

THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY

of the

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

NEWSLETTER

Spring, 1990



TOWARD REGIONALIZATION

Richard Morton, SFO, Chairman
National Regionalization Committee

Progress has started on the development of experimental regions for our Order. We hope this will be the first, small step toward regionalization. As most of you know, regionalization is the regrouping of the fraternities along geographical lines instead of along the friars' provincial boundaries.

On January 6, in the Los Angeles area, the provincial ministers and provincial spiritual assistants of the west-coast provinces of Our Lady of Angels, St. Barbara, and St. Joseph Cupertino held a tri-council meeting to discuss regionalization. The three provinces agreed that they are committed to it. They also established a committee to do the initial planning. Its first task will be towards the development of a sense of unity among fraternities located within designated areas.

In Minnesota, a meeting was also held in January for preliminary discussions before seeking permission to become a test region.

Letters have been sent to several provinces on the east coast to find out if they would be willing to start an experimental region. If they would, we will have regions in the west, in the east, and in mid-America. The lessons learned from those diverse sections of the country will be invaluable, if the process is to

proceed smoothly.

The strategy developed by the Regionalization Committee and approved by the National Fraternity calls for experimental regions to work through the process of discernment, education, and problem solving. They will become models for other areas as they begin the process.

The National Fraternity will monitor and evaluate the progress of the regions to insure that this significant change in organization will be in the best interest of our Order in the United States before final approval will be given. Much work remains for us, however, and the constitution, which is now in Rome, must be approved before we can complete the process.

The committee hopes to have more news for you during the summer. Please keep this vital issue in your prayers.

A PROVERB FOR SECULAR FRANCISCANS

Proverbs 17:17 could have been written especially for us:

"He who is a friend is always a friend, and a brother is born for the time of stress."

Are we always there for each other when the going gets rough?

MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD

James David Lynch, SFO
National Minister

Jesus came to earth to redeem the world. When He rose from the dead, Mary knew He had accomplished His mission: He had redeemed the world. Henceforth Jesus would reign triumphantly in heaven. A mother always shares in the successful achievements of her son. So it was with Mary. She shared in the redeeming triumph of Jesus. She was thrice-happy, because His resurrection was His supreme hour of glory. "My spirit has found joy in God, who is my Savior."

Mary's heart was also filled with joy, because Jesus, by His resurrection, had proved He was God. When His authority had been challenged earlier by the Jews, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (Jn. 2:19) The Jews never forgot those words. Later on, they quoted them to Pilate, "We have called it to memory that this deceiver, while He yet lived said, 'I am to rise again after three days.'" (Mt. 27:63) How thrilled was the heart of Mary to see that Jesus had now broken the bonds of death and had made clear to the Jews that He was indeed who He claimed to be, the Messiah, the Son of God!

It was all so clear to Mary. Looking back on the life of Jesus, she could see how all the messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Him.

She now also saw the fulfillment of the joyful prophecies of Jesus' glory. "I have appointed you to be the light of the Gentiles." (Is 49:6) For Jesus the dark days of suffering were over and gone. Mary's heart now sang with joy. Let us join with her in praising God for the triumph of Jesus! Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven, for Jesus, your Son, is truly risen! With you we praise and thank God for the glorious resurrection of Jesus.

Have a peace-filled Easter.

THE FIRST VICE-MINISTER

Gloria N. Shriver, SFO, Editor

At its 1989 annual meeting, the National Directive Board elected Mary Mazotti, SFO, a retired elementary school secretary, mother of seven and grandmother of eleven, to serve as one of our three vice-ministers. Later, the Executive Council elected her First Vice-Minister for the year 1989-90. Should Jim Lynch be absent or unable to fulfill his duties, Mary would preside.

Mary has already served our Order well for over thirty years. She is now in her second term as Minister of the Secular Franciscan Province of St. Barbara. Those, who attended the Quinquennial Congress in San Diego in 1987, will remember her as the Chairperson who managed everything so beautifully. The years of practice she had in leading her own fraternity really did shine through.

Mary, an avid student of Scripture, has been featured for over seven years as author of *The Liguorian* monthly feature "Know Your Bible Quiz." She still finds time to volunteer at her local library and serves on the county Friends of the Library Board. Those who know her are rejoicing that we have found another capable leader.

AND THE THIRD ORDER

Father Raffaele Pazzelli, T.O.R., has written on the Secular Franciscan Order and the Third Order Regular in a book called *And The Third Order*. The reviewer, Friar Phil Kelly, OFM Conv., calls it "a meticulously researched account of the beginnings of the Third Order, a real 'Roots' book."

It is available from:

The Franciscan Herald Press
1434 West 51st Street
Chicago, IL 60609

TEN-PLUS YEARS

Adelaide N. Sabath, SFO
from "Franciscan Forum", Sacred Heart Province

For more than ten years we've lived with our new Rule. Some have died with it, but what has its effect been on individual and community commitment? By now we must have seen the Pauline Rule as an extension for opening windows of Vatican II, merging the hopes and dreams of Francis with the wise, new outlook for the Catholic Church. By now this Rule's expression should be impacting our lives in many ways. We are especially called to:

- (1) Rebuild the Church as we face the twenty-first century.
- (2) Grow in the practices of prayer and contemplation and the centrality of the Holy Eucharist.
- (3) Unite ourselves to the obedient lives of Jesus and his mother.
- (4) Seek detachment from aspirations to possessions and power - so tempting in our present culture.
- (5) Build bridges for peace and justice, identifying with the poor and marginalized as never before.
- (6) Reach for greater harmony in homes and families.
- (7) Respect life in all its stages and at all its levels.

Let our own joy and sense of personal peace enable us to be messengers of joy and hope as we touch the lives of others. The root is healthy; now is the season for us to put out new, green shoots.

A SALUTE TO DR. McNELLIS

from "Counsel", St. Barbara Province

Eighty year old Dr. Patrick McNellis of St. Louis Fraternity in Santa Barbara, California, has the look of a leprechaun, the brogue of a Scotsman, and the patience of a saint. For an hour every week-day morning, this retired physician helps serve breakfast to one hundred needy people in a program he founded eight years ago. All of the needy get a handshake, a friendly smile, and the greeting, "Peace, and God bless you." Women and children also get hugs.

He wears his SFO medal and crucifix on a long chain around his neck. When asked why, he says, "If you support the team, you wear the colors."

Had it not been for a skiing accident at age seventy, Dr. Pat might still be working, but St. Louis Fraternity is glad that he and his wife, pediatrician Eileen McNellis, decided to come to Santa Barbara and join them ten years ago. They are both faithful and active members and are true examples of what it means to follow the Gospel life in the Spirit of St. Francis.

We're glad there's two of them.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

One of our Franciscan commitments is the remembrance of the departed. Shortly before Christmas, we lost a friar, whose scholarly life enriches ours each day.

Father Stephen J. Hartdegen, OFM, died at 82 after a long bout with cancer.

Fr. Stephen was a principal member of the team of biblical and language experts that gave us *The New American Bible*, which is used in the Church's liturgies, especially the Mass and *The Liturgy of the Hours*.

He was also an active Spiritual Assistant to the Seculars of Holy Name Province.

CALLED BY GOD AND CALLED BY FRANCIS

Maury C. Schaubroeck, SFO
from "Franciscan Forum", Sacred Heart Province

Does God really call people of this world to follow a specific course in life? Five years ago, my answer would have been, "No." Today, I say, "Most definitely, yes!"

I had never heard of the Secular Franciscan Order until, one day, my wife read a brief article in the diocesan newspaper to me. Upon inquiry, I received a letter of explanation from the fraternity minister and an invitation to attend the next meeting. We attended that meeting and all meetings, until May 1987, when we made our profession. Those months of formation were a period of spiritual growth I had never experienced before. The Franciscan spirituality gave me the peace promised by Christ in the New Testament.

I believe very strongly that I was called to this Franciscan vocation - called by God to follow Jesus within the Franciscan tradition and community in the Roman Catholic faith. I don't think there has been any great change in my secular life, but that call has added much to my spiritual life. I have become quite aware of Jesus' presence and experienced the effect of that presence in my life. Jesus not only lived and died 2000 years ago, but rose from the grave, conquering death to live again - not only 2000 years ago, but today.

In this materialistic world, we are deceived by many desires, tormented with many wants which draw our attention away from God. So many people are focusing on what they don't have - as opposed to really appreciating God's gift of life, taking what they have, and making the most of it. Each new day is God's gift, teeming with rich possibilities for spiritual advancement, if we only remain conscious of the divine presence of Jesus.

I thank God for calling me to the Franciscan way of life and to the Franciscan fraternity which gives me the strength and encouragement to keep my sights set on Christ rather than worldly treasures. I pray that all Secular Franciscans will be active in their fraternities, bringing the consciousness of Jesus' presence into all situations. God give us peace!

WHY REGIONALIZATION?

from "SFO Jottings", Holy Savior Province

Our provincial council agrees fully with the observations of Carl Schafer, OFM, General Spiritual Assistant, who made some very frank comments on the importance of regionalization in his "Letter from Rome to the Assistants," (1989, n.2, p.2) when he wrote,

"The SFO is one Order, and not an Order belonging to a specific obedience. From my experience of five years at the general level, and also working at the national and regional levels, I am convinced that the greatest obstacle to unity of the SFO is the continuation of obediential fraternities below the national level and even at the national level itself. I believe the key to unity in the Secular Franciscan Order is the Regional Fraternity, understood as including all the local fraternities assisted by all the obediences of friars in the area."

(Editor's note: Fr. Carl further stated that he believes the unity of the Secular Franciscans will not be attained until we, the Seculars, reject the concept of exclusive assistance by one friar obedience.)

PER-CAPITA INCREASE

The Directive Board voted to increase the contribution to \$2.00 per member beginning 1990. The previous \$1.00 assessment had been in effect for at least ten years.

OUR PENITENTIAL LIFE

Rev. Francis A. Lonsway, OFM Conv.
National Spiritual Assistant

For those of us in southern climes, the freshness of spring mixes with the beginning of the Lenten Season. It seems such a short time ago that we celebrated Christmas and the Feast of the Epiphany. The cycle of seasons and life intrigues each of us and forces us to face the maturity of Christ's ministry among his people, and then his passion and death.

The season of Lent is the time of year when we recall most poignantly that we are the Brothers and Sisters of Penance; that the penitential life is not old-fashioned, but very much in order during this season. I am amused when I hear that the post Vatican II Church has done away with penance. We are no different than any other body of Christians, they say. What has really happened is that the burden has shifted from the Church in general to each one of us in particular.

The issue is, then, what are we going to do for Lent? How is it that we will prepare ourselves for the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ?

Article seven of the Rule reminds us that "On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace." Appropriate to the season, too, would be the recitation of Francis' Office of the Passion (Confer our Ritual, pp. 82-98). Readings from the life of St. Francis, for example, chapters 19 and 21 from Englebert's *St. Francis of Assisi*, would also be helpful to our spiritual growth during Lent.

There are a host of other ways to prepare ourselves. My exhortation is simply that we take those steps necessary for the spiritual celebration of Lent now, so that we can delight in the Resurrection of our Savior at Easter.

"THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT"

The Conventual Spiritual Assistants have prepared a booklet with the above title, which "is intended to sketch briefly the charism, the history, and the structure of the Secular Franciscan Order and then to describe this ministry of the Spiritual Assistant..." Copies are available from Fr. Adam Keltos, OFM Conv, Box 627, Fonda, NY 12068 or other Conventual Provinces

AMBITION

Dr. Joseph J. Halka, SFO
Chairman, Work Commission

In our dog-eat-dog world, we must embrace a creed of a loving god. Ambition was not unknown among the saints, but the focus of their ambitions was the same as Christ's: to be about His Father's business. Christ's ambition was to teach us to live well. Our highest ambition will be fulfilled when we imitate Him. His life was a work of art. We are the embodiment of His art.

LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

At the October, 1989, National Directive Board meeting, a leadership questionnaire was distributed to all Secular Franciscans present. The questionnaire was the prime purpose of the leadership presentation given at the meeting by June Carpenter, SFO, Provincial Minister of St. Mary of the Angels Province. The results of the questionnaire were organized and compiled into a detailed report by June and passed on (December 4, 1989) to the National Executive Council for further study and evaluation.

(The report was also mailed to all Directive Board members.)

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VIDEO TAPES AVAILABLE

The Secular Franciscan Provinces of St. John The Baptist, St. Joseph, Sacred Heart, and The Assumption, in collaboration with their First Order Provinces, have produced three tapes on the Secular Franciscan vocation and the role of the Spiritual Assistant.

Marie Amore, SFO, Provincial Minister of St. Joseph and Councilor to CIOFS, appears in tape #1 on the Secular Franciscan vocation.

The tapes were edited and produced for distribution by St. John the Baptist. For subject and price information write to:

Secular Franciscan Office
St. John the Baptist Province
1615 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45210

NEWS DEADLINE

The object of our Newsletter is to inform, educate, and spiritually enrich. If it is to fill our needs, we must have news from YOU. Please send articles and copies of your provincial paper to:

Mrs. Gloria N. Shriver, SFO
Route 2, Box 17-N
Ahoskie, NC 27910

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: APRIL 15, 1990

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 27-29: Southeast Regional Formation Workshop: Forming The Formators. Avila Retreat Center, Durham, NC. Write: Ms Ann Corro, SFO, 5009 Richenbacher Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. (703)370-3664.

May 18-20: Chapter of Mats: LIGHTING, LEAVENING, AND SALTING. Contact: Ms Linda Beauregard, San Pedro Center, 2400 Dike Road, Winter Park, FL 32792. (407)671-6322.

July 8-13: Week of Community for St. Barbara Province: The Five Commissions, St. Anthony Retreat, Three Rivers, CA.

August 2-4: Provincial Conference of St. John the Baptist, Peoria, IL

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The National Executive Council will hold its regular spring meeting, March 2-4 at St. Bonaventure House, Hickory, NC. One of the agenda items will be: time for workshops at annual meetings.

Also, the Chairmen of the various Commissions will attend the meeting with the goal of devising workable programs and plans of action for local fraternities.