

Sharing The Vision

NAFRA Regional Executive Council Updates

by Jan Parker, National Secretary

National Executive Council

National Minister

Tom Bello, OFS

National Vice Minister

Elaine Hedtke, OFS

National Secretary

Jan Parker, OFS

National Treasurer

Cecila Maljan, OFS

National Councilor

Mary Bittner, OFS

National Councilor

Mary Frances
Charsky, OFS

National Councilor

Arturo Villarreal, OFS

International Councilor

Mary Stronach, OFS

National

Spiritual Assistant

Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR

As you look through this issue of the TAU you will see lots of news about the National Fraternity (NAFRA) Chapter, but you'll also see something very familiar. Our NAFRA gathering – like any fraternity gathering, local or regional – is built around those very familiar “four marks” of prayer, formation, fraternal sharing and necessary business. Looking at the Chapter photos you can catch glimpses of the Holy Spirit at work as we devoted time to each of these four aspects of fraternity life.

There were graced moments of prayer, an inspiring day of formation, joyful fraternal sharing, and yes ... business.

Although business is never the primary concern of a fraternity gathering, our Order is served by our attention to it. As we go from gospel to life, and life to the gospel, our approach to business is transformed. Financial planning turns into stewardship. The work of our Commissions and Committees becomes formation. Wise decisions bring life to our national priorities. Paraphrasing Article 16 of our OFS Rule, we are to “esteem *business*, both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.”

The following are the highlights of the business addressed at our 2013 NAFRA Chapter.

Communications Committee

- Has completed a study to evaluate current areas of communication including: TAU-USA publication, NAFRA electronic lists, OFS websites, Public Relations, Translations.
- Currently working to update our national website (NAFRA-sfo.org)
- Will provide a printed Spanish edition of TAU-USA, starting in 2014

Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Commission (JPIC)

- Presentation of National JPIC Award to Margie Sweeney, MD, OFS
- Appreciation to Kent Ferris for his years of service as JPIC Commission Chair.
- Blessing of new JPIC Commission Chair, Carolyn Townes and JPIC Vice-Chair Rhett Engelking.
- Carolyn Townes to send to all Regions her “12 Weeks of Franciscan Peace” program.
- Rhett Engelking reported on the growth of “Franciscan Earth Corps” – a program for youth involvement and education in Franciscan spirituality.

OFS Disaster Relief

Jim Flickinger OFS presented his vision for an OFS disaster response team. National Fraternity members were given an opportunity to sign up as volunteers, prayer partners, or to request more information.

Youth Commission

Youth Commission Chair, Rob Breen is working with the draft plan from the Confab to build capacity (infrastructure) for YouFra development in the USA and seeking OFS members who feel called to work with youth. Rob reported that “post-Confab” several OFS members went directly home and began working to build a YouFra in their area.

Development Committee

“*Live and give. Give and live*” was the appeal to “the living” to make donations to the Donor Fund for the purposes of charitable giving, outreach and funding for OFS activities. This committee continues to promote bequests and the establishment of a future endowment fund for the OFS.

Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) and Task Force on Spiritual Assistant Development

- Providing well prepared and suitable Spiritual Assistants remains a priority of the CNSA.
- There are plans for a Secular Spiritual Assistant to be appointed to the CNSA by 2015.
- The CNSA encourages OFS Regional Fraternities to be in relationship with the Provincials and Provincial Spiritual Assistants in their Regions.
- The Task Force presented the enlightening results of the national survey on Spiritual Assistance. The complete survey and a PowerPoint summary are available upon request.
- The September 2013 CNSA meeting in Maine included a very successful one day workshop for Local and Regional Spiritual Assistants.
- The CNSA and the Task Force will jointly present on the topic of Spiritual Assistance at the July 2014 Summer Seminar in Loretto, PA.
- A workshop for Provincial and Regional Spiritual Assistants will be held September 24-25, 2014 in Marytown, Illinois.

Endorsement and Continued Financial Support of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN)

Patrick Carolan, Executive Director of FAN, reported on the progress FAN has made in the past five years, citing examples of how their work has become known and respected. The presence of FAN has raised awareness of the Franciscan charism and the entire Franciscan family. The National Fraternity voted unanimously to retain membership with FAN at the \$1.00 per professed member rate.

Fair Share for Candidates

The National Fraternity approved the following motion: With respect to contributing to NAFRA their national Fair Share, beginning in 2015 candidates will be treated in the same manner as we treat all professed. In 2015, each Region will contribute to NAFRA the same Fair Share for each candidate and professed member, based on membership as of Dec. 31, 2014. The Regions will continue to set their own Fair Share amount for professed members and candidates. *Note: Providing subscriptions to the TAU-USA for Candidates is a future NAFRA agenda item.*

Budget Discussion and Approval

The National Fraternity unanimously approved a budget for 2014. A copy of the 2014 budget is available by request and will also be published in the 2014 spring issue of TAU-USA.

Prison Ministry Statement

The National Fraternity unanimously approved national guidelines for Prison Ministry for the OFS. A copy of these guidelines is available by request.

Charitable Donations

Over the last four years, our Secular Franciscan family has contributed \$73,000 to charity [\$42,500 from individuals in response to Special Appeals (e.g., Hurricane Sandy relief), and \$29,500 from the NAFRA Donor Fund to Special Appeals and to Franciscan organizations].

Special Appeals during 2013 included:

- Hurricane Sandy Relief (\$4366)
- US Tornado Relief (\$2000)
- Franciscans International (\$9052)
- Syria Relief (\$1550)

This year at Chapter the National Fraternity approved the following additional donations:

- \$1000 to Franciscans International.
- \$4000 to Franciscan Mission Service, earmarked for “FMS expansion”.
- \$2000 to Amazon Relief.
- \$1000 to Franciscan Family Apostolate.

Future National Gatherings

The NEC presented a draft 3-5 year schedule for National Gatherings:

- July 10, 2014 - Summer Seminar on Spiritual Assistance
- August 21-24, 2014 – Possible National Retreat directed by Br. Bill Short OFM
- October 21-26, 2014 - NAFRA Chapter in Lake Dallas, Texas
- 2014-2015 - Possible Youth Event
- 2015 - Peace Retreat with Carolyn Townes and Fr. Kevin Queally
- 2015 - Summer Seminar on Servant Leadership or Youth
- October 2015 - NAFRA Chapter
- July 1-6, 2016 - Quinquennial in Denver, Colorado

Fraternity Register of Professions

The NEC presented a sample of a hardbound fraternity register. Design suggestions were made and a final draft will be submitted to the National Fraternity for approval sometime early in 2014.

OFS Fraternities in Guam

The National Fraternity unanimously agreed to accept the St. Padre Pio community from Guam as an emerging community within NAFRA, with the intention that they become part of NAFRA, and gave approval for the National Fraternity to serve as the sponsoring fraternity.

National Theme for 2014

God chose us in mercy. As we continue to “be the bridge”, joyful in our universal kinship (OFS Rule, Art. 19), and having experienced the “transforming power of love and pardon” (OFS Rule, Art. 20) our national theme for 2014 is *“Be the merciful presence of God”*.

Please send requests for copies of reports, statements or guidelines, etc., to jansfo@yahoo.com

