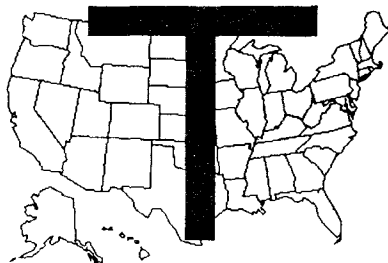


THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY
of
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER



Newsletter

Winter, 1992

DREAM DREAMS

Richard Morton, SFO, National Minister
Adapted from Chapter talk.

My wife Karol and I wish to thank you for your prayers for our daughter, Barbara. Her heart surgery was successful, and she is presently back in school.

Activities:

Concerning my activities over the past year, there have been thirteen trips including one combined Regionalization and Executive Council meeting, four area regionalization meetings, the Quinquennial Congress, elections, visitations, one ongoing formation seminar, a visit to the UN & attendance at a Franciscan Non-Governmental Organization Development Board meeting, a Franciscans Network Board meeting where I was elected to the Board. There have been over one hundred sixty telephone calls and at least ninety three letters or faxes sent. It has been a busy time.

Thoughts and Dreams:

My thoughts and dreams begin with our being witnesses to the Light as was John the Baptist. (See John 1:1-7) Down through the centuries, among the most effective witnesses

of that light have been Francis and Clare. Our heritage of following Christ in the manner of Francis has been passed down to us today through our Rule and Constitutions.

Our Constitutions refer, in Article 8, to "living...in their secular condition." Those are key words because they describe the reality of where we are to live out our vocation as followers of Christ and Francis. It is here we find our real challenge. As followers of Francis in the SFO, we find our support to live our vocation better by being active, participating members of local fraternities. These local fraternities, in turn, are supported by the higher level fraternities, namely the Regional/Provincial, the National and the International.

The higher level fraternity's role, in my mind, is to provide the leadership to help facilitate and to strengthen the lower level fraternities. When viewed from the big picture standpoint, the SFO then becomes an organic union of all fraternities throughout the world and truly global in nature. This gives a dimension to our Order which should help us to "think globally, but act locally."

With the interdependence of the fraternities of the various levels, it is important that all

members realize that they are co-responsible for the others' well being. (Const., Art. 30) The onus is no longer entirely on the shoulders of the fraternity minister and/or the council for a strong and vibrant fraternal life. In fulfilling the concept of co-responsibility, the members are then required to have personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration in the cause of what it means to animate a fraternity and the obligations that it incurs.

However, with the support provided by a sense of co-responsibility, the leadership and, in particular the minister, have a primary role to serve, to facilitate, and to reconcile. And, in so doing, they must articulate a vision and develop strategies to help make the vision come into being. What follows are some of the dreams, visions, priorities, etc. that I propose to the National Fraternity for its consideration. The list is in no particular order of priority.

- Renewal - SFOs should be making history happen.
- Increase our collaboration with the friars and other members of the Franciscan family.
- Regionalization is a top priority. At this time, provincial ministers should be concentrating on trying to work themselves out of a job in the spirit of Art. 32, Sect. 2 of the Constitutions.
- The work of the Commissions needs strengthening. Many of the most animated local fraternities are the ones that have active commissions. The most important commission is the Formation Commission, because the future of the Order is determined by the quality of our formation. Good formation will result in good leadership.
- Support the Franciscan family endeavors such as the Franciscan Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) at the United Nations, the Franciscans Network and its publication *Mustard Seed*, which needs subscribers;

participate in the 800th anniversary celebrations of the birth of St. Clare that are planned to be held around the country, and the **Frescoes for Assisi** project which you will hear more about next year.

- Support our own SFO endeavors such as the Franciscan Family Apostolate that sponsors SFO families in India, and the Franciscan Village retirement community in Texas.
- Promote diversity, including cultural and spiritual.
- Find better ways to serve our non-English speaking membership.
- Encourage the Franciscan youth movement.
- Market the Order.
- Develop a sense of family at the higher levels of fraternity.
- Inventory our human resources.
- Identify potential leaders early at all levels of fraternity and train them.
- Develop an SFO deacon network.
- Develop new models of fraternity.
- Start networking better; think globally.
- Establish an archive for the National Fraternity.
- Investigate the need for liability insurance.
- Establish a trust fund for those members who may wish to leave a legacy to the Order.
- Your suggestions.

This is a long list that, in the spirit of co-responsibility, needs the help of many of you who are reading this *Newsletter*. Let me know where you think you can help. Thanks. My address is:

3191 71st Street East
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

ELECTION RESULTS

Mary K. Mazotti, SFO, was re-elected National Vice Minister. Subsequently, the Executive Council re-elected her to the position of First National Vice Minister, which makes her the first delegate of the Minister.

FRATERNAL VISITATOR REPORT



(Mrs. Marianne Powell, SFO, is the CIOFS Councilor to English speaking countries; in addition to the fraternal visitation, she presided at and confirmed the election.)

My first impression of the National Fraternity is that of efficiency, warmth, friendliness. I appreciate the good pre-preparation - information that was sent to me in advance, such as last year's minutes, which helped me to prepare. Your use of Commissions is very good. Now, that development of legislation is behind us, we can concentrate on formation.

On the international level, the present Presidency has twelve members: the Minister General, one Vice Minister, and six Councilors representing the six major languages accepted as working languages in the SFO, and the four General Spiritual Assistants who are *ex officio*.

With regard to the practical question of how we work in a multilingual group, we use Italian as our working language. Should there be something that someone doesn't understand, we stop for translations.

One of the issues to which our present Minister General has given high priority is to

improve communications throughout the Order. To do this, she has established a central office in Rome and has begun publication of the International Bulletin. Neither of these projects is without problems, but we sincerely hope they are merely teething problems.

The biggest problem is the central office which lacks practically all office machinery. Further, it is staffed by volunteers who have families, jobs, and other commitments. They are doing their best, but, in an international organization of our size, it does cause problems, mainly delay.

In January of 1991, we set up the following commissions: Juridical, Formation, Financial, Franciscan Youth, and Evangelization. We also appointed a representative to the Interfranciscan International Commission for JPE. (Justice, Peace, Environment.)

The basic principle that we laid down was that each commission should be chaired by a member of the Presidency so that accountability is secured.

Our next International Chapter will take place in Mexico next October. One of the important items on the agenda is the approval of the new International Statutes. There will also be time for reflection on a theme which is presently formulated as "Secularity as the characteristic element of our identity."

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the very warm welcome. This is my first visit to the US, and I am touched by the sincere caring and kindness with which you have received me. Thank you.

PLEASE NOTE

All Chapter reports, including the above, are condensations.

THE BASIC RULE

Carol Amaral, SFO
Minister, Ohana O Ke Anuenue Region

Art. 17: In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make it a sign of the world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

Art. 18: Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High," and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship,

Art. 19. Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others. Since they are immersed in the resurrection of Christ, which gives true meaning to Sister Death, let them serenely tend toward the ultimate encounter with the Father.

These articles of our Rule cover the family unit, love for all creation, and conflicts of nations.

Basic family values are the themes for the political happenings of this day. They should be the themes for our everyday lives. Our children have great opportunities today along with technology, to shout God's goodness and love. With our guidance, through the Holy Spirit, they can exude love for all creation. There need not be prejudice or human suffering, if only we, as Franciscans and Christians, live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and teach our children that, regardless of what the world will teach them, being "Living Gospels" will not only rebuild the Church, but rebuild the world. That we, as parents and, yes, grandparents, must bear witness in this troubled world to the Love of Christ for us, His Church, and the world.

Francis understood finally that to "Rebuild My Church" meant not rebuilding a stone structure, but taking on the whole world, without fear, but with genuine love for Christ and His people. It meant to live the Gospel without deviating from Christ's words of "Love one another as I have loved you" and "No greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

If we love one another as He loves us, we cannot, WILL NOT, do harm, physically or through hurtful words to each other. We will communicate peacefully with one another; call on the Holy Spirit to be with us, to guide our communication with each other, so as to come to peaceful solutions, thus keeping harmony and love within our families, giving us the "ammunition" to go out into the world with peace, understanding, and love of all peoples and creation.

There are well over 1.5 million Secular Franciscans in the world; if they and their families went out there, everyday, every hour, with the attitude of love, peace, and understanding as well as pardon, just think what an influence and INSTRUMENT they could be in rebuilding His Church and the world....By being "living Gospels" and spreading the prayer that St. Francis spent much of his life saying, "My God and my all," we could overcome horrible human suffering and bring smiles instead of tears, love instead of hate; bring understanding and pardon, instead of selfishness to the whole world.

How can I rebuild the world around me? How can I, as only one person, stop the destruction of God's creation, both animate and inanimate, which bears the imprint of the "Most High"?

Dialogue! Dialogue at home! Dialogue at fraternity meetings! Dialogue in the market place where we work and spend so many of

our waking hours; dialogue with our parish families. Then we will be in tune with God, led by the Holy Spirit, to bring love and peace, pardon, and understanding, which "must be built up unceasingly, trusting in the presense of the divine seed in every one and in the transforming power of love and pardon."

We must be messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, striving to bring joy and hope to all others. We must teach our children well to go out among other children and bring that joy and hope to all the world, especially to God's little ones.

Teach them to go out and reach out. Teach them to take the hand of another child; to put their arms around that child and say "God loves you and so do I. Let me be a part of bringing joy and hope to you." Our children ARE the love, the joy, and the hope of the remaining time that this world has of existing. Only they have the time to bring love and harmony to this world. If we do not teach them, that God's love for each of us and the complete sharing of that love is the only thing that can rebuild His Church and the beautiful and awesome world He has given to us to care for, then the children will never see the love and beauty that we enjoy. Peace and love and justice will go. So will the environment, along with the destruction of human life, including them - the children.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ and Francis, it is up to us. We can be "Living Gospels" in our homes, in our fraternities, in our regions. We can bring love, joy, and hope to one another, OR we can go on our merry way of selfishness. Which will it be for you and me?

May the love of God, His Holy Spirit, and the unending love our Seraphic Father Francis be with you and yours always. Amen!

AUDIO TAPE NEWS

The complete set of audio tapes of the 14th National Quinquennial Congress is 17 tapes. They are available for \$4.00 each, plus postage. The discounted cost of the complete set is \$62.00 plus postage. Tapes may be ordered by titles or numbers from the following list.

AUDIO TAPE #	TITLE
1 & 2	"The Franciscan Moment" Bishop Chaput, OFM Cap
3	"Regionalization Information Session" Richard Morton, SFO
4	"The Nature and Dignity of the Call" Patricia Normile, SFO
5	"The Response to the Challenge" Doris Donnelly.
6	"Franciscan Roots of Responsibility" Bill Hocker, SFO
7	"Spirituality" Justin Carisio, SFO
8 & 9	"Formation of Laity in Culture" Joseph Holland "Response" Cynthia Loudon, SFO & Jerry Friga, SFO
10	"State of the Order" Richard Morton, SFO
11 & 12	"Evangelization in U.S. Culture" Fr. Max Langenderfer, OFM
13	"St. Clare" Sr. Dianne Short, OSC and Homily - Fr. Adalbert Wolski, TOR
14	Panel Discussion: Fr. Larry Landini, OFM, Chairman Fr. Camillus MacRory, OFM Cap Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv Fr. Adalbert Wolski, TOR Fr. Kevin Schindler-McGraw, OFM Conv
15	Mission Statement of Congress Mary Mazotti, SFO and "The Source of Action and Contemplation", Sr. Norma Rocklage, OSF
16	Homilies: Fr. Camillus MacRory, OFM Cap and Fr. Larry Landini, OFM
17	Homilies: Archbishop Pilarczyk, Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM Conv & Fr. Kevin Schindler-McGraw, OFM Conv

Please send orders to the SFO Province of St. John the Baptist, 1615 Vine St., Cincinnati, OH 45210, or call (513)241-9862. Do not send money with your order. You will be billed, because shipping costs will vary.

CHRISTMAS IS GOOD NEWS

Rev. Lawrence Landini, OFM
Conf. National Spiritual Assistants

By His birth, Christ has inserted Himself into our common history as well as into our personal biographies. He has come, says St. John, "not to condemn the world, but to save it." (John 3:17) This is truly Good News come in the flesh.

In the prologue of our Rule we have briefly stated Francis' grasp of the meaning of the Incarnation and its link with Redemption. We read his words: "Oh how holy and how loving, pleasing, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable, and desirable above all things to have such a Brother and such a Son: Our lord Jesus Christ, Who gave up His life for His sheep and Who prayed to the Father saying: 'O Holy Father, protect those in your name whom you have given to me in the world...Bless and sanctify them...And I wish, Father, that where I am they also may be with me'..." (EP 1, 13-19)

Francis' joy at the very thought of the birth of Christ is described for us by Celano. His face was all "aglow with overflowing love" when he frequently referred to Christ as the "Child of Bethlehem." (1 Cel 86) As a result of the manger at Greccio, the Christ Child came to life in the memory of Christians. The crib scenes around the world still bring joy to the hearts of many.

But even more, the birth of the "poor king" in the "little town of Bethlehem" colored Francis' vision of the entire world. D. L. Jeffrey points out that when Christ became human something important happened: the poor, shepherds, carpenters, donkeys, cows and even straw were elevated, lifted up. More than that, they were all glorified. They were recognized as worthy of God's Son, and that means they are truly worthy.

When we forget this faith fact, we are a prey to discouragement and even despair. Adrian Van Kaam writes: "To be overly upset, to be in despair, to be filled with resentment is to prefer spectacular change to slow and unseen transformation and to disown His Holy Presence in human history."

The presence of the Lord in our human history is there to save us, to guide us and to give us hope. What Good News it really is that sin has become the very condition of our liberation. That part of us which still needs healing, that sinful part of us that needs forgiveness and reconciliation with God and others, that wound which causes us to lament and beg for pardon is the very pledge of our final transformation.

T. S. Elliot gives us the challenge to enter into that "vast inner world of reshuffled hopes and desires" to find that hidden, tiny hope of inspiration which will be our salvation. A tiny child is that hope. Hidden within this tiny child are the hopes and desires which only Emmanuel, God With Us, can fulfill.

What Good News it is that the "Light has come into the world," (John 3:19) to show us the way home to the Father. We belong to a church that has been promised the presence of this "Light" for all times that we might see the path which safely leads us home.

The Good News of Jesus' birth is a promise of an enduring Presence among us and a sure hope which shouts that "humanity is possible," and that each one of us has a future. No wonder that St. Francis cried out, "How wonderful to have such a Brother!"

May his birth "fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that through the power of the Holy Spirit you may have hope in abundance." (Romans 15:13)

PEACE & JUSTICE REPORT

Ronald Michieli, SFO, Chair

"May those who have committed themselves to this *Way of Life* persevere to the end for great things have been promised, greater still are promised to them. Nor are the sufferings of the present time worthy to be compared with the glory to come." (Tertiary's Companion, Marion A. Habig, OFM, Editor)

While the Commission for Peace & Justice owes its alpha to the Rule, it has no omega, for it becomes the purview and mission of all who seek the Franciscan way of life.

These are trying times for souls yearning to seek peace, for it would appear that we live in a world long since Christianized which continues to condone and practice the medieval mentality of barbarianism with a vengeance.

Where then, where does the mission of a Secular Franciscan take root in such a calamity of events that make Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* appear sane?

Day by day the Commission has searched for ways to address the ideals of Saint Francis for social reform. Yet, when it would seem fit and proper to unleash a full fledged attack upon the untamed elements of society, the momentum is slowed by a message of patience.

In searching for the answer to patience, the Commission almost seems compelled to withdraw from the battle to regroup and reorient.

As Seculars, we tend to respond in a very human manner, the results of which become contrary to imparting the Gospel message as the real solution to daily conflicts which beg resolution.

Maintaining an attitude of dialogue and collaboration with the Lord's ministers is a duty we many times short circuit. The gratification of satisfaction with an immediate solution to conflict rather than the dialogue and collaboration with Christ's ministers appear old and trite. This means we live in free response to the law of love - the spirit cannot grow by legislation alone.

This, then, has been the Commission's mission throughout this past year. The compelling mission shall seek to encounter the living Christ in all activities that relate to society and social reform. This mission by action alone begs the utmost in patience and self-discipline.

The Commission will pursue the course of direction with renewed faith and hope as it broadens the base of the fourth point of its mission, advocacy. The advocacy phase of Peace and Justice is the most volatile phase since it requires diligence in putting forth God's Word in the marketplace. Bigotry and racism are rampant and can only be tempered and subdued by the Word of God, the Gospel message in lived action.

NEW WORK COMMISSIONER NAMED

Following the resignation of Dr. Joseph Halka, SFO, the National Executive Council appointed John Allen Jordan, SFO. Allen is a native of Philadelphia where he attended Southeast Catholic High School. At Drexel University, he majored in mechanical engineering and later attended Thomas Edison College for business. He and his wife, Eileen, have been married 27 years and have a son and two daughters.

They now reside in Cherry Hill, NJ, where he is a Cub Scout Master, a lector, and a Eucharistic Minister in his parish. He was professed into the SFO in 1988. He has served as Formation assistant in his local fraternity and is Minister of the Delaware Valley Interprovincial Fraternity.

ON CONFRONTING FOREST FIRES AND THE ARID SOUL

Mary K. Mazotti, SFO
First National Vice Minister

*Oh, living flame of love
That tenderly wounded my soul
In its deepest center...*

-St. John of the Cross

It was bound to happen, sooner or later - a run away fire storm! All odds pointed toward its happening in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where I live: seven years of drought, tinder-dry gulches, thick underbrush, and lack of precautionary control-burning, made conditions dangerously right for an inferno that would cost millions, and leave the spirits of residents stressed out.

It happened during a mid-August heatwave. A spark from a stalled car smoldered on dry grass, and then fanned into an out-of-control fire that severely damaged 18,000 acres of brush, timberland, and countless homes. The call to evacuate came around three P.M. for surrounding communities. A bloodshot sun glared through billowing smoke as ashes, carried by hot winds, sprinkled our heads like penitents of old. Four days and nights would pass before thousands of fire fighters, with hundreds of ground and air units, would be able to contain the fires, and allow us to return to our saved homes.

Wounds to the environment and the soul have been happening since creation took place. Life, death, and renewal are common to both. Symptoms of the wounded soul are more subtle and take many hidden forms: lethargy, aridity, depression, burnout, loss of faith, etc. Spiritual fires at ebb need to be approached with sensitivity. St. John of the Cross writes: "A soul that is weak in love is also too weak to work with the heroic virtues."

There is a similarity between nature's flame and the mystical flame. Both burn and destroy something and both are followed by some kind of renewal. After winter rains and snow, blackened hills and woodlands will again grow lush carpets of grass; scarred forests will show beginnings of life with creeping ferns and budding wild flowers; seedlings of pines, firs and cedars will poke their seed caps through acrid soot, and little trees will start growing next to charred stumps.

The great mystics write that trials - aridity is one - test the soul in imitation of Christ. For the faithful, these tests can act as catalysts in purging and cleansing the dross from ourselves. As servants of the cross, we can help the process by clearing out the undergrowth of personal accumulations, selfishness, and spiritual sloth, and by setting new spiritual priorities. We can literally eject ourselves from the comfortable plateau that has kept us spiritually stagnant by a deeper prayer life, fasting, readings, and by exciting ourselves to go up to a higher plateau, perhaps to reach that mystical union with God to which we are all called.

For centuries, the favorite books of those traveling the high spiritual roads have been those written by Theresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thomas à Kempis, and Jean-Pierre de Caussad. These passionate writers became instruments of God in helping the traveler attain the mystical "living flame of love" in their souls. Additional help in healing and enriching the wounded soul can come from communing with the environment, as St. Francis of Assisi was drawn. The silence and beauty of the Sierras attract thousands of campers and nature lovers. City dwellers, drained physically and spiritually, come often to renew themselves in the presence of towering trees, lakes, sparkling skies, and animal nature. Far from the noises of city life and

endless routines, they come to isolate themselves and to converse with God. Few have written more exquisitely about this intimacy than St. John of the Cross:

*"How gently and lovingly thou awakest in
my bosom
Where thou dwellest secretly and alone!
And in thy sweet breathing, full of blessing
and glory,
How delicately thou inspirest my love!"*

Like the many signs posted along Highway 4, saying "Thank You, Fire Fighters," gratitude should equally go to the mystics for leaving us a spiritual legacy on how to overcome aridity of the soul and how to move securely, through faith, toward a more intimate union with God.

1992 PAX ET BONUM AWARD TO MARGARET JAYNES, SFO

From the presentation made by
the Very Rev. Giles Schinelli, TOR,
Minister Provincial, Immaculate Conception



The phrase Pax et Bonum was fondly used by Saint Francis of Asisi as a form of greeting and as a concrete expression of his belief that all so addressed were his brothers and sisters. The PAX ET BONUM award is given by the TOR Franciscan Friars of the Province of the Immaculate Conception as an expression of their esteem and gratitude to persons outside their immediate family who have made significant contributions in furthering the spirit of St. Francis and who, by this award, now hold an honored place within the ranks of the Friars.

For her caring and collaborative leadership, for her tireless animation of local Secular Fraternities, for her participation in the National Secular Fraternity, for her strong but gentle encouragement of spiritual assistants, for her interest in the mission of the Province and in vocation recruitment, for her humility in working to empower regionalization, for her personal witness and for her deep love of Saint Francis and the power of the Franciscan vocation in the world today ...for all these reasons, I have the privilege and honor of bestowing on Margaret Jaynes, Secular Franciscan of the San Damiano Fraternity and Provincial Minister, the Province's PAX ET BONUM Award.

Peg has been professed for eleven years; she and Ed, her husband of nearly forty years, live in Wilmington, Delaware. They have three grown children.

As a member of Holy Rosary Parish, she serves as a lay minister of the Eucharist, and a member of the Parish Core Team of Renew. She also serves as a volunteer at Saint Francis Hospital in the base office of the Claremobile.

The Pax et Bonum presentation was made at the Friars' Annual Assembly, August 18th.

WHAT IS A SECULAR FRANCISCAN?

Dr. Marguerite B. Stein, SFO, Canonist

The true formation of the tertiary begins with his profession.¹ He is committed for the rest of his life, first of all, to daily prayer and meditation. Once he was one of the few seculars permitted to say the full Divine Office, but, since Vatican II and the new Code, all lay members of the faithful are now invited to do so.² Many alternate forms of the Office are available to him, ranging from the single volume *Christian Prayer*, *The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, *Francis' Office of the Passion*, and even to a short version of Francis' medieval office for the illiterate - the recitation of twelve Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glories.

He is committed to attending daily Mass, if it is at all possible as part of his ever-developing devotion to the Eucharist which is so meaningful to Franciscan spirituality.³

He reads the Gospel assiduously, striving to move from the Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel; he looks for Gospel meanings in his daily experience and takes to his daily life some thought to live by.⁴ He turns to God in his joys and his agonies, his surprises, and his drudgery.

He remains in active communion with the Church and particularly with the Pope, the vicar of Christ and leader of the Church on earth, acting as his defender in public and loyal follower in private, in imitation of Francis.⁵

He loves the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Angels, protectress and advocate of the Franciscan family,⁶ and tries constantly to imitate her fiat.

He fulfills faithfully his duties in life, following the example of the poor and crucified Christ.⁷

He lives a poor and humble life as did Christ and Mary; he regards himself as only the steward of his possessions with which he deals in a spirit of detachment, being always ready to give to the needy or to accept any loss as coming from God.⁸

He strives to avoid any attachment to power.⁹

He lives a life of chastity according to his state in life, seeking purity of heart and thus setting himself free to love God and his brothers and sisters with true *caritas*.¹⁰

He accepts all people, even the most difficult, as gifts of the Lord and as brothers or sisters, placing himself on an equal status with all and being ready to serve all; he will find a way in which to render service to them regularly.¹¹

He will stand for justice and defend it by word and example wherever he finds it endangered.¹²

He will esteem peace, fidelity and respect for life, and work for them in all ways and with all others, beginning within his family.¹³

He will respect all creatures and work for prudent ecology.¹⁴

He will strive to be a messenger of joy, bringing hope to others in every situation.¹⁵

He will hold himself ready for Sister Death at all times, looking forward with serenity to his ultimate encounter with the Father.¹⁶

That is a very long list of attitudes and a staggering blueprint for a way of life; it requires a lifetime to achieve anything like full conformity to these ideals. Each of them is taken from Chapter Two of the Rule and all taken together constitute the meaning of our simple profession promise.

To work toward these goals, the Franciscan immerses himself in a "community of love", his local fraternity. There he continues his learning process through discussions, study groups, reading, and daily prayer; also, he engages in some active, apostolic work of charity several hours a week, usually in company with other Franciscans.¹⁷

He attends his monthly fraternity meetings, never refusing an office without reason, helping the formation team, joining in prayer for deceased members, and trying to make at least one retreat a year to keep the flame alive.

He offers financial contributions according to his means to cover the spiritual and temporal needs of the fraternity, its members, its apostolic works, and its charities; in turn, his local fraternity contributes toward support of the regional/provincial, national, and international fraternities.¹⁸

Chesterton says that the Third Order was designed to assist ordinary men to be ordinary with an extraordinary exultation.¹⁹ And that is true, for Francis was a medieval advocate of courtesy and song, a spreader of joy and love and laughter, who made the road to God seem marvelously fascinating even in the rough spots. He knew the value of companions on the way ("And God gave me brothers"), and in all truth the concept of brotherhood is fundamental to an understanding of the Franciscan spirit.

Membership in and devotion to the charism of Francis' Third Order permit us to travel the road of life happily, in good company, with a means by which to see the deepest spiritual joy in humiliation and misfortune. For it is only then that we are children of the Heavenly Father and "spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁰ In the words of Francis, "Oh, how glorious it is!"²¹

¹ General Constitutions, 1990, Art. 44.

² Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order. Benet A. Fonck, OFM, Editor. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985, pp 103-04.

³ Francis originated the practice of genuflecting when entering the presence of the Eucharist and saying, "We adore you, O Christ and we bless you, here and in every church throughout the world, for by your Cross you have redeemed the world."

⁴ Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, promulgated June 24, 1978, Pope Paul VI, Art. IV.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Art. VI.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Art. IX.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Art. X; Art. XVI.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Art. XI.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Art. XI.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Art. XI.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Art. XIII.

¹² *Ibid.*, Art. XV.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Art. XVII.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Art. XVIII.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Art. XIX.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Art. XIX.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Art. XXII.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Art. XXV.

¹⁹ G. K. Chesterton, St. Francis of Assisi, Garden City, New York, Image Books, a Division of Doubleday & Company, 1957, p. 105.

²⁰ SFO Rule, Prologue, Chapter One.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Chapter One.

OPENING - ECOLOGY CHAIR

The National Fraternity invites qualified SFOs to submit résumés for the position of National Ecology Commission Chairman by January 15, 1993.

Applicants should have some background in ecology and must be able to inform, educate, and recommend.

Please mail information to:
Mrs. Mary Mazotti, SFO
Commission Liaison
P.O. Box 2571
Arnold, CA 95223

THE VINYARD

Bruce Snowden, SFO
Minister, St. Mary Fraternity, Yonkers, NY

The Bible's Exodus story tells of God's freeing the Israelites from spiritual and social oppression. Heaven's "campaign slogan" proclaimed to the Pharaoh by Moses, "Let My people go!" effectively destroyed the power of the Egyptians over God's chosen people. The decisive victory was won after the Avenging Angel passed over the homes of the Israelites marked with the sign of the Tau, red in the blood of a lamb sacrificed at God's command.

The sign of the Tau, red in the blood of personal Franciscan commitment which marks the heart of every Secular Franciscan, continues to play an important role in freeing all humanity from the tyranny of personal, spiritual, and social oppression.

Rev. Benet Fonck, OFM, in December 1979 *Franciscan Herald* says, "The laity who commit themselves to live the Gospel in the spirit of St. Francis, fail to fulfill their vocation if they passively sit back and remain uninvolved in changing the temporal order."

Conjointly, the Church teaches "One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives ... The Christian who shirks his temporal duties towards his neighbor neglects God himself and endangers his eternal salvation." (The Documents of Vatican II, Chapter IV, The Role Of The Church In The Modern World, #43.)

Some of us Secular Franciscans believe what we have been taught; here are a few examples: There is a Fraternity in Denver called, St. Francis of the Street. There, SFOs help in a Health Shelter started by the Denver Archdiocese which is cared for by Capuchin Friars. Denver SFOs also are into care for unwed

mothers and work in psychiatric hospital ministry. A member of the St. Francis of the Street Fraternity works with housing for the poor - indeed so much gospel ministry is being done in one way or the other that it is impossible to list them all. Georgia Gunzenhauser, SFO, Fraternity Minister, sums up their Fraternity zeal as follows - "Individually we make efforts to keep our lives and surroundings as simple and as uncluttered, ecologically balanced as possible. Getting ahead is not important to us." The main concern is identical to the Lord's and to St. Francis' - to encourage and support every-one hurt, or oppressed.

William E. Doherty, SFO, Vice Minister of Our Lady's Fraternity, West Concord, Massachusetts, shared this. Secular Franciscans in Zambia Africa, are actively involved in liturgical and catechetical parish committees. They are very helpful to the local clergy, and, as a result of their work, more Christians are responding to the Franciscan vocation in Zambia. The Zambian Secular Franciscan Minister, Clement Milambo, SFO, asked that U.S. SFOs send him wooden Tau crosses, Christian reading material, rosaries, taped spiritual lessons, formation instructions, and homilies. He asked for, "An interaction program between U.S. fraternities and the missions of Zambia." Our Lady's Fraternity is finalizing a plan to assist that African Fraternity.

Another Secular Franciscan source tells this. There is a small Fraternity where members are supporting an unwed teenager who chose not to abort. The source also knows of at least one fraternity in a very poor economic area, where members are suffering personal economic deprivations, but who are dedicated to parish apostolates.

The Lady Poverty Fraternity of Orlando, Florida is dedicated to alleviating human

