

GETTING TO KNOW OUR FRANCISCAN FAMILY

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It is a downright miserable morning! It is very gray and cold and it's not quite raining. More like 'spraining' – something between a sprinkle and a rain. Whatever it is, it is just chilly enough and damp enough to go right through you.

But on this very miserable morning, I am anything but! I have just spent the last few hours with the postulants of the Padre Pio Friary in Philadelphia. Brother Kip Ledger, OFM Cap, is in charge of the Postulants. Last year, I was stunned when Brother Kip invited me to speak to the class of Postulants and tell them about Secular Franciscans. Not only was I honored; but I was "over-the-moon" that he was reaching out to educate the guys early in their journey.

This year when the invitation was extended, I jumped at the chance to speak to the new class. Brother Kip also invited me to attend the 7:30 a.m. Mass and then have breakfast with them before the class at 9:00 o'clock. What a wonderful start to the day!

I received an e-mail from our brother, Patrick Martin, OFS, the Regional Minister for the St. Margaret of Cortona Region, who had heard I was speaking to the class. Patrick had spoken to them on Servant Leadership, and he thought I could use the piece from the OFM Caps' constitutions where we are mentioned. Although I know the Friars are supposed

to work with us, I never saw these words before. They are certainly beautifully written.

...the Secular Franciscan Order should be especially dear to us. Let us work with Secular Franciscans so that their fraternities may grow as communities of faith particularly equipped for effective evangelization. Let us also work with them in the formation of their members, so that they may spread the Kingdom of God not only by the example of their lives but also by various kinds of apostolic activity.

The men in the class are so young and holy and so ready to go out in the world and serve. They were very impressed with the history of the OFS and want to be part of its future. Something very powerful happened this morning – this rainy, miserable morning. And it is filled with sunshine from the Lord and a smile or two from St. Francis. May we continue to reach out to each other and get to know our family better!

