

# The Promoter

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When you ponder the word “Promoter,” what comes to mind? One thought could be of the famous Don King, the boxing promoter with his famous hair-do, or perhaps a promoter of a rock band concert – an elephant act barker at a circus, or a football player’s agent, a la Jerry McGuire.

But, *did you know*, that the Promoter was a highly regarded position within the Third Order of St. Francis during the mid-decades of the twentieth century?

Yes, as you suspect, a Promoter in the ranks of the Third Order did, in fact, promote the Third Order. But that was not the extent of his/her ministry. At the 1962 Federated Congress (Quinquennial Congress), held in Detroit, Michigan, Janet Davis moderated a workshop on Promoting Tertiariism. She defined the Promoter System as twofold: (1) the effort to make effective and fruitful the apostolic work of the fraternity, to keep members faithful to their vocations and (2), to interest others of the faithful outside the fraternity in the life and work of the Third Order, to recruit new members.

Marie Amore, SFO, provides for us more detail with her article titled *What is a Promoter?* published in the February 1965 edition of The Poverello, the St. Bonaventure (of Detroit) fraternity newsletter. Marie wrote: “It has been said that the fraternity is the body, the Council its head, and the promoters are its hands and feet...The fraternity is divided into districts, or areas, [recall that some fraternities had as many as 2000 members]. Each promoter has a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of the professed tertiaries in his own parish and a few nearby parishes. These people are to consider the promoter as a personal representative of the Fraternity. The promoter calls them for rosaries for the dead. He will call if a member has been absent without an excuse from two months meetings. He will inquire about illness, or to see if transportation or some fraternity help is needed. He will call his people if some important event necessitates a phone message. In time, his people should feel free to call him for information concerning the Third Order.”

In the July 1973 edition of the Franciscan Herald and Forum, Mark Beckford offers lessons on diplomatic interfacing with the local pastor regarding promoting the Third Order in his parish. Mr. Beckford suggests that the Promoter (Captain of a Promotion team)

should make an appointment with the pastor and leave a copy of the Rule and other promotional material with him, and should remind the pastor that Third Order mothers and daughters will help mold their children to become good citizens and good parishioners. He should ask the pastor if he can leave pamphlets in the church book rack, pass out pamphlets after Mass, permit a homily on the Way of Life during Mass, permit advertising in the church bulletin, speak to the various church organizations, etc.

And the Promoter does, in fact, “recruit” prospective members. In an unsigned paper, dated 1957, found in the SFO archives at St. Bonaventure, the following advice is given: “Don’t, just right off, ask a prospect to join the Third Order. First tell him about St. Francis – Did you know that St. Francis built the first Christmas Creche? Next time you see him, talk again about St. Francis and give him a pamphlet to read in his own time. After a while, invite him to a meeting, and about four days before the meeting, write him a reminder note.”

I am sure there are promoters in fraternities today, not in an official capacity, but there are people who invite others to meetings. And, we do have the 1-800 FRANCIS information, and referral, number, answered by none other than Marie Amore. And we do have a website. But having a Promoter, as an official position in each fraternity, seems to me, an idea whose time has come - again.

## A Summer Seminar for SFOs

Endorsed by the National Executive Council of the SFO  
Presenters:

**Fr. Joseph Nangle, OFM and  
Pat Brandwein-Ball, SFO**

Thursday evening, **June 24, 2010** – Sunday lunch, **June 27, 2010**  
**St. Francis University**  
**Loretto, PA**

**Registration limited to 100 participants!**  
**Absolutely no registrations accepted after**  
**June 12, 2010!**

**Contact person for registering:**  
**Cecilia Maljan, SFO, 1111 Freyburg Street,**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15203-1211**

**Questions? Contact Diane Rombouts, St. Francis**  
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