)

Translations into the four official languages of all circular letters, publications, and other materials sent to all national fraternities are the primary focus of the second priority: **Communication**. The four official languages are English, French, Italian and Spanish. You can find copies of almost all CIOFS mailings on the CIOFS website.

<http://www.ciofs.org/en.htm> 

The communication challenge for the United States is getting the information sent from CIOFS into the hands of our local fraternity members.



The third priority, **Franciscan Youth**, is an area where the United States needs both inspiration and perspiration. By that I mean we have a lot of work to do. Worldwide, Franciscan Youth is present in 66 countries. The OFS has 35 recognized national fraternities and 31 emerging fraternities. A youth presence exists in 26 other countries. The YouFra International Council held a meeting in Madrid, August 12-15, 2011. Three hundred and twenty young people attended this meeting, representing 31 fraternities worldwide. More information can be found at:

<http://ciofs.org/youfra.htm> 

The fourth priority, **Presence in the World**, is akin to our Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation efforts, but in a worldwide context. In 2009, CIOFS instituted a campaign against the persecution of Christians in Pakistan. CIOFS also contacts and offers support to nations experiencing natural disasters. Recently, members of the Presidency visited Haiti to help the Haitian Secular Franciscans develop a plan for reconstruction. This project is ongoing, and you will find more information posted on the CIOFS website.

The last priority, **Emerging National Fraternities**, is probably one you know little about. Earlier in this letter I mentioned that worldwide we have 42 emerging national fraternities and 3 nations with an emerging OFS presence. Also, there are 39 emerging YouFra national fraternities. The Presidency has objectives in place to accompany emerging national fraternities by:

- (1) animating and guiding them;
- (2) assembling and maintaining data on them;
- (3) involving national fraternities to accompany them;

- (4) preparing documents that describe the responsibilities of accompanying fraternities;
- (5) establishing a process of “twinning” fraternities in different parts of the world; and
- (6) supplying materials and funds to poorer emerging fraternities.

I have barely scratched the surface of all that happened during the eight long and wonderful days in Brazil. I am adding some websites for those of you who want to know more and don't want to wait for my next letter.


I will close this letter with the words Encarnita used at the end of her presentation. They apply to all of us as well as to those who were present at the Chapter. She said,

The Holy Father on October 2, told us that God is presented by the prophet Isaiah as a farmer in love with his vineyard, who gives his heart, feelings, thoughts, fatigue and anxiety to make it more beautiful and fruitful. We are thus invited to bear abundant fruit, whether as farmers or as the vine itself, since it is our duty to give back to God the Father all that we are, or what we have and that He has given us. With these words of the Holy Father, I finalize this report to our Order of the past three years, asking forgiveness for our shortcomings and omissions.

In peace and with fraternal affection,
Your sister,

Anne



WEBSITES: 

Final Message of the General Chapter:
<http://www.ciofs.org/doc/kia11/ENkia11final.html>

Conference of General Spiritual Assistants' Newsletter *Koinonia*:
www.ciofs.org/Koinonia/Koinonia%202011-%203%20EN.pdf

Pictures from General Chapter:
<https://picasaweb.google.com/113355173615765443104>



DON'T SIT ON FENCE, GENERAL MINISTER EXHORTS

by
BOB STRONACH, OFS
NAFRA PR CO-CHAIR

The general minister, from the General Chapter in Brazil at the end of October, urged Secular Franciscans worldwide to support emerging fraternities, to get involved with Franciscan youth, to take on the church's urgent call to evangelize, and to stop sitting on the fence in creating a more just and fraternal world.

"The Order is growing!" said Encarnacion (Encarnita) del Pozo, OFS. "It is growing not only in numbers, but also in awareness of its identity, of its proper place in the Family and the Church as well as in awareness of the work it must undertake in the world in continuing the mission of Francis."

She pointed to an increasing number of emerging fraternities in all parts of the world, "especially in those areas where the Church exists in very difficult conditions." She encouraged Secular Franciscans "to get involved in accompanying these fraternities both spiritually as well as materially and to assist them in formation."

Noting that "Franciscan Youth is growing stronger all over the world and is a witness to us of a profound commitment of Christian and human authenticity," the general minister said:

**"WE EXHORT YOU TO LOVE,
GET TO KNOW,
AND SUPPORT YOUFRA."**

Encarnita noted that the Holy Father, in his message to the chapter, asked Secular Franciscans "to be builders of a civilization of love" and "witnesses and instruments of the redemptive mission of the Church, announcing Christ both by word and their own example." She said: "It is a mission which is urgent and demanding."

The chapter also challenged attendees to reflect on the call to build a more just and fraternal world —

"to become active witnesses and not just passive and distracted observers of the injustices and extreme material and spiritual poverty that a world without God imposes on a large part of humanity and creation."

She exhorted:

"We can no longer sit on the fence. The Church and the world are waiting for a courageous and effective response from us. The Church and the world have a need for Francis and for the Family of which we are the part that is the largest in number and the most deeply implicated in every place of the world."

She closed her message by entrusting the order to the protection of Mary, mother of God, "that she might watch over us and lead us to the full realization of our vocation and mission."



XIII Capitolo Generale dell'OFS
22-29 Ottobre, 2011 - Brasile





DID YOU KNOW THAT CIOFS HAS FORMALLY CHANGED OUR ACRONYM FROM SFO TO OFS?

The name of our Order remains the Secular Franciscan Order, but we will now be using the initials OFS after our names (and everywhere else we used to use SFO).

Below is a message from our National Minister Tom Bello, followed by the document from CIOFS.

Beloved National Family,

As all of us know, we are experiencing language changes in how we celebrate Mass. I am absolutely certain that it is still the same Lord and Savior that I receive at Holy Communion. At the last International Chapter in October in Brazil the following document was introduced, voted upon and approved. It is signed by our Minister General. You will see in the official document the words “Secular Franciscan Order” still used when referring to our Order in English, as well as “Secular Franciscans” still used when referring to us. I also give you these exact words in an email from Doug Clorey, who many of us know from previous visitations:

“Document on the ‘Name of the Order’ should be released shortly in a circular from our Minister General. This document was presented to the General Chapter in Brazil, voted and approved.”

Doug Clorey, OFS
Vice-Minister General
Secular Franciscan Order

Note that Doug, our Order’s Vice-Minister General, is still a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. When we use English, we are still the Secular Franciscan Order, not the Order of Franciscan Seculars or whatever. We remain Secular Franciscans, not Franciscan Seculars, when we use English. What has changed is that Doug is now, when he uses the initials after his name, Doug Clorey, OFS not SFO.

Again, I am absolutely certain that OFS or SFO does not make me or you or Doug any more or less Franciscan. We are still permanently professed. Our Order is still, in English, the Secular Franciscan Order.

Tom Bello, OFS, National Minister

XIII GENERAL CHAPTER São Paulo, 2011 October 22-29

THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE ORDER THE USE AND THE TRANSLATION OF THE NAME OF THE ORDER

1. The official name of the Order is
Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis.

2. Translations of the name of the Order

2.1 The translation of the name of the Order is already made in the four official languages, and these are the ones to be used in these languages, namely in Italian, in English, in Spanish and in French.

2.2 The name can be translated into local languages only when the literal translation from Latin is easily understandable even by the civil society and does not change its meaning or substance.

2.3 When the translation into the national language distorts the meaning of the name, or is linguistically impossible to transfer the genuine meaning, **Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis** must always be used, which can be followed by expressions to clarify and make more understandable the nature of the Secular Franciscan Order to everyone in the local language.

3. The Acronym

The acronym which refers to the name **Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis** is **OFS** and is always to be used regardless of the language. For example, when Secular Franciscans use the acronym after their name, they must use “**OFS**”.

Encarnación del Pozo, OFS, General Minister

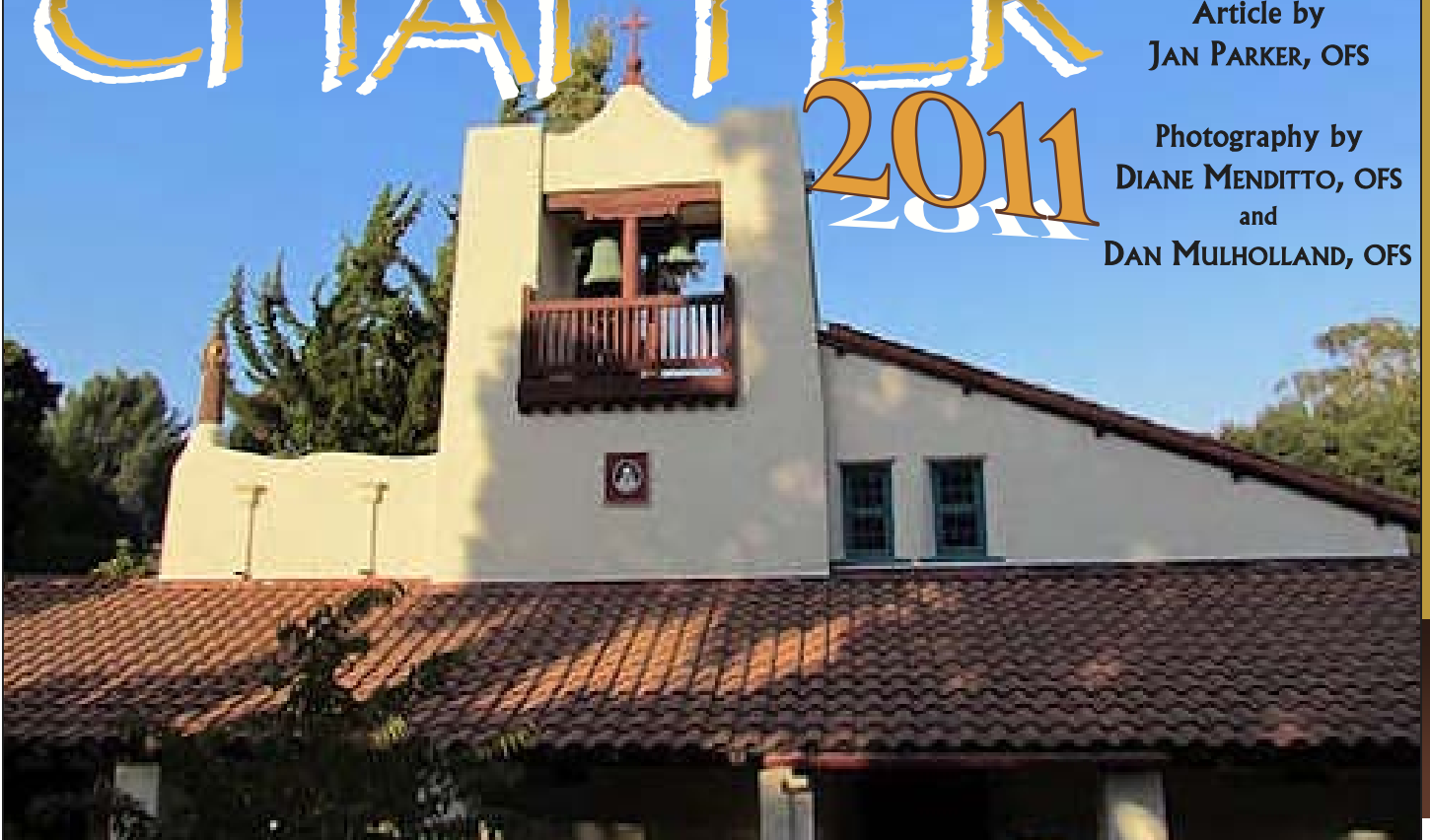


NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
OCTOBER 25—30, 2011 — SAN JUAN BAUTISTA, CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER 2011

Article by
JAN PARKER, OFS

Photography by
DIANE MENDITTO, OFS
and
DAN MULHOLLAND, OFS



“For St. Francis, Chapters were extremely important. They are true celebrations of life in fraternity animated by the Holy Spirit. We gather to discuss matters pertaining to God. We consult with the brothers and sisters concerning whatever pertains to the welfare and the good of the fraternity — and we listen to all, for God often speaks the best through the least. When the fraternity comes together, whether for Chapter or Visitation or for any gathering, it should have the appearance of a Thanksgiving dinner, not a business meeting.”

—Tom Bello, OFS

“All the participants rejoice and praise the Lord for the journey accomplished and repent for their misgivings, promising to be more faithful to their Secular Franciscan evangelical Way of Life.” Misgivings? Yes, perhaps we must repent of our misgivings! Should we not repent for our lack of faith, our lack of hope, and our wishy-washiness, and our inability to motivate ourselves? Maybe those are the things we should turn away from as we turn to the Lord and promise to be more faithful to our Secular Franciscan evangelical Way of Life!

—Mary Bittner, OFS, quoting from
the CIOFS *Guidelines for Chapters*.

FRATERNITY is why we GATHERED

National FRATERNITY is what we CELEBRATED.

FRATERNITY is what we were

Chapter

SENT FORTH TO BUILD!

The Franciscan call to fraternal communion brought more than 70 of our brothers and sisters to San Juan Bautista, CA from October 25-30, 2011 to celebrate a “thanksgiving feast” with our national family, the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (NAFRA), at our annual Chapter.

Much was shared during these precious days, but by far it was our “being together in fraternity” that brought the most joy. Together we shared in a Chapter filled with the sense of family, love, and mission.

In planning for this Chapter the National Executive Council (NEC) was inspired by the 2008 CIOFS *Guidelines for the Celebration of Chapters* which beautifully state,

“Jesus Christ, who teaches, prays and serves, makes Himself present in the chapter. The Chapter evokes the Church and renders it present, assembled in faith, hope and charity.”

These guidelines also challenged us: “Chapters are privileged times of renewal and grace for the entire National Fraternity; hence, the importance that all the brothers and sisters of the National Fraternity be fully committed in the preparation of the Chapter and its follow-up. The Chapter is to be always celebrated in an attitude of conversion, since there is a search for greater perfection in life according to the Rule, in fraternity.

In the Chapter all personal interests and ambitions of power must be excluded. Everything must be done according to the example of Jesus Christ, in the spirit of service.”

PRAYERFULLY LED

Keeping in mind the CIOFS guidelines, we focused on the essential aspects of a Chapter:

(1) The proclamation of the Word of God, which enlightens the themes to be discussed;

(2) Prayer; and (3) The search for what is best for the life of the Fraternity.

Each day began with an hour of quiet and individual prayer followed by an hour of shared prayer and reflection.

As we proclaimed and responded to the Word of God and the writings of St. Francis we felt the powerful movement of the Spirit and the strengthening of fraternal bonds. The summit of our prayer each day was the celebration of the Eucharist.

We are deeply grateful to Bishop Richard J. Garcia (*Diocese of Monterey*), Fr. Lester Bach OFM Cap., Fr. Steve Gross OFM Conv., Fr. Kevin Queally TOR and Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM for their presence with us, and for their inspiring homilies – such beautiful messages to us of hope, love and mission!

Our hearts were also lifted in prayerful and joyful song with music led by Cindy and Jim Wesley, OFS and oh, how Franciscans can sing! Two special liturgical highlights were the Mass celebrated at the San Juan Bautista Mission and the “Spirit of Assisi” Prayer Service organized by the friars of St. Francis Retreat.



A TURKEY PARABLE

by JAN PARKER, OFS

Wildlife abounds at St. Francis Retreat. During our stay some of our members reported on encounters with wild boar and even a bobcat! More abundant were sightings of deer and wild turkeys. At our National Executive Council meeting, just prior to the NAFRA Chapter, Kent Ferris, OFS, shared the following story about a turkey.

Early one morning as Kent was out running he saw a group of wild turkeys strutting down the road. As these turkeys passed by a parked car one of them was suddenly distracted by his reflection in the bumper.

This turkey became totally focused on his reflection. He started beating his head against the bumper and persisted for some time in this behavior. Then, seemingly coming to his senses, he gave up, shook his head a bit and strutted quickly to rejoin the group.

The moral of the story? Sometimes we see enemies where none exist. We can knock ourselves out trying to defeat something that is not there. Fortunately even a real turkey can realize the error of his ways.

After Kent shared this story, Jan Parker led all in the singing of the following appropriate song:

IF GOD CAN LOVE TURKEYS

If God can love turkeys,
God can love you.
I am a turkey.
You are one, too.
So if you feel lonely,
remember it's true.
If God can love turkeys,
God can love you!



St. Francis Retreat – a place rich with natural beauty and hospitality in an area rich with Franciscan history and tradition.



Newly elected regional Ministers received a cheerful and enthusiastic welcome Orientation from Mary Frances Charsky, OFS.



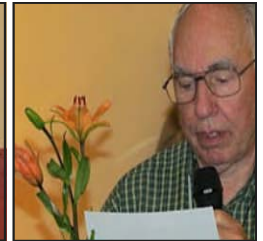
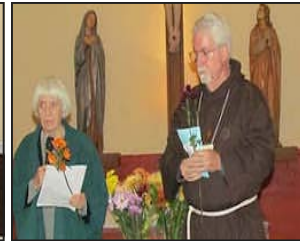
CHAPTER 2011 Day by Day

Tuesday, October 25th OPENING OF CHAPTER



National Minister, Tom Bello, OFS welcomed all to this feast, introducing everyone individually, and noting that we are an Order that includes local, regional and national fraternities within a Franciscan family that includes all of our 1st, 2nd and 3rd Order brothers and sisters.

Our fraternal communion also includes the brothers and sisters who have gone before us and the evening fittingly ended with Mass and the Rite of Remembrance.



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W Wednesday, October 26th FRATERNITY

The Chapter's first full day was devoted to the theme of Fraternity beginning with talks from National Councilor, Mary Bittner, OFS and CNSA President, Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap. With one sentence Mary had everyone quickly scribbling notes. Her words hit the mark and we could not write fast enough! A powerful quote was from our General Minister, Encarnita del Pozo, OFS challenging us to "an intensification and revitalization of our local fraternities".

(For more on Mary's talk see the sidebar "Speaking of Fraternity" on page 27)

A question Mary put forth for discussion was "What are we as leaders doing to enhance the vitality of our fraternities? (Local, Regional and National).

While Mary's talk focused on fraternity more or less "within the Order", Fr. Lester spoke to the heart of what it means to live the Franciscan charism of fraternity in our daily lives. His talk challenged us to do just that. In summary,

"If we are going to work well as followers of St. Francis we have to know who we are. We need to do what Franciscans do. This is our way of life — a way that consistently shows "this is what the Lord would do". Jesus healed on the Sabbath. People were upset. He was breaking the law.

When we follow the Lord we will sometimes upset others. But we need to do this in the right spirit. We do not have a charism that builds walls.

(Continued on page 27)



2012 Quinquennial



LET US BEGIN!

“... Let us begin to serve the Lord our God, for up till now we have done little.”

Quinquennial XVIII

Holiday Inn, Chicago North Shore
July 3 – 8, 2012

T

hese words recorded by

Saint Bonaventure in the Major Life, are attributed to Francis as he lay dying.

Why am I bringing this up in an article about the “Q”?

Precisely because that is what the Q is about— beginning (again) to hear and respond to our call to live the Gospel life in the footsteps of Saint Francis.

For the last 20 years, the Quinquennials have been preparing us and calling us forward, to refound the Secular Franciscan Order by exploring the original charism of our founders and, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, revisioning what that means in today's reality.

We have been reminded that WE are the Order now and WE have the responsibility and authority to discern and implement that charism now.

THIS IS THE MEANING OF THE Q OF 2012

The Quinquennial speakers will provide history and perspective to help reawaken and focus the call of our vocation.

Small group fraternities will meet to consider and share what their insights mean to a Secular Franciscan living today.

Those insights and ideas will be taken to the National Council to further discern and consider how to make the message real.

And everyone who attends will have the opportunity to hear the Holy Spirit's call to renew and claim the gift of our Franciscan call.

Every member of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States is called to participate in some way.

MANY ARE CALLED TO ATTEND IN PERSON.

Certainly every regional minister or a member of each regional council, the national leadership, and local fraternities.

If it is not possible that a member from every local fraternity attends, there is someone who can represent and report to a cluster of fraternities.

Those who cannot attend in person can pray, prepare, and share what God is speaking to their hearts with the brothers and sisters.

Let's make room for the Holy Spirit to move this National Fraternity past old habits and safe traditions and on into deeper waters of life—

giving, meaningful and courageous Gospel Living!

CLAIM THE GIFT!



SR. ILIA DELIO, OSF

Ilia Delio is a Franciscan Sister of Washington, DC, and a Senior Fellow at Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University where she concentrates in the area of Science and Religion.

She is currently involved in research projects on technology, evolution, and ecology. She is also exploring the theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Sr. Ilia is the recipient of a Templeton course award in Science and Religion which she received in 2000. Prior to Woodstock she was Professor and Chair of Spirituality Studies at Washington Theological Union where she taught in the areas of general spirituality, Franciscan theology and Science and Religion.

She holds a doctorate in Pharmacology from New Jersey Medical School-Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and a doctorate in historical Theology from Fordham University.

She is the author of ten books including, *The Humility of God*, *Christ in Evolution* and *Care for Creation* which won two Catholic Press Book Awards in 2009. Her newest book, *The Emergent Christ: Exploring the Meaning of Catholic in an Evolutionary Universe* was published in May 2011 (Orbis).



PATRICIA BRANDWEIN-BALL, OFS

Pat has served the Secular Franciscan Order in elected leadership since 1992. She has served as local minister of the Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God Fraternity, Kennebunkport, ME; St. Casimir Provincial Minister; St Elizabeth of Hungary,

Vice-Minister, then Regional Minister; National Councilor. Pat is a member of the Spirit and Life Team. She travels extensively throughout the country in service to the Secular Franciscan Order.

Pat is the former chair of JPIC, (Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation). She was appointed in October 2009, having served as chair of both the ad hoc committee to revision the apostolic commissions and the JPIC transition.

A member of Our Lady of the Angels parish in Berwick, ME, Pat served many years ago as Confirmation CCD teacher and more recently served as a Eucharistic Minister and as part of church cleaning crew. She is a retreat director and facilitator, and Spiritual Director of individuals and groups. She is a member of Spiritual Directors International.

Pat lives in Maine with her husband, Gary. She is a passionate gardener and collector of amaryllis.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY — JULY 3RD

ARRIVALS & REGISTRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- Dinner ▪ Welcome
- Opening Liturgy: **Bishop George J. Rassas, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Chicago.**
- Simple Social

WEDNESDAY — JULY 4TH

- Breakfast
- **KEYNOTE: *Why Francis? Claim the Gift!* Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF**
- Q fraternities: Introductions, What are you hoping to experience at this Q?
- Wednesday Liturgy (CNSA) ▪ Lunch
- **KEYNOTE: *Who are you, O Lord?* A Franciscan view of God - Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF**
- Q fraternities: Prayer/study— using mutual invitation.
- Discussion: *Our View of God.*
- Reflections on the talk.
- **CNSA session for Experienced Spiritual Assistants.**
- Evening Prayer.
- Dinner (picnic in Skokie Park) ▪ Social

THURSDAY — JULY 5TH

- Breakfast
- **KEYNOTE: *And What am I?* A Franciscan understanding of the human person. - Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF**
- Q fraternities: Meditation— using mutual invitation.
- Discussion: *Our View of Ourselves.*
- Reflections on the talk. *What is God's View?*
- Thursday Liturgy (CNSA) ▪ Lunch
- **PRESENTATION: Deepening our relationship with God: Tools for a more authentic spiritual life. - Ed Shirley, OFS**
- **CNSA session for New Spiritual Assistants. - (Part 1)**
- Q fraternities: Discussion: Reflections on the talk. *What is God saying to you about your relationship with Him?*
- Evening Prayer ▪ Dinner
- **CNSA session for New Spiritual Assistants. - (Part 2)**
- The Polish Highland Children's Orchestra
- Social

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

FRIDAY — JULY 6TH

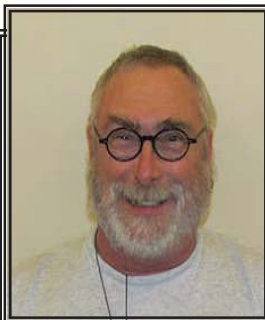
- Breakfast
- **PLENARY: *Who Are We?***
An overview of the Franciscan Family and the place of the OFS and the rest of the Third Order.
- Br. Bill Short, OFM
- Q fraternities
- Friday Liturgy (CNSA) ▪ Lunch
- **PRESENTATION:**
The Rule of the OFS and Presence in the World.
- Pat Brandwein-Ball, OFS
- Q fraternities: Discussion.
- Reflections on the talk.
- Evening Prayer ▪ Dinner
- Chiesa Nuova-
A Franciscan performing arts ministry.
- Social

SATURDAY — JULY 7TH

- Breakfast
- **PLENARY: *Claim the Gift!***
A process of discernment.
- Adoration, time for private/personal prayer and discernment.
- Q fraternities: Meditation on vocation.
- Discussion: *What IS our gift?*
What is God asking of us NOW in the 21st Century?
- Lunch
- Q fraternities:
Compose summary of discernments.
- NAFRA ministers and delegates report and discuss the message from the Q fraternities.
- Time for relaxation, recreation, or personal prayer, reflection.
- Dinner
- **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS.**
-Deacon Tom Bello, OFS
NAFRA Minister
- Closing Liturgy.

SUNDAY — JULY 8TH

- Breakfast
- Morning Prayer
- Closing Remarks



EDWARD L. SHIRLEY, OFS

Ed is a professor of Religious and Theological Studies at St. Edward's University, where he has taught for 25 years. He has also taught part time at a number of institutions, both in Texas and nationally. He has a doctorate in theology from Fordham University, and specializes in Trinity, Christology, Mariology and Interreligious Dialogue. He possesses the theological *mandatum* from the Diocese of Austin. In addition, he has given classes and presentations for numerous dioceses, parishes and Church-affiliated groups across the country.

Ed has received numerous St. Edward's awards for his teaching, including the University-wide Teaching Excellence Award for 2008-2009. He is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the Catholic Theological Society of America, and is the past secretary for the Society for Buddhist Christian Studies. He has given a number of presentations at professional conferences, and has published on a variety of subjects, many of them in Secular Franciscan publications.

He has been a professed member of the Secular Franciscan Order since 1980, and as such has served in formation for local, regional and national fraternities. He is currently the chair of the Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee for the Secular Franciscan Order in the U.S.



BR. BILL SHORT, OFM

Br. Bill Short, OFM, is a friar of the St. Barbara Province. Born in Seattle Washington, Br. Bill was raised in a Franciscan parish there, and was educated by the friars at their high school seminary in Troutdale, Oregon.

After graduating from the University of San Francisco, he entered the Order of Friars Minor in 1972. He studied at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, and at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he received the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology.

Since 1983 Br. Bill has been teaching at the Franciscan School of Theology in the area of Christian Spirituality and Christian history with a specific emphasis on Franciscan spirituality. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the Franciscan tradition and a frequent speaker at retreats, workshops and parish events across the country.

Br. Bill currently serves as Director of St Francis Retreat Center in San Juan Bautista, CA.



**XVIII QUINQUENNIAL
JULY 3-8, 2012**

REGISTRATION FORM

Congress begins on Tuesday, July 3rd with dinner at 5:00 pm – Opening Liturgy is at 7:30 pm.

Important Instructions:

1. Please TYPE or PRINT all information clearly.
2. Only one participant or married couple per registration form.
3. Payment must accompany this form and is **NON-REFUNDABLE**.
4. Make your check for registration and meals payable to **NAFRA**.
5. Mail this form with payment to:
Cecilia Maljan, SFO
1111 Freyburg Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203-1211
cylmaljan@earthlink.net
6. Hotel reservations must be made separately by each person (see bottom of this form).

PLEASE TYPE or PRINT CLEARLY

Title First Name(s) Last Name

Address City State Zip Country

Region

Home Phone Cell Phone E-Mail Address

Early Registration: # of people _____ x \$ 275. = \$ _____ (After June 1, 2012 the fee is \$325. pp)

Special Dietary Needs: _____

Need for handicapped facilities _____

Language preferred for small group Sessions _____

I need a roommate – please try to match me with someone _____

**Housing and the Congress are at Holiday Inn Chicago North Shore Skokie Hotel
5300 West Touhy Avenue • Skokie, Illinois 60077
Toll free number: 866-750-3369 • Hotel Direct: 847-679-8900 • <http://www.hiskokie.com/>
The Group Code for Skokie is: **FRO** • The Group Name is: **Quinquennial Congress 2012**
NAFRA has arranged for a **discounted room rate of \$ 87 (plus Illinois hotel tax) per night**. Each room has twin double beds with 1 to 4 occupants possible. You should **make your own room arrangements directly** with the hotel **prior to June 9** in order to get this reduced rate. *In the event that the Holiday Inn North Shore, the location for all conferences and activities, has been filled, additional rooms will be made available at the nearby Holiday Inn, O'Hare. The hotel will provide timely shuttle service between the two hotels.***

The Hotel provides free shuttles to and from O'Hare Airport based upon scheduled runs.

Day by Day

(Continued from page 22)

We are to build relationships.

Franciscans do not have to defend the faith from every last thing that comes along. Let the theologians take care of that; our role as Franciscans is to say, how can I build a bridge to that heretic? Where walls are being built, we need to put in a door.

This is difficult because we have those who will say “we can’t have anything to do with them”.

It’s hard to reach out like this, but that is our call. And if we start trying to correct every fault in the Church – that’s not who we are.

We have a hard enough time correcting our own faults. We have to keep “conversion” in mind—it’s in our *Rule*—daily conversion! We all want to find people who agree with us – but we need to move beyond that and seek the truth, not my truth or your truth, but the real truth. Let’s listen to each other.

Let’s help each other find that truth together. This cannot happen unless we build relationships.

We’re not there yet—and we may not be able to do it all on our own, but if we can get the whole community together—not just seculars – but all of them – Catholic, non-Catholic, whoever they are – to work toward the justice to give to each one the human dignity that he and she deserves – what a glory to God!

And that’s finally what Francis always did – give glory to God!”



SPEAKING OF FRATERNITY

NATIONAL COUNCILOR, MARY BITTNER, HELPED US BREAK OPEN THESE POWERFUL WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENCY:

“Challenges for the future:

A creative intensification and revitalization of the local fraternity where the life of the Order and the concrete vocation of brothers and sisters are developed. This creative intensification and revitalization requires that fraternal life as such be the foundation of our charism and constitute a mission by itself, and the most precious gift that we must and we can offer to the Church. This strong idea, this powerful idea, must increase in our entire order.”(Report of the Presidency of the International Council to the General Chapter 2008.)

It is in fraternity that the life of the Order is developed.

It is in fraternity where the concrete vocation of our brothers and sisters is developed.

Article 1 of our Rule calls us to “make present the charism”. Fraternal life is its foundation.

Fraternity itself is a mission.

Fraternity is the precious gift we share with the Church.

Fraternity finds its origin in the inspiration of Francis to whom the most high revealed the essential Gospel quality of life in fraternal communion. This was revealed to Francis. Fraternity is not optional. It is essential.



THREE CANDLES

One of the local fraternities of Blessed Junipero Serra Region shared a beautiful tradition. At the beginning of their meetings three candles are lit. One candle is for those members no longer with them, one is for the current members and one candle for those they hope to join them in the future. All three of these groups are then remembered in prayer at their meeting.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

The Vitality of the Local Fraternity

In his Wednesday morning keynote address, National Minister Tom Bello, OFS, spoke passionately, “Perhaps no aspect of the Secular Franciscan life should be of more concern to those called to leadership than the vitality of the fraternity. This must be our central focus.” Tom directed our attention to a beautiful painting of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and read from John’s Gospel, “‘Peter, do you love Me?’... ‘Yes, Lord, You know that I love You’... ‘Peter, feed My Sheep’ ” (*John 21:15-17*), helping us see that as leaders in the Secular Franciscan Order we are called to first, love the Lord and second, to tend the sheep. Tom asked that we examine the content and format of our gatherings, “What builds fraternity? What gives fraternity vitality? These are the things we should be doing. We should be careful to do nothing to diminish the vitality of our fraternity.” Referring to the guidelines in the new NAFRA Visitation brochure Tom pointed out the importance of the gift of time, noting that this often comes at additional cost. “We are not only asking for a significant commitment of time, but also a financial commitment. We cannot sacrifice fraternity for the dollar. Vitality of fraternity is the focus.” Tom focused next on the four marks of a vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity – Spirituality, Formation, Family and Witnessing:

“The true vitality of a fraternity must first be its spiritual vitality. It is the Holy Spirit’s Order. We pray because we cannot save ourselves. We need God. And it’s not about our individual efforts. Our salvation is never about any one individual. God called twelve and sent them two by two. We need to work at our salvation in community. We are a community of love. Love by definition needs another.”

Tom introduced how these vibrant marks of fraternity influenced the themes for the subsequent days of Chapter. He reviewed the accomplishments of the past year in these areas – one being the new *For Up to Now (FUN)* formation manual.

“These new formation materials now must be put into the hearts and minds of every Secular Franciscan. This is a great call and can only be done in fraternity”. He noted the success of our “courageous witness” in our JPIC outreach and partnering with Catholic Relief Services. Quoting an observation made by Mary Bittner, Tom explained the connection between fraternity and our JPIC activities, “Extending Francis’ notion of ‘fraternity’ into our relationships with all people is the foundation for all JPIC activities and a serious challenge for our Order.

Fraternity does not stay within “ourselves” – we reach out.” Tom joyfully welcomed to our Chapter those representing Amazon Relief, the Franciscan Action Network, Franciscans International, and Franciscan Mission Service— “all with us as brothers and sisters, members of the one Franciscan family”.

With these groups and with others we walk step in step to give courageous witness to the world. “We cannot do this great work alone – we do it in the wider fraternity – the community of love”.

“To build fraternity we also need to know who we are,” Tom shared as he announced that registrations for the Quinquennial to be held in July 2012 have begun. The theme of this year’s “Q” is *Why Francis? Claim the Gift!*”

Please, please, please, as soon as you get back from this Chapter try to get one representative from every fraternity in your region to come to the ‘Q’.

There are 653 fraternities in the United States. We would like one member from each of those 653 fraternities to be there!” He also requested that each Region send a representative from their Executive Council to the Quinquennial.

Tom concluded this address on fraternity with a quote from the 2010 CIOFS Visitation report to NAFRA written by International Councilor Tibor Kaiser, OFS:

“The fraternal spirit among the local fraternities is good, but we still recommend to strengthen it. Those fraternities, who have more in formation, in vocations, in spiritual or mental capacities, in financial resources, shall in a good fraternal spirit share these goods with the others. This is explicitly valid for the formation and the spiritual capacities.”

Tom then challenged us:

“We, in leadership at the regional and national levels need to think and pray more about this – how we can we help local fraternities share their resources with each other? How can the vitality of our fraternities be shared? Do we know which of our fraternities have more vitality and which fraternities are struggling? How can a strong local fraternity help a local fraternity that is struggling? Let us go forward with that sense of helping one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord.”

Please note: a recording of Tom Bello’s talk and the complete text of his “VISION OF THE ORDER” ADDRESS is available on the NAFRA website at: www.nafra-sfo.org/meetings_and_resources.html



Day by Day

Thursday, October 27th

A day that began with the presentation of the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order's *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Award*.

FR. LOUIE VITALE, OFM, RECIPIENT OF THE 'JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION' AWARD

Fr. Louie Vitale, OFM, a Franciscan friar known for protests against war and torture and advocacy for the poor, was awarded the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order's *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Award*. The award comes with a St. Francis statue and a \$2,000 prize.



Formerly known as the *Peace Award*, it was “renamed this year to capture the significant efforts in the areas of justice, peace and the integrity of creation,” noted Award Chairman Kent Ferris, OFS, who chairs the order's Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission.

“Our Franciscan Rule reminds us of our responsibility to 'individually and collectively be in the forefront of promoting justice by the testimony of our lives.' The JPIC Award allows us to recognize those who have modeled such courageous efforts.”



Letters of nomination spoke not only of the issues Father Louie has focused on – such as nuclear disarmament, School of Americas watch, and torture – but also on his personal lived experience. "Father Louie is the ultimate model for us on our journey of following in the footsteps of Saints Francis and Clare," he quoted one letter. And in another, “Father Louie sees each and every person as part of the Integrity of Creation and a gift from our Loving God as a path towards humbled holiness.”

Fr. Louie Vitale, 79, who resides at St. Elizabeth Church in Oakland, CA, is an Air Force veteran who became a Franciscan friar. He co-founded the *Nevada Desert Experience*, a movement to end nuclear testing, and *Pace e Bene*, an organization that aims to transform lives through education and nonviolent action for social change. He travels extensively throughout the United States speaking on nonviolence, the moral dimensions of torture and drone warfare, and living as a peacemaker.



He holds a Ph.D. in sociology, and has taught classes at colleges and universities throughout the Western states. He has served as provincial of the Franciscan Friars' Santa Barbara Province, and for more than a decade, he was pastor of St. Boniface Church in a low-income neighborhood in San Francisco, CA, where he opened its doors to the homeless so they could sleep in the pews during the day.



Father Louie has engaged in civil disobedience for some four decades in pursuit of peace and justice. He has been arrested an estimated 300 times standing up against war, nuclear weapons, drones, and the training of Latin American soldiers at what was formerly called the U.S. Army's School of the Americas.



T

hursday, October 27th
WITNESS (JPIC)

On Thursday the stage was set to look at our “courageous witnessing” and presence in the world through our Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) outreach. JPIC Commission Chair, Kent Ferris, OFS led us in prayer and then the celebration of the faithful example of this year’s JPIC Award recipient, Father Louie Vitale, OFM.

This was followed by a review of the webinar series on Catholics Confront Global Poverty, through *Catholic Relief Service (CRS)*. Chris West, CRS community organizer, joined us in person to thank us and encourage our continued partnership.

Kent then presented a year-in-review of the *Franciscan Action Network (FAN)*, and we were again fortunate to have guests join us, this time Patrick Carolan and Christy Elliott of *FAN*.

Finally, we heard about the new *USCCB Spotlight Programs* project which will take us through 2012, month by month, introducing and inviting us to participate in the various JPIC related programs that the *United States Council of Catholic Bishops* have put into place.

The question for our discussion groups was, “How are you supporting or going to support JPIC efforts?”

A day that began with the presentation of the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order’s *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Award*, (see page 29), closed with our participation in a beautiful “Spirit of Assisi” prayer service commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Day of Prayer for Peace. (see page 31).

Later in the evening a small group worked on the NAFRA Statement of Compassion addressed to the Super Committee, (see below). Truly, from beginning to end, this day was a celebration of justice, peace and all creation!



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STATEMENT OF COMPASSION FOR THE POOR

**U.S. SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
DEMANDS THE DEFICIT "SUPER COMMITTEE"
ENSURE JUSTICE FOR ALL.**

The U.S. Secular Franciscans met for their national gathering from October 25th through 29th at the St. Francis Retreat and Renewal Center in San Juan Bautista, CA. The national group represents approximately 13,500 Secular Franciscans across the United States. The statement is based on the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, chapter 2, article 13 that they “place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.”

**WE ISSUE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT
TO THE “SUPER COMMITTEE”:**

Do not further oppress and penalize those who are poor and those who are already most vulnerable, here and around the world.

We realize the moment of decision is rapidly approaching, and in this critical time it is essential that you understand the impact each decision may have. Justice for all requires that we pursue the common good.

It is essential that the “Super Committee” reach a decision by November 23rd. It is morally irresponsible for this committee to delay a decision and default to the automatic cuts that are applied at a fixed percentage, doing further injustice to the poor here and abroad.

T

Day by Day

Thursday, October 27th

The day closed with our participation in a beautiful "Spirit of Assisi" prayer service commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Day of Prayer for Peace.



CHAPTER 2011

Day by DaY

Friday, October 28th
FORMATION

SECULAR FRANCISCAN IDENTITY/CHARISM

National Formation Commission (NFC) Chair, Bob Fitzsimmons (Fitz), OFS began by giving updates on the implementation of the *For Up to Now (FUN)* manual and distributed a newly revised "FUN CD" to all Regional Ministers.

Fitz then gave an amazing talk on our identity and presence both in our fraternities and in the world. Noting that the topics of the previous days of Chapter (Fraternity and JPIC) were "FUN" (formation) topics, Fitz shared,

"When we talk about the vitality of fraternity we are talking about our 'presence', or identity, in our community with our brothers and sisters. When we talk about 'JPIC' we are talking about another kind of presence – our presence, or identity, in the world."

He explained that this "identity", is one and the same, just on different levels, but "this identity informs us so that as we live in our fraternities and in the world we are enhancing who we are as Franciscan people."

Fitz sees formation as our charge to take the legacy of Francis (our identity) and make it available for today. He continued,

"For those who are coming after us:

How are we keeping alive the vision of St. Francis and adapting that to our needs in the modern world?

How do we form and inform the Franciscan person to understand, live, and embrace that legacy so that that when they come to profession and say 'this is what I want', that it *really is* what they want?"

Good formation is critical to guaranteeing the vitality of our fraternities and Fitz closed by saying,

"We need to form Franciscan people if we are going to be a viable Franciscan entity."



IN THE SECOND PART OF HIS PRESENTATION, FITZ FOCUSED ON OUR FRANCISCAN CHARISM.

"Our unique gift to the Church is living the Gospel in relationship with God and each other. We witness to a God who loves us," he said.

"How can we strengthen and gift the world and the Church with our Franciscan charism?"

What is our presence (identity) in the fraternity and in the world?

Is there a desire to live our charism and give *our* gift to the Church?

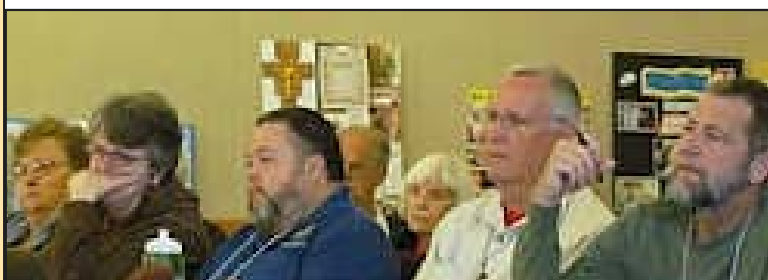
How are we, both in our fraternities and individually, bringing forth and giving witness to our charism?

What identity are we putting out there? If we are not attracting vocations, is it because we are not gifting the Church and the world with *our unique Franciscan gift*? Are we merely just another group? Or are we gifting the world with something deeper?"

Fitz asked that the Regional Ministers discuss those questions, and then also give some feedback concerning the new formation materials.

He asked,

"How is the process going? How are regions dealing with the needs of non-English speaking fraternities? Are there other struggles you are experiencing that the NFC may be able to assist with?"



Day by Day

Saturday, October 29th
SPIRITUALITY
SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE



Fr. Steve



Fr. Lester



Br. Bob



Fr. Kevin

Our four excellent and dedicated friars of the CNSA spoke to us as a panel on various aspects of spiritual assistance to help us deepen our understanding of the altius moderamen.

FR. STEVE GROSS, OFM CONV.,

presented an interesting history of the lay penitential movement and the development of the altius moderamen.

BR. BOB BRADY, OFM, shared how important a Spiritual Assistant (SA) is to fraternity life. The Regional Ministers were each given a copy of a CNSA Directive dated July 13, 2011 expressing the Friars' serious concerns about the establishment of new fraternities without a Spiritual Assistant.

Br. Bob reminded us, "There are some key and appropriate steps which are required before an emerging fraternity can be canonically established.

A Spiritual Assistant should be appointed at the beginning of the process".

FR. LESTER BACH, OFM CAP.,

continued by outlining those steps and explaining the role of the Provincial and Regional SA's.

He gave a detailed explanation of who can be a SA and handed out a brochure entitled "Spiritual Assistance" with information on the altius moderamen, the authority to appoint, who can be appointed, and the process for selection and training and the role of a SA.

"The competency of a Spiritual Assistant is very important", he said. He also spoke on the need for Seculars to seek out those who they feel have the potential to be a good SA.

"We need to prepare spiritual assistants ahead of time, before the need arises."

FR. KEVIN QUEALLY, TOR, spoke in detail on the particular responsibilities of the SA at the various levels of fraternity, most importantly the "real life-giving union between the religious and the secular fraternities."

His PowerPoint presentation, available on the NAFRA website:

www.nafra-sfo.org/cnsa.html 

was a great reminder of all the ways we need to interact with our Spiritual Assistants at every level.

As the friars of the CNSA expressed their concerns, the love and care that they have for us was obvious. Each of them spoke of the relationship between the 1st Order/TOR's and the Seculars truly as one of vital reciprocity.

They encouraged Secular Franciscan council members to work as a team with their SA and to include their SA in all the important aspects of fraternity life, most especially formation.

A final concern expressed was how we, the Seculars, need to spend more time together to build fraternity at the Regional level.

Some Regions gather once a year for only six hours. More time is needed, especially at Visitations.

The new Visitation brochure, prepared jointly by the Friars and Seculars, should be our guide. The vitality of our fraternal life is their concern as well as ours.

What is the CNSA?

The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants is the four spiritual assistants, one from each friar obedience (Order of Friars Minor, OFM Capuchin, OFM Conventual, and Third Order Regular), who provide assistance to the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. The CNSA is responsible for guiding all the spiritual assistants to the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. The President-in-Turn of the CNSA, who serves for two years, is a member of the National Executive Council of the National Fraternity.

Saturday, October 29th
BUSINESS

OFS NATIONAL THEME FOR 2012

Our National Fraternity chose this theme not only as a statement of our direction, but as a statement of who we are as Secular Franciscans.

When I think about our theme, which was drawn from Article 14 of the Rule, the first word that strikes me is the word “build”.

What a great Franciscan word! It calls us to action. I am also intrigued by the linking of the words “fraternal and evangelical”. To me this means not only are we to build a world that speaks more and more of the Good News of Christ, but we are to give equal and perhaps first effort to building fraternity.

This means building relationships. Seems to me this is a very Franciscan way to evangelize.

“Called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world”.

We can’t speak about building a more fraternal world or building relationships without speaking of love. Love, the basis of all relationships, is a powerful witness.

“This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)

To see love in action is to see God who first loved us, and so love is not only the first step in building a more fraternal world, but the first step in building a more evangelical world as well.

Franciscans are in touch with a fraternal world- a world full of loving relationships.


We celebrate fraternity – this universal kinship – with all people and all creation for we are all children of the same Father. When we care for people and for creation, treating all as sister and brother, we are building a more fraternal world and in doing so we are evangelizers, telling the good news of God’s great love.

When we think of building a more fraternal world we cannot help but also think of the gift of Franciscan fraternity—the gift of our Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters. To bring about a more fraternal and evangelical world, relationships of love and the sharing of the Gospel must be built up in our fraternities as well!

With a year of opportunities before us let’s keep our theme in mind. Use it in your newsletters and emails. Refer to it often so it can do its job of uniting, motivating and focusing us on what we have been called to do. Please share your own ideas about our theme and how you will put it into action.

3
4

Chapter Presentations on NAFRA Website

Our NAFRA website is a wonderful resource! Did you know that some of the talks and presentations from our Chapters can be downloaded from our website? These could be used for your own ongoing formation, or shared with your fraternity. Our NAFRA website is www.nafra-sfo.org and near the bottom of the menu list you will find “Meetings and Resources”. Click there and you will find many wonderful resources to choose from! 



PATRICK MENDES, OFS
Co-Chair of the 2012 Quinquennial Planning Committee.
See pages 23–26.



DENNIS ROSS, OFS
National Treasurer addresses final budgets and approvals. Budgets will be published in the TAU-USA Spring (May) issue 73.



JESSICA HARDINGER
a student at Alvernia University gives a presentation on World Youth Day.

Day by Day

Saturday, October 29th
WRAP-UP

Quotes from
Chapter Evaluations:
What did you
"like best"?


- "Being with , sharing with , praying with , "playing" with fellow brothers and sisters of Francis."
- "The opportunity to be with my fellow brother and sister Secular Franciscans to revitalize, to re-form!"
 - "True blessing of being with "Family."
 - "Exchange of love and ideas."
 - "Prayer, quiet, community and small group, including the Eucharist."
- "The peace of prayerfulness, purpose and Fraternity."
 - "The opportunities for prayer and solitude on the beautiful grounds."
- "Sharing space in the Blessed Sacrament Room with Fr. Louie Vitale every a.m."
 - "Daily Mass." ▪ "Homilies at the Masses."
- "The Morning Prayer experience and group sharing was wonderful."
 - "Group prayer/liturgy, especially 'Spirit of Assisi' evening."
 - "Music – simple, clear and Franciscan."
 - "There was a lightness, informality, to the conduct of business."
- "Tom's keynote address."
 - "Presentations on formation, JPIC, CNSA."
- "Franciscan Fraternity JOY!"

Here are some of the highlights of the business conducted at Chapter:

A COLLATED ANNUAL REPORT

Was distributed with much information on regional and local fraternity life. Shows decline in membership, down 2400 in the last three years to 13,420 active members and 1262 inactive.

THE COMPUTER COMMITTEE

Updated us on improvements to our website www.nafra-sfo.org and database. They request that each local fraternity appoint a database person. 

BUDGET APPROVAL AND NAFRA FAIR SHARE

Motion was passed to increase fair share by \$5.00 so that the total NAFRA Fair Share per person would be \$17.00 per year starting in the year 2013 January (based on membership as of December 31, 2012).

OFS NATIONAL THEME FOR 2011-2012

"Called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world." (see page 34)

"TRAINING FOR FRATERNITY COUNCILS" DVD'S

Were produced by Blessed Junipero Serra Region, available digitally, and soon to be posted on the NAFRA Formation Website.

JOINT STATEMENT FOR RIO 2012 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Was presented and affirmed.

OFS STATEMENT ON COMPASSION FOR THE POOR

addressed to the "Super Committee" – written and approved. (see page 30)

- "The sharing on WYD by Jessica Hardinger, youth who attended WYD."
 - "The content of the gathering / variety of topics covered."
- "A wonderful mix—only the Holy Spirit could have put together such a wonderful mix of speakers and topics needed for the good of the Order."
 - "Meeting Franciscans who expand our outreach i.e. Amazon Relief, FAN."

CHAPTER 2011 Day by DaY

IN CLOSING

As we left St. Francis Retreat we took with us many memories of our NAFRA 2011 Chapter — being with so many members of our wider Franciscan Family, a renewed sense of our identity, the opportunities for prayer and solitude on the beautiful grounds, the spiritual sharing in our geographic groups, the inspired sharing in our Morning Prayer, the wonderful mix of speakers and topics, beautiful liturgies and beautiful music, the hospitality of the staff, meeting Fr. Louie Vitale, the presentation on World Youth Day by Jessica Hardinger, the pre-dawn walk with brothers and sisters on a very cold morning to watch the sunrise, the sharing of our stories, our brother Ed's attempts to blow the Shofar, San Juan Bautista Mission and Monterey Bay, and the joy and warmth of our brothers and sisters.

"I leave here recognizing that this is a vibrant fraternity and it gives me the courage to be a witness", said one participant. "I have a renewed sense of love for fraternity. It's amazing and wonderful to be with our national fraternity, and I return home to a local fraternity that is truly my privileged place."

We are Very Grateful to Blessed Junipero Serra Region and the Host Committee:

Kathleen Molaro, Dianne Prior,
Brian Simmons, Mary Carson,
Diane Creedon, Rosemary Apodaca,
Barbara Mastrini, Brother Bob Brady, OFM,
Jim and Cindy Wesley

FOR THEIR HARD WORK, MANY KINDNESSES
AND GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY.

From organizing transportation and taking care of registrations, to providing a great day away and wonderful entertainment, they did a superb job in caring for all our needs. They were truly joyful servants!



by
FRANCINE GIKOW, OFS
 FEATURE EDITOR

A TIME FOR COURAGE

I have often wondered how the great Franciscan saints, such, as St. Clare of Assisi, just “knew” what God wanted. How did St. Clare feel so sure that the “privilege of poverty” was what God wanted from the Poor Clare nuns even when the Pope and many others, forced them to do the opposite? Why did St. Clare stand her ground, convinced that this was the path wanted by God for the Poor Clares? Did she have doubts when Pope Gregory IX (previously Cardinal Hugolino) insisted that Clare live a rule contrary to the privilege of poverty and her convictions?

I think this problem is one faced by many when we try to discern God’s path for us, especially when it comes to discernment for office in the Secular Franciscan Order.

As a member of a regional nominating committee, I have seen first hand, how many of our members try to discern God’s will for them when they have been nominated to an office. They ask themselves, am I available for meetings, visitations? Am I able to be free enough from family responsibilities to fulfill the office requirements? Am I physically able to undertake the traveling required for the position?

All these questions are right and just. However, if they asked themselves whether or not they would “like” to be in the office, it would be immaterial. Discernment is not about likes or dislikes at all! God can draw us past our own preferences. In fact, the correct discernment is whether it is God’s will for the individual and for the order.

But how do we do this?

How do we really know if it is God’s will for the order and for us?

Thankfully, we can rely on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit during the voting to confirm for us if we are to hold office in the Secular Franciscan Order.

However, I find that many people do not even allow themselves to get to the step of being on the ballot.

First, of all, let us not have any illusions about holding office in the Secular Franciscan Order. We are never worthy! We are never ready! We are never “old enough,” nor prepared enough, nor (fill in the blank) enough!

It has been said that God takes the unworthy, the unready and the most unlikely, to serve His purposes. We just have to be willing.

Recently, I had been nominated for an office, I felt unprepared to accept. I prayed about the “cons” and the “pros.” I discussed it with my spiritual director and still felt unsure. Then, a “Call of Jeremiah” prayer card fell out of my journal: (*Jer.1:6-10*):

“Ah, Lord God!” I said,
 I know not how to speak:
 I am too young.”

But the Lord answered me,
 Say not, “I am too young.”

To whomever I send you,
 you shall go;
 Whatever I command you,
 you shall speak
 Have no fear before them.

Then the Lord extended
 His hand
 And touched my mouth,
 saying,
 See, I place my words in
 your mouth!”

“OK, Lord, I thought. Maybe I need to accept this nomination.” This thought was confirmed through discussions with work when I discovered a way to allot more time if needed to the Secular Franciscan council position. Then doubts came flooding into my mind!

How can I do this?

There are others nominated more qualified than I.

Perhaps then, I don’t need to accept the nomination.

Again, an inspiration came to me and God wasn’t letting me off the hook. How dare I lack the courage for something God might be asking of me? Don’t I love Him enough? By refusing the nomination, am I just being selfish by staying in my comfort zone? Can I trust Him enough?

Am I willing to take risks for God and leave it up to Him to decide if I was meant to serve in this office? Is it my will and need for self-determination or is it God’s will?

Subsequently, I decided that I needed to show my love for God by having courage and being willing to take a risk. A Secular Franciscan friend also reminded me that the Lord makes us “ready” when it is the right time to be ready and not necessarily when we “think” we are. He gives us His grace, which is sufficient for us.

Think of accepting a nomination for office as a way to show your love to God in a radical freeing way. It is a time where we can demonstrate how we can rely on Him alone!

We don’t have to be perfect. We just have to be willing. God will do the rest.



LOOKING FOR AN APOSTOLATE? GET TO KNOW: FRANCISCAN MISSION SERVICE


by Kim Smolik, FMS Executive Director
kim@franciscanmissionservice.org

Greetings to you, our Secular Franciscan Order brothers and sisters, from us at Franciscan Mission Service (FMS).

We are a Catholic nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, that trains and supports lay men and women for service with communities in need overseas. I like to think that we are part of the extended OFS family. Why?

Because we share your calling to spread the joy of the Franciscan spirit as widely as possible among the laity. We'd like to be more actively involved with you in working towards this goal. It takes the faith, vision and commitment of a large, diverse and multitalented Church family to answer Christ's call to mission.

You know the saying attributed to St. Francis: "Preach the Gospel always, and when necessary, use words." This is the heart of what we call the ministry of presence, our approach to service. Our lay missionaries range from recent college graduates to married couples with grandchildren. They serve in ministries to which a local community has invited them, and they often partner with Franciscan religious – caring for HIV/AIDS patients in South Africa, teaching at a Franciscan high school and running a retreat center in Zambia, accompanying children with severe medical conditions at a Franciscan social center in Bolivia. FMS exists for the same reason St. Francis founded the OFS: so that religious and lay people can serve and pray side by side.

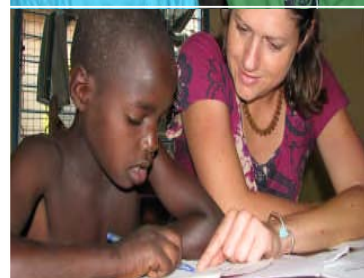
Have you ever felt called to serve overseas? If you're not called to go, ask yourself: Is there anyone in your parish, family, or social circle who may have such a desire? By exploring our website: www.franciscanmissionservice.org and reading our missionaries' blogs, you'll get a better sense of what we do. 

I'd also like to explore ways your fraternity and Franciscan Mission Service can mutually enrich each other here in the U.S. I've had the privilege of attending and speaking at the last two OFS annual Chapter meetings. Each time, people have been enthusiastic about the fact that Catholic lay people are getting involved in mission in the Franciscan charism. Many Seculars have also asked me what they can do to partner with FMS.

Here are some ideas for you: • Is your fraternity planning its next regional meeting? Ask us to come facilitate a discussion with you about lay mission in the Franciscan tradition, and the ways we can answer this call in our daily lives. • We are seeking to raise mission awareness. Do you have contacts at a Franciscan college or university you would be willing to share with us? Or contacts at a Franciscan parish. • If you are in the Washington, DC metro area, come to our monthly *Sunday Soup Symposiums*. We created it to bring together Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted people in the area, and we've lined up some great Franciscan speakers. There will be a reflection, guided questions for small group discussion, and a chance to socialize.

I love telling stories about our missionaries. As I write this, Susan Slavin is about to board a plane for Nairobi, Kenya, where she will live for the next two years. She recently left an active legal career in New York City to train for mission with FMS. A Kenyan Franciscan community has asked her to help set up a free legal clinic, and she hopes to work especially with IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons who lost their homes in the election-related violence of 2008). I was with her before she left, and I heard her telling friends, "I've packed my life into three suitcases, and I'm going to Africa!" There is clearly nothing she would rather do than use her talents in this way, and her excitement and passion are contagious.

What are your passions as a fraternity? Do you have an apostolate? Do you think about Christ's call to live simply and joyfully, in solidarity with the poor? When we give ourselves, the results cannot be measured. I give thanks for the conversations I've had and the prayers we at FMS have received from many of you in the Secular Franciscan Order, and I look forward to talking about how we can better serve, and serve with, each other.



by **KENT FERRIS, OFS**
JPIC CHAIR
kentferris45@yahoo.com

I write today on the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. I am grateful for Deacon Tom Bello's letter today and was consoled that even though I could not be with him and many other Franciscans at the March for Life in our nation's capitol, our prayers join together in order that respect for life can be realized.

We previously covered the Respect Life campaign in October, Two Feet of Love in Action in November, the National Campaign for a Human Life Amendment in December, and Catholics Mobilizing Network for the End of the Death Penalty here in January.

Our regional fraternity JPIC Point People have done a great job getting the information to local fraternities and noting ways that folks are already supporting these issues.

The JPIC Rally at *Our Lady of the Snows* in Belleville, Illinois, is the first opportunity for many commission members and JPIC point people to meet each other. Our national fraternity covers a lot of territory and our Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation covers as much, what with the multitude of issues that comprise JPIC.

Besides striving to maintain the dignity of every person, realizing the common good and solidarity with all of creation, our JPIC rally will allow us the time to "...foster an atmosphere in fraternity, the privileged place, where with openness and trust, we may share with each other the manner in which our personal conversions are shaping our Franciscan lives."

(From Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Chapter by Pat Brandwein-Ball in the new Formation Manual)

And finally, all of these efforts are in preparation for our return together as a national fraternity family at the Q this summer in Chicago!

We hope and pray that many members of our Commission, JPIC Point People and friends of JPIC will come together at the Quinquennial in order to be recharged and renewed for the work we are called to do.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with comments or questions at the above email address.

Kent



CANONICAL ESTABLISHMENT OF SAGRADO CORAZÓN DE MARIA FRATERNITY



Submitted by **GRACIELA ROCHA, OFS, MINISTER**

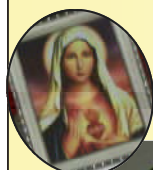
In the beautiful little Chapel of St. Anthony's Seminary in El Paso, Texas on September 10, 2011,

after a long eight year wait, a solemn Mass was celebrated by Fr. Mauro Muñoz, OFM, to finally establish canonically, the Fraternity of Sagrado Corazón de Maria in the Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas Region. Sagrado Corazón de Maria fraternity has 10 Professed members, 8 Candidates, and 1 Inquirer.

It was an amazing and heartwarming ceremony. During the Mass, the last three remaining signatures needed in the establishment document were signed by Fr. Larry Schreiber, OFM, Regional Spiritual Assistant; and by witnesses Ruth Nevarez, OFS, Regional Councilor; and Donna Hollis, OFS, Regional Secretary. The Regional Minister,

Christine Imislund, OFS, and Regional Vice-Minister, Cathy Pierce, OFS, were also present at this most wonderful and blessed event, as well as brothers and sisters from other fraternities in El Paso.

After the Mass everyone gathered in the seminary's dining hall to enjoy some light dishes prepared by the Sagrado Corazón de Maria Fraternity members. A beautiful framed picture with the image of our Lady, Sagrado Corazón de Maria, was given as a gift to the newly established fraternity by the members of Mary Immaculate Fraternity. Many, many thanks to everyone who participated in this magnificent establishment ceremony.




FRATERNAL SHARING

THE YEARLY REGIONAL GATHERING of the Secular Franciscan Order New York/New England



Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap.,
Regional Spiritual advisor with
Teresa Baker, OFS.

For more information,
or details for the
2012 FLIC e-mail
Deacon Bob Campbell, OFS
arcyc@aol.com 

Submitted by
LAURIE WOJCULEWICZ, OFS
ST. MARY FRANCES OF THE FIVE
WOUNDS FRATERNITY, BRISTOL, CT

province was held from August 8-11, 2011 at Mount LaVernia retreat house in Wappingers Falls, NY. This gathering is called "FLIC" or *Franciscans Living In Community*. Our speaker was Teresa Baker, OFS, a married mother & grandmother from Greccio Fraternity in Derry, NH. Former co-chair of the National Formation Commission, Teresa is also author of the book, *Gospel Living*, & co-author of the book *Come & See*. Her topic was *Franciscan Penitential Spirituality*. Her talks were deeply based on the Rule and the Admonitions; she stated that the admonitions are complimentary to the rule. Teresa also gave us great insight on how to live these out as Secular Franciscans, but stressed that we cannot do it alone. We must always beg for grace.

FLIC is not a retreat, but the grounds were beautifully peaceful. Teresa was a wonderful speaker, and it is great to meet and renew friendships with our regional OFS brothers and sisters each year. We shared morning and evening prayers, meals, and lots of social time together. This year we were privileged to attend the *Transitus of St. Clare* with the near-by Poor Clare Sisters.



Submitted by
ALLEN WARD, OFS
SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI FRATERNITY

On September 10th, the Saint Francis of Assisi Fraternity held a Day of Reflection in Apopka, Florida for the East Central Area of the Five Franciscan Martyrs Region.

Besides the host fraternity we also had members of Lady Poverty Fraternity from Winter Park; and Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity from Melbourne; as well as our Regional Minister Hans Huemmer other members of the Regional Council in attendance. The guest speaker and Mass celebrant was Fr. Thomas Murphy our Regional Spiritual Assistant.



Submitted by
JOAN FALTOT, OFS
ST. CONRAD'S FRATERNITY, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

St. Conrad's fraternity would like to announce the following changes in their fraternity:

Newly professed: Mary Musselwhite, OFS, professed at Capuchin College, Washington, DC on Saturday, October 15, 2011. Celebrant was Fr. Stephen Shin, OFM, Cap.

Their new co-spiritual assistant is Br. John Paul Kuzma, OFM Cap, who replaced Br. Patrick Monahan, OFM Cap, who received a new assignment working with the Capuchin Lay Volunteer Program in Washington, DC.

Br. Jonathan Ulrick continues on as our co-spiritual assistant.

ELECTION RESULTS CONGRATULATIONS TO

SYLVIA PAOLI, OFS
REGIONAL MINISTER

AND ALL THE NEWLY ELECTED
COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE
ST. FRANCIS REGION.

RONALD PIHOKKER, OFS
REGIONAL MINISTER

AND ALL THE NEWLY ELECTED
COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE
OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS
REGION.

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA FRATERNITY, OAK LAWN, IL MOTHER CABRINI REGION

Our fraternity celebrated its 125th anniversary on October 23, 2011. The fraternity was canonically established in 1886. In 1971, there were 1,172 members.

We thank all the friars, brothers and sisters who were involved with our fraternity. "*Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ*" by Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM, formation book was born in our fraternity. The Alvernians, a youth fraternity viable through the 1980's owed its beginning to our community.

Our day of recollection was part of the anniversary celebration. Our speaker and celebrant was Fr. Arthur Anderson, OFM. We thank Fr. Arthur for a wonderful day.

Submitted by **JOANN LIPKA, OFS, MINISTER**
ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA FRATERNITY, OAK LAWN, IL

SANTA MARIA DE LAS MONTANAS REGION JPIC AWARD RECIPIENTS

St. Francis of the Streets Fraternity is proud and humbled to have these good people to inspire us on our common Franciscan journey.

Submitted by **JUDY SASSETTI, OFS, MINISTER**
ST. FRANCIS OF THE STREETS FRATERNITY, DENVER, CO

JIM AND MONICA ANTHONY, OFS, were recently recognized for significant contributions to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation by vote of all the fraternities in the Santa Maria de las Montanas Region of the Secular Franciscan Order. Jim and Monica are members of St. Francis of the Streets Fraternity, as is the runner-up for the award, Joe Basehart, OFS. The regional fraternity represents some 200 Secular Franciscans across five states, including five local fraternities in the Denver area.

Jim and Monica have lived lives of consistent commitment to the twin Franciscan ideals of personal spiritual growth and compassion for all of creation. For years they have volunteered at Samaritan House, a shelter for homeless people. They decided to adopt older, more difficult-to-adopt children instead of simply having a biological family. They have three wonderful children whose prospects would have been very limited without them. Jim began a recycling program at his company long before it became popular. Monica, in her work as a veterinary technician spends her days calming the animals' fears while providing medical and surgical care. They have always made room for yet another stray dog or cat in their home, which is sometimes referred to as "The Anthony Ark." In keeping with their reverence for all creatures, they are vegetarians.

Jim and Monica served as co-chairs of the regional Ecology Commission for several years, and they have both generously served as officers of our fraternity in several capacities including as Minister. They are active in their parish, St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Denver, and recently taught a First Communion class. In the past few years they realized a lifelong dream and built a "green" straw bale house with their own hands, aided by their children. The straw bales keep the house naturally cool in summer, and in winter, the bales retain the heat gain by passive solar so very little additional heat is necessary. This home and their home in Denver are powered by solar electric panels. Their commitment to the environment is expressed by actual investment in sustainable living. They show us that true courage is not just a single grand gesture, but rather making many smaller choices every day that add up to a just and peaceful life lived in harmony with all creation.

The runner-up for our Regional JPIC award, **JOE BASEHART, OFS**, is a very gentle, unassuming man who generously and consistently gives of himself to others. He never counts the cost and never boasts of what he does. When his landlady was dying of cancer, he stayed with her and nursed her until her death. Recently he donated a kidney to a friend who is a local Denver priest who will now be able to continue to serve others in his ministry. Surgical complications resulted in a difficult recovery for Joe, but he evidenced no self-pity or regret. Joe has for years clowned for children who have to endure a hospital stay, as well as for children in poor neighborhoods. If anyone needs help, they turn to Joe who is always there for them.

GOOD NEWS FROM FAR AWAY:

IS THE LAMBI CALLING YOU?

by
MARY LISTON LIEPOLD, OFS

If you're bookish like I am, and you take an interest in the developing world, you may have read *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Tracy Kidder's inspiring account of physician Paul Farmer's global health ministry that began in Haiti. If you haven't, I highly recommend it. But in either case, if you have any idea of the scale of Haiti's challenges, you'll be happy to know there's another American physician with a commitment to Haiti, and he's one of our own.

Dr. Tom Fame is a member of the Companions of Francis and Clare SFO in Roanoke, Virginia. When I met Tom and Leah at our regional Chapter of Mats in July, he told just a little of the story and gave me a copy of his 2008 book *The Lambi's Call: A Haitian Journey*.*

The *lambi* (you must be wondering) is a conch shell. It's the Haitian symbol of freedom and hope because it called the people together out of their slavery. They say it is like the gospel: good news from far away.

"I was professed in June 1998," Tom says, "but I began my Franciscan journey along with my Haitian journey, and that ministry has been parallel to my Franciscan walk."

Tom's wife Leah, who is in formation as a Secular Franciscan, and their three daughters have been to Haiti and support the work he does there, but his love affair with the Haitian people has been a personal, particular, and expanding call.



Tom first heard that call on a fairly ordinary medical mission trip. He went to Haiti for the first time in the early 1990's with a group of other physicians. They took a supply of medicines and put in long days treating hundreds of patients who had not had medical care in a long time and would not have it after they left.

It was gratifying, and it left him with tremendous admiration for the Haitians he met, but it was also frustrating. Clearly, visiting for a week was not enough.

Back in the US, Tom attended a meeting about a parish twinning program that offered a chance to be in ongoing relationship with a particular community of Haitians.

The project had roots in Richmond Bishop Walter Sullivan's own engagement with Haiti and the work of several Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (including Sister Rose Gallagher, who also attended the *Chapter of Mats*). His fellow parishioners agreed to be twinned, but communications had to be hand-carried, so the going was slow.

Still, by 1996 Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem, Virginia was twinned with the Parish of St. Gabriel in Lascahobas, on Haiti's central plateau.

Says Tom:

"I finally had a purpose, and that was to have no purpose."

No purpose, that is, other than to develop personal relationships with their new friends in Haiti, and then see where the Spirit led him.



(Continued on page 43)

(Continued from page 42)

This time, rather than going in with his medical kit thinking he had the answers, Tom took others there to visit while he waited for the pastors and parishioners of St. Gabriel and another even more remote parish, to tell them what they needed. When they did, it was not a clinic but a school.

Rural Cabestor had just built a church, after 50 years of prayers, so a school was the next step. The project had been carefully budgeted out at US \$49,000. Tom had no idea how he would raise that sum, but he agreed to try. He says, "It was a promise not written on paper but inscribed on my heart."

Trying meant turning himself into a fundraiser, learning the Creole language, arranging for a road to be built stone by stone, and negotiating new and sometimes difficult relationships.

Over the course of repeated visits, trust grew stronger on both sides. And as he and the friends who supported the project tackled one obstacle after another, they learned the truth of the proverb that describes Haiti's landscape and so much more:

"Deye mon gen mon":
"Beyond mountains there are more mountains."

The book opens in 2001 on January 1— the Haitian national holiday as well as the beginning of the year— with the dedication of the new school, Sacre Coeur. It was a mountaintop experience. And as soon as it was over, Tom learned there was no money to pay the teacher's salaries, at that school or the one in the next village, and the students were coming to school hungry. He went home and got back to work.

Funds for salaries were raised and feeding programs were set up and staffed at several area schools. In the years since the book ends, two clean water projects have been built with Farmer's nonprofit Partners in Health, and a third is in the works.




Another school is going up—very slowly, since all the materials have to be carried up the mountain where it's sited. Tom has made an arrangement with the priest in the nearby village, who is starting an advanced high school, that will allow 25 students who graduate from the elementary schools to continue their education. He has learned how to work with the Haitian peoples' bank, Fonkoze, and set up a trust fund, the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Haiti Trust, so the partnership's projects will remain financially secure. Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne ravaged the area in 2004, and other natural and economic disasters have followed. Tom lost some dear friends, including a strange little girl he had come to love, Tifi, or Rose Carmel.


He reflects, "I cannot relieve all the suffering in Haiti, but I can hold a child, I can comfort a man, and I can visit with a family... I have taken on some of the suffering of my Haitian friends, and together, with solidarity, we support each other on our mutual journey."

Tom tells more funny stories than sad ones. Talking to him or reading the book, it's clear that he sees what is unfolding as a series of miracles, and he credits the Haitians' own resilience and the grace of God more than the resources he has helped to provide. "Each time I visit," he says, "I am amazed at what can be discovered when I reach down into the unknown world of poverty's richness."

Tom will finish a Master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins in May of 2012, so he has even more to offer at home and in Haiti. The village of Cabestor has recently gained a new community kitchen, a bookstore, and a guesthouse with power provided by solar electric panels. A partnership has been forged to start a fish farming program on the nearby lake.

Many urgent needs are still unmet. Will there be enough money? Each of the book's 16 chapters begins with a Haitian proverb. For chapter 9, it is: "Si Bondye ki vole ou, li pral paye fre pou ou": "If it is God who sends you, he'll pay your expenses." Chapter 11 begins with "Men anpil, chay pa lou": "Many hands make the load lighter."

If you'd like to order a copy of the book, learn more about the OLPH Haiti Project, and possibly lend your hands, contact Tom, fame5@verizon.net,  or call 540.389.3577.

*Tom Fame, *The Lambi's Call: A Haitian Journey*, Salem, VA, Trust Publisher, 2008. 

Mary Liston Liepold, OFS is a member of the St. Francis Fraternity in Washington, DC, which she serves as Council Secretary. She is also Editor in Chief at [Peace X Peace](http://PeaceXPeace.org), a nonprofit that raises women's voices to build cultures of peace, and a member of the Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore regional board. Mary is an avid reader, writer, wife, mother, and peace activist who spends one day each week with two of her five grandchildren.

THE SALT EXPERIENCE AT LADY POVERTY REGION

by

CECILIA MALJAN, OFS, MINISTER
LADY POVERTY REGION

*“a faith sharing, beautiful experience-
time well spent;
the possibility of good things
coming forth from this starting point”*

*“the weekend touched me far greater than I expected...
I am looking to being more of an apostle.”*

*“I feel changed and challenged from the weekend-
I can leave where I have been marking time as an OFS
and move on to being more of an apostle.”*

*we “talked the whole way home about it, and ...
still talking about how we can light additional fires...
that means it certainly accomplished its' goals!”*

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On a beautiful fall weekend, September 23 to 25th, 2011, twenty similar minded people — most professed Secular Franciscans, two non-professed in different stages of initial formation, two priests, and one brother — met at St Paul of the Cross Retreat Center in Pittsburgh, PA. for a weekend of renewal under the guidance of Marie Amore, OFS and Richard Morton, OFS.

The weekend was a wealth of information and insight. In hearing what past popes and others had to say about our Order, we were all taken aback by a quotation of Walter Dirks from *Build with Living Stones* (p 171-181):

“Too often the Third Order was taken for a closed order, a pious association. This concept is too narrow. I suppose that St. Francis himself cannot be blamed for it.

The Third Order was meant to be a movement, even an historic one...It appears that Francis' mission found a real meaning in the Third Order. Its task is the sanctification of the world, penetrating the world with the Holy Spirit.

The First and the Second Orders exist only to enable the Third Order to develop fully.

What is needed is not the renunciation of sexuality, money and power, but just the opposite: the meaningful use of money, reaching out into the whole world, exercising a positive influence on trade, politics, marriage, the building of the earthly city. Instead the Third Order has become a 'pious club.' It is not what it intended to be. Therefore, it too, is partly responsible for the world becoming so godless.”

Whew!

Another highlight was recalling the story of Emmaus—one of grieving and then recognizing Christ; then taking an Emmaus Walk with another participant, sharing deep thoughts and feelings during a walk in the monastery garden—a very moving and sharing experience.

Not everyone was able to attend the Sunday morning session, but it was the most emotional part of the weekend. As each of us discussed the key word or phrase that described our weekend experience, we saw how each of us would carry something different with us as we went back to our secular and fraternal lives. After we each renewed our commitment as Secular Franciscans, the TWELVE (12) professed Secular Franciscans present were “commissioned” to carry “the Spirit and Life” back to our fraternities, our Church, and the world.



NO FRILLS

by
M. MARKO, OFS
FEATURE EDITOR

Having gone through I don't know how many batteries by turning my radio on when I went to bed and then falling asleep without turning it off, I decided to buy myself an electric radio. Just a simple AM/FM plug-into-the-wall type. So I went to a well-known store that specializes in such things. In fact, "radio" is actually part of its name.

Having been unable to find anything I wanted on the shelves, I went to the counter and asked for an electric radio. The salesperson pointed out a nice electric radio cum CD player. No, thanks. Just an electric radio. There was this nice one with an alarm clock built in. Cute, but no. Just an electric radio.

Finally, he found one – the only model they had in stock, high up on a shelf that obviously wasn't visited too often. The dust was rather thick on its box. But it was what I wanted. Just a radio. No CD player, no alarm clock, no waffle iron. Just a radio. You wouldn't have thought I was asking for anything so rare. But radios aren't just radios anymore. They got frills!

Our prayer life can get that way. Instead of just talking to God AND listening, we rattle beads at Him, we light candles in front of Him, we bombard Him with novenas and vigils. Not that these things don't have their place. But you can get too much of a good thing.

When you say the Rosary during Mass, 'something gonna suffer': the Rosary or the Mass. If you've ever tried to talk on the phone and watch TV at the same time, you know this. True, our minds can work on several levels at once; but one level or the other is going to take priority. The Mass and the Rosary both deserve one's undivided attention. Hence, combining the two ain't gonna cut it.

Some people "prescribe" certain prayers for themselves. This is fine as we should all have a regular prayer routine (NOTE: I said *routine*, not *rut*). But to panic if you "miss" this or that prayer, to feel that you must say all the prayers or it doesn't count and so you rush through them – well, it can get almost superstitious. Like it's "bad luck" not to knock on all those heavenly doors everyday.

God's not counting the words. He's looking into the heart they come from. If, indeed, they come from the heart and not just from habit.

Part of the problem, I guess, is the fact that we learned prayer as a set of formulas. I know when I was a kid (back in the Dark Ages), prayer wasn't just rapping with God, it was the recitation of these formulas.

As a result, I more or less grew up with the idea that that was the only way to pray. Once I realized you can pray in your own words, some of the strict routine fell away. Don't get me wrong. Formula prayers are good. Like, who can knock the Our Father? But people should realize that they can pour their hearts out to God in their own words and it will still "count." It's still prayer. Just a little less frilly is all.

Of course, just as we must be careful not to let routine become rut, we must also guard against getting sloppy.

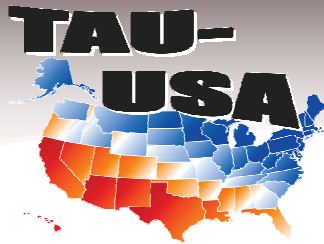
Formula prayers (if we don't just rattle them off) can help focus our attention on what we're doing, what we're saying.

It's good, every so often, to read over the Our Father or the Hail Mary. To see what we're actually saying. And then try to put it into your own words. These simple exercises can give us a renewed appreciation of the words and their meanings.

The important thing is not to get so caught up in style and formula that we neglect the communication aspect of prayer. Sometimes, a simple, no-frills, straight-from-the-heart prayer is the best kind. Just like sometimes all you want is a basic electric radio.

Now, if you'll excuse me,
I'm off to buy a watch that does nothing
but tell time.





PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER IN THE UNITED STATES

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