

*If all the people who sleep in church were placed end-to-end, they'd be more comfortable*



Secular Franciscans for the 21st Century  
Lester Bach OFM Cap - Winter, 2016-2017

✦ **REMEMBER** ✦

✦ **Benet Fonck OFM - Died on December 23, 2016**

Around the turn of the century (2000), CNSA received many sharings from Benet as he ministered with us. He shared his experiences of OFS from his international ministry in Rome and served the CNSA, as well as ministry with local fraternities. In his work with CNSA he shared wise ideas and insights. His formation book: *Fully mature with the fullness of Christ* is a fine text. He generously shared his many skills with us. We celebrate his gifts and dedication to the OFS. Benet was a friar whose insights and dedication are well known. Thank you, blessed Trinity, for sharing Benet with us.

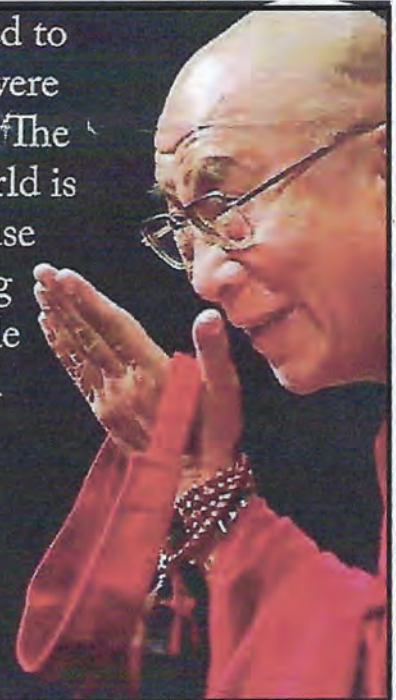
✦ **John Sullivan OFM - Also died in December, 2016.**

John also served CNSA in the new century of 2000. He knew the OFS documents and followed their guidance as OFS Provincial spiritual assistant within Sacred Heart OFM Province. Sharing his viewpoints helped to keep us on a path of taking OFS documents seriously. His service assisted the seculars as a concerned brother to all. Beloved Trinity, thank you for our brother, John.

✦ We likewise celebrate the life and death of **Secular Franciscans**. May they (and we) join Benet and John in a chorus of praise to the Trinity for their lives. Each of us embraces our present Franciscan life in the ministry in our lives where love is needed.

Thanks to the "The Poverello," for this quotation.  
St. Bonaventure OFS fraternity, Detroit, MI.

People were created to be loved. Things were created to be used. The reason why the world is in chaos is because things are being loved and people are being used.



While the above quote may not touch every situation, it calls us to reflect on Article 11 of the OFS Rule and Article 15.3 of the OFS General Constitutions (GC):

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**OFS Rule - Article 11:** *Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life, even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children. Thus, in the spirit of "the beatitudes," and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.*

**GC - Article 15.3:** *Secular Franciscans should pledge themselves to reduce their own personal needs so as to be better able to share spiritual and material goods with their brothers and sisters, especially those most in need. They should give thanks to God for the goods they have received, using them as good stewards and not as owners. They should take a firm position against consumerism and against ideologies and practices which prefer riches over human and religious values and which permit the exploitation of the human person.*



Bill Short OFM, a recognized name in Franciscan spirituality, has a new ministry. He has been appointed as director of the Collegium S. Bonaventure - an international Center

for Franciscan Studies and Research located at St Isidore in Rome.

*Congratulations, Bill. We hope you can keep in touch with us.*

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**\* A New Book! \***



Vinal Van Benthem OFS and Lester Bach OFM Cap, have written a new book for ongoing

formation: **Waiting for Love.**

It includes our personal ideas, but we share quotations from people like Pope Francis, Benedict XVI, Henri Nouwen, Jean Vanier, Francis of Assisi, and ordinary folks who share their Franciscan vision. Each of the 15 chapters contain ideas that assist group discussion and personal reflection.

In church, family & community discussions, in public & political interaction, people use different tools to win a debate. They seek to overcome in topics under discussion. People have strong opinions & ideas about many subjects. They invest talent & energy to succeed in arguments.



The USA has over 300 million people. There are a variety of cultures, political leanings, specific insights, education and ideas on any subject, religion included. Disagreements seem almost normal. **Dialogue** takes time, but it can bring people to understand one another rather than rejecting realistic dialogue and possible solutions. (Cfr. Waiting for Love - Pages 38 to 42). **It is available from Smoky Valley Printing.** (Cfr. Inside back cover of TAU-USA.)

\* At the news of the death of Fr. Benet Fonck OFM, I remember an article he wrote for the revised Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order (page 53). It focuses on the role of Eucharist at regular OFS fraternity gatherings. It is good reading since many Secular Franciscans believe Eucharist is meant to be a part of every gathering - which is not quite accurate! Here is a copy of his article.

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(Nov 7, 2001) It is true that Article 14.2 of the General Constitutions (GC) states: *The Eucharist is the center of the life of the Church. Christ unites us to himself and to one another as a single body in it. Therefore, the Eucharist should be the center of the life of the fraternity. The brothers and sisters should participate in the Eucharist as frequently as possible.*

It is also true that Article 53.2 (GC) states: *They should come together periodically (Emphasis mine) as an ecclesial community to celebrate the Eucharist in a climate which strengthens the fraternal bond and characterizes the identity of the Franciscan Family.*

And the footnote to Article 42.3 (GC) indicates that profession ought to take place during the Eucharist.

Yet, Article 24 of the OFS Rule points out: *To foster communion among the members, the council should organize regular and frequent meetings of the community ... (and) should adopt appropriate means for growth in Franciscan and ecclesial life and encourage everyone to a life in fraternity.*

So, Article 53.1 (GC) builds on this idea by stating: *The fraternity must offer its members opportunities for coming together and collaborating through meetings to be held with as great a frequency as allowed by the situation and with the involvement of all its members. The GC picks up on the idea of ongoing-formation in Article 44.2: The fraternity has the duty to help its members with programs of continuing formation: a) to listen to and to meditate on the Word of God, going from gospel to life and life to gospel. b) to reflect on events in the Church and in society in the light of faith and with the help of documents of the teaching Church, consequently taking consistent positions; c) to realize and deepen the Franciscan vocation.*

What does all this say? *Though the Eucharist is central in the life-style and mind-set of Secular Franciscans and ought to be part of the fraternity's gathering on a periodic or occasional basis, like at professions or special events, it is NOT meant to be a part of the regular and frequent meetings of the fraternity because that has a different objective all together. The objective - according to both the Rule & General Constitutions - is what the French call a review of life or a faith-sharing based on the Word (not Eucharist) to nourish and strengthen the apostolic, ecclesial, and Franciscan dimensions of OFS life. Peace.*



Benet

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*Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom.*  
Laudato Si' - Pope Francis - #205