

TAU-USA

A PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN
ORDER

WINTER 2014-15 ISSUE 82



Be the joyful face of Christ to all!

NAFRA Theme 2015

Mission to Share the Vision

The TAU-USA, a publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of the United States, is a vital communication link between the NAFRA leadership and all professed Secular Franciscans throughout the United States. The articles within the publication, while sharing the Secular Franciscan charism and vision, are intended to inform, inspire, and challenge.



Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief
Jim Wesley, OFS

Spanish Editor
Cindy Wesley, OFS

Copy Editor
Mary Lou Coffman,
OFS

Special Assignments Editors

Mary and Bob
Stronach, OFS

NEC Consultants
Jan Parker, OFS
Mary Bittner, OFS
Mary Stronach, OFS

CNSA Contributor
Fr. Lester Bach,
OFM Cap

Database Administrator
Robert Herbelin, OFS

Subscription Coordinator
Cecilia Maljan-Herbelin, OFS

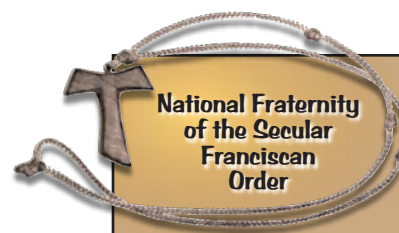
Webmaster
Dan Mulholland, OFS

TAU-USA email
tausa.ofs@gmail.com

Contents

Minister's Message	1
by Tom Bello, OFS	
NAFRA Chapter.	3
by Bob and Mary Stronach OFS	
CIOFS Chapter	10
by Bob and Mary Stronach OFS	
Reflections from Rome	13
by Tom Bello, OFS	
Sharing the Vision	14
by Jan Parker, OFS	
Formation.	16
by Bob Fitzsimmons, OFS	
Spiritual Assistance	18
by Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap.	
Ecumenical/Interfaith Commission	20
by Anne Mulqueen, OFS	
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.	22
by Carolyn Townes, OFS	
Youth and Young Adults Commission.	23
by Sue and Christy Nelson, OFS	
Vocation	26
by Jeff Ramirez, OFS	
2015 Annual Budget.	27
by Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS	
2016 Quinquennial Poster	28
Smoky Valley Printing.	29

TAU-USA is published quarterly. Each professed Secular receives the newsletter without charge. For subscription or change of address information, write to: Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS, 1933 Tudor Dr, San Jacinto, CA 92583-6035, or cylmaljan@earthlink.net. Subscriptions per year cost \$4.00 for U. S., \$6.00 for Canadian, \$15.00 for Overseas.



National Fraternity
of the Secular
Franciscan
Order

National Executive Council

National Minister
Tom Bello, OFS

National Vice Minister
Elaine Hedtke, OFS

National Secretary
Jan Parker, OFS

National Treasurer
Cecilia Maljan-Herbelin, OFS

National Councilor
Mary Bittner, OFS

National Councilor
Mary Frances
Charsky, OFS

National Councilor
Arturo Villarreal,
OFS

International Councilor
Mary Stronach, OFS

National Spiritual Assistant
Fr. Kevin Queally,
TOR

Request to receive the TAU-USA as a digital version only.

To receive the TAU-USA in electronic form only, email Cyl Maljan-Herbelin, OFS at cylmaljan@earthlink.net.

Note:

A Spanish version of the TAU-USA is now available and being mailed to Spanish speaking members upon request. If you wish to receive the TAU USA in Spanish and not English, please send your name, address, fraternity name and region name to: Cindy Wesley ofs, cw93444@gmail.com or 846 Calimex Place, Nipomo, CA 93444.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

National Minister, Tom Bello, OFS

Be the Joyful Face of Christ to All!

NAFRA Theme for 2015

One Possible Answer to the Mystery of Perfect Joy

This past November found me on several different days for sometimes longer than an hour sitting in front of, praying before and meditating upon the original San Damiano Cross that once spoke to St. Francis and now hangs in the Church of St. Clare, Santa Chiara, in Assisi.

This Cross did not speak to me in so many words, but it did have much to say.

One important thing is that look on Christ's face. I came to see it as a look of joy in spite of, or even because of, suffering.

Yes, the suffering is undeniable. Christ is truly hanging on the Cross, and blood is copiously flowing from the nail prints in His hands all the way down His forearms to His elbows, dripping on those below Him. Particularly bathed in blood, both from the nail print in His right hand and from the spear-piercing in His right side, stand Mary, His Mother, and John, the beloved Disciple.

Yet look at the face of the Lord! Study that face! Look at Mary's and John's faces! Nobody is crying. Nobody looks particularly sad. Jesus clearly is not dead. His eyes are wide-open, and to me He appears more joyful and triumphant than sad and defeated.

As many commentators on the San Damiano Cross have observed, this is the Christ of John's Gospel. He looks in control, so to speak, laying down his life willingly in obedience to His Father and knowing that this action and His blood will take away all sin and open the gates of Heaven.

Thus, I think Christ on the San Damiano Cross offers one possible answer to the Mystery of Perfect Joy. It is not about Him! It is not about Death. It is not about Suffering. Perfect Joy is perfectly offering yourself for the glory of God and for the salvation of our brothers and sisters. If death and suffering are the only means to that end, then so be it. Take the suffering and death and give them to God! Let go and let God!

I believe both St. Francis and St. Clare understood this message, of course directly from Christ Himself,

but perhaps indirectly through meditating on the Christ hanging on this same San Damiano Cross.

Perhaps this is what St. Francis is stressing in that famous story of "Perfect Joy" found in Chapter Eight of the Little Flowers of St. Francis (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ugolino/flowers.iii.viii.html>). Take your time and read it once again, word for word in the original, remembering Christ on the San Damiano Cross:

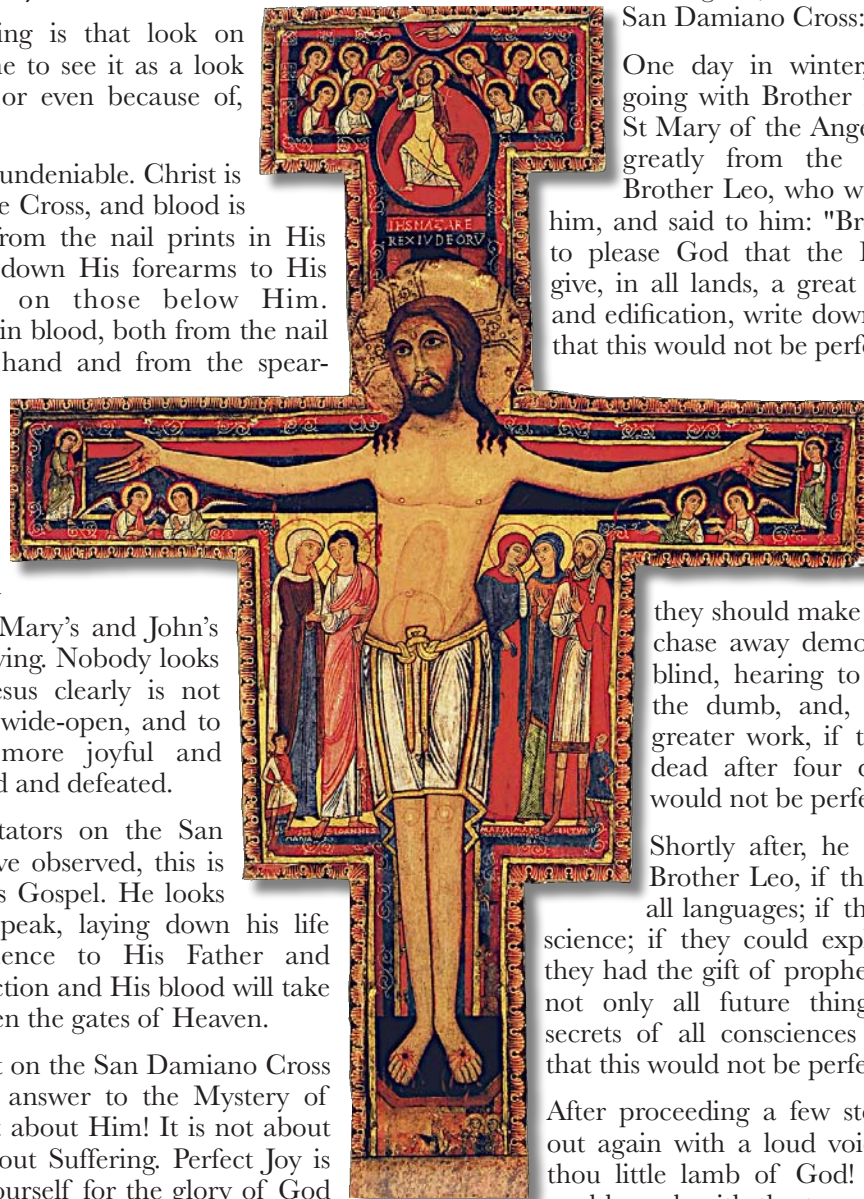
One day in winter, as St Francis was going with Brother Leo from Perugia to St Mary of the Angels, and was suffering greatly from the cold, he called to Brother Leo, who was walking on before him, and said to him: "Brother Leo, if it were to please God that the Friars Minor should give, in all lands, a great example of holiness and edification, write down, and note carefully, that this would not be perfect joy."

A little further on, St Francis called to him a second time: "O Brother Leo, if the Friars Minor were to make the lame to walk, if

they should make straight the crooked, chase away demons, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and, what is even a far greater work, if they should raise the dead after four days, write that this would not be perfect joy."

Shortly after, he cried out again: "O Brother Leo, if the Friars Minor knew all languages; if they were versed in all science; if they could explain all Scripture; if they had the gift of prophecy, and could reveal, not only all future things, but likewise the secrets of all consciences and all souls, write that this would not be perfect joy."

After proceeding a few steps farther, he cried out again with a loud voice: "O Brother Leo, thou little lamb of God! if the Friars Minor could speak with the tongues of angels; if they could explain the course of the stars; if they knew the virtues of all plants; if all the treasures of the earth were revealed to them; if they were acquainted with the various qualities of all birds, of all fish, of all animals, of men, of trees, of stones, of roots, and of waters — write that this would not be perfect joy."



Shortly after, he cried out again: "O Brother Leo, if the Friars Minor had the gift of preaching so as to convert all infidels to the faith of Christ, write that this would not be perfect joy."

Now when this manner of discourse had lasted for the space of two miles, Brother Leo wondered much within himself; and, questioning the saint, he said: "Father, I pray thee teach me wherein is perfect joy."

St Francis answered: *"If, when we shall arrive at St Mary of the Angels, all drenched with rain and trembling with cold, all covered with mud and exhausted from hunger; if, when we knock at the convent-gate, the porter should come angrily and ask us who we are; if, after we have told him, 'We are two of the brethren', he should answer angrily, 'What ye say is not the truth; ye are but two impostors going about to deceive the world, and take away the alms of the poor; begone I say'; if then he refuse to open to us, and leave us outside, exposed to the snow and rain, suffering from cold and hunger till nightfall - then, if we accept such injustice, such cruelty and such contempt with patience, without being ruffled and without murmuring, believing with humility and charity that the porter really knows us, and that it is God who maketh him to speak thus against us, write down, O Brother Leo, that this is perfect joy.*

And if we knock again, and the porter come out in anger to drive us away with oaths and blows, as if we were vile impostors, saying, 'Begone, miserable robbers! to the hospital, for here you shall neither eat nor sleep!' — and if we accept all this with patience, with joy, and with charity, O Brother Leo, write that this indeed is perfect joy.

And if, urged by cold and hunger, we knock again, calling to the porter and entreating him with many tears to open to us and give us shelter, for the love of God, and if he come out more angry than before, exclaiming, 'These are but importunate rascals, I will deal with them as they deserve'; and taking a knotted stick, he seize us by the hood, throwing us on the ground, rolling us in the snow, and shall beat and wound us with the knots in the stick — if we bear all these injuries with patience and joy, thinking of the sufferings of our Blessed Lord, which we would share out of love for him, write, O Brother Leo, that here, finally, is perfect joy.

And now, brother, listen to the conclusion. Above all the graces and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit which Christ grants to his friends, is the grace of overcoming oneself, and accepting willingly, out of love for Christ, all suffering, injury, discomfort and contempt; for in all other gifts of God we cannot glory, seeing they proceed not from ourselves but from God, according to the words of the Apostle, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received from God? and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it.' But in the cross of tribulation and affliction we may glory, because, as the Apostle says again,

'I will not glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Amen."

Again, when St. Francis is able, with and only with the grace of God, to get beyond himself, to get beyond even his own humiliation and suffering, when he realizes that it's not really about him at all, nor about suffering, but rather about doing the Lord's will and imitating Christ first and foremost, before every other consideration, then and only then does he realize perfect joy.

Do you see the Mystery of Perfect Joy? First, how can anything be perfect is this vale of tears? We all suffer. Second and worse, we see people we love suffer. Third and worst of all, it seems there is so little we can do to relieve the suffering in the world, in those we love, in our own lives. How can we find joy in so much suffering? Again, how can one speak of anything perfect in this life?

Well, that look on Christ's face on the San Damiano Cross, that moral to St. Francis's story on perfect joy, suggest to me that only when we can look beyond our own lives, our own self-importance, even our own suffering and death, and see God's will, God's plan, God's complete Love and Mercy, only then can we realize that perfect joy.

Yes, there will be suffering, even death, but if we live in the Lord, suffering and even death are but steps. Suffering with the Lord is a cause for joy, not sorrow. With the Lord's Cross, there is always the Lord's Resurrection, and above Christ's head on the San Damiano Cross, you can see Him rising, ascending, joyfully, confidently, into Glory.

This also seems to be the moral of St. Francis's story. Most importantly, it's not about St. Francis! It's about St. Francis surrendering his will to the Lord's will, putting even his own humiliation and suffering into the Lord's humiliation and suffering. When he can do that, again, with and only with God's great grace, then he can achieve Perfect Joy.

Let us pray. God, why do we get so caught up in the sin of Adam and Eve, trying to be You, trying to make our own rules and make ourselves the center of creation? Help us, Lord, to be ourselves, not You. Help us to realize that we don't need to be and cannot be You. Help us to accept our small parts in Your plan of salvation. Help us to do what we can do, to say what we can say, to pray what we can pray for your Glory and for the salvation of our sisters and brothers AND LET YOU BE GOD. We don't need to be Pope; we don't need to be God. Let Pope Francis be Pope. Let You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be God, and help us do what we can. In doing what we can, what we should, in accord with Your Will, even if it involves humiliation, suffering and death, let us realize that Mystery of Perfect Joy. We pray in Jesus' name.

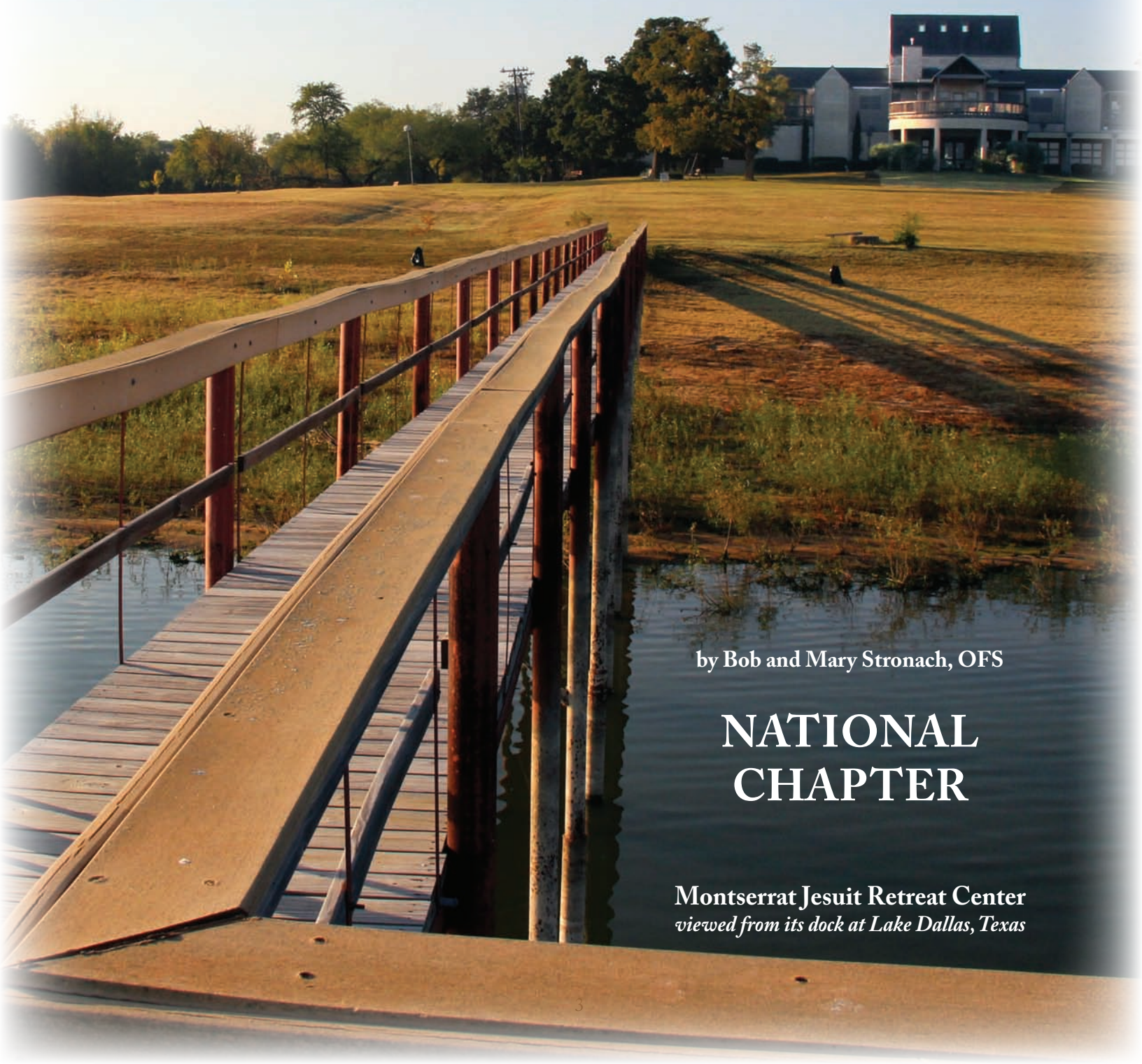
CALLED TO WALK ON WATER

In his opening remarks to the 2014 National Chapter, National Minister Dc. Tom Bello, OFS, encouraged everyone to stretch, to act on their faith, to live the Franciscan charism – to follow the Jesus who walked on water.

Referring to the Gospel passage where

Peter got out of the boat and tried walking to Jesus, he said: “Our Lord has called us to walk on the water. He didn’t say, sink. He said, come. If we keep our eyes on the Lord, we will never sink.”

He put it another way: “Jesus has not invited us to failure.”



by Bob and Mary Stronach, OFS

NATIONAL CHAPTER

Montserrat Jesuit Retreat Center
viewed from its dock at Lake Dallas, Texas

CALLED TO 'REBUILD MY HOUSE'

God is not only among us, but we are His merciful presence.

That 2014 national theme – be the merciful presence of God – resounded through the national chapter, held Oct. 21-26 at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House near Dallas, TX.

The difference between saints and sinners is the ability to listen, National Minister Dc. Tom Bello, OFS, suggested in his welcoming remarks.

Give others the benefit of the doubt, he said. Think before speaking. Listen. And learn.

“In other words, just be the merciful presence of God.”

It also means being like servants,



**Deacon Tom Bello, OFS
NATIONAL MINISTER**

National Spiritual Assistant Kevin Queally, TOR, noted in the opening liturgy.

“Too many times we want to be leaders... but really it’s about ‘waiting’... learning the needs...ready to serve.”

God “is our peace,” who breaks

down “the walls between us.”

No enmity. No hate. Break down walls. “It’s what we’re meant to be,” Father Kevin said.

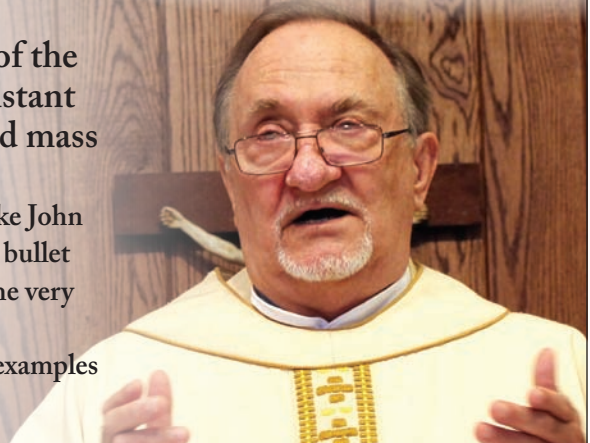
“He says to us, ‘rebuild my house’... You servant-leaders have been called to do this.”

WE ARE THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

“We are called more and more to be expressions of the merciful presence of God,” National Spiritual Assistant Stephen Gross, OFM Conv., asserted at the second mass of the chapter.

There are many models of God’s goodness, he said – models like John Paul II, who “forgave the man who shot him.” Even though that bullet began his physical deterioration, his spirit soared. “He tried to the very end to be an expression of God’s love and care.”

He declared: “We are the signs of the times. The signs are the examples we give.”



LIGHT A FIRE

Do you wish life wasn’t so full of strife? Do you yearn for peace?

“Forget about it!” That’s what Jesus is saying, asserted National Spiritual Assistant Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap., at the chapter’s third mass. “He came to light a fire... Jesus challenged the status quo.”

He continued: “We today are called to be Jesus’ disciples, to spread fire.”

Disciples spread fire by “being the merciful presence of God” and by living the greatest commandment – “love God and love neighbor.”

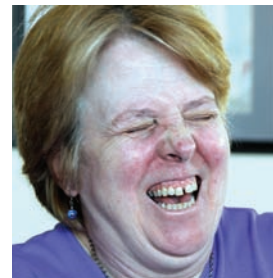
CHAPTER WAS A WEEK OF WONDER

The national chapter in Dallas was a week of wonder.

The wonder of coming together as brothers and sisters... of praying with joy and song... of prodding and visioning how to be more present Franciscans... and of savoring the morning-to-night sounds and scents and sights of a retreat center enveloped in nature (and isolated from the ebola scare at a downtown hospital).

Among the highlights:

- Adopting “*Be the Joyful Face of Christ to All*” as the 2015 theme (springboarding off 2014’s “Be the Merciful Presence of God”).
- Awarding the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Award to Tuscon Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas for “ground zero” work with desperate migrants.
- Declaring “solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters.”
- Putting a focus on vocations with a Vocations Committee developing marketing and resource materials.
- Invigorating the Franciscan Youth and Young Adult program with the appointment of a mother-daughter team to lead the charge.
- Adopting a \$356,000 operating budget.
- Immersing in prayer and reflection through on-going formation, including the words and challenges hurled by friars during daily mass.



BY THE NUMBERS

In his national minister's report to delegates, Tom Bello noted that the U.S. has:

- 12,739 active professed members (down 264).
- 1,014 candidates (a drop of 42).
- 637 canonically established fraternities (an increase of 31 fraternities).

SOME BEST PRACTICES

The topics of vocations, fraternity growth, and council health were on the minds of participants in both small group and general sessions. The discussion offered suggestions of best practices:

- Communication, in various forms, is essential, whether to keep people informed, invite to meetings, show appreciation for a job well done. Use cards, letters, certificates, email, social media (e.g., Facebook).
- Learn to delegate tasks.
- Offer retreats for local and regional leaders.
- Develop a cadre of mentors.



Carolyn Townes, OFS

- "In the best local fraternities, everybody has something to do. Members are engaged."



The chapter broke into small group sessions to tackle agenda topics, such as best practices in regional and local fraternities, leadership development and effective communication.

JPIC IN ACTION

One might say the chapter experienced an immersion in Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

National JPIC Chair Carolyn Townes, OFS, spoke of DOING peace. Franciscan Br. David Buer, OFM, who himself previously received the award for his work with the homeless and migrants, accepted the JPIC Award on behalf of Bishop Kicanas, who sent video greetings (*see opposite page*). Chapter delegates were so moved that they later unanimously adopted a statement of solidarity (*see opposite page*).

There are two ways of being – “a heart of war or a heart of peace,” Townes told the assembly.

“Which are you?”

“We see the world as we are.”

She asked: Do we think of ourselves and others, for example, as being fat or stupid or something else?

“This is the violence we do to ourselves and to one another.”

Or “do we truly believe we are beloved sons and daughters of the God of peace?”

As Thomas Merton suggested, she said, to be a saint is to be myself; but my true self is found in God.

“Once you got the ‘who’ straight, then you do the ‘do’.”

“Do PEACE,” she said, explaining the word as an acronym.

Do... Prayer

Empathy

Active Listening

Compassion (recognize suffering and act to relieve it)

Evangelical Love

“That’s the Gospel!”

JPIC AWARD HONORS BISHOP'S WORK WITH MIGRANTS

DALLAS – Citing his “ground zero” work on behalf of desperate migrants in southern Arizona, the Secular Franciscan Order is honoring Tucson Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, D.D., with the Franciscan Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Award.

The award was announced at the national annual gathering, held Oct. 21-26 at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, Lake Dallas, Texas.

Br. David Buer, OFM, a friar who himself received the JPIC Award in 2010 for his work with the homeless and migrants in Arizona, accepted the award on behalf of Bishop Kicanas, who was unable to be present.

JPIC Commission Chair Carolyn Townes, OFS, introduced Brother David and National Minister Deacon Tom Bello, OFS, presented the award, saying the bishop “exemplifies the Franciscan values of peace-making, charity and justice for the poor.” The award included a glass statue of “God’s hands embracing the world,” and a \$2,000 prize.

In a video message, Bishop Kicanas expressed “deep gratitude,” praised the advocacy of Secular



JPIC Chair Carolyn Townes, OFS, with Franciscan Br. David Buer, who accepted the award on behalf of Tucson Bishop Gerald Kicanas.

Franciscans on behalf of the poor and homeless, and said the award encourages him and others to continue the fight to fix a broken immigration system.

Secular Franciscans nominating the bishop wrote: “Over the last

decade, southern Arizona has been ‘ground zero’ for the humanitarian crisis of desperate migrants risking their lives, by crossing the desert on foot. Each year, 150-200 human remains are found in the desert around Tucson. Many more hundreds are found each year along the Mexican border in Texas, New Mexico and California.

“Bishop Kicanas has been tirelessly working to create bridges of love and concern in an era of wall building and militarization. He helped form the ‘Dioceses Without Borders’ project, which unites the Catholic Dioceses of Phoenix, Tucson and Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, to work together on migration issues. He reaches out to all the human beings in the borderlands: the humanitarian groups; the Border Patrol and other enforcement agencies; the migrants; the faith community; the ranchers and elected officials. He welcomed the Jesuit’s Kino Border Initiative project in Nogales. Bishop Kicanas’ commitment has also played an important role nationally, testifying before Congress, for the need for comprehensive immigration reform.”

CHAPTER DECLARES SOLIDARITY WITH IMMIGRANTS

DALLAS – The national body of the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order declared its “solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters” in a statement unanimously adopted at its annual gathering, held Oct. 21-26 in Dallas, TX.

Citing Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput’s insight that “the more we encourage and support the integrity of families, the healthier society becomes,” the national body

said: “We lament that immigrants live in fear of a dysfunctional system which often leads to the forced break-up of loving families.”

The body, consisting of some 50 leaders representing nearly 13,000 Secular Franciscans across the U.S., said that Secular Franciscans “are called by our Rule of Life to cultivate the well-being of the family through our Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life.”

The leaders said they were inspired by the words and actions of Tucson Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, this year’s recipient of their Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Award.

“We accept the challenge from Bishop Kicanas that we seek ways to stand in solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters, through prayer, personal action, and support for comprehensive immigration reform.”

YOUTH TOOLBOX

Active in youth ministry, Christy Nelson, OFS, and former Regional Minister Sue Nelson, OFS, were introduced as the new Youth/Young Adult co-chairs.

They presented a three-year vision to attract youth to a Franciscan spiritual experience and ultimately nurture a multi-generational membership in fraternities. They're developing a "fraternity toolbox" -- a how-to guide with resources and materials such as a "welcome video" -- that fraternities can use to attract and work with youth. They said they would like to see every fraternity plan two activities this year that involve youth, whether it's planning a public event or something as simple as a couple of Secular Franciscans talking Franciscan spirituality with one or two youth at a coffee shop.



FORMATION SHARING

Another new national appointee, Formation Chair Mary Anne Lenzi, OFS, shared a vision to move from information to transformation. She anticipates a workshop that follows up on the FUN (For Up to Now) Manual, and that fosters sharing -- "share the journey, share with one another, share our stories."



Mary Anne Lenzi, OFS



Jim Flickinger, OFS

DISASTER RESPONSE

Jim Flickinger, OFS, founder of Amazon Relief, reported on his efforts to launch a Secular Franciscan disaster response team -- initially in Florida, with plans to expand to other states. Some 50 people had already indicated an interest in volunteering.

to Fair Share, the chapter voted to have *Tau-USA* mailed to candidates as well as professed members.

FOR CANDIDATES

With the international order requesting that candidates contribute

ANNUAL REPORT DATA

Vice National Minister Elaine Hedtke, OFS, emphasized the importance of regions submitting annual report data, with National Spiritual Assistant Stephen Gross, OFM Conv, noting that the church needs to know the status of its people and orders. "We're responsible for handing in accurate statistics."



Elaine Hedtke, OFS



Donna Hollis, OFS, and Josh Molidor, OFS, are the regional ministers who co-hosted the 2014 chapter in Texas.



VOCATIONS PLAN

Vocations Chair Jeff Ramirez, OFS, announced that the Vocations Committee was in the process of developing a plan of action, best practices and promotional material. The committee can be contacted at ofsvocationscommittee@gmail.com.

“Vocations are not only found within the church,” he noted. “Get out of your comfort box” and be open to the idea that “you can find vocations” in the “most unlikely places.”

He added: “We embrace our imperfections. We need to love ourselves because how then can we love anyone else?”



Jeff Ramirez, OFS

“We’re Franciscans – not for ourselves but for others. We come together to get energized and then we have to go out... The world is our

cloister.”

And: “We are the servants of God whose purpose is to move people’s hearts... We’re the seeds.”

COMMUNICATIONS

The chapter heard that communication continues to be a priority – with the Communications Committee looking at how to improve the NAFRA website and Tau-USA publication, and to make better use of social media (facebook.com/secularfranciscans-nafrausa and [#secfrannafra](https://twitter.com/secfrannafra)).

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

“I have come to set the earth on fire.”

That’s how Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, opened his remarks as outgoing president-in-turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA).

He pointed out that, as Franciscans, “we are called to heal wounds...to bring home those who have lost their way,” and that “we must listen to each other and grow together.”

The discussion moved to an important



Fr. Kevin Queally

topic for many fraternities – the need for spiritual assistants. With fewer friars available, the order needs to foster the formation of secular spiritual assistants. Regions that have active SA training shared how they go about it.

“We need to do everything we can to give spiritual assistant training,” said National Minister Tom Bello, OFS.



Anne Mulqueen, OFS

INTERFAITH

Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Chair Anne Mulqueen, OFS, spoke of church unity as “a spiritual relationship” and pointed to areas where different faiths can work together, such as in peace-making, advocacy, and recognizing “the Earth belongs to God and is intrinsically good.”

Ecumenical and Anglican Franciscans journeyed with the chapter -- Katie Cook, OEF, representing the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans, and Fr. Tom Johnson, TSSF, minister provincial, Province of the Americas, (Anglican) Third Order Society of St. Francis.



Katie Cook, OEF

BUDGET APPROVED

National Treasurer Cyl Maljan-Herbelin presented a proposed 2015 budget of \$356,195, which drew praise as well as discussion of several line-item allocations. It was approved by a nearly unanimous vote.



Fr. Tom Johnson, TSSF

ASSISI REFLECTION

By MARY T. STRONACH, OFS
International Councilor

How can anyone bring an experience of the soul, of family, of culture to life? How can I give a sense of being a member of an international order that brings together the Franciscan family from around the world?

This Order has no walls. It flows seamlessly from one nation to another, one brother or sister to another. Yes, we have our differences. We have cultural experiences that add a unique Franciscan twist to all we do – our music distinguishes us, our special practices enrich us, our dialects and our language identify us. But, at the core, when we first meet, we embrace as a brother or sister whom we haven't seen in a while. And we have brothers and sisters everywhere – Japan, China, Angola, Eritrea, South Africa, Switzerland, France, England, Norway, Germany, Croatia, Argentina, Venezuela – the list seems endless.

Just like family, we sometimes think differently. I was gently told that I was too quick to offer solutions. We must talk about them, talk around them, talk them through. In our group discussions, we often had different points of view on how to address issues. Some cultures are more quiet, wait for others to give their opinions, process what is being said and then, possibly, offer their perspective. We, on the other hand, tend to tackle the problem head first. It made for some interesting moments, but at the end, we found consensus.

Our day always began with prayer and Mass at 7 a.m. Our General Assistants brought the Eucharist to us in multicultural and multilingual modes. Our General Assistant from



The Portiuncula sits prominently in the central nave of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. The group posing for the photo include members of the U. S. delegation. FROM RIGHT: National Councilor and Observer Mary Frances Charsky, International Councilor Mary Stronach, National Minister and Observer Tom Bello, and National Secretary and Observer Jan Parker.

Cameroon, Fr. Francis, even shared the idea of “dancing in the Lord.” The first Mass was celebrated at the Lower Basilica of St. Francis. Just below lies the crypt where Francis sleeps. Imagine that... to be so close to Francis – not just in spirit but in physical proximity.

Just as amazing was our next Mass at Santa Maria degli Angeli where we found the chapel of the Portiuncula

inside the basilica. Yes, the same chapel that Francis rebuilt with his own hands. Bob, my husband who served as the chapter photographer, said the moment lingered throughout the day for him. Indeed, we all felt the presence of Francis as we began eight days of work for the Lord.

Meals were an Italian feast! But, more importantly, we spent the time sharing with our brothers and sisters

GENERAL CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS



Mary Stronach, OFS, (center left), international councilor for the U.S., confers with Gerti Theobald, OFS, of Germany during the opening session of the XIV General Chapter in Assisi.

ASSISI -- The General Chapter, held Nov. 1-8 in Assisi, attracted 170 participants, including some 84 capitulars (or voting delegates).

With an overarching theme of how to better manage the order, the chapter set the following priorities for the next three years: **Formation, Family, Presence in the World, Communication, YouFra, Emerging Fraternities, Finances.** These priorities will, among other things, focus on creation of a permanent translators' group, better use of the internet, strengthening the sense of belonging to the universal fraternity, boosting formation efforts, continuing to provide aid to special projects (particularly Africa, China and Haiti), developing an international

plan to promote vocations, and maximizing the relationship between Franciscan Youth and the OFS.

National fraternities are being asked to review the state of the order in their countries, including problems, strengths and opportunities, and to make recommendations on how to better adapt to today's reality. (At the National Chapter, NAFRA took the first steps with a mini-session discussing these issues. A committee, representing all levels of the order, will be pulled together to further the discussion.)

PRESIDENCY AREAS

The Chapter modified the areas of service within the Presidency to help equalize the workload for the

Presidency Councilors.

Areas are no longer based solely on language, but, also geography. The countries to the south of Latin America and those that speak Portuguese now share the same Presidency Councilor (Spanish – Portuguese) and the same happens for the countries in South East Europe (Italian – English), while the Asian nations and those of Oceania now have their own Presidency Councilor. The U.S. and Canada are now paired with English speaking Africa.

3-YEAR BUDGET

The Chapter approved the budget for the next three years: 209,624 Euros (2015), 215,707 Euros (2016), and 221,730 Euros (2017).

– the African brother who shared the struggles of his fraternity in a country where Christians are martyred; the Japanese sister who spoke English with a lovely British lilt; the brother from Cuba who shared his work experiences at a local university; the Italian brother and sister who volunteer at the Vatican.

I must admit, the system of managing meetings is quite different at the inter-

national level. They do not follow parliamentary procedure, and, until I realized that, I felt a little frustrated. While ideas and suggestions were offered, they did not always have the opportunity to be vetted by further discussion.

Elections followed the guidelines we all follow. At the end, there was a good balance of past and new representatives. New General Minister Tibor Kauser is a past Presidency councilor

for English speaking countries. He brings an understanding of the constitutions and legal system of the Order, but he also is very fraternal and open-minded. He is, in fact, the first man to be





Mary Stronach (rear, 3rd from left) shares a lighter moment with African and Canadian brothers and sisters.

general minister since we changed from the provincial model. Our vice minister, María Consuelo Núñez (or Chelito, as we call her), is also a past presidency councilor (12 years). She's a great organizer and has a great understanding of the Order. Ana Fruk, previously YouFra representative, was elected to serve Northern and Eastern Europe. She brings a youthful perspective, vigor, enthusiasm. The other presidency councilors are new and come from Italy, Peru, Libya and South Africa. The USA will have as its representative a very intelligent, loving and energetic sister from South Africa -- Jenny Harrington. She has been very involved in assisting the African countries as they establish themselves in the Order and address the unique needs of the African brothers and sisters.

I had the privilege of working with

Chelito on the Conclusions Committee, producing a document that offers an overview of the Chapter happenings and focuses in on the priorities for the next three years. In this committee, it was very apparent that different cultures plan their projects differently. We had two Latino Americans. Besides Chelito, there was Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, General Spiritual Assistant. Two North Americans, myself and Marion Clorey. And one Southeast Asian, Hendro Satiawan. As you might expect, Hendro was very flexible. Chelito and Amando needed to process and organize. Mary and Marion wanted to get right to work. We ultimately found a workable model that successfully delivered an eight-page document to the Chapter assembly on the final day.

On our last day together we were

taken to La Verna, a two-hour journey by bus. Upon arriving, we had to hike up part of the mountain. It was drizzling but the view was magnificent. I am not surprised that Francis would take this hike often to refresh and renew his spirit. The church there had numerous De la Rocha ceramics -- beautiful works of art of blue and white ceramics. During the pilgrimage, we visited the cave where Francis slept. We walked where Francis had walked, sat where he spent time in prayer. Further on and in a small chapel was the spot where historically, he received the stigmata. Many of us spent much time there praying and just absorbing the spirit that surrounded us.

On our trek back to the bus, I had the privilege of walking arm-in-arm with Jenny, our Presidency councilor. We had become family. A joyful one.

ENTER INTO THE DANCE OF THE LORD

“To be Christian is to dance in the life of God.” In fact, Capuchin Friar Francis Bongajum Dor noted, “in Africa, we do everything with dance...even funerals.”

Speaking at the mass launching the third day of the chapter, Father Francis had everyone stand, raise their arms and sway side to side while chanting, “Be happy in the Lord.”

He spoke of “the joy that springs from a pure heart,” of entering “into the dance

of the Lord,” especially at such a “privileged moment” as a General Chapter in Assisi.

It's like returning to the womb and being reborn, he added; being “born again with St. Francis.” Pointing out that everyone “should leave Assisi with renewed fervor to live the Gospel,” Father Francis prayed: “May Mary the mother of God, intercede for us that we may live our life as Eucharist... going into the feast of God.”



REFLECTIONS FROM ROME

The Five P's of Similarity between Pope and Saint Francis

by Tom Bello, OFS National Minister



All of us have been blessed as Secular Franciscans with a strong “talking point” with those interested in following our vocation: For the first time in the human history of the Church, we have a Holy Father who has specifically chosen the name Francis in his identification with St. Francis.

On Wednesday, November 12, 2014, following the International Election Chapter in Assisi, our National Secretary Jan Parker, our National Councilor Mary Frances Charsky and I received printed invitations for a General Audience with Pope Francis in the same St. Peter's Square you see above.

It occurred to me then, and I share with you now, that I have found many Catholics more interested in sharing their excitement about Pope Francis than in learning more about St. Francis or our Secular Franciscan charism. Thus, permit me to share with you so that you might share with others the Five P's of similarity between Pope and Saint Francis, which Pope Francis himself has shared in his words and example.

1. Putting on Christ. In his visit to Assisi on October 4, 2013, Pope Francis spoke about St. Francis: “His first and most essential witness is this: that being a Christian means having a living relationship with the person of Jesus; it means putting on Christ,

being conformed to him.” Lives putting on Christ characterize both Pope and St. Francis.

2. Peace. Again, in Assisi, Pope Francis said, “This is the second witness that Francis gives us: that everyone who follows Christ receives true peace, the peace that Christ alone can give. . . . Many people, when they think of Saint Francis, think of peace. . . . What is the peace which Francis received, experienced and lived, and which he passes on to us? It is the peace of Christ, which is born of the greatest love of all, the love of the cross.” Being “Instruments of God's Peace” characterizes both Pope and St. Francis.

3. Protection of all God's Creation. Again, in Assisi, Pope Francis said, Saint Francis “bears witness to the need to respect all that God has created, and that men and women are called to safeguard and protect, but above all he bears witness to respect and love for every human being.” Protection of all that God has created characterizes both Pope and St. Francis.

4. Poverty. During the Papal election, a good friend whispered, “Don't forget the poor!” Three days after his election, Pope Francis retold those words and related, “And those words came to me: the poor, the poor. Then, right away, thinking of the poor, I thought of Francis of Assisi.” As St. Francis espoused Lady Poverty, so Pope Francis went on to say, “How I would like a Church which is poor and for the poor!”

5. Prayer. As St. Francis spent days in prayer, so Pope Francis admits to constant prayer. He said, “I pray the breviary every morning. I like to pray with the psalms. Then, later, I celebrate Mass. I pray the Rosary. . . . In the evening then, between seven and eight o'clock, I stay in front of the Blessed Sacrament for an hour in adoration. But I pray mentally even when I am waiting at the dentist or at other times of the day.” Both Pope and St. Francis can be characterized as people of deep and constant prayer.

Let us pray. God, help us to share our Secular Franciscan vocation at this unique time when our Holy Father himself has both chosen the name of St. Francis and, more importantly, chosen to follow the footsteps of St. Francis closer to Christ. May we do the same in our words and actions. We pray in Jesus' name.

Sharing The Vision

News from the National Executive Council (NEC)

by National Secretary, Jan Parker, OFS

NAFRA Theme for 2015

Be the joyful face of Christ to all!

*“How joyful it is to have a God who loves the simple, the poor and the humble!
How joyful it is to learn from the example of St. Francis! Let us rejoice and exult!”*

Minister General Tibor Kauser, OFS, in his 2014 Christmas message to the Secular Franciscan Order

Our National Fraternity (NAFRA) was truly blessed as we gathered at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House in Lake Dallas, Texas, for our October 21-26, 2014, Annual Chapter. A spirit of joy was felt in our prayer, fellowship and deliberations. During 2014, NAFRA continued to focus time, energy and funding to address the six priorities chosen in 2012. The reports on our progress were heartening, yet there are great challenges before us. Trusting God, who has not called us to failure, we made decisions and set directions for 2015.

2014 OFS National Fraternity Chapter Highlights

Note: See the NAFRA website for the National Minister’s Annual Report and State of the Order Address

2015 Goals Set by National Minister

National Minister Tom Bello reported good progress on our six national priorities but encouraged and invited us to go further in faith, placing before us some specific challenges. His hope is that each Region could meet the following goals in the coming year:

- Make every effort to build relationships with the First Order and Third Order Regular Friars, including regular communication with each Friar Province within your Region.
- Offer a Regional Spiritual Assistant Seminar or Workshop
- Develop a Spiritual Assistant Training Program for your Region
- Ensure that your Region and each local Fraternity has a Spiritual Assistant
- Invite Seculars in your Region to be trained as Spiritual Assistants
- Offer a retreat and encourage each local fraternity to do the same
- Attend to each area of Formation: (1) Information (2) Fraternity building via gatherings, retreats, Quinquennial, etc. (3) Life-long ongoing “lived” formation for personal transformation and the transformation of our families, our political and economic structures, and our world
- Reach out to OFS brothers and sisters whose language and culture are not our own
- Participate in the four OFS Fraternities to which you belong – local, regional, national and international
- Tom addressed this National Challenge to each Region: Sometime during the “Year of Consecrated Life” (November 30, 2014, to

February 2, 2016) plan an event that gathers and includes the whole Franciscan Family – 1st, 2nd and 3rd Orders – to celebrate our common call to a life of conversion.

Ongoing Formation

Ongoing formation provided for wonderful fraternal sharing. Anne Mulqueen gave an insightful presentation entitled “A Different Way of Looking at Servant Leadership,” examining the traits of leadership as found in each phrase of St. Francis’ “Prayer Before the Crucifix”. Diane Menditto and Patti Reynolds presented “*Evangelii Gaudium* and the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.” (PowerPoints of each of these available on the NAFRA website.) Mary Anne Lenzi shared goals for the coming year: (1) building relationships via the NAFRA-Form listserv (2) an updated Formation website and (3) an opportunity for Regional Formation Directors to come together.

Spiritual Assistance

The Task Force on Spiritual Assistant Development is developing a syllabus and guidelines for Spiritual Assistant Training Programs. There is a strong possibility of the appointment of a Secular Franciscan to the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) in 2015. CNSA President-in-Turn, Fr. Kevin Queally encouraged Secular Franciscan to take Spiritual Assistants training. The support of the Friars is real and will remain, but some things about Spiritual Assistance are changing. Fr. Kevin encouraged us to “accept this as the work of the Holy Spirit... let the Spirit direct this as it unfolds.” His presentation included a call to the OFS to embrace and live our Rule and our charism of conversion.

Best Practices

Much time was devoted to discussing “Best Practices.” Dozens of great ideas addressing a wide variety of OFS fraternity issues were shared and discussed by Regional Ministers; these will be compiled and distributed.

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission (JPIC)

Carolyn Townes introduced a *What is JPIC?* video. (A “must see!”) Carolyn reviewed the JPIC “BE-Attitudes Diagram” and presented copies of the “Handbook for Animators of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation” for distribution to Regional JPIC point persons. A JPIC Peace Retreat will be held in August 2015.

Youth/Young Adults Commission

Sue and Christy Nelson presented “SHINE” – a program to bring the next generation of Catholics closer to Christ through Franciscan spiritual experiences. A SHINE Fraternity Guide and SHINE “toolbox” are soon to come. Sue and Christy also gave an informative session on multi-generational fraternities.

OFS Disaster Relief

Jim Flickinger reported on “OFS Disaster Relief,” with an initial base in Florida. Jim requests monetary donations and volunteers. Application forms were distributed.

Communications: Come & See Video / TAU-USA for Candidates / Translations

Communication Committee goals include an improved NAFRA website and the appointment of a NAFRA “Facebook person.” Jerry Rousseau presented a *Come and See* video. (Another “must see!”) As of January 2015, each OFS Candidate listed in the national database will receive the *TAU-USA*. Funding for translations of formation books was approved. There was good discussion on the needs and the nurturing of our many non-English speaking and bilingual groups of Seculars.

Closing Reflection - National Minister Tom Bello

National Minister Tom Bello shared a closing reflection (paraphrased): *“Our Lord has called us at every level of fraternity to walk on the water. Yes storms are there. We are all sinners. But have faith in us as an Order and faith in God has called us to COME, to walk on the water. If we can keep our eyes fixed on the Lord we will never sink. We will never die as an Order. I feel better this year than in past years about the Order. How do we keep that life? How to stay with Christ? Be that merciful presence this week and the rest of our lives. May we not focus on the stormy waves outside or the raging fears inside - trust the Lord! Pray more and keep your eyes on Christ! Don't be afraid of suffering in service to God and neighbor - there will be suffering, but we do not fail when we suffer in doing the Lord's work. May God help us to trust more, to hope more, and to love more! May we always remember and believe that Jesus has not invited us to failure!”*

Good news! Candidates are now receiving the TAU USA in the mail, which is mailed out in either English or Spanish. If you want to receive it in a different language than was sent to you, please contact Bob Herbelin: rherbelin@gmail.com or 1933 Tudor Dr, San Jacinto, CA 92583-6035. He will need to know your name, address, name of your fraternity and your region, and which language you want to receive.

Vocations

Jeff Ramirez spoke on the importance of our witness and personal invitation to “come and see.” Ideas for promotion of vocations were shared. A list of these ideas and a “Vocation Challenge” will be presented early in 2015.

International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order - CIOFS

Mary Stronach’s presentation on the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS) gave all a greater awareness and appreciation of our worldwide Order, encompassing 115 countries and 360,000 members. She encouraged our support of CIOFS, including financial support. She elicited ideas from NAFRA to present at the November 2014 CIOFS Chapter in Assisi. (A copy of her PowerPoint presentation is available on the NAFRA website.)

NAFRA Statement from Chapter

NAFRA issued a statement to declare solidarity with immigrant brothers and sisters.

Nominations Committee for 2015 Elective Chapter

A new National Executive Council will be elected at our October 2015 Chapter. A Nomination Committee was formed; members are Kathleen White, Mattie Ward and Susan Simeone.

2015 Events:

- Summer Seminar, July 9-12, on Servant Leadership with Fr. Michael Higgins TOR, and Mary Frances Charsky
- JPIC Peace Retreat, with Youth Track, August 20-23, at Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Illinois
- World Meeting of Families, September, in Philadelphia with Pope Francis – St. Katherine Drexel Region and National Youth Commission plan to participate and promote OFS.
- NAFRA Elective Chapter, October 13-18, in Clinton, New Jersey, hosted by Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity.



FORMATION COMMISSION

PEOPLE OF THE WORD

by Bob Fitzsimmons, OFS

Blessings to all dear sisters and brothers, and many thanks for all your prayer and support during the six years you allowed me to serve as your National Formation Chair.

This past October, I had planned to give my last formation session at our 2014 National Chapter, but unfortunately needs at home prevented me from attending.

I had planned to speak on the great blessing we have received by being called to be both People of Eucharist and, as Franciscans, also People of the Word. Our Rule of Life entrusts us with the great privilege of carrying the Word of God to all. We are also challenged to understand what is being spoken to us and to transform ourselves into “little” words of the Father. The path has already been modeled for us by Francis and Clare and countless of Franciscans before us. What an Honor! What a legacy! What a challenge, to become “alter-Christus”.

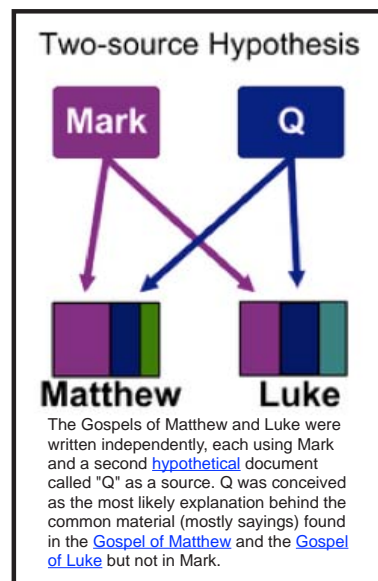
We are all familiar with the Gospels, the words spoken by Jesus, along with the evangelists’ additions and commentary that the specific communities being introduced to Jesus needed. Matthew, for example, follows a tradition needed by Jewish Christians, arranging his witness in a five-book pattern similar to the Torah. Luke pursues a path that highlights the important moments of faith among the little ones in society — women and also the poor and sick. Both Matthew and Luke took Jesus’ words and tailored them to meet specific needs, but the common foundation is the sayings themselves, the words of the Word.

This foundation is known as the Q document. Q for *quelle* or the “source”. We don’t know whether it was once a written collection or an oral tradition passed from one Christian community to the next, most likely in the preaching and stories from the Apostles as they shared their lived experience of Jesus.

Q sayings from Matthew and Luke are the common materials in both the Gospels, which were written independently, but share so much similarity.

So why am I going there? The Gospels are a tremendous treasury of what is important in our lives and much needed within our society, but we as People of the Gospel need to enrich ourselves, not just with how Matthew and Luke interpreted Jesus words, but how

Jesus words speak to us today. What is the commentary we write to explain and introduce Jesus to the world today?



In my travels to many local fraternities, I have been amazed at how well we understand the Gospels as a set of behaviors, a newly updated Ten Commandments.,, Certainly the Gospels do emphasize a specific approach to living life based on the way of love, love freely expressed and given for others. A life based on compassion, forgiveness and gifting ourselves to relieve

the pains of our sisters and brothers. A life counter to the world, one not based on using others for our own gain, hoarding, or being greedy and cheap with our time and presence, as if we have placed a buy/sell price on human worth.

But what I see, as either overlooked or not seen at all, is that the Gospels are not just about how to live life, they are about how God Incarnate lives life. They tell us who God is in His very essence, and not who we prefer Him to be. Jesus is the blueprint or master plan for all creation. The Gospels introduce Him and the Father to us. The Life of Jesus and the Gospels are how we know the very Nature (essence) of God. We no longer see Him only in a burning bush or a shadow passing by. Now we know with certainty, and no matter how hard we try, the Gospels are NOT about us, they are about the One we profess to follow and into whom we seek to transform ourselves.

So back to Q (*Quelle*)! The words of Jesus! For ease, consider reading from a red-letter version of the Gospels, focusing only on the red letters. This is easier on computer because you can extract the red letter sayings and then journal and pray with them., Then YOU can arrange them and YOU fill in the needed commentary for today as both Matthew and Luke once did. Then

you can begin to write your own “good news” for today and begin to introduce Jesus to all you meet —. Jesus brought to life now, today, in your own words and, more important, your actions.

It’s a bit of work, but it’s what all of us Franciscans professed that we want, To Observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot give what we don’t have or be what we don’t understand. As a possible personal ongoing formation and also possibly reinforced by fraternities, we might begin this journey into the words and therefore the mind of God. Formation and transformation at their fundamental core are the personal responsibility of each professed member, for life.

The Q-sayings or red letter editions give us the opportunity to hear and reflect on the sayings of Jesus without the evangelists’ commentary. The context added by Matthew and Luke add insight on how Jesus’ words were introduced to various communities and situations within their developing communities. Important yes! They can help us see how it mattered then, and how we can better evangelize the world in a way that can be heard Today.

Jesus’ words themselves can be quite forceful and even severe or shocking, so be prepared for a jolt! I would caution all of us at this point with the words of a Jesuit mentor I had the joy of some study with, Fr. John Powell, SJ. (paraphrased): The Gospel is meant to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. So if you are comfortable in are hearing the Gospel, you are probably not listening to the Gospel.

If, however; you desire to transform yourself into a part of the living Gospel, much like Francis, take the time, shut off the TV and go into your closet with the words of Jesus. Pray with them, play with them, taste their sweetness, let them fill you very soul. Then you will find the right words to write your own Gospel and proclaim the wonders God is constantly doing for you.

Make the Gospel your own and share it to the glory of the Father who richly blesses us.

Begin in thanksgiving, as urged by Bl. Solanus Casey, OFM Cap, again paraphrased — Thank God in advance for the wonders and blessings He will do for you.

I urge you to make the effort and take the path less taken and become truly People of the Word!

Peace, blessings and all good,

Fitz

Bob Fitzsimmons, OFS

National Formation Commission 2015



Pictured above are the four members of the National Formation Commission: Diane Menditto, OFS from Our Lady of the Angels Region in New Jersey; Patti Reynolds, OFS from Divine Mercy Region, Michigan; Mary Anne Lenzi, OFS (National Formation Director) from Santa Maria de Los Montañas Region, Colorado; and Anne Mulqueen, OFS from St. Margaret of Cortona Region, Maryland.

To provide a smooth transition for the new formation team, Bob Fitzsimmons, the previous National Formation Director, met with the group offering invaluable information and guidance to help clarify the vision for the Commission, and its mission within the Order.

Our initial plans for this year are to begin building and forming those strong relationships. The NEC has challenged the commission to prepare a formation workshop in 2015. Plans are underway for a centrally located formation director’s workshop in late August. We are also working to provide email communication by revitalizing the NAFRA-FORM. It is a beginning and we welcome your questions and input. We share with you the theme that developed over our weekend together: When we understand relationship, and how to be in a relationship, we will “be who we say we are”, following Jesus just like Francis.

*Peace and All Good,
Mary Anne Lenzi, OFS
National Formation Commission*

News & Views

Franciscan Life in the 21st Century
Lester Bach OFM Cap

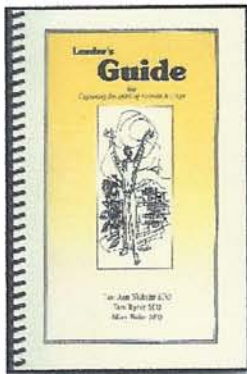


Meandering through the years

Near the end of the 20th century, Benet Fonck OFM and CNSA saw the need for initiating a training program for spiritual assistants. Benet wrote a text to train people as spiritual assistants to OFS fraternities. What began has been enhanced and revised by CNSA, NEC, and Regional councils as they developed programs for training spiritual assistants. CNSA workshops, plus time shared with local assistants at regional visitations, adds to the formation of spiritual assistants. Individual regions are developing formation programs for spiritual assistants. The Holy Spirit guides our efforts to develop practical programs to train people as spiritual assistants.

Dialogue among regions and CNSA/NEC, concerning training for spiritual assistants, supports the development of good programs. Regional Councils and their committees design programs to fit the needs of a region. Sharing ideas and structures (dialogue) enrich the programs as we *learn from one another*.

Training programs require more than book-learning. Programs should touch the hearts of people training to be spiritual assistants. If we do not touch the hearts of trainees we miss an important element for their service to the OFS. They need loving hearts in their service to the OFS. "Vital reciprocity" requires unity between spiritual assistants and fraternities (Building connections between the OFS and the 1st Order/TOR provinces). Promoting unity is vital. These imperfect human productions will need regular evaluation and updating.



2. In 2006 Franciscans of La Verna Region wrote two books for ongoing formation. The titles are: Capturing the Spirit of Francis and Clare, and a Leader's Guide. The Leader's Guide was written by Lee Ann Niebuhr OFS, Don Ryder OFS and Mary Fedor OFS, seculars from the La Verna Region. The Leader's Guide provides a variety of activities and programs that help to implement the chapters

of Capturing the spirit of Francis and Clare. The books assist ongoing formation programs.

Winter - 2014/2015

The Leader's Guide offers ideas that touch both the heart and the mind. It has practical ways to guide ongoing formation programs. The Leader's Guide includes prayer, quotations from Scripture, activities (and guidance for their use), the time needed, and directions for each session. Such inter-action during sessions helps people engage the ideas in Capturing the spirit of Francis and Clare. Information on costs etc are available on the inside back cover of TAU-USA.



3. In 1953 President Eisenhower shared ideas in a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors. No matter what your political persuasion, these words offer some "common sense considerations" which are not too common today. They encourage us to have compassion for people in need, aware of being called to ... *set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters*. (OFS Rule - Article #12).

*Every gun that is made, every warship launched,
and every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense,
a shift from those who hunger and are not fed,
those who are cold and are not clothed.
The world in arms is not spending money alone.
It is spending the sweat of its laborers,
the genius of its scientists,
and the hopes of its children.*

Franciscans realize that support for violence often means that more violence occurs. People become burdened with the *consequences of violence*. This happens through personal, family, group, national or international violence as is evident in today's world. The OFS Rule calls us to ... *a sense of community (that) will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people ... for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ*. (OFS Rule - Article #13).

4. The words of Christian writers often invite us to reflection. Here are a few words from Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) that invite us to realize more deeply how close we are to Jesus.

What good is it that Christ was born two thousand years ago if he is not born now in your heart? When love is pressed down and brimming over, it can't help but overflow to those around us. When we know love, it

gets paid forward to others. We pay more attention to those who also hunger but don't know where to look for nourishment. In our hearts we know that Christmas is not about pretending that God will be born again this year but about recognizing that God takes flesh for us every day. And we are partners with Christ in that incarnation because ours are the hands and hearts that offer love to the world and give it flesh.

*Cfr: Today's Liturgy – Advent-Christmas-Epiphany
2015 - Page 15*

5. Vatican II documents offer other helpful ideas: (October, 1962 - to - December, 1965)

By living in faith, Christian people see Christ in all, whether neighbors or strangers, and make accurate assessments about meaning and value in life. ... By living the true spirit of the beatitudes, lay people grow in a true sense of poverty which is neither sumptuousness nor destitution. They grow in a true sense of humility: aware of their gifts but not seeking empty honors. They grow in their sense of justice: leaving everything to pursue it with vigor.

*Vatican II in Plain English (Vol 3) - Decree on the
Apostolate of the Laity - Page 22*



St. John XXIII

The basic underlying principle of this Christian message to the world is this - LOVE. Everything Christians do should be motivated by love, but certain activities are especially loving: pity for the needy, care of the sick, and other works of charity. Today the world is reduced to a single family in which everyone knows of the needs of others, making charity more urgent and extensive. Christian social action should, therefore, reach out to every single person on earth who is in need, regardless of their faith, to offer food and drink, clothing, housing, medicine, employment, education and freedom. Christians should seek those in need, search for and find them wherever they are, and offer them solace and comfort.

*Vatican II in Plain English (Vol 3) - Decree on the
Apostolate of the Laity - Page 25*

Peace, we believe, is not merely the absence of war. Nor is it reduced to a silent, cold standoff where the parties remain armed. And it is not an outcome of dictatorship. What is it then? Indeed, what is "peace?"

Peace is a harmony built into human society by God, the divine Founder of all life, and it is a direct outcome of justice. Such a peace is not attained once and for all but is constantly built up as people control their passions and governments remain vigilant.

But even this is not enough. For peace is the fruit of love as well. It cannot be obtained and safeguarded unless men and women freely and trustingly share with one another their inner spirits and talents. It is based on a firm determination to respect others, and

The God of peace is never glorified by human violence.

Thomas Merton



to live lives of sisterhood and brotherhood. Without such love, peace absolutely cannot prevail in our time.

For all of this flows from the peace of Christ, who first loved us and dedicated himself for us. We urge all Christians, therefore, to join with all peacemakers in the world to plead for peace and bring it about. We praise those who renounce violence and find other ways to settle disputes where fairness for all is assured. We dream of the day when we will say with Isaiah (2:4), "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again."

*Vatican II in Plain English (Vol 2) - Constitution of the
Church in the Modern World - Page 182-183*

6. When we dialogue with one another, attentive listening is vital. It helps us understand each other. It will often require *conversion*. As the world changes; as people change; as we change; "... (it is) necessary that this *conversion* be carried out daily." (OFS Rule #7) Dialogue brings us fresh ways to express a gospel spirit and enriches our Franciscan experiences.

Reading the signs of the times we recognize possible actions that can to be taken. We implement the spirit of Francis by implementing freshly discovered ideas. Intellectual understanding begins this process. But putting the ideas into practice touches the heart, giving life and flesh to what we have learned. We engage in *the daily conversion* required by the OFS Rule - #7.

Otherwise we will become a devotional Order that ignores social needs or a social-action Order that fails to have a prayerful spirit. A healthy combination is what Franciscans desire i.e. a deep, prayerful trust in God that finds expression in concrete actions of love for our neighbor. The combination is essential. What is done has the handprints of God and our own handprints on it. It is our "working together" that effectively proclaims our Franciscan way of life. *Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.* (OFS Rule #19)

Compassion is a heart-to-heart encounter because compassion flows from the human heart; it is not a rational conclusion to a problem. Rather, it is an act of love beyond what the mind can comprehend. The heart therefore must be able to see what may be blind to the physical eye.

*Compassion . living in the spirit of St Francis
Ilia Delho OSF - Page 70*





Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Walking Together

by Anne Mulqueen, OFS

This past Christmas I received cards from a few friends who worship as Byzantine Catholics. Whenever I hear from them or others who belong to the Eastern Rite, I am flooded with memories of love, laughter, lots of good food and fraternity. The friends I speak of are Secular Franciscans who belonged to the currently deactivated region called *The Exhaltation of the Most Holy Cross*.

Now this may seem like a strange topic for an Ecumenical-Interfaith article, since normally I write about denominations that are not in union with Rome. However, reflecting on emails I receive from Eastern Rite Franciscan Catholics, I have come to believe that Latin Rite Catholics, of which I am one, need a bit of sensitivity training and a little educating.

According to *Lumen Gentium*, the *Constitution on the Church*, the Catholic Church is a corporate body of Churches united with the Bishop of Rome. The Bishop of Rome serves as the guardian of this unity. So, rather than using the term “Roman” Catholic, I will use the terms Latin Churches to differentiate from Eastern Churches and for geography I will use “East” and “West.” To avoid confusion, let us remember that Eastern Rite Catholics and Latin Rite Catholics are united under the Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis. We are One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church organized into separate Churches using various rites.

This article cannot do justice to the history that led to the separate Churches. Simply let me say that at Christ’s command, the apostles were sent to **all** nations — not only to Rome. The other apostles founded churches in other geographical areas. (See Matthew 28:18-20) In 292, the Emperor Diocletian divided the Roman Empire into two major portions, Rome and Byzantium. In 312, the Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity and established Constantinople as the capital of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. The Eastern half was influenced by Hellenistic culture. The Eastern churches profess the same beliefs as the West, although the manner of expression may differ.

Distinctions occur when language and custom impact the **expression** of faith. In the West, the Mass is called The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and in the East, the Divine Liturgy. In the West, churches have statues and in the East, icons. The West genuflects—the East bows. In the East the Mysteries (sacraments) of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation are administered at the same time, whereas in the West, the prevailing custom begins with infant baptism, with Eucharist and Confirmation administered as the child matures. It is interesting to note that as a result of the Second Vatican Council, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) follows the ancient practice of the Church, that is, individuals in the catechumenate receive all three sacraments together. (See: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Restoration of the Catechumenate, paragraph 64.) All practices add a depth of beauty and reverence to the worship of the Divine.

Touching briefly on hierarchy, the East has Patriarchs. The Patriarch is the highest church official after the Pope. The Patriarchs have jurisdiction over a particular territory — over all the bishops and archbishops (metropolitans), priests and people in their patriarchate. Again, without delving deeply into Church history, divisions and schism did occur within



the Church of the East and West. In the East, some Orthodox churches continue to reject the authority of the Pope over all the “Catholic” churches.

Having done a little bit of research I found that there are 24 Catholic Churches grouped into eight different rites, all of which are in full communion with Rome. Some of these are headed by metropolitans who are elected and then confirmed by the Pope. Others elect their own Patriarch and exchange official communication after the Patriarch is installed. Still others submit a list of eligible candidates to Rome for consideration. So you can see there is a lot that most of us do not know about the Eastern Rite Churches, and it is beyond the scope of this article and this author’s knowledge to delve much deeper.

Although I am no authority on Eastern Rite spirituality, I have attended Divine Liturgy on many occasions. Most of what *I think* I know comes from the joy of being with Byzantine Catholics and a little bit of research. It is my understanding that the Byzantine Rite grew out of the Churches in Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria. These three centers shared a common language, Greek. American Byzantine Catholics are descendants of Christians from Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and from the histories I have read, they trace their spiritual heritage back to the Great Church of Constantinople, known as *Hagia Sophia*, the Church of Holy Wisdom.



In closing, let me describe some emotions and impressions I experience whenever I attend a Divine Liturgy. Unfailingly, my initial impression upon entering the Church is a sense of holiness and reverence. A silence comes over me that I cannot describe in words. The sanctuary is behind a screen covered with icons. My feeling is one of “otherness,”

or the beyond, perhaps a window into heaven. For me the icons provide a focus for an encounter with the Divine. On the Holy Table is the Book of the Gospels and the Holy Gifts. In the center of the altar is the tabernacle, which contains the reserved Eucharist. Surrounded by icons of the Lord, saints and angels, I can feel the communion of saints lifting me up. The consecrated bread is leavened and communion is received under both species, given by the priest from a spoon. Receiving communion in a totally “other” way seems to awaken in me the wonder of what I have consumed and a longing to participate in the heavenly banquet.

As I come to the end of this article let me repeat that I want you to continue to communicate with me, you Eastern and Latin Rite Franciscans, both Secular and Religious. It is a joy to hear from you. Wishing you peace and all good now and forever.

Your sister, Anne

**The People of God: A Sacred Prism,
An Interfaith Conference
Sponsored by the Joint Committee of
Franciscan Unity**

**Sunday, April 12 through Tuesday,
April 14, 2015
At the Franciscan Center of
Tampa, Florida**

The Joint Committee Representatives
are members of
The Secular Franciscan Order
The Third Order Society of St. Francis and
The Order of Ecumenical Franciscans

For more details and registration information, please
contact Michael Carsten, OFS
At mikecars10@gmail.com (313) 309-1277



Additional Resource:

<http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-other-catholics-a-short-guide-to-the-eastern-catholic-churches.html>



JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



A FRANCISCAN APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, National JPIC Animatrix

*“Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day, and You give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.*

~ From the Canticle of the Sun

Our Seraphic Father Francis was so in love with God and creation that he praised God in song with the beautiful *Canticle of the Sun*. Sick and near death, Francis was still about the Father’s business. He was filled with the love of God and love for God. In all his writings, Francis expressed the depths of his love for God and all God’s creation. It was even said that Francis would move a worm to the side of the road so it would not be trampled underfoot. Francis loved all creation, from the greatest to the smallest of creatures, and he praised God for them all.

We have a three-fold responsibility to care for God’s creation. First, as humans living on this temporary home we call Mother Earth. Second, as Christians and children of God who made us stewards of creation. And lastly, as Franciscans, for whom our Seraphic Father Francis called all creatures brother and sister. When we can remember our innate relationship with creation, we will be less likely to destroy it. In the beginning, when the Lord God created the heavens and the earth, God then created us to care for the earth. Then, oh happy fault, oh necessary sin of Adam happened, as our great Easter Exsultet proclaims. And yes, Adam was kicked out of the Garden, but he was never relieved of his responsibility to care for the earth. After the fall, the Lord God sent them out of the Garden, where they would have to work the ground from which the man had been made (cf. Gen 3:23).

Today, our Mother Earth has become a dumping ground for the toxic and harmful and a place where the poor and the vulnerable are most at risk. A Christian leader once wrote: “*Christian people should surely have been in the vanguard of the movement for environmental responsibility, because of our doctrines of creation and stewardship.*” As Franciscans, I believe we have an even greater responsibility because of our Franciscan

tradition. Our Seraphic Father’s *Canticle of the Sun* is our clarion call to right relationship with all of God’s creation.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, **Environmental Justice** is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. For us, this is the “IC” part of JPIC – integrity of creation. The environment includes anywhere we live, work, play and worship and the impact on that global atmosphere. That impact includes the global climate crisis: food, water and the air we breathe.

The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds, sings the Psalmist (Ps 24:1), and as people of faith, we must truly believe that. In the words of our Catholic Bishops: “*At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God’s creation and the one human family. It is about protecting both ‘the human environment’ and the natural environment.*”

So, what can we do as people of faith? Firstly, focus on the small things that affect the environment. Become more responsible about the food you purchase – eat locally grown and purchase food with less packaging; the energy you consume – use less and unplug unused appliances; and the water you use – turn off the tap when brushing your teeth. These are just a few small things we can do that add up. Another thing we can do is the Water Meditation. I created this years ago as a way to become more conscious and more thankful for the precious gift of water. Whenever you are using water – washing, showering, gardening, doing laundry or even flushing the toilet, take three deep breaths and thank Sister Water for the gift that she is. Say the stanza from the Canticle: “*Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water, she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.*” Be mindful how many times you do this meditation, it is a reminder of how much water you use and how very precious she is to each of us.



SHINE/YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS COMMISSION

Christy & Sue Nelson, OFS

“Promoting the vocation by means of appropriate and dynamic initiatives!”

Franciscan Brothers and Sisters,

Let your spiritual light SHINE! We enter the new calendar year with a new name for our OFS Youth & Young Adults initiatives in the US: **SHINE**

Focus of **SHINE**

To bring the next generation of Catholics closer to Christ through Franciscan spiritual experiences

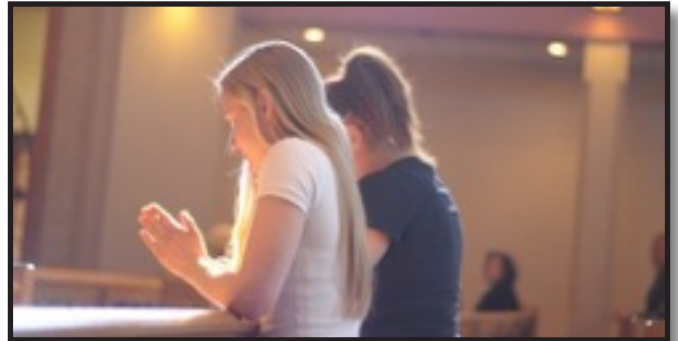
Shine will include youth under 18 and young adults 18-34.

The new term **SHINE** will encompass our three key focus areas for Young Catholics under 35:

1. Y.E.S. – Stand-alone events that may be held once or may be recurring. Y.E.S. is “Youth Exploring Spirituality”; activities are conducted at the local, regional or national level in the United States (see the most recent Tau for suggested Y.E.S. activities)
2. YouFra Groups – Emerging and existing groups that have been recognized by the United States SHINE/Youth & Young Adults commission and that hold regular gatherings under the CIOFS YouFra Guidelines
3. Young Franciscans – Those younger than 35 who have made the one-year Franciscan promise



SHINE is... Creating local, regional and national experiences for Catholics younger than 35 in the United States to explore their spirituality and to experience the Franciscan charism. Through interactions with OFS/Secular Franciscans while participating in fun and interactive community activities, dialogue, prayer (always), and religious



formation (in person and online), young Catholics will observe Franciscans modeling our charism.

Utilizing our Rule, Ritual, US Constitutions, National Statutes, Formation materials, International guidelines (CIOFS) and information regarding St. Francis of Assisi, St. Clare and Pope Francis, we will advocate a Gospel life.

SHINE will encompass both stand-alone “Come & See” activities through Y.E.S., Existing/Emerging YouFra Groups and Young Franciscans who have made the one-year Franciscan promise.

Our outreach to young Catholics will have a positive impact on our fraternities by stretching our Franciscan spirituality to partner with a generation that thinks and interacts differently from our current OFS population in the United States. Secular Franciscans who are called to servant leadership for young Catholics through our Order will receive encouragement, prayers, tools and start up financial support from our fraternities at every level. Adult Franciscans will care for Young Catholics by demonstrating respect and keeping them safe from any harm while in our presence.

Our outreach to young Catholics will result in rebuilding our Order in the United States through more early-lifetime professions. Our **SHINE** focus is simply: To bring the next generation of Catholics closer to Christ through Franciscan spiritual experiences.

SHINE is...

Young Catholics
Celebrating Christ
In Their Lives

SHINE/YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS COMMISSION

“Go, Rebuild My Church”

SHINE/OFS Youth & Young Adults

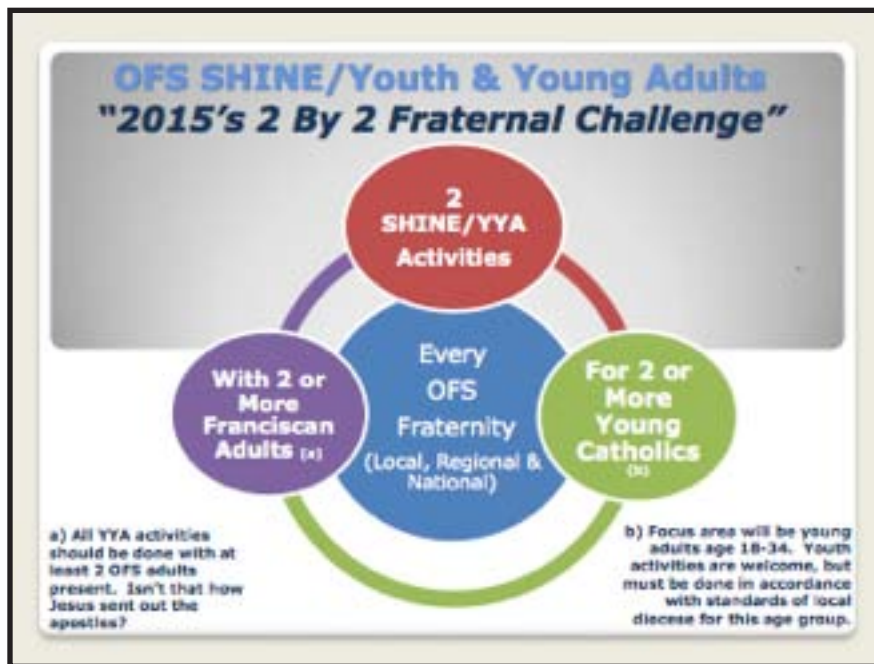
Vision for Calendar 2015

Shared Goals for each Fraternity at the Local, Regional & National level:

- ★ Pray for our **SHINE** Leaders and Young Catholics across the country
- ★ Conduct two **SHINE** activities
- ★ Select two young adult **SHINE** Ambassadors to participate in at least two meetings per year to interact with and advise the fraternity council
- ★ Help build our fraternal “Welcome Mat” by guiding our fraternities toward a spirit of acceptance and inclusion for our younger friends of St. Francis

Shared Goals for **SHINE** resource development:

- ★ Implement **SHINE** Activity Trackers by March 1st
- ★ Write and distribute **SHINE** Fraternal Guide by May 1st
- ★ Conduct a gathering of Regional **SHINE**/Youth & Young Adults Leaders (formerly Regional YouFra Chairs) and **SHINE** Advocates (interested/supportive Secular Franciscans) at JPIC’s Peace Retreat in Belleville, IL in August
- ★ Provide booth for OFS/**SHINE** at the Eighth World Meeting of Families (WMOF) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in September
- ★ Build our national **SHINE** structure by identifying a **SHINE** Leader in every region by December 1st and by encouraging appointment of local **SHINE** Leaders



The World Meeting of Families (WMOF) is a triennial global event that seeks to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe and highlight its intrinsic value to the good of society. This will be the first time the event is held in the United States. The theme will be “Love is our mission: the family fully alive.” The event website (<http://www.worldmeeting2015.org>) includes a Preparatory Catechesis for all ages including lesson plans for Grades PreK through High School, which could be used as part of a local **SHINE** activity.

This International Conference was founded by Saint Pope John Paul II. In November 2014, the Vatican confirmed that Pope Francis will be making his first visit to the United States to attend the conference. Additional information is available via

Facebook: World Meeting of Families 2015; and via Twitter: @WMF2015.

What a great opportunity for us to celebrate our Franciscan family! Registration for the event is open. Additional details regarding OFS/**SHINE** participation in the event will be in the next Tau. Highlights of the event include the Pope’s visit, an International YouFra gathering and Cardinal Sean Patrick O’Malley, O.F.M. Cap. as one of the keynote speakers

*** NEW SHINE/YYA FRATERNAL ACTIVITY TRACKER ***

Please use the survey on the next page to share Youth & Young Adult activities during the last few years. Completed trackers may be included in the upcoming SHINE/YYA Fraternal Guide if received by March 30.

OFS SHINE/Youth & Young Adults - FRATERNAL ACTIVITY TRACKER

Return to: ShineYourSpiritualLight@yahoo.com or OFS/SHINE, 114 Barnett Drive, Edwardsville, IL, 62025

PDF and Word versions of this document available through www.NAFRA-SFO.org



A. ACTIVITY LEADERSHIP

Name of Activity			
Form Prepared By	Name		Email
	Phone		OFS Status (Professed, Candidate, Inquirer, Non-OFS)
	Date Form Completed		Local Fraternity Name
	Date of Activity		Regional Fraternity Name
Brief Activity Description			

B. ACTIVITY SCOPE & DEMOGRAPHICS

Responsibility for Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Local__ <input type="checkbox"/> Regional__ <input type="checkbox"/> National__	
Number of Attendees	___ OFS Professed ___ OFS Candidates ___ Catholic Adults non OFS) ___ Priests ___ Nuns	___ Deacons ___ Catholics 18-35 years old ___ Non Catholics 18-35 years ___ Catholics under 18 ___ Non Catholics under 18
	TOTAL ATTENDEES _____	
Location	___ church ___ school ___ restaurant ___ park	___ home ___ theater ___ retreat center Other _____
Event Cost/Surplus for Fraternity	\$ _____	
Event Cost for Attendees	\$ _____	

C. ACTIVITY PUBLICITY

How was activity publicized? Indicate all that apply	___ Local Fraternity Newsletter ___ Regional Fraternity Newsletter ___ Local Fraternity Announcements ___ Regional Fraternity Announcements ___ Local Fraternity Calendar ___ Regional Fraternity Calendar ___ Face to Face	___ Phone calls ___ Radio spots ___ Website: ___ Facebook ___ Twitter ___ Pinterest	___ Through church organizations ___ Catholic Schools ___ Church Bulletin/Insert ___ Church Announcements ___ Press Releases ___ Other:

D. KEY ACTIVITY SHARING

1. What went well with the activity was...	
2. In retrospect we wish we would have...	
3. Most memorable moments from the activity were...	
4. The benefit to our fraternity was...	
5. The event taught us...	

E. ATTACHMENTS

Please attach reference documents such as: Step by step guide for planning activity, timeline/agenda of activity, photos, publicity flyers/bulletin inserts/press releases, description of social media use, summary of event evaluations, etc.
If multiple attachments are included, please list the names of all attachments on 1st page of attachments as a summary.

VOCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

By Jeff Ramirez, OFS

As National Vocation Chair, I want to step back for a moment and speak briefly about the word “vocation.” Vocation comes from the Latin word “vocatio” which means a call, a summons. A vocation is God’s invitation, His call to each person to love and serve Him and His Church in a particular state or way of life. Each person’s vocation flows from the grace of Baptism.

We, as a very special part of the Franciscan Order, make a commitment to live an evangelical life and become a transforming presence within the world. The gift of the Franciscan charism is a unique way (among many) of returning God’s love to Him and His people, which manifests a particular attribute of God’s being. Now the question is: How do we promote vocations to the Franciscan way of life?

The NAFRA gathering in Dallas last October gave me a perfect opportunity to talk about vocations, and having a captive audience of Regional Ministers from all over the United States, I was able to get some insight regarding vocation promotion. Each Regional Minister was asked to list their 5-Best Practices for the promotion of vocations. Jane DeRose-Bamman, National Vocation Co-Chair and I went through the responses, and here is a list of some of the Best Practice responses:

- Introduce the Order to those in RCIA
- “Feed the Birds” package at Christmas
- Celebrating the Transitus of Francis & Clare include blessing with a relic
- Franciscan Movie Night

- Franciscan Flash Mob
- Blessing of the Animals
- Creating a “Come and See” event
- Pulpit Announcements
- Brochures
- Listening/Connecting with others
- Elevator Speech
- Social Media



For 2015, the National Vocation Committee would like to pose a special challenge to each local and regional fraternity! We challenge you to make a special “vocation promotional” effort by using one of the above Best Practices or another inspired effort. Your Vocation Committee would like to hear about your creative efforts, so please email us at OFSVocationsCommittee@gmail.com and tell us about your vocation outreach. We are counting on you to make 2015 a year of growth for the OFS.

Let me close by saying the most effective way of promoting vocations is by understanding and living our vocation as Franciscans in the world. Your story alone may give someone the direction they need to transform themselves and the world. In Pope Francis’ document “Rejoice! A Letter to Consecrated Men and Women” at the beginning of this special “Year of the Consecrated Life” he writes very simply... “I want to say one word to you and this word is joy. Wherever consecrated people are, there is always joy!”



7th Summer Seminar for the OFS

Endorsed by the National Executive Council of the Secular Franciscan Order – USA

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Presented By:

Fr. Michael Higgins, TOR and Mary Frances Charsky, OFS

July 9, 2015 – July 12, 2015

At Saint Francis University Loretto, PA

Please Save the Dates!

The 2015 Summer Seminar will focus on
Servant Leadership

Details and registration information will follow in the next
TAU-USA





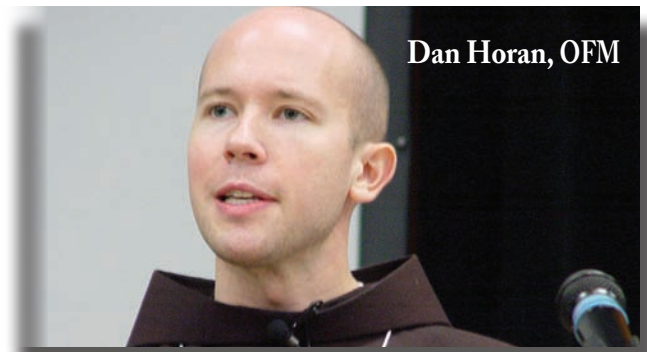
the
mile
high

2016 Quinquennial Congress Denver, CO - July 1-6, 2016

“Save the date, make plans, and come journey with your brothers and sisters in the Mile-High City,” urges Quinquennial Committee Co-chair Mary Anne Lenzi.

“The ‘Q’ will focus on ‘relationship,’” she says, and will feature “Dating God” author Fr. Dan Horan, OFM, as a keynote speaker. Father Dan was ordained in 2012 and is already a prolific author with six books published and two more due out this year.

Not only will the ‘Q’ help you journey in the footsteps of St. Francis, Mary Anne adds, but also in the footsteps of Saint John Paul II -- who visited Denver for World Youth Day in 1993 and confirmed Francis of Assisi as patron saint of Colorado in 2000.



Dan Horan, OFM



The ‘Q’ takes place at the
Inverness Hotel in the
Denver suburb of Englewood.

Giving Life to the words #540: A, B
 By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. Secular Franciscan Constitutions – A spiritual commentary. **NEW!**
 5½ x 8½ in., 204 pgs.
 #540-A 1-9 copies \$16.00 ea + S/H
 #540-A 10 or more \$12.80 ea + S/H
 #540-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$10.00 ea + S/H

What it takes #520: A, B
 By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. Seven chapters on elements of our Franciscan spirituality & Appendix. **NEW!**
 5½ x 8½ in., 86 pgs.
 #520-A 1-9 copies \$10.00 ea + S/H
 #520-A 10 or more \$8.00 ea + S/H
 #520-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$8.00 ea + S/H

Seeking a Gospel Life #400: A, B
 By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. 5½ x 8½ in., 124 pgs.
 #400-A 1-9 copies \$11.00 ea + S/H
 #400-A 10 or more \$8.80 ea + S/H
 #400-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$6.00 ea + S/H
 Special: 1 Book & 1 CD-ROM \$15.00 + S/H

Elements of Formation #106
 8½ x 11 in., 44 pgs.
 #106 1-24 copies \$5.00 ea + S/H
 #106 25 or more \$4.00 ea + S/H

Alcanza Un Arco Iris Para Mí También #200: A, B
 Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. 5½ x 8½ in., 520 pgs.
 #200-A 1 or more copies \$12.75 ea + S/H
 #200-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$12.50 ea + S/H

Ven A Ver #203: A, B
Orientation & Inquiry in Spanish, by Bach & Baker.
 5½ x 8½ in., 115 pgs.
 #203-A 1-9 copies \$13.00 ea + S/H
 #203-A 10 or more \$10.40 ea + S/H
 #203-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$8.50 ea + S/H
 (English language version is now out-of-print)

Pick More Daisies #109
Ongoing Formation for Secular Franciscans, by Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. 5½ x 8½ in., 256 pgs.
 #109-A 1-9 copies \$14.00 ea + S/H
 #109-A 10 or more \$11.20 ea + S/H
 #109-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$10.00 ea + S/H

Handbook (Rev. 2012) For Spiritual Assistance to the SFO #231: A, B
 By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. Fully revised in 2012.
 8½ x 11 in., punched for 3-ring binder, 90 pgs.
 #231-A \$16.00 + S/H
 #231-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$10.00 + S/H

To Set Themselves Free #221: A, B
 By Teresa V. Baker, S.F.O., 8½ x 11 in., 284 pgs.
 #221-A 1-9 copies \$27.00 ea + S/H
 #221-A 10 or more \$21.60 ea + S/H
 #221-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$14.00 ea + S/H

Guide for Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Ministry #108
 2006 Upgrade. 8½ x 11 in., 84 pgs.
 #108 1-9 copies \$10.00 ea + S/H
 #108 10 or more \$8.00 ea + S/H

Franciscan Journey #501: A, B
 By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. A new SFO formation book for use in the USA, covering Orientation, Inquiry and Candidacy. 5½ x 8½ in., 375 pgs.
 #501-A 1-9 copies \$18.00 ea + S/H
 #501-A 10 or more \$14.40 ea + S/H
 #501-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$11.00 ea + S/H

Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership #105: A
 An aid for those who wish to improve their service.
 8½ x 11 in., 130 pgs.
 #105-A 1-9 copies \$20.00 ea + S/H
 #105-A 10 or more \$16.00 ea + S/H

Digests (Set of Nine) #102: A, B
 #101 Francis of Assisi; #121 Clare of Assisi; #131 Franciscan Prayer; #141 Franciscan View of Christ; #151 Franciscan View of Mary; #161 Peace & Justice; #171 Care of Creation; #181 Work & Spirituality; #191 Vision of Youth; each 8½ x 11 in., 4 pgs.
 #102-A set of 9 \$7.00
 #102-A additional sets \$3.00
 #102-A singles or mixed, 50-100 \$.35 ea
 #102-A singles or mixed, 101-250 \$.30 ea
 above prices include S/H
 #102-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$8.00 + S/H

Capturing the Spirit of Francis & Clare #304: A, B
 By Lester Bach O.F.M. CAP. An ongoing formation book for Secular Franciscans. 5½ x 8½ in., 146 pgs., plastic coil binding.
 #304-A 1-9 copies \$15.00 ea + S/H
 #304-A 10 or more \$12.00 ea + S/H
 #304-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$9.50 ea + S/H

Leaders Guide for Capturing the Spirit of Francis & Clare #306: A, B
 By Niebuhr, Ryder, Fedor, SFO. Time and talk study guide. 5½ x 8½ in., 88 pgs., plastic coil binding.
 #306-A 1-9 copies \$14.00 ea + S/H
 #306-A 10 or more \$11.20 ea + S/H
 #306-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$9.00 ea + S/H

Franciscan Family Connections #308: A, B
 By Lester Bach, O.F.M. CAP. A preparation book designed to form people who serve as regional or fraternity Spiritual Assistants, 5½ x 8½ in., 185 pgs., plastic coil binding.
 #308-A 1-9 copies \$15.00 ea + S/H
 #308-A 10 or more \$12.00 ea + S/H
 #308-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$9.50 ea + S/H

A History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States #410
 Volume I, 1917-1942. 5½ x 8½ in., 450 pgs.
 Volume IIA, 1943-1978. 5½ x 8½ in., 506 pgs.
 Volume IIB, 1943-1978. 5½ x 8½ in., 496 pgs.
 Volume III, 1979-2007. 5½ x 8½ in., 489 pgs.
 #410 1-9 copies, one volume ... \$20.00 ea + S/H
 #410 1-9 copies, Vol. IIA & IIB ... \$35.00 set + S/H
 #410 1-9 copies, Vol. I, IIA & IIB. \$50.00 set + S/H
 #410 1-9 copies, Vol. IIA & IIB, III \$50.00 set + S/H
 #410 1-9 copies, all four vols ... \$75.00 set + S/H
 #410 10 or more, individual volumes or combinations call for pricing

Guidelines for Initial Formation, SFO #107: A, B
Guía Para la Formación Inicial en la Orden Franciscana Secular de los Estados Unidos. Prepared by the National Formation Commission! 8½ x 11 in., 84 pgs.
 English Language:
 #107-A 1-24 copies \$5.00 ea + S/H
 #107-A 25 or more \$4.00 ea + S/H
 Spanish Language:
 #107-B same prices as above

Life-Giving Union #112
SFO Spiritual Assistants Course. A year long correspondence course prepared by the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. 5½ x 8½ in., 73 pgs.
 #112-A (2005) \$5.00 ea + S/H

Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order #302: A, B
Upgraded version, by Mulqueen & Sanborn. **NEW EDITION UPDATED!**
 5½ x 8½, 7 categories, coil binding & map, 324 pgs.
 #302-A 1-9 copies \$16.00 ea + S/H
 #302-A 10 or more \$12.80 ea + S/H
 #302-B CD-ROM (PDF) \$11.00 ea + S/H

English/Spanish Promotional Brochures #110
 8½ x 11 in., full color.
 #110 50 copies \$40.00 (includes S/H)
 #110 PDF file via E-Mail or Disk, you print & fold \$10.00 (includes S/H)

Rule Book #111
The Little Red Rule Book! 3 x 5 in., 32 pgs.
 #111 10 copies \$20.00 (includes S/H)

SHIPPING/HANDLING
 Items #105-A, #108, #200-A, #221-A, #231, #302, #308, #501-A, #540: 1st copy add \$6.00, each additional add \$2.00;
 Item #410: 1st copy add \$7.00, each additional add \$2.50;
 All other items: 1st copy add \$5.00, each additional add \$1.00

Order from: Smoky Valley Printing, Box 189, Lindsborg, KS 67456
 785.227.2364, Fax 785.227.3360, E-mail lindabce@kans.com

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
 E-MAIL or FAX: _____

ITEM #	TITLE	QUANTITY	PRICE
Shipping/Handling: Please Review, Most Expensive First Book THEN additional THEIR Charges:			
(1/15) DATE:			INVOICE TOTAL: \$



The NATIONAL FRATERNITY of the
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER, USA
1615 VINE ST
CINCINNATI, OH
45202-6400



ST. BONAVENTURE
UNIVERSITY

**SECULAR FRANCISCAN
PROGRAM
JULY 20-24, 2015**

At the turn of the 13th century, Assisi, like the rest of Italy and most of Western Europe, was going through dramatic changes in the society. A thriving economy and prosperous commerce had brought the rise of a middle class that wanted its share of power. The alliance of the land owners and the money makers created flourishing cities, but also added to the poverty of those who held no shares in the wealth. Those in charge of the Church were too involved in those politics. The laity reacted to these unjust and unchristian developments: the penitential movement, focused on a return to the Gospel, arose. Francis, Clare and others joined it.



**Assisi in the Time of Francis:
Birthplace of the Secular Franciscans**

**A Course with
Jean-François Godet-Calogeras, PhD**
Professor of Franciscan Studies



**Meet the New Minister General of the
Secular Franciscans (OFS), Tibor
Kauser, OFS, who will be
participating in the program.**

**For more information on our summer programs, go to:
[http://www.sbu.edu/academics/schools/franciscan-studies/
summer-program-2015](http://www.sbu.edu/academics/schools/franciscan-studies/summer-program-2015)
Conference fee: \$250.
Housing and Meal plans: available**

St. Bonaventure University
3261 W. State Rd. St.
Bonaventure, NY
To register, contact:
Prof. Godet-Calogeras
Phone: 716-375-2149
Email: jefgocal@sbu.edu