

Sharing The Vision

News from the National Executive Council (NEC) to the National Fraternity (NAFRA)

National Fraternity Visitation

The word visitation holds rich meaning for us. Say “visitation” and we may quickly think of Mary and Elizabeth, an infant leaping for joy and the Magnificat. As Secular Franciscans, this word also calls to mind Pastoral and Fraternal Visitations to our fraternities. This brings me to one of the highlights of our recent Chapter – our Visitation from the International Council (CIOFS). Like that visit of Mary to Elizabeth, this Visitation was a time of great joy and a wonderful manifestation of the love we share as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The National Executive Council (NEC) prepared for our Visitation by completing an extensive questionnaire. The resulting 20-page document, compiled by Vice Minister Mary Bittner and Br. Bob Brady, OFM, reflects very precisely the state of our National Fraternity. This extremely informative document was distributed to our Visitors, as well as to all Regional Ministers. It is available to anyone by request.*

Our CIOFS Visitors, Vice Minister General Chelito Nunez, OFS, and General Spiritual Assistant Fr. Francis Bongajum Dor, OFM Cap., spent two days with the National Executive Council and five days with the National Council at Chapter. On the last day of Chapter, Fr. Francis expressed his gratitude for the sense of belonging he experienced with us, noting, “We need to make our brothers and sisters more aware that once you are admitted to a local fraternity, you are a member of the Secular Franciscan Order at all levels. To be called to serve at the regional, national, or international levels is NOT a promotion; the order is ONE. We need to clarify the concept of the international fraternity – it is *all the brothers and*

sisters in the world, not just the Presidency! Similarly, the National Fraternity is not the National Executive Council or the National Council, but *all the Secular Franciscans in the country*. The contributions of the individual members must flow to all levels of the order. If we understand that we belong to all of these levels of fraternity, the contributions at all levels make sense. It is a matter of formation. You (NAFRA) have so much potential, and the International Fraternity needs us to open up that potential to be used at all levels. We need to open ourselves to be used by the Lord.”

A full Visitation Report will be forthcoming, but the NEC has already discussed some of the recommendations suggested by our Visitors. Overall, our Visitors were complimentary towards our National Fraternity and impressed with the many gifts that our members so generously share. Chelito shared that she was overwhelmed by all the goodness she experienced during her time with us, describing her feeling as “*encandilada*” (roughly translates “dazzled by the light”).

I think I speak for many of us when I say we, too, were *encandilada* – dazzled by all that happened at our Chapter! Praise God for the Light of the Holy Spirit working among us, and working through our beautiful Visitors to bring enlightenment to us. I look forward to the growth that will happen as a result of this Visitation as we journey through this New Year. May we be open and receptive to what we hear the Holy Spirit is saying to us, and trust God to show us the way forward. May the dazzling light of Christ guide us always!

Other Topics Addressed at the National Chapter

Franciscan Action Network

The floor was open at Chapter for a discussion of the work of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) and the concerns that have been expressed during the past year. All agreed with the plan proposed by the National Executive Council to arrange a meeting with

the President of the Board of Directors of the Franciscan Action Network to discuss those concerns.

Duns Scotus Trust Fund

The Duns Scotus Board of Trustees has approved a new grant application and a new funding cycle. The

application is available by emailing DunsScotusTrustFund@gmail.com.

Franciscan Youth and Young Adults (FYYA)

A National OFS Gathering on the topic of Franciscan Youth and Young Adults will be held July 27-30 in St. Louis, MO. The NEC will invite a group of individuals to attend this gathering to discern together the next steps for FYYA. (See related article in this issue of *TAU-USA*.)

Communications Update

To improve the flow of communications our Regional Vice Ministers and Regional Spiritual Assistants will soon have their own listserv and will be copied on all “NAFRA-L” emails.

Donations

Due to the generosity of our National Fraternity, the following donations were approved:

- \$1500 Franciscan Mission Service
- \$2000 Don Bosco pre-school (Venezuela)
- \$2000 CIOFS Solidarity Fund for African formation workshops
- \$2000 Franciscan Ministries, Inc. (Detroit)
- \$1500 Amazon Relief
- \$1500 Franciscan Family Apostolate
- \$1500 Franciscans International
- \$1500 Villa La Paz, Peru (Ministry of Dr. Tony Lazzara, OFS, former JPIC Award Winner) donated in memory of Deacon Tom Bello, OFS

National Opportunities to Serve

The National Fraternity is in need of servant leaders to serve in several areas. If you are interested in any of the following positions, or would like more information, please contact National Secretary Jane DeRose-Bamman at janedbfo@msn.com.

National Calendar Coordinator / National List Serve Coordinator

We need two or four detail-oriented and technologically-skilled people to update and maintain our National OFS Email Lists and Google Calendar.

Website Development and Maintenance

Help is needed to develop a new NAFRA Website, see related article in this issue of *TAU-USA*.

2012 Quinquennial Committee Chair

See application in this issue of *TAU-USA*

Participants in National OFS Gathering on Franciscan Youth and Young Adults

See application in this issue of *TAU-USA*

*For a copy of this document send an email to ofs.national.minister.usa@gmail.com

WEBSITE DEVELOPER NEEDED

After many years of quality outreach and service, the NAFRA website is due for a major redesign. The National Executive Council is seeking a Secular Franciscan who has the skills necessary to design, develop and maintain a website that will appeal to newcomers as well as serve our members.

The ideal candidate must have sufficient experience in Web Development and Multimedia Design or the equivalent to create and maintain a creative and interactive online presence for the NAFRA page. He/she will work with a committee of OFS to access our needs, write copy, and provide photos, etc.

If you are interested in applying, please send your resume to Jan Parker at ofs.national.minister.usa@gmail.com or Jane DeRose-Bamman at janedbfo@msn.com.

Please include links to websites you have designed and whether you would offer this service as member of a volunteer committee

ST. JOAN OF ARC REGION EXPRESSES GRATITUDE!

On behalf of St. Joan of Arc Region, we would like to say, “Thank You.” These two words really doesn’t fully express the amount of gratitude St. Joan of Arc Region wishes to convey to the National Fraternity for its generous monetary support for the six families in St. Joseph Fraternity who lost everything during the historic August flooding in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Their struggles are far from over, but your love and support lifts them up and truly helps them to persevere.

With much Humbleness and Love,
Cherryle Fruge, OFS
Minister, St. Joan of Arc Region