

TAU-USA



Issue Number 29

The Newsletter of the National Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order in the United States

Winter 2000

A Place of Belonging

William Wicks, SFO, National Minister

As we grow older, pleasant memories force their way into our presence, and are welcomed. They are recollections of a secure place. They are memories of home. I recall my Christmas memory. That morning, we would wake up and wait for the time when Dad would line us up to enter into that mystical Christmas morning place: the parlor, with the smell of fir emanating from an over-decorated tree that touched the ceiling. There were stockings set out, filled with walnuts and Juicy Fruit gum and Hershey kisses. Christmas songs by Bing Crosby filled the air, as we unwrapped the gifts and offered hugs, and later sat down together as family to enjoy Mom's baked ham that was coated with pineapple slices and cherries. Each of you has such remembrances of Christmas morning - of home. That we cherish those memories hints to us that there is a longing for a place to call home, that we, as God's people, are never able to fulfill. Of course, we realize that many children aren't so blessed with such memories - but that is a different challenge. In the following paragraphs, this unfulfilled longing is addressed.



through the veil, to experience what is to fully become. My samples sometimes come as surprises: a looking up from under a stand of autumn Aspen through the gold leaves set in a deep blue sky, a lifting of a glass of wine with close friends, a kiss, a listening to "Oh Holy Night" at Midnight Mass with tears running down my cheek, a special time of reconciliation, a gospel verse that reveals a special truth just for me, and just at that special moment when it is needed, a getting caught up in the music and words of a beautiful earthy ballad, the scent of a rose when there are none around, the reading of a poem that touches my heart, a kind remark by a close friend, a waking up to the loving smile of my wife. All of these moments of joy are glimpses of

what is someday to be complete, in what is to be our final home. "Our hearts are restless till they rest in thee," says Saint Augustine. We must ask that question, "While we are here, where is it we are absent from?" That coming home is yet to come for those of us still here. For those who have gone before us, the answer is found, and the joy is complete, and the homecoming is experienced in the form of a final eternal Jubilee.

I recall my Christmas memory. That morning, we would wake up and wait for the time when dad would line us up to enter into that mystical Christmas morning place...

Somewhere along the way of life, we come to realize that deep within ourselves there is a memory of a place yet to be found. There is a longing in our heart for a home that would end all of our searching - a space placed there by God that is for God alone. It will be filled only when we have completed our time here on earth, and are welcomed into the Completeness. John O'Donohue, in his book "Eternal Longing" asks the question, "While

Our longing is the living imprint of Divine desire.

I believe that without that ever-present longing, and those wonderful samples of joy given to us by our waiting God, our souls would atrophy. In his book, John O'Donohue tells us that "Our longing is an echo of the Divine longing for us. Our longing is the living imprint of Divine desire. This desire lives in each of us in that ineffable space in the heart, where nothing else can satisfy or still us. This is what gives us that vital gift we have called, 'the sense of life!'" But, until we are welcomed into that final completeness, let us, with friends, loved ones, or alone, embrace those special glimpses of heaven that come to us in the form of enticements from a Lover: invitations to the complete act of Love - the ever presence of our glorious God in the place of eternal belonging.

we are here, where is it we are absent from?" God gives us samples of this eternal home along the way. We have moments of joy when we glimpse

God give you hope.

Bill

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Guidelines for Submission of Articles

Due to the overwhelming number of submissions for the national newsletter, we cannot possibly include all submissions. Therefore, to increase the likelihood of your submission being printed, we offer the following guidelines:

- Please ensure that articles do not exceed 500 words;
- Please understand that articles may be edited for length and clarity;
- Submissions received after the deadline for a particular issue will be given consideration for the following issue.
- In the Franciscan interest in ecology, please try to send submissions in electronic format (e-mail or floppy disc), instead of on paper.

Letters to the Editors

All correspondence sent to the editors becomes the property of the editors, and may be published in TAU-USA. Please state in all correspondence whether you wish to have your name withheld.



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Merry
Christmas!

"Oh, There's No Place Like Home for the Holy Days"

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OK, so we took a few liberties with the first line of a popular Christmas song (you know, "holidays" instead of "holy days"), but we did so to make a point. A very important aspect of every Jubilee Year is the experience of people returning home. In Pope John Paul II's official Prayer for the Great Jubilee Year 2000, our Holy Father prays: "By Your grace, O Father, may the Jubilee Year be a time of deep conversion and of joyful return to You." If anyone in the Church should know about joyful anything, it should be the spiritual daughters and sons of Saint Francis of Assisi!

The fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of Saint Luke contains three famous parables of the divine mercy of God: the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to find the one who is lost (1-7); the woman who turns her house inside out and upside down to find a single lost coin (8-10); and the Prodigal Son -- which is probably better understood as the parable of the Loving and Forgiving Father (11-32). Because of who we are as Catholics and Franciscans, all of us are called to be agents and instruments of this divine mercy of our loving God.

Many of our local dioceses and parishes are committing considerable effort and resources to the apostolate of reaching out to our brothers and sisters who, for whatever reason, have become inactive in the practice of their Catholic faith. Many are angry with the Church over some perceived past hurt or injustice. Others may find themselves in irregular marital situations, or may just have gotten into a lax attitude about church attendance. Regardless of the reason for their separation, our approach is to be one of conciliatory listening, sincere invitation to come back, and genuine willingness to accompany them on their return home.

*NOW is the time
for us to reach out
with renewed zeal*

In each of our Secular Franciscan fraternities, there are likely to be at least a few members who are no longer active in the life of the fraternity. As in the larger

church community within which we live our vocations, some may just have drifted away; others may be dealing with a perceived past hurt or disagreement within the fraternity. **NOW** is the time for us to reach out with renewed zeal -- we could say, with Jubilee fervor! -- to these separated sisters and brothers of ours, and to invite them to come home! The simple truth is this: we, as a Secular Franciscan presence in the world, are not complete without them. We need them every bit as much as they need us.

As we enter into the final weeks of this Great Jubilee Year, let us strive to be mindful of our need to help others to return home. Prayer for this intention is always

essential; beyond that, all it sometimes takes is a kind word, a friendly note, a gentle invitation to come back. In the words of the Loving Father, "But we had to rejoice! This brother [sister] of yours was dead, and has come back to life. He was lost, and is found" (Luke 15: 32). Yes, there really is *no place like home for the holy days!*



Applications Sought for National Formation Commission Chair

The National Executive Council invites qualified Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the position of Chair of the **National Formation Commission**. An applicant is expected to:

- be an active professed Secular Franciscan (a copy of Profession Certificate is required);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and Goals of the National Formation Commission;
- possess a broad-based understanding of the formation process as envisioned in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and in the Rule and General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order;
- have excellent written and oral communication skills;
- have extensive experience with initial and ongoing formation at the local, regional, and/or national levels of fraternity;
- be available and willing to travel to required meetings and workshops;
- be committed to working collaboratively with the National Executive Council, the National Fraternity Council, the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, the members of the National Formation Commission and other National Commissions, and the Regional Formation Directors.

An applicant wishing to obtain a complete job description of this position should feel free to contact Carol Gentile, SFO, the National Commissions' Coordinator.

The current plan calls for the appointment of a Chair-Elect for the Commission by October 2001, to work with the current Chairs until October 2002 when the appointment as Chair becomes effective. Interested Secular Franciscans should submit resumés by **March 1, 2001** to:

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Our Home is the Heart of God

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We begin our journey home from the time before our birth, when we are created by God. He wants us to get to know Him better, so that we can share in all His beautiful gifts, and that when we finally get home, we can live with Him eternally in perfect peace and happiness. But right now we are not in a hurry to reach home - His heart. We want to take our own sweet time because we derive pleasure from the worldly things that litter and obstruct our path. We choose the long, windy road, taking the slowest mode of transportation, and carrying with us all the material possessions we accumulate along the way. We make several stops to linger and delight in the temporal things, to amass more worthless things, knowing they are just obstacles to our final destination.

*...let us get back
on track, and
start a new
pilgrimage
home.*

Our selfishness makes Him sad. His heart is aching because of our ingratitude. And yet He is very patient with us. When are going to mend our ways? Let us abandon all the unnecessary baggage, the useless trappings that hinder us. Let us get on our efficient

transportation and get back to the highway that will take us straight to Him. Let us do it now while we have time.

At the beginning of this third millennium, let us get back on track, and start a new pilgrimage home. This time, let us keep our focus on the portal which is Jesus, and on our home, the heart of God. Forget all the mundane

materials, and resist all enticements that will keep us from reaching our goal. Concentrate, instead, on prayer, which is the key to the portal of the home.

On this pilgrimage, let us not leave our family behind. We always like to take them with us wherever we go, be it on a short trip to a nearby park, or for a long vacation to a distant place. We travel together, because we want us all to experience the fun of the trip, to learn to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of God's creation. So why not take the whole family home - our children, parents, brothers, and sisters.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you prepare for this pilgrimage?
2. How could you avoid the obstacles on the road?
3. What do you expect to see when you are home?



To decorate the houses with religious pictures is a custom as old as Christianity itself, for the true Christian has always considered his home as nothing less than a Temple of God, and the religious pictures as a means to extend and preserve the spirit of Christianity in the home.

Saint John Vianney



Returning Home To Rest

... continued from page six.

organize a memorable event, that will have a lasting impact.

Lastly, perhaps the most compelling cause for gratitude has been witnessing the on-going conversion taking place among all of you. A metanoia that leads some to say, "Wow, work really is part of the Good News". A change-of-heart that embraces an appreciation of the beautiful Franciscan understanding of work. We have begun to truly understand why work is not a curse, but a blessing - truly a gift, or, as Francis put it, a "grace" - one that is to be "esteemed."

Now is the time for Mary and me to return home - a time to rest - a time to look back in gratitude and remembrance, with "a gaze filled with joyous delight", for all that has transpired, and all the wonderful Franciscans we have met. Thank you for permitting us to serve you.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How do you rest "rest?" That is, how do you spend your Sundays and other free time?



Returning Home – Where the Heart is

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Every year, beginning around All Souls Day, we are besieged in the media by the image of the happy American family gathering together for the holidays, sitting around the table to share in a sumptuous meal, filled with love and warmth. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving is the busiest travel day of the year, as people head home for the holidays. We all yearn for the warmth and comfort of home. It is worth a lot to us to make that trip, despite the crowded roads and trains and airplanes.

Thomas of Celano writes that Saint Francis sent the brothers out into the world, saying, "Go, my dearest brothers, two by two, into the various parts of the world, announcing peace and repentance unto the forgiveness of sins" (Celano, First Life, XII, 29). But, almost as soon as he sent them out, Francis looked forward to their coming home. He prayed "to the Lord, Who gathers the dispersed of Israel, that He would deign to bring them together.... When they had gathered together, they rejoiced greatly." (Celano, First Life, XII, 30)

The call to return home would seem to be a universal one, not restricted to 21st century Americans or 13th century Italians. Why is this pull so strong? What is it about "home" that compels us? And what exactly is "home" anyway?

For those of us who flock to be with family for the holidays: are we looking for, hoping for, something that is real or an illusion? Do we really think that a big turkey and several kinds of pie will satisfy, truly satisfy, our craving for "home"? Or is what we are seeking something more spiritual? Perhaps we are looking for that level of contentment that comes only from truly being "where the heart is". When Francis prayed that his brothers might come home, it was to the community of

faith that they formed. He drew them together that they might all be one in their pursuit of Gospel living. Home did not involve being together because you were supposed to, because advertising told you that was normal and desirable, but rather,

When Francis prayed that his brothers might come home, it was to the community of faith that they formed.

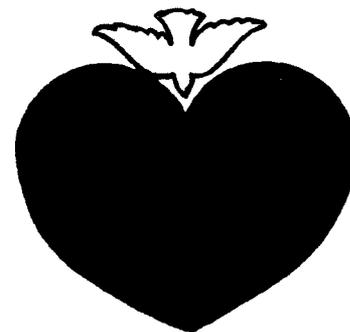
home was the place where you were able to be most deeply content because you were with God.

The love and warmth of family that we seek on the holidays is a reminder of the love God has for us, who are all children of God's family. As we see the Jubilee year draw to a close, and as we progress through the holiday season, we are drawn again to that miracle of miracles which showed God's love for us in such a real way. We are drawn to the images of the birth of our

Lord, and the Holy Family, and the warmth those images bring to us. But we should not forget that family is a much wider concept than that of our immediate family. The global village, of which we are slowly becoming aware, is a reminder of the breadth of that family and of our relationship to it.

There are many people in our midst who do not have a home, in the commonly understood sense of it. Our world is full of refugees, driven from their homes, and, in many cases, living in places where they receive no welcome, where they are shunned or actually fought against. There are homeless people, men, women and children, living on the streets of our cities and towns. In the Middle East and other places, wars are being waged over land which opposing groups and peoples claim as their homeland. We are reminded that the Holy Family were themselves refugees.

It would be naïve to think that we do not need to address these problems of homelessness, of refugees, of battles for a homeland, that all we have to do is remind people that their true security comes from God.... Mary and Joseph were prevented from going home to their embattled, conquered homeland, so that one day their Baby could bring us all the Good News about how to truly go home. Now we need to do our part to bring about the Good News in the new millennium.



Questions for Discussion:

1. Our fraternity in many ways is our refuge and our family. Do we feel that warmth of family with our brothers and sisters when we meet? Do we look forward to being with them each month? The Jubilee Year was a time for Right Relationships, were we participating?
2. We can rejoice that our country voted to forgive a portion of the debt owed the US from the third world countries. Have we personally forgiven some of our indebtedness?
3. Have we welcomed some of the refugees in our midst? Are they being exploited because of their neediness? What can our fraternity do to aid refugees?

Returning Home To Rest

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When I saw this issue's Jubilee theme of "returning home", the phrase that immediately came to mind was "returning home...from work." The image of the laborer coming home after putting in a long day was etched in my mind. Returning home from work to do what? Well, returning home to *rest*.

*Work and rest,
when taken
together and
held in dynamic
balance,
constitute the
natural rhythm
of our lives.*

After writing about work-related themes for six years, this is my final article on behalf of the Work Commission. It is the perfect time to develop work's counterpoint - rest. Rest is as much a part of God's plan for us as is work. We see this clearly in Genesis. "On the seventh day God finished His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." (*Genesis 2:2*). We, who

are made in God's image and likeness, are called to imitate the Creator's pattern of activity and quiescence. Work and rest, when taken together and held in dynamic balance, constitute the natural rhythm of our lives. Our SFO General Constitutions capture this reality in recommending that "Secular Franciscans should maintain a balance between work and rest and should strive to make meaningful use of their leisure time." (21.2)

As I have tried in the past to uncover the meaning of work for my brothers and sisters in Francis, so I would now like to attempt to do the same for "rest", in the limited space available. To do so, we will turn to an Apostolic Letter presented to the Church by Pope John Paul II on the Feast of Pentecost in 1998. The letter is entitled *Dies Domini* - "The Lord's Day".

The Holy Father immediately makes it clear that God's rest, as depicted in Genesis, is not to be treated lightly - as a day of simply doing nothing after six days of ceaseless activity.

It would be banal to interpret God's "rest" as a kind of divine "inactivity".... The divine rest of the seventh day does not allude to an inactive God, but emphasized the fullness of what has been accomplished. It speaks, as it were, of God's lingering before the "very good" work (*Genesis 1:31*) which His hand has wrought, in order to cast upon it a *gaze full of joyous delight*. This is a "contemplative" gaze which does not look to new

accomplishments but enjoys the beauty of what has already been achieved. (No. 11)

Pope John Paul II suggests that our time of rest, particularly each Sunday, should follow the Creator's example. Our time of rest is time for us to recall all that God has done for us. We recall not only the blessings that have touched our own lives, but the most fundamental gifts of all - our own lives and the magnificent creation of which they are a part. Sunday is a time to re-adjust our vision of reality - a vision that our week of self-reliance on the job may have blurred - to come to see correctly that all good comes from God, and that we are totally dependent on the One Who brought us into being out of love. "The Lord's Day...recalls that *the universe and history belong to God*, and without a constant awareness of that truth, man cannot serve in the world as co-worker of the Creator." (*Ibid.*, no. 15)

The Holy Father also references another Old Testament text from Exodus: "Remember the Sabbath day in order to keep it holy." (20:8) Commenting on this text, John Paul II emphasizes that remembering the Sabbath "...is

a call to awaken remembrance of the grand and fundamental work of God which is creation, a remembrance which must inspire the entire religious life of man and then fill the day on which man is called to *rest*. Rest, therefore, acquires a sacred value: the faithful are called to rest not only as God rested, but to rest *in* the Lord, bringing the entire creation to Him, in praise and thanksgiving, intimate as a child and friendly as a spouse." (*Dies Domini*, no. 16)

Permit me, for a moment, to look back in remembrance and give thanks for the good work that the Lord has allowed the Work Commission to accomplish over the past six years. A major achievement was the development of an actual Commission, rather than having just a nominal commission with only Chairs. Ann Devine, Terry McCarthy Sr., incoming Work Commission chair Pauline Cahalan, and Teresa Redder have each offered their own unique gifts in service to the Work Commission. Together, we have been able to achieve the creation of tangible gifts to the Order, including a newsletter, a resource manual, several talks, a website, and list-serve. We came together splendidly for the All Commissions Conference, where we were graciously joined by Richard Morton. The All Commissions Conference also gave us the joy of working together with the other Commission chairs to

*Rest,
therefore,
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...continued on page four



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Returning Home or Venturing Out?

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Andy, my eldest son, wanted to go to college – as far away as possible. He wanted to be on his own; he wanted freedom from his family. I was terribly upset. My son was actually happy to be leaving our family. What would become of him? I felt he wasn't really ready to be so far away. I grieved what I saw as the loss of our relationship.

My desire is to have all four generations of my family united together and sharing a loving family life. But, like most mothers, I struggle to accept the absence of those who are away. I must realize that they are away developing their talents, exploring different career choices, and discovering how God is calling them to live their life. Yet, I miss them so.

From the day I brought each of my children home from the hospital, I intended to teach them to be independent, and prepare them for the day when they would leave home. Why, then, was I surprised when they did?

Similarly, should I be surprised when one of my children leaves their spiritual home, the Church? Should I believe that they are in the process of developing their adult relationship with God? Luke (2:41-52) tells us the story of the boy Jesus in the temple. He shows Jesus remaining in Jerusalem, while Mary and Joseph thought Jesus was in their caravan. They must have been frantic with worry when they realized Jesus was not with them. Jesus, too, left the presence of His family. His parents found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers and asking them questions. But, just as I did not understand Andy's choices, Mary and Joseph did not understand what Jesus was doing. Was that Jesus' first step away from His parental home to follow His Heavenly Father's call?

My children's spiritual journey also reminds me of the Magi in search of Jesus. They didn't have a roadmap; they followed a star. Did the Magi start out together, or, with God's providence, did they meet and become companions on the way? Providing a Franciscan Youth / Young Adult group is an opportunity to *be* companions on the way. Franciscan Youth / Young Adult groups provide a roadmap for youth, and inspire them on their journey. These groups provide a place where youth are always welcome to return, time and time again, to their spiritual home, the Church.

The rich young man in chapter 19 of Matthew's Gospel searched for Jesus and was told, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor. Then come, follow me.... When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions." Jesus was offering him a whole new challenge – a new life. During World Youth Day in Rome, Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, offered youth a challenge to "put on Christ". Will the challenge of

living the gospel and rejecting material things cause youth to "turn away sad?" Will they stop their spiritual journey?

Saint Augustine once said, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee". And so, I believe, my children and other youth / young adults will keep on their journey, looking for a spiritual home. The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) tells us, "The young son came to his senses... decided to say, 'Father, I have sinned... treat me as one of your hired workers.'... While the son was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. The father ordered a servant to bring the finest robe, a ring, and sandals for the son's feet. He celebrated with a feast because he felt his son had been dead, and now had come to life again."

I can relate to this father, because now I know great joy when each of my children returns home to visit. I never would have experienced the joy I now have from Andy's visits, nor would I have an adult relationship with him, if he had never left our home. I never would have known that special joy that comes from having a caring daughter-in-law and grandchildren who love me. My joy is complete when I see Andy, and his wife, Doreen, teaching children in their parish Church. I feel that they have truly returned home.

Like our Loving Father, who is waiting to catch sight of us, let us accept youth just as they are. Let us welcome them, love them, and companion them along the way. With this loving support they can accept the invitation to holiness and sacrifice. We hear Our Loving Father saying, "Long have I waited for your coming home to me and living deeply our new life".



Questions for Discussion:

1. What kind of family get-together do you enjoy the most (the least)?
2. Does the Prodigal Son's brother have to experience leaving home to gain spiritual maturity?
3. How can the Church provide both the freedom and the challenge youth need so they will want to stay?
4. What is it that Jesus is asking you to give up in order to follow Him?



"Welcome to our annual SFO family reunion". With these words, Bill Wicks, SFO, officially opened the National Fraternity meeting for the year 2000, which took place from October 17-22 at the Mother Boniface Center in Philadelphia, PA. Throughout the day on Tuesday, Secular Franciscans arrived from all over the United States.

Inaugural Mass

On Tuesday evening, the inaugural liturgy was celebrated by Father Loren Connell, OFM, President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. Father began by posing the question, "If we are looking for God's law, where can we find it?" It is in our hearts, here in this gathering of family. Father Loren revisited his own history as a Franciscan. Forty years ago, as a senior in high school, when he was trying to make sense of his own vocation, he visited the Franciscans "not really expecting to be impressed". Instead, he found a brotherhood. Experiencing this, he heard within himself, "This is what I want". He said, "It was the seed of God's law in my heart, calling me". In the 1990's, Saint John the Baptist Province of friars focused on Saint Clare in a series of retreats. This led to a new discovery for Father Loren. In 1996, he was asked to become the new Provincial Spiritual Assistant to the SFO. Before this, his experience with Secular Franciscans was limited, and this led to more new discoveries for him. These forty years of growing and dying have been his Franciscan journey. He invited us to re-visit our own Franciscan journeys, and to realize that God's law is in our hearts. In the Gospel for today, Jesus invites the apostles to come to an out of the way place, and rest a while. Father Loren said that Jesus is, in effect, saying to the Apostles, "Let's spend sometime together, just being family, and celebrating the goodness that is here". Then they went forth. We also are called to go out in our unique Franciscan way, and let others touch us, so that we can be a leaven among them, and bring peace. There is a time for work and meetings, and Father emphasized that we are all here as brothers and sisters. We must respect each other, and celebrate our common call. "We are here today, in Philadelphia, to be nourished by the Lord. We begin here at this Mass, asking God to transform our gifts of bread and wine, and to continue to transform us."

After Mass, San Damiano Fraternity of Wilmington, DE hosted a Wine Tasting Festival, featuring the wines of Chaddsford Winery in Philadelphia.

On Wednesday, Morning Prayer centered around a short play, written by Jack Miffleton called "The Stranger". It tells the story of a cactus that comes to live in a vegetable garden, and illustrates what can be lost when we thoughtlessly reject others who are different.

Business began on Wednesday morning, with the prayer from the SFO Ritual, Roll Call, and an opportunity for all of those present to briefly introduce themselves to one another.

Bill Wicks, SFO presented his National Minister's Report. Bill pointed out that, as was decided last year, the National Fraternity meeting would follow a new format this year. No longer will the Regional Ministers meet separately from the Executive Council, but all members of the National Fraternity Council would meet together as one body.

Marie Amore, SFO, presented her report as Vocations Director. She has received 734 calls to the 1-800-FRANCIS telephone number. Marie has been dismayed by some of the reactions that people have received when approaching a local fraternity to inquire. Some have received responses such as "Our fraternity is full", or "We don't meet during the Summer". Marie assures us that there are far more happy outcomes than bad ones, however.

On behalf of the Spirit and Life Team (SALT), Marie reported that the team has been invited to make presentations in two regions in the last year, to groups of thirty to sixty people.

Father Loren Connell, OFM presented a report as President of the CNSA. Father Loren asked that the Conference be given plenty of advance notice when a witness is needed for a Regional Chapter of Elections, and that Regional Ministers should make an effort to stay in touch with the Provincial Spiritual Assistants who are responsible for the local fraternities

**"WELCOME TO
OUR ANNUAL
SFO FAMILY
REUNION!"**

in their Regions. Father Loren emphasized that it is a requirement, not an option, for a Church witness to be present at elections on all levels. Elections without witnesses are still technically valid, but they should be a rare occurrence, not the norm.

Father Loren closed by informing the group about materials that are newly available, including information for the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program, and the recently published book "To Live as Francis Lived", an update of the popular but obsolete "Third Order Vocation".

John Sanborn, SFO, National Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report. The National Fraternity has made three charitable donations in the past year, two to Franciscans International for a total of \$1500, and one, via Catholic Relief Services, to aid flood relief efforts in Mozambique, for \$1000. John discussed the tax advantages to members of making donations to the Order in the form of appreciated stock (see article elsewhere in this issue). Also, the National Fraternity is still able to provide insurance to local or Regional Fraternities if they hold events at facilities that require

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them to have coverage. The cost is \$1 per attendee, or \$100 total, whichever is greater.

John also discussed the procedure that local or regional fraternities would have to go through in order to obtain a federal ID number (aka Employer ID number), should this be necessary. This is a very simple procedure, and John can assist anyone who needs to go through it.

A Word from the Commissions

After lunch, Deacon Dave and Therese Ream, SFO, Co-Chairs of the National Formation Commission presented their report. They encouraged Regional Formation Directors to establish Regional Formation Commissions to assist them in their work. They also discussed the Formation Resource Kit that they developed for last year's All Commissions Conference.

The Duns Scotus Secular Franciscan Formation Trust Fund is still available to provide funding for Formation Projects. Dave discussed the criteria and procedure for

We must use our talents, so that the world will hear the Truth that is Jesus, and He will give us what we need.

applying for a grant. There was also discussion of the possibility of offering training for Regional Formation Directors. This will be discussed further at the meeting of the National Formation Commission in March.

Anthony and Mary Mazotti, SFO, offered a report as

Co-Chairs of the National Youth / Young Adult Commission. Mary Mazotti and Kathy Taormina, SFO, also a member of the Commission, took a group to the recent Youth Jubilee in Rome. The Commission was also represented at the World Youth Day in Paris. Mary said that she and Anthony see their role as Commission Chairs as one of laying a foundation for others to build upon.

International News

Laura Haukaas, SFO, International Councilor (who represents the National Fraternity of the United States on the International level), presented her Annual Report to CIOFS for the approval of the gathering. Laura recently attended a "very, very busy" CIOFS meeting in the "beautiful city" of Madrid, Spain. Laura had the opportunity to visit the town of Avila, including the convent of Saint Therese.

Laura discussed in detail the proposed changes to the General Constitutions that were discussed at the Chapter. Of seven proposed changes, two have been struck down by canonists as invalid. The other five are still under consideration. They are: 1) to disallow an outgoing Minister from being elected as Vice Minister; 2) to place a greater emphasis on initial formation; 3) to provide for special attention to be paid to the newly professed; 4) to make it possible for laypersons or diocesan clergy to be appointed as Spiritual Assistants; and 5) to deny membership to those who are professed members of another Order.

The United States has contributed a total of \$2433 to the CIOFS office fund, which was set up to allow the International Council to obtain office space and equipment.

Developing Committees

Juan Lezcano, SFO, (after indulging the group by telling a quick story), presented the report of the Multicultural Committee, which was established at last year's meeting. The Committee is growing slowly, and Juan is still hoping to find members from the Pacific Islander and Anglo communities. He encouraged us to view America not as a melting pot, but as a fruit cocktail, where each culture mixes together with the whole, while still retaining a distinct flavor. Juan briefly discussed the idea of "interculturalism" as the next step in the multicultural movement. The committee is currently working on getting Lester Bach's "Catch Me a Rainbow, Too" translated into Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese.

Father Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR discussed the work of the Fraternal Life Committee, and in particular the "Rediscovering the Charism" project. The project began with the question "What does the SFO need?", which led to the decision to work on leadership development. A training team put together a programme that was presented as a retreat over two weekends. The programme focuses on the idea of the baptized disciple, observing that leadership is intimately connected with discipleship.

The meeting broke up to prepare for Mass, which was celebrated by Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap., assisted by Deacon Tom Bello, SFO. In his homily, Father reminded us that it is normal for us to feel lonely in our beliefs. We need to be a team to share our successes and failures – we need each other. He cautioned that if we do things on our own, it is easy for us to get wrapped up in our own ideas, and get off track. When we work together, our sharp edges get rubbed off, allowing new and better ideas to shine through. In the Gospel, Jesus sends the Apostles forth, and warns them not to carry a lot of baggage. Father explained that Jesus was telling the Apostles that His word would be their strength, and our strength too. We must use our talents, so that the world will hear the Truth that is Jesus, and He will give us what we need.

After dinner, Marcella Bina, SFO, gave a report on behalf of the Ecumenical Committee. Marcella gave a brief history of the ecumenical movement, and of the formation of the Committee. The Committee's mission is to "seek to foster a ministry of reconciliation", and to "bring a Franciscan focus to the ecumenical movement". Marcella recommended that local fraternities review their own ecumenical involvement, seeking to promote a mood of "awareness and hospitality". The Committee provided packets of information for distribution on the local fraternity level.

Wednesday evening's social featured a selection of local Philadelphia specialties, including Philadelphia cheesesteak sandwiches, Italian ice, soft pretzels, Philadelphia wines, and locally brewed beers.

A Morning's Work...

Thursday's Morning Prayer centered around a memorial service for all of our members who have died during the previous year. Each region lit a candle in remembrance of their departed brothers and sisters.

After breakfast, the Ministers participated in an open forum with the Executive Council. Special guest Anneta Duveen, SFO, who is the outgoing liaison with Franciscans International, introduced her successor, Richard Morton, SFO, past National Minister, who said that "Franciscans International is our opportunity to leverage our influence at the high levels of government, to attack the root causes of the ills of society". Richard reminded us that all professed Secular Franciscans are automatically members of Franciscans International.

...And an Afternoon Away

After lunch, everyone gathered for the traditional group picture, before departing for the annual "Day Away". In honor of the recent canonization of Saint Katharine Drexel, a Philadelphia native, the first stop was a celebration of Holy Mass at Katharine Drexel's Shrine, which is located at the motherhouse of the Order she founded.



Photo by Bob Garon, SFO

After touring famous Philadelphia sites, the brothers and sisters enjoyed a lovely dinner together at Casa di Sal. Special guests Anneta Duveen, SFO, and James Lynch, SFO, both former National Ministers, were honored for their many years of love and service to our Order.

Unfinished Business

Friday morning began with a discussion of unfinished business. Among the items discussed on was a memorial brick donated in memory of Jerry Rome, SFO, at the Tau House, which is a ministry for AIDS sufferers in the French Quarter of New Orleans. It will be dedicated at the Vigil Mass on December 24, 2000. Also, information was made available concerning the Holy Land Foundation, which aims to maintain a Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Father Ben Brevoort, OFM Cap, offered his reflections on the gathering. Father brought copies of a CD-ROM produced by the SFO Presidency, that contains copies of all of the official documents of the Order, including an archive of the weekly CIOFS bulletins since 1995, and a

selection of Franciscan graphics. Father also discussed the current situation of the SFO in Italy, which is still having difficulty uniting under one National Council.

Our Apostolic Works

Carol Gentile, SFO, gave a presentation in her capacity as Apostolic Commissions Coordinator. She encouraged outgoing Commission Chairs to prepare and train their successors, to journey with them for some time, before stepping aside. Projects that Carol is looking into include developing a Procedural Manual and Guidelines for the Commissions, and preparing another All Commissions Conference in 2004.

Carol had just returned from Rome, where she had attended the International Pastoral Conference at the request of General Minister Emanuella De Nunzio. Pope John Paul II told the 5000 attendees that "the future of the world passes through the family".

In the afternoon, Sarah and Dan Mulholland, SFO led a short prayer service in memory of John Popelliers, SFO, who died earlier this year, while serving as National Ecology Commission Chair.

Sonia and Jaime Bernardo, SFO, Chairs of the National Family Commission, reminded us that "the future of the family is the future of society", and that "family has its roots in man's heart". To illustrate the fact that each member of a family is important, and must have a role if the family is to be vibrant and strong, Sonia told a story of a family fleeing a war-devastated village in Bosnia. Each member of the family had a task to perform, except the baby and the grandfather. Each of the others took turns carrying the baby. After a stop to rest, the grandfather was lying down, and told the family that he could go no further. "Keep going, and save yourselves", he said. One of the sons picked up the baby, and gave him to the grandfather, saying, "It's your turn to carry the baby, now". This new sense of purpose and feeling of importance gave the grandfather the strength he needed to lead the family to safety. Sonia observed that, as each instrument is important to a symphony, each family member is important to the family.

Among the programs which the Bernardos will be proposing are a "Family of the Year" program, and a "Family Together in Prayer" program. Sonia stressed that "the most important thing that a human being can do is pray". They distributed Family Commission calendars and prayer cards, and encouraged everyone to get active. Sonia quoted a line from the popular Broadway musical "My Fair Lady": "Don't talk of love, show me!".

Dan and Sarah Mulholland, SFO, Chairs of the National Peace and Justice Commission, began their presentation by stating, "In 2000 years, we have not internalized the Good News". Dan noted that, just the previous day (on the "Day Away"), the group had visited the room where the country was started "by a group about this size". There are plenty of Peace and Justice of issues to be addressed – land mines, the School of the Americas, crime and the death penalty, prison ministry. Dan and Sarah's philosophy is to try to communicate a Franciscan approach to Peace and

Justice issues, which fill every part of our lives. The Commission runs an on-line listserv that posts action alerts for current Peace and Justice issues. Anyone is welcome to sign up (contact Dan and Sarah at dannymai@aol.com for more information).

Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO, National Work Commission Chairs, recalled that, during their six years chairing the Commission, they have developed a resource manual, established a web site and listserv, and published a regular newsletter, "Dignitas". Ed said that the most rewarding part of the job has been to see the "Eureka! moments", when people catch the Franciscan vision of work, and realize that it is a sharing in the life of God. Franciscan work is person-oriented, not task-oriented. Through work, God gives us the best gift of all "our better and truer self".

Some Time with Our Guests

Doug Clorey, SFO, the International Councilor from Canada, shared his view of the Franciscan journey, saying, "We are called to make this journey with others". If we were meant to be alone, it is unlikely that many of us would reach our destination.

Doug shared two of the songs that

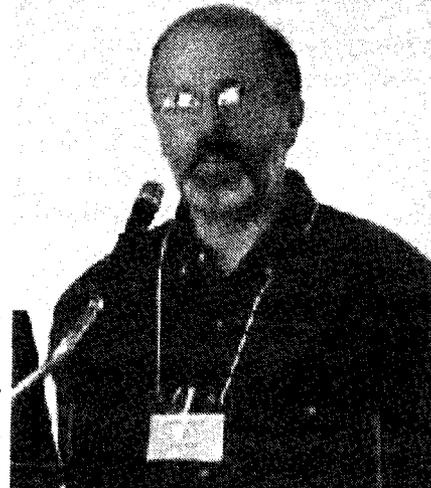


Photo by Anthony Cuthwaite, SFO

he has written, inviting everyone to sing along. The first was called "The Holy Spirit Leads Us", which says, "Wherever the Spirit leads us, wherever we go, wherever the journey takes us, together we'll go". The second song was called "Humility and Poverty", which expresses the idea that poverty allows us to focus on God – the journey and destination. Doug emphasized that humility is not a question of belittling our gifts; it is a call to recognize our need for God. With humility and poverty, we are assured that we will become free to love, to care for one another, and to trust.



Photo by Bob Garoni, SFO

Rev. Masud Syedullah, an Anglican Priest and member of the Third Order Society of Saint Francis (TSSF) shared the history of his Order, which was founded in 1917. He said that joining an Order is "a way to have a community to whom we are accountable". He shared that the TSSF is currently focused on ongoing formation, as a way of dealing with the issue of the "great void" after the conclusion of initial formation. The TSSF is also a member of Franciscans International. "We live in a time when the Church will need to be quite intentional about its life in Christ".

Sister Eleanor Granger, OSF, greeted the group on behalf of the Franciscan Federation, as its Executive Director. She discussed an upcoming conference in Baltimore in August 2001, which will focus on the religious vows, and the Franciscan evangelical life.

The last item of business before dinner was the approval of the budget for 2001. Among the items in the budget is a two dollar increase in the annual per capita contribution to the National Fraternity. It is expected that this additional two dollars per professed member will be used to establish a universal subscription to TAU-USA.

Fraternal Reconciliation

After dinner, the brothers and sisters gathered in the chapel for a Reconciliation service. Deacon Oscar Perez, SFO and Clare McCluggage, SFO led the examination of conscience, which was based on our *Rule*. Father Steve Gross, OFM Conv reflected on the fact that it is our joy and gratitude for our Redemption that pushes us to works of charity. He noted that, if we were not sinners, we could never truly know how limitless is the love and mercy of God.

The evening social was a celebration of the canonization of Saint Katharine Drexel. Members of Consolation of Christ Fraternity, Ridley Park, PA were on hand to serve hors d'oeuvres and canapés, and provide a fraternal welcome.

We Elect a New Council

Saturday's main event was the Chapter of Elections, presided over by Doug Clorey, and witnessed by Father Ben Brevoort. The newly elected council are: Minister – Bill Wicks, SFO; Vice Minister – Marie Amore, SFO; Secretary – Elizabeth Allen, SFO; Treasurer – John Sanborn, SFO; Councilor – Deacon Oscar Perez, SFO; Councilor – Diane Halal, SFO; International Councilor – Juan Lezcano, SFO; Alternate International Councilor – Carol Gentile, SFO.

Let Us Pray

After lunch, the Spirit and Life Team led a prayer service centered around the Paschal Candle. Deacon David Ream proclaimed the "Exsultet". The group read the poem "Passover Remembered", and shared a Spirit-filled exchange of interpretations.

The newly-elected officers were installed during Mass, celebrated by Father Ben Brevoort, OFM Cap, assisted by Deacon Dave Ream, SFO. The entire assembly came forward to congratulate and embrace our new council.



Photo by Anthony Outhwaite, SFO

Father Ben spoke on the holiness which comes from the suffering of servant-leadership. "Toil and weeping in sowing, leads to rejoicing". Father encouraged the newly-elected National Executive Council, by saying that the leaders of the fraternity must walk the path first before they can lead others. "Look up to the Lord as your guide".

"You have been called by your brothers and sisters to animate and guide. You have been given the joy of leading. Remember that you will experience suffering – this leads to holiness. So do not fear, because we have a great High Priest, Jesus, Who has gone through this first. Do not be afraid to drink the cup that Jesus drank. He will be with you, and will reward you."

Father encouraged all of us when he said that we have promised small things to Jesus, but He will reward us richly, and, in the end, we will receive life eternal.

The evening was spent celebrating, with a social featuring a dessert extravaganza, served by members of the Community of the Franciscan Spirit emerging fraternity. A special treat was musical entertainment by the Mummers.

The Party's Over

Sunday morning featured a "wrap-up" session – a chance to reflect on the week, and to say farewell to one another. By lunchtime, the retreat house was empty once more – another NAFRA meeting completed, another family reunion ended.



To see more pictures of the NAFRA gathering, visit
<http://www.rc.net/sfo/skd/nafra/nafra.htm>

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QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS

JULY 9 – 14, 2002

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY
 NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

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(TRANSFORMING, APOSTOLIC, UNITY)

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH MEMBERS OF THE
 WHOLE FRANCISCAN FAMILY

THIS WILL BE A MEMORABLE EVENT IN YOUR
 FRANCISCAN LIFE

START SAVING YOUR DOLLARS NOW

DYNAMIC SPEAKERS, INSPIRING LITURGIES,
 GOOD FOOD, GOOD MUSIC, LOTS OF FUN

BEST OF ALL, YOU WILL BE CELEBRATING WITH
 YOUR FRANCISCAN SISTERS AND
 BROTHERS



National Ecology Commission Chair Needed

The National Executive Council invites Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the positions of National Ecology Commission Chair. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the National Ecology Commission;
- be willing to communicate your passion and desire to promote the Ecology Commission to others;
- provide on-going Formation articles for TAU-USA;
- provide a summary of some of your ideas to promote the Commission; and
- be able to attend at least two four-day national meetings yearly.

Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by February 1, 2001 to:

Carol Gentile, SFO
 National Commissions Coordinator
 136 Woods Avenue
 Monaca, PA 15061
 Phone 724-775-4248
 E-mail: gentsfo@icubed.com



National Fraternity Of United States Annual Report to CIOFS

Laura Haukaas, SFO
International Councilor

Membership as of 12/31/99

Professed:	17,634
Candidates:	1,316
Inquirers:	936

Fraternities as of 12/31/99

Regional:	31
Local:	756
Emerging:	71
Youth groups	6

The National Fraternity of United States has continued its emphasis on implementing the work of the Commissions and the initiatives presented at the *All Commissions Conference* held in June of last year. The regions have held many similar workshops in response to their participation in the Conference. The six Commissions – Formation, Work, Peace and Justice, Ecology, Family and Youth – work in unity to present a model of their interconnectedness as Commissions, and are represented to the Executive Council by the Apostolic Commissions Coordinator.

COMMISSIONS: Each of the Commission Chairs addressed different aspects of Jubilee Year 2000 by submitting articles in the quarterly issues of TAU-USA, our National Newsletter. The themes were *Jubilee, Pilgrimage, Forgiveness of Debts, and Returning Home*. All Chairs are very involved in giving workshops, fulfilling speaking engagements, and representing the Secular Franciscan Order at other gatherings. Web pages provide additional opportunities for dialogue and inspirational contributions.

FORMATION: Documents concerning the Orientation phase of the initial formation process and Guidelines for Remote Initial Formation were written and approved. The Orientation phase gives guidance to implementing this process for discerning a vocation to the Secular Franciscan Order. The Commission designed a bilingual (Spanish / English) promotional brochure for the SFO.

WORK: The Commission continues to handle distribution and sales of the All Commissions Conference tapes. The Chairs are in the planning stage of developing a course based on Father Robert Stewart, OFM's book, *"De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam" The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation* for the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life.

ECOLOGY: The National Fraternity continues to support National Wildflower Week, observed each year in May. Past Chair, Charlie Spencer, SFO was honored to receive the Marty Wolf Peacemaker Award for his work on behalf of the integrity of creation from the OFM JPIC.

FAMILY: The Family Commission has accepted the additional responsibility of monthly publication and distribution of *Living By Faith*, a publication for the

elderly, infirm and physically handicapped members. An article on Family activities has been submitted to the International Council for their newsletter, CIOFS-L.

PEACE AND JUSTICE: This Commission is extremely active in use of e-mail and the Internet by sending messages, information, and action alerts on peace and justice issues. The Chairs represent both Franciscans International and the Secular Franciscan Order in meeting with the Religious Working Group on the World Bank and the IMF.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT: The National Fraternity approved two members of the Commission and one youth to be representatives at Franciscan World Youth Days in Rome 2000. The establishment of several more youth groups are in progress.

COMMITTEES: Multicultural, Spirit and Life Team (SALT), and Ecumenical are in the process of development. These efforts move slowly, and need the cooperation of all regional ministers.

MULTICULTURAL: A special issue of *U.S. Catholic* on Multiculturalism has been distributed in order to prepare and educate members for the National Council meeting to be held in San Antonio, TX in October 2001. The theme of this meeting will be Multiculturalism. The committee is composed of the following ethnic / language groups: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Anglo.

SPIRIT AND LIFE TEAM (SALT): The theme of "Sustaining and Nurturing Our Vocation" was presented by the committee for the on-going portion of the NAFRA meeting, October, 2000.

ECUMENICAL: The resource packet, *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, was distributed. This Committee reviewed the Associate Membership statement and supports the intent of the statement in implementing Article 103 of the SFO General Constitutions. Education of the Secular Franciscan Order in identifying the structure and purpose of this statement, and the need to discern the appropriate development and purpose of "Friends of Francis" will be studied at future meetings.

SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE: Four Workshops, designed to assist Spiritual Assistants in examining their role as they journey with the members of the Secular Franciscan Order, are scheduled in 2000, with five more to be conducted in 2001. The Formation Commission is collaborating with the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants in presenting these workshops. All Franciscans who in any way provide spiritual assistance and animation are invited to attend. These workshops are held in all areas in U.S. for the convenience of attendees. As a result of their correspondence course, *Life Giving Union*, a number of certificates have been earned by Secular Franciscans, and a number of additional Secular Franciscans are enrolled in the course. This will ease the shortage of Spiritual Assistants that exists in some areas.

COMMUNICATION: The addition of "Regional Roundup" in TAU-USA, featuring articles about activities

which are extracted from regional newsletters, gives evidence of the vitality and growth of the regions.

The Nature Experience in Yosemite, CA in May was attended by friars, religious Sisters, and Seculars from all areas of the US.

The Secular Franciscan Order was represented at the Franciscan Family Council, established to foster the inter-relatedness of the Franciscan family as a gift to the Church and our culture.

The Peace Award Committee has proposed Guidelines to re-institute this award. Nominations are being submitted for consideration.

FINANCIAL: The balances remain very good. We are blessed to have generous donors, so that we can continue the many projects in which we are engaged. The Regions are prompt in submitting their per capita contributions. We were able to make several donations, and one forgiveness of debt. The financial statement for 1999 was submitted to CIOFS along with payment of our per capita contribution.

NEW PROJECTS: 1. Establishing a database of all professed Secular Franciscans in the United States, with the goal of each member receiving TAU-USA. The cost will be included in the per capita to NAFRA. 2. Securing a place for the preservation of our historical documents. The position of National Fraternity Archivist has been filled.

The local fraternities are the backbone of the Order from which good works flow. There is so much good work accomplished that it is impossible to list. A few that stand out include: taking medicine to Iraq; translating official documents into Braille; the fast growth of Korean fraternities; works of mercy such as "Simon House" for the poor and "The Sanctuary", a small private residence for the aged; walking the Way of the Cross in a large city; plus many personal civic awards to worthy Secular Franciscans. We are thankful for the many good works that are performed without recognition.



In beautiful things Saint Francis saw Beauty itself, and through His vestiges imprinted on creation he followed his Beloved everywhere, making from all things a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace Him who is utterly desirable. If you desire to know... ask grace, not instruction; desire, not understanding; the groaning of prayer, not diligent reading, the Spouse, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness not clarity; not light, but the fire that totally inflames and carries us into God by ecstatic unctions and burning affections.

Saint Bonaventure

National Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair Needed

The National Executive Council invites Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the position of National Secular Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair. Recommended requirements are:

- active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- familiarity with the Mission Statement and Goals of Youth/Young Adult Commission;
- knowledge of Articles 96 and 97 of the SFO General Constitutions regarding Franciscan Youth;
- experience working with youth, either in the area of Franciscan Youth Groups, Parish Youth Groups, or CCD Programs, etc.;
- ability and willingness to provide quarterly on-going formation articles for the TAU- USA;
- ability to attend at least two four-day national meetings each year.

Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by March 1, 2001 to:

Carol Gentile, SFO
National Commissions Coordinator
136 Woods Avenue
Monaca, PA 15061

Phone 724-775-4248

E-mail: gentcsfo@icubed.com



Franciscan Youth in Rome

Elizabeth Taormina, Franciscan Youth

Imagine that you're sweating so bad, that you can't tell whether it's from spraying water or from the heat. There are over two million people who are as hot as you are, and who have spent what feels like an eternity squished on a smelly subway, dragging heavy bags, and walking over six miles to be in the same place. Everyone is of a different color, language, and country. Each group proudly waves the flag of their country, and sings, shouts, or chants at the top of their lungs. Just when you think it can't get any more amazing, the Pope goes by, less than ten feet away from you! If this seems unbelievable, picture ten days with similar experiences. This is what my trip to Rome was like.

My Franciscan experience in Rome was on the same spiritual level, but in a different way. The first day we gathered together at a meeting to discuss the Franciscan youth and youth formation around the world. It was amazing to see Lebanon, the Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Croatia and especially Cuba, all represented. I was saddened, however, when I found out the number of countries that weren't in attendance. These were countries who either have no Franciscan youth programs, or who boycotted this meeting because of the split in the Italian GIFRA.

I was intrigued when I learned what all the other countries went through just to have Franciscan youth programs. In the United States, we have so much freedom to do what we want in our religion, yet, compared to them, we look selfish and lazy. If they can have growing productive Franciscan youth groups, then there is no excuse for us not to have them. I know, being a Franciscan youth, that we have the potential, but we are lacking in what we do with it. There are many youths, even Catholic, who have no idea who Franciscans are, or what they are capable of doing. I do enjoy being a Franciscan, going to meetings, and helping out. I am also a youth, and I would love to see other people around my age experience my joy. Bringing in youth will bring future Secular Franciscans. I think more of an effort should be made.

The second day was a dramatic change from the first. Everyone, including ourselves, sang and danced with plenty of energy at the Franciscan Festival. I did not always understand what they were singing or saying, but it was all a lot of fun anyway. Soon, each country with Franciscan youth was represented, and called onto the stage. Our group represented the United States of America. I had never before had the privilege of representing my country, and I felt the importance of it at that moment, especially when the Italians started singing "Born in the USA". Once again, we experienced that connectedness between people who didn't understand each other's languages, but felt the same emotions.

The Franciscan part wasn't the only part of my ten day trip, but it was one of the most memorable. It was one of

the main reasons why I can't wait until the next World Youth Day, to be held in Toronto, Canada, in 2002.

I want to thank the Executive Council of the Secular Franciscan Order for considering me to represent the Franciscan Youth of the United States. I would also like to thank them for helping me to get to Rome, to see the Pope, and to have a religious pilgrimage I'll never forget.

Rome has the Coliseum, the Forum, Saint Peter's Basilica, ruins, and even gelati. However, from August 15th through the 20th, it had one of the biggest displays of youthful Christianity and love for God that can never be recaptured!



Mary Mazotti, Kathy Taormina, and Beth Taormina
on their pilgrimage to Rome



A Prayer Before Meals

Elaine Hedtke, SFO
Councilor, Troubadours of Peace Region

*Bless us Lord,
as we thank You for food,
and remember the hungry;
as we thank You for health,
and remember the sick;
as we thank You for friends and family,
and remember the lonely;
as we thank You for peace,
and remember the embattled.
May these remembrances stir us to service,
that the gifts You have given to us
may be used for the benefit of others.
Amen.*

Gone Away, But Their Spirit Lives On

We have lost some good family members recently, brothers and sisters who have contributed much to our Secular Franciscan Order over the years. As we go about our Franciscan business, sometimes we fail to remember, and credit, those who are called home before us. Following are brief memorials to some of those who should be remembered. They are the modern day heroes of our beloved Secular Franciscan Order.

Waldemar Augustin Roebuck, SFO
January 30, 1913 - November 1, 1999
Quoted from the memorial Mass leaflet.

Wally's fifty years of service to the Franciscans began with his serving Mass at the Capuchin Franciscan Church in New York City. He joined the Third Order of Saint Francis in 1951 at Saint Francis of Assisi Church on 31st Street, as a member of Holy Name Province. In 1967, he was elected President of the Third Order North American Federation. Wally brought many gifts to our Order. Imbued with Franciscan ideals of humble justice, communal peace, and divine joy, Wally energetically set out on a path of interracial understanding and peace. He served as a delegate to the National Conference of Race and Religion. During the riots in Harlem, Wally organized a group to distribute the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis on the streets and in the churches. As a representative of the Third Order North American Federation, he was instrumental in conferring the Peace Award on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963. In his acceptance speech, Dr. King observed that the Award was the first time he had been honored by the Catholic Church. Wally received many awards, including the Pontifical Order of Saint Gregory the Great, and the Ecclesiastical Order of a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem from the Vatican. Wally is survived by his wife, Dolores, two sons and a daughter, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Well done, Wally, you have been a good and faithful servant.

Jerry Hidalgo Rome, SFO
December 4, 1928 - November 11, 1999
by Bill Wicks, SFO

Jerry Rome's last official appearance was such a heroic act that it was the stuff of Saints. Jerry attended and participated in the 1999 National Fraternity Council gathering in Danville, California, less than one month before she left us. She appeared with us, as she did before the Lord, with a bald head and a smiling face, even though she was in pain. That dedication defines Jerry's life with the Franciscans. She began her Journey with the Secular Franciscans, as a member of Saint John the Baptist Province, and was an instrument of life-giving union with the Friars of that Province. She was truly a Louisiana woman, who delighted everyone with her southern accent and warm demeanor. When I became a member of the NAFRA Council, Jerry was National Vice-Minister, and she performed her duties well, completing the Regionalization Process for our

Order in October, 1997. Jerry and her husband, Pete, who went before her, leave the blessing of seven children, sixteen grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She was, without admitting it, the Matriarch of Saint Joan of Arc Regional Fraternity. And she is a loving sister to all of us.

Violet Tipotsch, SFO
June 11, 1910 to August 11, 1999

by Bill Wicks SFO and Father Chris Partee, OFM

When I first met Violet she was a member of the National Formation Commission. Prior to that, she was Provincial Minister for Our Lady of Guadalupe Secular Franciscan Province from its establishment in 1985 until 1988. Violet also served many years on the Commission for updating the SFO Rule. She served as Director of Religious Education at Saint Peter's Catholic Church, in Roswell, New Mexico. Violet taught elementary school for forty years in Colorado, and was elected County Superintendent of Schools. In 1965, she qualified for a pilot's license in a single engine plane, and has 140 hours of flying time. Since her passing, her flying time has increased immensely.

Tom Carter SFO
May 10, 1929 - April 13, 2000
by Marcella Bina, SFO

Tom will long be remembered as a model for living as a true follower of Saint Francis of Assisi. Professed in 1971 with his wife Jeanne, he subsequently became Minister of Blessed Giles Fraternity in Parma, Ohio. His leadership abilities were further recognized when he became Provincial Minister for the Secular Franciscan Sacred Heart Province. Tom helped bring about Regionalization, and worked on the Council to help form Saint Maximilian Kolbe Regional Fraternity. He served with the Army during the Korean conflict, and had a long-standing position with East Oil Gas Company in Cleveland, OH, until his retirement in 1992. He is survived by his wife of forty-eight years, one son, three daughters, and five grandchildren. Tom will be remembered always for being there when needed, for his helping hand, for his sympathetic ear, and for his outstanding heart.

John Charles Poppeliers SFO
October 5, 1935 - September 1, 2000
by Bill Wicks, with quotes from the Memorial Mass leaflet
"John was a devoted husband, son, and brother. He was a friend to scores of us. In his unassuming and gentle manner, he greeted everyone as a brother or sister in Christ. His generosity extended to each person he met. He never denied anyone in need. He was a kind and gentle man. For over three decades, John served as an architectural historian. John received a doctorate in architectural history from Catholic University. He rose to the top of his profession, and enjoyed the respect of all professionals in his field. He was an active member of the Secular Franciscan Order. He served as Chair of the Order's National Ecology Commission. John was a Christian gentleman in every sense of Our Lord's commands. Requiescat in Pace."

...continued next page

John leaves a wife of thirty-three years, Julia, and a brother. For me, John did not have the chance to live out his potential in the Secular Franciscan Order. He held so much promise as the Chair of the Ecology Commission. His disposition was one of engendering unity. Even so, his inspiration lives in all of us, and helps us to be more peaceful, gentle human beings. John, you were one with us here for a while, but not long enough. Thank you.



*Crosses are the best school wherein to
learn appreciation for the love of
Christ Crucified*

Father Solanus Casey



Ecumenical Committee Needs Members

If you have an interest in reaching out to other Christian denominations in fulfillment of Jesus' prayer as recorded in John 17:21, please submit your resumé and apply to become a member of the Ecumenical Committee. The Committee needs two new members. Applicants must:

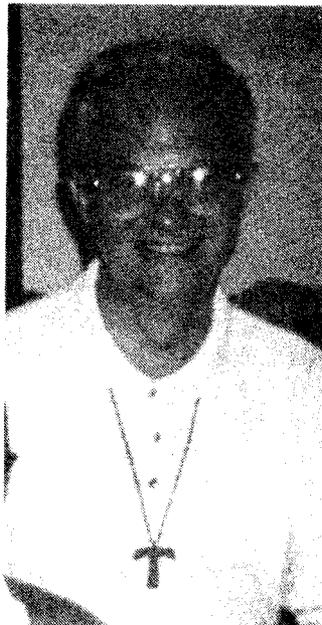
- have active Secular Franciscan status (must have proof of profession);
- provide a statement of knowledge of and interest in the work of the Committee concerning unity among all Christians;
- be familiar with the inclusive message presented in the Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*;
- be able to develop resources in education and programs for Regional and Local Fraternities;
- be willing to assist this Committee in developing into a model of ecumenism, collaboration, and support, that would include non-Roman Catholic representatives;
- demonstrate ability to complete tasks on time and work as a team member;
- be willing and able to attend one or two meetings per year

Send applications by February 1, 2001 to:

Marcella Bina, SFO
Ecumenical Committee Chair
16820 Brinbourne Ave.
Middleburg, OH 44130



Jim Flickinger, SFO Wins NAFRA Peace Award



Ken Beattie, SFO, Chair of the Selection Committee for NAFRA's Peace Award, has announced that this year's winner is Jim Flickinger, SFO. Jim, a resident of Grand Rapids, MI, developed the Amazon Relief Project, which seeks to help break the cycle of poverty in the Amazon region. The project has worked since 1995 to alleviate some of the suffering of the 45,000 lepers in the area, assisting them with shelter, food, medicine, and clothing. The project also supports two

schools, which currently serve over 550 children aged four to fourteen. No administrative costs come out of donations to Amazon Relief. Everything goes to those in need.

The nominees were evaluated based on their significant efforts in the generally defined area of Peace. Current activities carry more weight than past activities; that is, a nominee exhibiting current Peace activity carries more weight than a nominee who displayed activity a few years ago. In order to prevent any scandal, the nominee must be of good moral character. Nominees need not be Franciscan or Catholic, but should not be politically controversial.

Each Region in the United States may make one nomination per year, submitted to the chairman of the award committee, by the approval of the individual Regional Executive Councils.

The other candidates were Martin Sheen, Brother Xavier Marion, OFM, Myldred Jones, SFO, Archbishop Renato Martino, SFO, retired General Colin Powell, and former President Jimmy Carter.

When contacted about the award, Jim offered the following comments: "I am very honored to receive this award. I accept it humbly, not merely on my own behalf, but on behalf of all of the Secular Franciscans and others who have united together to aid our neighbors in distress. Our Lord and our Rule remind us that serving our neighbor is not an option of our faith – it is a requirement (see Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 16:19-25, and the SFO Rule, Article 13). And we cannot be paralyzed into inaction by the vastness of the world's problems. While we may not be able to solve all the world's problems, we must do everything we can. We are all called to help through our prayers, our finances, and our time. None of us is exempt."

The Dawn of Joy

Antony Outhwaite, SFO

With hearts aflame and eyes alight,
Three Magi gallop through the night,
While shepherds wonder at the throng
Of Heaven's angels, hundreds strong,
Who sing a strange and glorious song
Of blessing, peace, and light.

"A child is born", the angels say,
"Who by His coming on this day
Shall sunder time itself in two,
And re-create the world anew.
Behold! He is a Shepherd too;
His sheep have gone astray."

This newborn infant, ages old,
Is He Whom Israel's seers foretold.
The God Who parted day from night,
Who gave the Law on Horeb's height,
Who gave those ancient seers their sight,
Takes shelter from the cold.

He comes that He may make us whole,
And every contrite heart console,
By taking Adam's sins, and all
The countless others since the Fall,
Each crime and outrage, great and small,
Upon His guiltless soul.

From ancient days the Lord had said,
"Your seed shall crush the serpent's head.
A Virgin shall conceive a Son,
And He shall be the Holy One.
The reign of sin shall be undone;
The Grace of God shall spread."

In Him shall Adam's race e'er be
Entwined within the Trinity.
As David's city quietly slept,
The promise of the Lord was kept,
And angels sighed and prophets wept,
This blessed day to see.

Hosanna in the highest height,
The darkness has been put to flight.
Rejoice, O Children of the Lord!
The Reign of God has been restored!
Forever may He be adored,
Our Prince of Peace and Light.



Family Matters

A Homemade Holy Family

Sonia and Jaime Bernardo, SFO
Chairs, National Family Commission
11704 Veirs Mill Road, Silver Springs, MD 20902
301-933-2487; e-mail: jsbernardo@aol.com

Can holiness be obtained within the family? Is it really possible to call our family a holy family? Or is there only one Holy Family – the very first family of Nazareth, the family of Jesus, Joseph and Mary?

As we pray the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and a host of other prayers with other members of the family, we learn that holiness is homemade. Families are called the "little church" or "domestic church". We encounter God everywhere and in everyone: "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst". When God is the center of our home, each member is respected, loved, and valued as a person.

We also need to have sacred space in order to experience the ordinary holiness that is present in our home. But we do not have to build a chapel with four walls. Sacred space is created by the way we think and behave that tells each family member that God is the center of this house. Some holy objects like the crucifix, or statues of Mary, Joseph, and favorite patron saints, serve as reminders of these models of our faith, and make our home a sacred place. Today, we lack such a religious sanctuary in our home. This practice is long gone. A holy family revitalizes this custom.

We also need to have sacred space in order to experience the ordinary holiness that is present in our home.

We see God in the ordinary experiences of life – birth, marriage, work, death. Can we find meaning in the first cry of a newborn baby, in the crayon marks on the wall made by a kid, in waiting at the check-out counter, in the preparation of a meal to be shared by the family? Do we see God's hand in all that we do? As expressed beautifully by Catherine Doherty, "every action performed in the sight of God because it is the will of God, and in the manner that God wills, is a prayer and indeed a better prayer than could be made in words at such times"

Holiness in a family means learning to forgive others, remembering that we too need forgiveness. A holy family is not perfect, not trying to measure up to the standards set by others, but embodying God's teachings in its everyday struggles. Holiness in a family does not mean being free of problems, disorder, or conflict, but being able to iron out difficulties with faith, and believing that every sin is forgiven. Every hurt or pain inflicted by another is blotted out by the intervention of our Lord. It is by weathering the storms of daily life that we find the rainbows of life. That is a holy family!

In the Trenches

Mary Zablocki, SFO

Co-chair, National Work Commission

360 Beard Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14214

716-838-4178; e-mail: zablocki@acsu.buffalo.edu

website: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~zablocki>

What is it about going home that causes such a deep visceral response in our gut? Is it simply a sentimental attachment we have to fond memories, good food, or affectionate company? Or is it something deeper, a response so immersed in our early development that we cannot even recognize its origin? Do we spend our entire lives working our way back to the womb? Is each homecoming a subliminal reminder that we reside only temporarily on this planet, in this body, in this life?

Sometimes, it seems that no matter how hard we try, we cannot really find our way home. Whole segments of our lives are spent searching. We search for a dream, spending hours in thought trying to decide what we will do when we grow up. We form in our minds the image of our ideal mate, our imaginary life, our career, our house. We study and work, primp and perform the rituals of our culture to achieve, to attract, to settle, to procreate. Is this not all an effort to find our way home, to seek our niche, our place in the world?

Sometimes, it seems that no matter how hard we try, we cannot really find our way home.

The things we find the most offensive, the most frightening, are the things that threaten the sanctity and serenity of our home. Men have forever been willing to take up arms in the face of certain death to defend their homes, their wives, their families. Women have instinctively prepared a home for their babies, even to the extent that this nesting instinct has

been commonly known to herald impending birth.

What is it about going home that so relentlessly calls us back, over and over? I believe it is, at its most fundamental, a search for love. Even if we never find a human partner to share our life with, we make a home somehow. We can't help it. We may surround ourselves with books filled with fictional friends; we may treasure our gardens, devoting hours to nurturing cherished living things; we may surround ourselves with walls that make us feel secure, perhaps having a pet to greet us at the door, perhaps preferring to be alone, enjoying the solitude of our own company.

Some of us use our home as a springboard, a place to take a shower on our journey outward, a place to rest up for the next adventure. As long as there have been people, some of them have been nomadic. But, the truth is, all of us need a home. Most of us look to our home to find the ones who will love us.

In Scripture, the Lord tells us that he himself knitted us in our mothers' wombs. So, if we spend our lives searching for the one who loves us, if we are indeed on a journey back to where we started, we search for God.

And to find God, we must go back even further than the womb. We were, before the womb, already in God. We were His idea, His plan, His next creation.

When we imagine ourselves as far back as we can, we are generally limited to the earliest memories of our parents. But we exist in God's memory far before that. We were formed in our mother's womb by the same Creator that made the oceans and mountains. Each one of us, alone, with God. Even identical twins don't begin the business of becoming twins until after God creates them. We are made to be eternal; to be made by God, and to return to God from whence we came; to go home.

We are made to be eternal... to go home.

When we are called home by the One who loves us, when, once again, each of us is alone with God, then we will truly be complete. Then, there will be no more searching, no more waiting. How dear, how sweet, that dream is to us. Wherever you are as you read this, take time now and contemplate this pearl of great price. You know it will be time well spent.



New Leaders of Franciscans International

The Board of Directors of Franciscans International, at their meeting in Rome November 2-5, 2000, appointed Friar Agostinho Diekmann, OFM, of the Vice-Province de Nossa Senhora Da Assunção, Brazil, as the new Executive Director.

The Board of Directors also appointed Sister Florence Deacon, OSF, as the Designated Representative and Director of the New York office of Franciscans International. Their appointments take effect in February, 2001.

The board recognized the work of the previous Co-Executive Directors Father Ignacio Harding, OFM and Sister Kathie Uhler, OSF. "Kathie and Iggie have contributed much of themselves to FI and the United Nations over the past years," the Board said. "We wish them all the best in their future ministries."

A native of Germany, Father Agostinho has ministered in Brazil since 1983, working intensively among the poor in the Northeast, and with many small Christian communities. He has held various positions within his Province, and has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Council of both the Brazilian Conference, and the Brazilian Franciscan Family.

A Sister of Saint Francis of Assisi of Wisconsin, and a member of the faculty of Cardinal Stritch University, Sister Florence has published numerous articles on religious life and international issues. She has taught a model United Nations class since 1978, and has attended various UN conferences.

Regional Roundup



Please be sure to add us to the mailing list for your regional newsletter:

Mr and Mrs Antony Outhwaite, SFO, Editors, TAU-USA
6 Light Street, Nuangola, PA 18707-9415

Father Solanus Casey Region

Father Solanus Casey Region will conclude this year in a spirit of gratitude for many graces and blessings, by participating in a Franciscan Crown Rosary Novena of Thanksgiving. This novena will begin on December 28, 2000, and conclude on January 5, 2001. The Region is encouraging local fraternities to join together in group celebrations during the weekend of January 6 - 7, 2001, to coincide with the closing of the Holy Door.

The Region will sponsor servant leadership workshops based on the *Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership* in March and May, 2001.

Five Franciscan Martyrs Region

The Regional Work Commission Chair, Sophia Kalapaca, SFO, has been presenting workshops throughout the Region.

Regional Formation Director Carlos Calderone, SFO was the principle speaker at an Area Formation and Combined Profession Gathering for the Southwest Area. Regional Spiritual Assistant Father Tom Murphy, OFM, witnessed the Profession of Candidates

The Region will sponsor a pilgrimage to Tallahassee, FL during the weekend of January 12 - 14, 2001.

The Franciscan Retreat will be held at Saint Leo's Abbey, March 23 - 25, 2001.

Franciscans of the Prairie Region

The Region's annual retreat was held September 8 - 10, 2000, at Christ the King Retreat House in Henry, IL. The theme was "Our Franciscan Roots". The retreat was led by Father John Sullivan, OFM, Regional Spiritual Assistant.

Holy Trinity Region

The Regional Pastoral and Fraternal visitation was conducted on October 28, 2000, at Saint Leonard's Church in Centerville, OH, and included a meeting of the full council.

The Region held a Franciscan family gathering at Our Lady of Consolation Shrine in Carey, OH, on December 2, 2000. Father Peter Damien Massengill, OFM Conv, was the featured speaker. Mass was celebrated at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation.

Our Lady of Indiana Region

At the motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Francis in Oldenberg, IN, on September 29, 2000, the Region sponsored a presentation by Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF, entitled "To Catch the Stirring of the Spirit".

The Region's Unity Day was attended by ninety-four brothers and sisters this year. The discussion centered around our Apostolic Commissions, and the presentations which followed gave everyone inspiration regarding Ecology, Family, Formation, Peace and Justice, Work, and Youth.

Our Lady of the Angels Region

Our Lady of the Angels Region held their annual retreat September 29 - October 1, 2000, at Xavier Center on the campus of the College of Saint Elizabeth, in New Jersey. Kevin Cronin, OFM, was the retreat director, as the brothers and sisters gathered together in reflection and prayer, mutual support, and solidarity.

The Region held their Third Annual Cathedral Mass Celebrating the Franciscan Family, on October 8, 2000, at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. Father Matthew Gaskin, OFM, received the Portiuncula Award.

A Chapter of Ministers was held November 18, 2000, at Assumption Church Hall, Wood-Ridge, NJ

Saint Clare Region

Saint Peter's Fraternity in Belleville, IL held a Eucharistic Conference on August 12, 2000. Eighty-six people attended from Illinois and nearby Missouri. Father John P. Grigus, OFM Conv, was the speaker. A healing service concluded the day.

A Regional gathering was held on October 3, 2000, to celebrate the Transitus at Saint Francis of Assisi Church, Saint Louis, MO. The traditional Transitus ceremony was expanded into a fifty-minute dramatization of the life of Francis of Assisi. It was a thought-provoking, historically accurate portrayal of the life of Francis as the Man of Peace.

Saint Anthony of Padua Fraternity sponsored an Autumn Pilgrimage on Sunday, October 28, 2000. The bus tour visited four pilgrimage churches in Illinois and Missouri.

The Region held a Chapter Day on November 4, at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Saint Louis.

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Region

The Region sponsored Franciscan Study Days during the month of October, 2000. The sessions were devoted to acquainting participants with the first two volumes of "Francis of Assisi: Early Documents", and the writings of Saint Clare, especially her letters to Saint Agnes of Praque. Special emphasis was placed on Clare's use of images, key concepts of prayer and poverty, Clare's resistance to papal demands, and Clare as seen by her sisters.



“Rediscovering the Charism”

An SFO Leadership Program That Looks Ahead

Susan Burke, SFO

Maintaining a healthy store of leaders is a continuing challenge for the Secular Franciscan Order. In a Church – and an Order – where, until the last few decades, leadership was predominantly in the hands of the clergy, it is often still difficult to find members both willing and able to take on the role of Minister, Formation Director, even Commission representative.

Now there is another tool to encourage and educate SFO leaders, both potential and current....

Several years ago, NAFRA appointed a group of Secular Franciscans and friars to write a leadership manual for the SFO. The resulting “Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership” offers a helpful foundation for the incoming leader, and has been distributed to each fraternity in the United States. Now there is another tool to encourage and educate

SFO leaders, both potential and current: a pair of retreats specifically designed for this purpose by a Franciscan friar of the Third Order Regular.

“Rediscovering the Charism” is a two-part retreat/workshop developed and presented by Father Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR. Father Bernie was a Spiritual Assistant for fraternities in Winchester, VA, and Punxsutawney, PA, for a number of years, and currently is Regional Spiritual Assistant for Lady Poverty Region in Pennsylvania, Provincial Spiritual Assistant for Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, and a member of NAFRA’s Fraternal Life Committee. His experience with the SFO, combined with his search for a project topic to complete his Doctorate of Ministry at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, led him to a practical idea. Along with a lay committee, consisting of Secular Franciscans from Lady Poverty Region, he conceived a workshop/retreat that he would present with a team of lay leaders. The program invites discernment, creates confidence, and presents leadership tools for current and future servant leaders in the Secular Franciscan Order. The design, execution, and results provide the content for his doctoral project.

Father Bernie’s doctoral committee volunteered to act as the initial team that would help bring the retreat design to reality. The first weekend was held in September 1999, at the Franciscan Spirit and Life Center in Whitehall, PA, where Father Bernie is now the center director. The lay members of the team included Regional Minister Richard Fetkovich, Regional Secretary Vivian Weaver, Regional Councilor Mary Lou Kreider, and Mary Lou Brown, Formation Director for Saint Clare Fraternity in Punxsutawney. Each played a leadership role in presenting the retreat. Sixteen other people participated.

When asked why they had attended, the retreatants gave a variety of reasons, such as leadership burnout, wanting to find out how to do more in fraternity life, the

desire to bring a sense of renewal and revitalization to the fraternity.

Subtitled “Sharing Our Gifts,” the weekend began with the roots of leadership. The charism of the Third Order tradition, Father Bernie reminded those gathered, is grounded in ongoing conversion. Conversion arose in the Old Testament from the prophetic experience. From there, it found a permanent place in the Judeo-Christian tradition. How does this common charism of conversion play out on an individual basis? How is it manifested in our personal charisms, our individual gifts? Through presentations and group work, participants were encouraged to discern their own gifts, a vital step in discovering where they can best serve. Other segments included “The Qualities of Good Leadership”, “The 1978 Rule – Leadership and Service”, “Community Life – Discipleship and Participation”, and “Community Life – Putting Discipleship into Practice”. The weekend provided the groundwork for understanding the importance of good, solid leaders – servant leaders – in helping a fraternity to grow and prosper.

The follow-up weekend, seven months later in April 2000, was subtitled “Seeking Our Vision”. It included most of the same leaders and the same number of participants, some returning and some new. This phase of “Rediscovering the Charism” began with an overview of “Sharing Our Gifts”, then concentrated on the practical, everyday elements of leading a local or regional fraternity. Presentations included “Relationships and Franciscan Community”, “Conflicts in Community”, “Leadership Theory – Leadership and Virtue”, “Franciscan Leadership” (compared to other types), “Decision Making in Community”, and, finally, “Our Vision for the Journey”.

The emphasis throughout the two weekends is on the practical and the concrete: What is leadership, and what is the basis of mature leadership? What needs to be done, and how is this done most effectively? The retreat uses common scenarios or examples from typical fraternity life for discussion: How to handle a problem or conflict? When should the whole fraternity be included in a decision? How to advocate a position without taking over?

Comments from retreatants and team members at the conclusion of the programs included “Very enlightening”; “Thank you, Father, for your commitment to us”; “It really felt like a circle”; and “This has really increased my comfort with the idea of leading.”

Because NAFRA’s leadership continues to be committed to the formation of the Order’s leaders, Father Bernie was able to receive a grant from the Duns Scotus Trust Fund, established for the development of ongoing formation programs within the Order. The grant was used as a supplement to make the cost of the retreat more affordable.

Father Bernie is making the two-part retreat available to any regions that are interested. He may be contacted at Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234. Phone: 412-881-9207; or by e-mail at BFTTOR@aol.com.

NAFRA 2000 Scrapbook



Photo by Bob Garon, SFO

Above: Teresa and Justin Carisio share a smile with Deacon Dave Ream

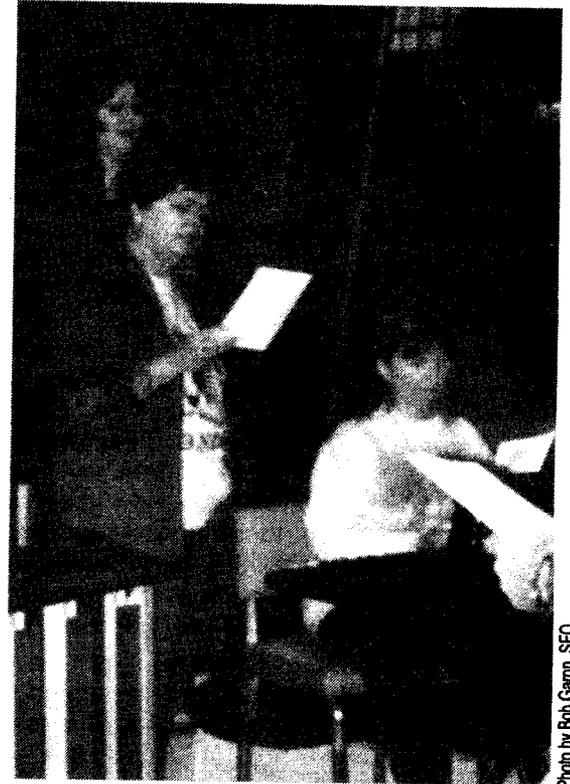


Photo by Bob Garon, SFO

Right: Clare McCluggage, Kay Wallace, and Theresa Redder lead us in music and song



Photo by Bob Garon, SFO

Franciscans doing
what Franciscans do
best... enjoying each
other's company!



Photo by Bob Garon, SFO



Photo by Bob Garon, SFO

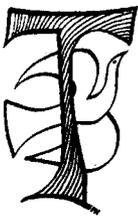


Photo by Bob Caron, SFO



Photo by Bob Caron, SFO

Above: Hosting Regional Minister Terri Leone welcomes her brothers and sisters.

Below: Entertainment by the Mummers!

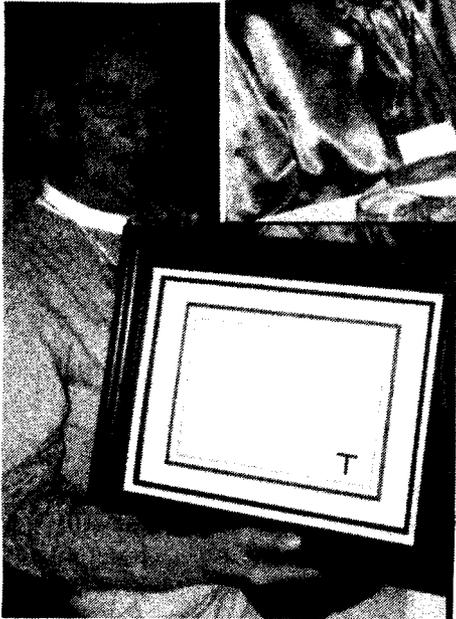


Photo by Bob Caron, SFO

Above: Jim Lynch and Anneta Duveen are honored for their many years of service to the Order.

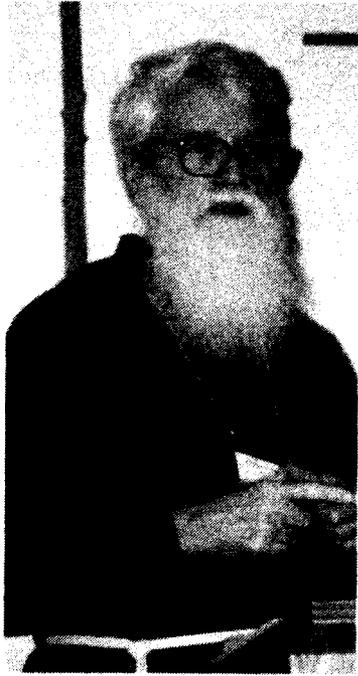


Photo by Bob Caron, SFO

Right: Father Ben Brevoort explains some of the finer points of election procedure.



Photo by Antony Outhwaite, SFO



Photo by Bob Caron, SFO

The usual suspects...!

On Willingness to Serve

Tom Mitus, SFO

Minister, Mother Cabrini Region

re-printed from the Mother Cabrini Regional newsletter

With our regional elections approaching, I note that we have only one nominee for many of the offices. In conducting many fraternity elections this last year, I noticed that there seems to be a lack of responsiveness to the call to service. A number of times, when I came to conduct the elections, there was only one name nominated for an office, and sometimes there was no nominee at all. I can only wonder about this. Do we live out our vocation to be served or to serve?

When I was professed in 1993, I immediately became an active member of my fraternity. Though I did not hold an office, I regularly attended my fraternity's council meetings. I volunteered to update the fraternity's directory, I developed a program to seek new members, and made name tags for everyone. It was not long before I was nominated for a councilorship, then later served as Vice Minister. One Sunday, I got a call from the Pro-Tem Regional Minister asking me if I would start a regional newsletter. Four years later, I accepted the nomination for Regional Minister, and here I am. Just recently I was nominated for National Treasurer. Sure, I had to think about accepting. I remember well sitting on my patio one evening wondering if I should accept or not. But, I told myself to be open to the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, that is what He wanted me to do. If I had declined I would not have been open to His promptings.

I, too, had a lot of reasons for not accepting any of these things: carrying a full time job, social life, my activity with the pro-life movement, parish work, and service. But, the point is, sometimes it is what we are called to do, not necessarily what we want to do. I recall very vividly Father Benet once explaining that he always seems to be called to things he had not originally intended to do, but he was open to these callings.

I can only ask the same of all of you. We each have talents given to us to be used. I hear all the excuses. Some of them are valid, of course, but some are just that – excuses.

Your fraternities need you. The Region needs you. As I say during many of my fraternity visitations, everyone should have a job to do, no matter how small. We should get into a habit of serving. We are all responsible for our fraternities, and the Region, and the Order.



Do not let there be any doubt in your mind that man is born to work, and when he does not do so, he is out of his element and in great danger of offending God.

Saint John Bosco

Secular Franciscans Help Close Abortion Clinic

In January 2000, Saint Francis Fraternity of Hyde Park, MA, in Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Region, witnessed the power of prayer when the Crittenton-Hasting abortion clinic in Brighton, MA closed its doors, after five years of monthly prayer vigils outside the facility. During the First Saturday vigils, the Franciscans saw Crittenton-Hastings' abortion business drop from over 4,000 annually to less than 1,600. Their prayer was supported by weekly "sidewalk counseling", where they distributed literature and made offers of help to the abortion-bound women. The Fraternity has continued this apostolate outside a Brookline clinic known to do 5000 abortions per year. The vigils are held in full cooperation with Boston Police.



Commitment and a Servant's Heart

Patricia Sovich, SFO

Minster, Troubadours of Peace Region

Having a servant's heart is not easy. It requires time, energy, and commitment. Now many will say: "I don't have the time, I have family considerations, work, church obligations, I'm too old, I have poor health." The list can be never ending. All of these excuses may have some validity. However, when we became Secular Franciscans we promised to follow the *Rule*, and to act in accordance with the *General Constitutions* of our Order. Article 30.2 reminds us that: "the sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration, in accordance with each one's means and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity."

Emanuela De Nunzio, OFS, in a recent edition of the CIOFS Bulletin reminds us: "that too many brothers and sisters choose apostolic courses and duties without considering those of the Fraternity. The Fraternity then meets great difficulty taking up and carrying out its own apostolic work because of the unavailability of the individual members".

Secular Franciscan leadership requires those individuals who are elected to office to realize that it is an obligation to "hold oneself available and responsible in relation to each brother and sister of the fraternity so that each individual will realize his or her vocation and each fraternity will be a true community,... actively present in the church and in society." (*Constitutions* 31.2) Friar Lester Bach, OFM Cap. states in *Catch Me a Rainbow, Too* that "No matter what our role, it fits into the larger picture of community needs. What we are and have is available to serve others. What they have, is available to serve us. In this mutuality, no one is left without help and support."

*Having a
servant's
heart is not
easy.*

Reduce Taxes, Avoid Capital Gain and Make a Significant Gift to NAFRA!

John K. Sanborn, SFO
National Treasurer

Consider Another Way of Charitable Giving: Appreciated Stock

In the past there were relatively few wealthy people. Today it is different, and millions of average Americans – perhaps you – own some form of securities. If they are held in the form of publicly traded stock, and these securities have greatly increased in value and the owner decides to sell the securities, he or she must pay a capital gains tax. Here, capital gains refers to the increased value of the stock; that is, the difference between what you paid for the stock and its present market value. The greater the increase, the greater the capital gain.

For example, if you purchased stock years ago for \$2,000, and today it is worth \$10,000, you have a capital gain of \$8,000. This gain may be taxed as high as 20%, which means: 20% of \$8,000 = tax of \$1,600. Thus, if you want to sell the stock and reinvest the proceeds, you would lose \$1,600 in the process.

If you intend to make a charitable gift, it is wise to consider making a gift of stock instead of cash. Here's why – a gift of stock provides two tax benefits: first, you can take a charitable deduction for the full market value of the stock, regardless of what you paid for it; second, you avoid being taxed on the increased value of the securities. This is one instance where a taxpayer gets a deduction for money "earned" that has never been taxed in the first place.

When choosing which stock to contribute, consider the stock with the lowest cost basis, and choose stock that you have owned for more than one year.

How about U.S. Savings Bonds? Give...but give wisely. You can use U.S. Savings Bonds to make a gift to your favorite charitable organization. You need only to be aware of how best they can be given. Here are some suggestions that will make it easier to contribute this valuable asset:

Consider leaving the bonds to a tax-exempt charity (such as NAFRA) in your will. For example, your will could state: "All of my savings bonds shall become the property of The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA, Inc." (this is NAFRA's legal name). No tax will be due to the charity or the estate when the bonds are redeemed.

Or, consider using the bonds to fund a Charitable Remainder Trust, or "CRT", that is established through your will. The trust, which is tax-exempt, can sell the bonds and incur no income tax on the interest. The trust can then reinvest the full value of the bonds and generate a source of income for a loved one that you name. Note, however, that CRT's are generally funded with sums of more than \$100,000.

Don't make a gift of your U.S. Savings Bonds to a charity while you are living, unless you are fully aware of the tax consequences. You will trigger a tax whenever there is a transfer of ownership, and this tax cannot be avoided.

Please consider remembering the work of NAFRA in your will or living trust. You can also name NAFRA as beneficiary of your IRA or insurance policy.

Questions? Contact: NAFRA Treasurer: John K. Sanborn, SFO. Phone: 716-773-1912 or email: jksanborn@juno.com



***The poor of the United States and of
the world are your brothers and
sisters in Christ. You must never be
content to leave them just the crumbs
from the feast. You must take of
your substance, and not just of your
abundance, in order to help them.
And you must treat them like guests
at your family table.***

Pope John Paul II, October 2, 1979



Western Week of Community

Hawaii, August 5-10, 2001

Diane Halal SFO

Secular Franciscans on the West Coast have discovered that retreat houses offer reasonable prices on non-weekends, when there are no retreatants. So, for many years they have held wonderful "Weeks of Community" during which they join together to have a relaxing time from Sunday evening through Friday noon – to pray, learn, celebrate, and become closer to one another as members of the Franciscan Family. This tradition has continued, with the Week of Community being hosted by different regions.

Last year it was held at San Juan Bautista Retreat Center in the Blessed Junipero Serra Region. This year, in August, it was held at San Luis Rey in Saint Francis Region. We enjoyed beautiful liturgies, wonderful speakers, and an outstanding talent show. It was truly a Week of Community! Next year 'Ohana O Ke Anuenue Region will host the week in Hawaii, from August 5 to 10, 2001, and you are all invited. Please contact Regional Minister, Lynne Murray (at mamam@hgea.org) for more details. (Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap, and Bill Wicks, SFO will be attending. Please join us!)

Saint Elizabeth Region Jubilee Pilgrimage with Jesus

Pat Richards, SFO, Regional Councilor

Father John Bavaro has once again led a happy group of retreatants on a pilgrimage... this time, right at home at the Franciscan Center. Approximately forty Secular Franciscans joined Father John as he led us, in a series of presentations, from Bethlehem to La Verna.

Our pilgrimage began as the Word became Flesh in Bethlehem's stable. Jesus was, by choice, born into poverty. Franciscan theology suggests that Christmas is a greater feast than Easter, because when the Word became Flesh all of nature – man, animals, plants – felt the warmth of the Son of God, and was enlivened. Jesus' choice of poverty brought Him closer to us, who are so poor without Him. Francis chose poverty because Jesus chose poverty, and Francis wanted, in every way possible, to imitate our Lord.

After our stops at Bethlehem and the crèche at Greccio, (where, once again, Francis explained a fact of faith in a beautifully simple way,) we were on our way once more. We traveled to Galilee to hear Jesus speak of the Beatitudes. Father John explained that the peace ("Shalom" was probably the word that Jesus used) Jesus taught was harmony within oneself and harmony with others.

As Francis strolled the hills and vales of Umbria, he taught the same thing. Witness Francis and the wolf of Gubbio, or his instructions to the Friars who were being annoyed by bandits.

Our relaxing, but very inspiring, journey with Jesus and Francis reached its climax as we stood beneath the Cross of Christ, and observed His incredible suffering. Crucifixion was the cruelest death, reserved for the foulest criminals and slaves. Once again, Jesus chose to be identified with the poorest of men. But why should He suffer at all? Why should suffering be part of redemption?

The cross has become the symbol of discipleship, and so we take up our cross and follow Jesus, as did Francis. As his life drew to a close, he suffered severely. His eyes failed him. Primitive and painful treatments offered no cure. Francis received the stigmata shortly before he died. This, too, was very painful, but Francis welcomed the pain, because once again he could imitate his beloved Jesus. Now Francis knew how those nails felt.

At the end of our Pilgrimage, we all felt that we knew Francis a little better. Father John has the ability to bring the Saint to life with a few words. The image of Francis contemplating and enjoying the stars will be with us for a long time!

We cannot wait to see what next year's Secular Franciscan Retreat will bring forth.



Just Throw it Away! Where is "Away"?

Mary Minor, SFO, Ecology Commission Chair
Saint Margaret of Cortona Region

This article is reprinted with permission of Mary Minor, SFO, President of Citizens Urge Rescue of the Environment (CURE)

God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1), and He found it very good (Genesis 1:31). "De-creation is the destruction of God's creation." (Mark Link, SJ, The New Catholic Vision). Would God see this as very good?

"God has lent us the earth for our life... it belongs as much to those who come after us... as it does to us, and we have no right, by anything we do or neglect, to involve them in unnecessary penalties or deprive them of the benefits." (*Ibid.*)

So, how does this "de-creation" happen?

In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way. At the root of the senseless destruction of the natural environment lies an anthropological error, which is unfortunately widespread in our own day.... Man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will.... Instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in the place of God and, thus, ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him. *Pope John Paul II, May 1991*

When we participate in activities that contribute to pollution of our air, water, and other resources, we then risk breathing in and drinking contaminants that may harm our neighbors and ourselves. And, did you know that "the total body water content of adult men varies from 55% to 65%" (Robert Berkow, MD, *The Merck Manual*, 1982). So, how good is polluted water for us?

It should be noted that there is no new water except for "unknown amount(s) from volcanic gases" (Larson and Birkeland, *Putnam's Geology*, 1982). Our water is all used and reused and stored in places like oceans, rivers, lakes, glaciers, and rock fractures. Water is transferred through the air.

The next time we choose to drink from a throwaway container, which may be burned and pollute our air, perhaps we should remember that there is a better way than "throw away". We do well to remember that a polystyrene foam cup just won't go away if it is put in the ground. If thrown on the ground, it may still be there, even 500 years from now.

Since our world will be needed by our children, we would do well to stem the tide of de-creation in every little way that we can. When we unnecessarily use toxic substances and "throw away" items, we endanger our children's future. And "away" is a place we will have to try to clean up someday.

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Gospel Living Every Day of Our Lives: A Formation Guide To The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Baker, Teresa V., SFO. (1994). 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 131 pages. \$10.00 per copy, plus \$4.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.50 for 2, \$7.00 for 3; 10 or more copies is \$8.00 per copy plus P&H.

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