



TAU-USA

Newsletter of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States
~Winter 2006 ~ Issue 53



Photo by Br. John E. Angauer, Maryknoll Missioner

**How wonderful, how pleasant,
To remain in the
“Shadow of His wings.”**

Psalm 17:8 and Psalm 91

Quinquennial Congress Prayer

And the Lord said,
*When you pray, say
Our Father...*

Our Father,
Soon we will gather for our
Seventeenth Quinquennial Congress,
As we approach this celebration of cultures,
Prepare our hearts to recognize your Son
Along the road to Steubenville.

Our Father,
Gather your people
From the north and the south, the east and the west,
To a celebration of diversity
In an assembly of harmony.
May all who bear your image and likeness
Acknowledge You as Father and Creator of all.

Our Father,
May our gathering be a new Pentecost!
Pour out your Spirit on the young and the old
And mold us into prophetic people.
Bless and sanctify your people
And plant seeds of respect and love in our hearts.

Our Father
We know that the time has come for your kingdom to
be established on earth.
Remind us that the unique gift of each person
Is by your design and is intended
To strengthen the Body of Christ.

Our Father,
Give us a spirit of understanding
And a willingness to serve.

Our Father,
Baptize us in the fire of your love
And help us to continue your work.

Our Father,
Lead us into truth and respect
And make us your people.

By Anne Mulqueen, SFO

TAU-USA

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On behalf of our staff, I wish you all a
peaceful and productive New Year, filled
with blessings from Our Great and
Wonderful Lord.

Contents:

- 1 Minister's Insights
- 2 Impressions by SA
- 3 Classic Franciscan
- 4 National Election
Chapter By The Stronach's
- 12 Ongoing Formation
- 16 Poetry Page
- 18 Humor Page
- 19 Regional Roundup
- 20 Franciscan Living
- 20 FYI Page
- 21 Little Weeds
- 22 CNSA News & Views
- 24 Quinquennial
Registration

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The National Minister's Letter to the Order



Building with Living Stones...

By Patrick Mendés, SFO
National Minister

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Peace and all that is good! This is my first opportunity to write you as your new National Minister. My name is Patrick Mendés (Sounds like Mon-day). People often have difficulty pronouncing my last name, but just so you are comfortable, I respond to Patrick just fine, thank you! Prior to being called to serve our national fraternity, I served as Minister of the Mother Cabrini Region, which covers the northern part of the State of Illinois. I live in Oak Brook at Mayslake Village, which is a Franciscan retirement community. Know that the door is open and the welcome mat is out, anytime you are in our area.

I, also, look forward to meeting you at the Quinquennial next July in Steubenville, and as I make visitations.

Your new Executive Council and I look forward to serving you with the same dedication and commitment, as did our predecessors.

As I alluded to in the scripture at the beginning of this column, we do, indeed, build with and upon living stones – those who have preceded us and have accomplished so much for us as an Order and for all the people of God. I give thanks to those “living stones,” who have come before me and in whose noble and holy footsteps I walk - our past National Ministers: Richard Morton, Bill Wicks, and Carol Gentile. They have modeled for me the role of National Minister. I am confident that I can call upon their wisdom and guidance, as I begin my ministry in

these new seas, along with my able and gifted fellow navigators of the Lord’s ship, the SFO. I give thanks to the Lord for the wonderful members of the newly elected Council. They are grace filled, dedicated and very gifted. I am humbled to be in their midst. I give thanks to you and for you, the 15,000 brothers and sisters of our National Fraternity. We are companions on the journey.

I ask your prayers as we set about the tasks before us. As we re-vision our living of the Holy Rule, we will be looking at ways for a more holistic approach, which is practical, faithful to our charism and rebuilds the Lord’s Church, as he told Francis to do. We will look at the Apostolic Commissions and their current structure, which has served us well, and how they interface with the other articles of the Holy Rule and ask the question of ourselves – what is the next growth step we need to take? To this effort, the National Fraternity gathered in Marathon, Wisconsin, voted to appoint an *ad hoc* committee to study what we currently do and make recommendations for the future. This is not something that will be accomplished overnight, but with careful steps, so that we build on what we have and not lose all the good fruits of our efforts up to now. In the oft quoted words of our holy father, Francis “Let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing.” It’s not so much that we have done “nothing,” as the fact that there is much more yet for us to do.

Until next time, I beg your prayers and assure you that you are in mine. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings.

Patrick

Impressions



Living the Rule

By Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR
CNSA President-in-turn

Trusting 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.
SFO Rule - No. 11

Sisters and brothers, as the Rule suggests, Seculars have a “proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods when they reduce or simplify their own material needs.” The call of Seculars to live the poverty of the gospel is different from that of a vowed religious. While living in a world where every television commercial can lead one to believe that we will only be happy if we have more things, we must be vigilant. Am I accumulating more and more? Is my closet getting very crowded? Do I need to donate some things to the poor? However, we can't stop at clothing. What about our other things? Do I ever ask myself, “Do I ‘need’ this or just ‘want’ something?” We can and should have the things we need. Perhaps we can let go of some of the things we want. I was listening to some of the students here at Saint Francis University recently. They were talking about a situation where they were living an experiment in voluntary poverty. They only had a small amount of money each day with which they had to buy all their food. It was quite a different experience for them to be able to spend only this limited amount of money and not to buy whatever they wanted or even needed. Do I limit my consumption? Or is the rampant consumerism of the culture working its way into my life?

Living simply is a call that touches many areas of our lives. Franciscans will always find that call to be very attractive, but each of us must examine the way in which we do this. Perhaps it is not too obvious, but living simply touches ecology and justice as well. Living simply will help us to “walk softly” on the earth and to care about the plight of the suffering multitudes and even contribute to ameliorating the situation. To be “stewards” of the goods received for the benefit of God's children puts a new light on what we have. Are my goods used for the benefit of anyone besides myself? Are they used for the building of God's kingdom? How good it would be if we thought of all our goods as “belonging” to someone else. We only have them to use and then must hand them on in good shape! This also applies to the environment around us. We are the stewards of God's wondrous creation.

Finally, the last section of the Rule, paragraph 11, talks about the Beatitudes. It would be good for us to meditate on how we live the Beatitudes as Franciscans. Do we act as pilgrims and strangers or are we building our own “kingdoms?” How are we purifying our own hearts from “every tendency and yearning for possession and power?” Do I serve others or do I want others to do what I say? Am I willing to let go of my own ideas of “how it should be done” in order to learn and work with others? Or must it always be “my way?” The tendency in human beings is to do the opposite of what the Beatitudes and this paragraph of the Rule state. Who could believe it? Even in Secular Franciscan fraternities, could we encounter someone who wanted power? It is difficult to examine ourselves and understand what we are doing.

In the next issue, the new President-in-turn, Fr. Bart Karwacki, OFM Conv, will be writing in this space. I pray that my reflections have been helpful and challenging to you. May God bless you all, as you follow Christ in the way of St. Francis! And may He bless the SFO with growth and fidelity to its charism! Pace e bene! Fr. Kevin

Note: Many SFO fraternities are using [Pick More Daisies](#) by Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap, for ongoing formation. It has much in it that will lead to reflection and discussion about the Secular Franciscan life. If your fraternity has not started to use it, you may want to consider it. Be sure to have a leader who will draw all the members into the conversation.

Queen of Russia, Queen of Peace

By Julia Pearson, SFO
Human Interest Editor



Fr. Charles Shelton, Second to left with fellow friars in
Moscow, Russia on December 31, 1991

"It was a Lady dressed all in white, more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal glass filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the burning rays of the sun." Description of Mary by the young Fatima visionaries.

The appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to three child visionaries in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917, is believed to be the greatest of the twentieth-century apparitions of Our Holy Mother. Impacting the faith of millions during turbulent world events, Fatima even reached forward through the years to the last decade in Russia. *The first secret of Fatima was the vision of hell, and the second secret was the revelation of the importance of devotion to the Immaculate Heart. The third secret foretold the consecration of Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart.*

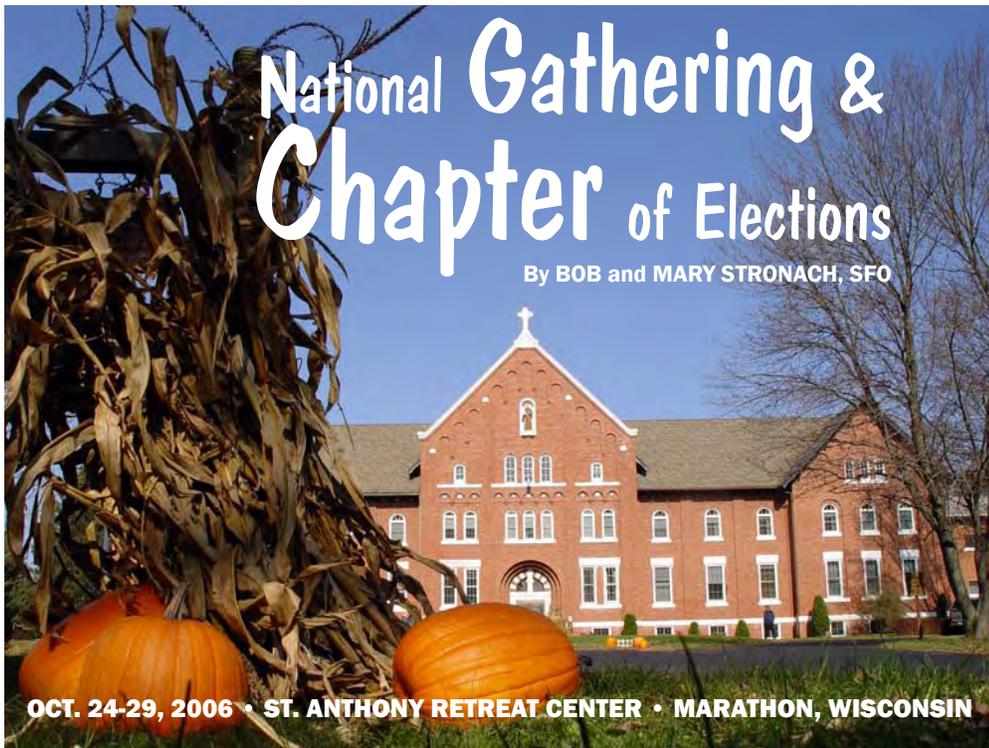
Roy Abraham Varghese, [God-Sent: A History of the Accredited Apparitions of Mary](#). New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000.

On Christmas Day, 1991, the Kremlin saw Mikhail Gorbachev replaced by Boris Yeltsin. Several days later, during this holy Christmas season on New

Year's Eve, the flag of the Soviet Union was lowered for the last time and the Federation flag took its place and continues to fly to this day. Embracing our Holy Mother as the ambassador of reconciliation between God and His people, Father Charles Shelton, OFM Conv, came to Red Square on the night of the fall of the Soviet Union. As the new era of a free Russia emerged from eighty-five years under Soviet rule at mid-night, Father Shelton crowned the Blessed Mother using a statue of Our Lady of Fatima in front of Lenin's Tomb. Father remembers this event as one of the most precious in his lifetime. Dressed in his Franciscan habit and warm overcoat, the beloved miraculous medal close to his heart, he stood in the frigid square, which had been swept clean of snow. It was 20-30 degrees below zero, with a wind chill making it feel like 50 degrees below. Fireworks in the black, inky sky reflected the white of the garments on the four-foot statue to a luminous sheen. In the backdrop of the tomb, KGB soldiers in dark, green-gray coats marched in the identifiable high, straight-legged fashion.

After the ceremonial changing of the guards and the air stilled of the fireworks, thousands of her Russian children filed past Our Lady. Behind the statue stood Father Shelton, witnessing the respectful hand of his history, as the Queen of Peace and the Queen of Russia were one. He remembers a particular old grandmother, her face wrinkled, wise, and gentle, with a babushka covering her head against the bitter night air. Grandmother looked at the statue and then directly into Father Shelton's face, her own face transformed by wonderment and awe. At that moment, the fear that had been his constant companion since arriving in Moscow was now gone. As the Russian grandmother passed by, Father Shelton said, "I knew my job was done." The knowledge that the image of the Holy Mother would bring comfort to the people of the former Soviet Union was secure in his heart. It is unfortunate that the mass media did not report or record this event.

Father Shelton made his solemn profession, as a Franciscan friar, in 1979. He became a deacon in 1980, and was ordained a priest by Bishop John Cummings at St. Elizabeth's in Oakland, California, on June 7, 1981. He received an undergraduate degree in psychology. His education also includes a Master of Divinity degree from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley. Father Shelton lives at the St. Joseph of Cupertino Friary in Arroyo Grande, CA.



\$201,000 Budget Approved for 2007

The National Council approved an operating budget of \$201,000 for 2007. It projects income of \$150,000 in Fair Share (\$10 x 15,000 members), plus \$48,000 in book sales and \$3,000 in interest. The budget calls for no increase in Fair Share, even though the U.S. contribution to the International Fraternity has more than doubled (from 50 cents to \$1.20 per U.S. member). The International Fraternity asked the U.S. and a number of other countries to step up contributions to help offset a lack of money in Third World fraternities and the expense of acquiring an international office.

Patrick Mendés Leads Order in U.S.

J. Patrick Mendés, SFO, of Oakbrook, IL, has been elected national minister for a three-year term.

The election took place during the annual national gathering and triennial chapter of elections held Oct. 24-29 at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Wisconsin. Mendés recently retired as parish coordinator of ministries at St. Colette Parish in Rolling Meadows, IL.

Other new officers are:

- National Vice Minister & Substitute International Councilor: Deacon **Tom**

Bello, SFO, of McLean, VA, teacher to adult immigrants and refugees.

- National Secretary: **Sarah Mulholland**, SFO, of Bend, OR, freelance editor for American Psychological Association.

- National Treasurer: **Dennis Ross**, SFO, of Mentor, OH, a retired high school math teacher and junior high assistant principal.

- National Councilor: **Pat Brandwein-Ball**, SFO, of South Berwick, ME, a staff nurse at Rochester Pediatric Association, Rochester, NH.

- National Councilor: **Mike**

Carsten, SFO, of Fenton, MI, construction superintendent and carpenter.

- National Councilor: **Clare McCluggage**, MD, SFO, of Vancouver, WA, a family physician.

- International Councilor: **Anne Mulqueen**, SFO, of Kingsville, MD, certified spiritual director.

At the same time, Fr. **Bart Karwacki**, OFM Conv., of Ellicott City, MD, began serving as President-in-Turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA).

See *LEADERS* – Page 5



Regional ministers lined up to congratulate the new national leaders during the installation Mass. Delia Banchs, SFO, embraces Patrick Mendés, SFO. Behind them Harry Harned, SFO, congratulates Deacon Tom Bello, SFO.

FACES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP: NAFRA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



PATRICK



TOM



SARAH



DENNIS



PAT



MIKE



CLARE



ANNE

LEADERS

Continued from Page 4

Mendés, professed in 1961, has been regional minister for the Chicago-area Mother Cabrini Region. He formerly was a university professor and chief nursing officer/vice president for professional services of a multi-facility healthcare system.

He holds master's degrees in nursing and education, a C.A.S. in gerontology, and a doctorate in adult education.



New national leaders during a reflective moment at their installation Mass.

NATIONAL SURVEY: STATE OF THE ORDER

Start Leadership Training Programs in Regions

Regions should start servant-leadership training programs, if they haven't already, and also look at starting train-the-trainer programs to spread the training.

That was one of outgoing Minister Carol Gentile's recommendations in her state-of-the-order report. She noted that the Executive Council had conducted an in-depth survey with regional ministers in order to establish a "baseline of what we're about...for the future of the order."

"We need to know if we're meeting the needs of our brothers and sisters," she said, adding: "We need to know who you/we are."

The national survey, which

had 100 percent participation by regions, "empowered everyone with the opportunity to have their voice heard."

Based on the survey, she recommended leadership training and offered the following suggestions and observations:

- Persons who feel a calling to leadership roles should, at their own expense, shadow the position for a reasonable amount of time.
- Continue open forums. Exchange and share good things happening in your region.
- Witness more, and you will have less conflict to deal with.
- Franciscan spirituality



Outgoing National Minister Carol Gentile, SFO, during her state-of-the-order address.

soars in places that have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament going on continuously at their meetings.

• Apostolic Commissions, in spite of the concern of the structure, are fulfilling a section of the Rule. It is working because of them, not the lack of them.

• Be unique and tailor Commissions according to your means and needs.

• Committees also help us live our Rule. Help them ex-

pand and grow.

- Continue to work with the Friars.
- Increase our relationship with the Poor Clares.
- Keep in mind the key to a family relationship is vital reciprocity.
- Continue to dialogue electronically.
- Treat each other with respect and put principles before personalities.
- Continue to work with/support International Fraternity.

HONORED

Outgoing Minister Carol Gentile gave awards for outstanding service to, from left, Marcella Bina, John Sanborn, Anne Mulqueen, Deacon Juan Lescano and Mike Carsten.



Carol Gentile with outgoing Secretary Elizabeth Allen.

NAFRA Urges Darfur Aid; Backs Bishops On Immigration

The National Fraternity, representing more than 15,000 Secular Franciscans across the nation, is calling on the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to grant immediate refugee status to people who have fled the genocide in the Darfur region of the Sudan.

In a statement adopted at their annual gathering, the Secular Franciscans said: "We urge that the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service grant prompt and just refugee status to the people of Darfur now languishing in refugee camps in Kenya and throughout Africa." Reiterating a statement adopted two years ago condemning the genocide, they also urged the U.S. to "firmly support the United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Darfur."

They approved sending \$2,000 from the NAFRA donor fund to Catholic Relief Services for Darfur refugees.

The National Council also addressed the issue of immigration, declaring support for the joint U.S.-Mexican bishops' call for expanded economic opportunities in the home nations and for facilitating the reunion of close family members separated by national borders as part of comprehensive immigration reform. The call came in a recent pastoral letter issued by the Catholic bishops of Mexico and the U.S., entitled "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope."

Hold People of Darfur in Prayer

Clare McCluggage, MD, SFO, took the National Council's actions on Darfur one step further, asking all Secular Franciscans in America to "hold the people of Darfur in prayer for an entire year."

Secular Franciscans "don't have to feel helpless in what they can do for Darfur refugees," she said, "because prayer is action."

"Fraternities could take turns," she explained, "so

that we would hold them in prayer everyday of the year."

She composed a "perpetual" novena prayer and presented it to the regional ministers to share with their fraternities. She later organized a suggested monthly schedule, assigning each region to different months.

"Can you imagine 15,000 SFOs praying for these people, and what God can do with those prayers?"



Clare McCluggage, SFO

CLARE'S NOVENA PRAYER FOR PEOPLE OF DARFUR

Merciful Father, Prince of Peace, Spirit of Wisdom and Compassion, please look upon our brothers and sisters in Darfur. We humbly pray:

--For those who have been subjected to violence: women, children, young and old men, we ask for healing, consolation, and relief of further suffering.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

--For those who have done violence, we ask for healing, forgiveness, and the grace of conversion.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

--For those in authority throughout the world, we ask wisdom, creativity, compassion and courage in addressing this situation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

Lord Jesus, Your Sacred Heart burns for love of all your people. Please place in our hearts that same love and inspire us to have the courage, wisdom and ingenuity to take what measures we can personally to relieve the suffering in Darfur. We pray this in the Name of Jesus, our Lord, through the intercession of the sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Memorare: Remember oh most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, oh Virgin of Virgins, my mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. Oh mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR REGIONS TO PRAY FOR DAFUR

	Dec/June	Jan/July	Feb/Aug	Mar/Sept	Apr/Oct	May/Nov
Week 1	St. Elizabeth of Hungary	Bl Kateri Tekakwitha	Fr Solanus	The Tau Cross	Our Lady of the Angels	St. Katharine Drexel
Week 2	Lady Poverty	St. Margaret of Cortona	Bros. & Sisters of St. Francis	Five Franciscan Martyrs	St. Maximilian Kolbe	Holy Trinity
Week 3	Divine Mercy	Our Lady of Indiana	La Verna	Mother Cabrini	Franciscans of the Prairie	St. Clare
Week 4	St Joan of Arc	Queen of Peace	Juan de Padilla	Los Tres Companeros / 3 Companions	Our Lady of the Rockies	Santa Maria de las Montanas
Week 5 or Week 1	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Troubadours of Peace	Bl. Junipero Serra	St. Francis	St. Thomas More	Ohana O Ke Aneunue

YOUR NATIONAL COUNCIL AT WORK



SFO Enhances Family with Addition of Affiliates

The National Council approved an amendment to the National Statutes that accepts affiliates into the SFO. It follows a similar action by the International Fraternity.

Spouses and friends of SFOs, who, in the past, felt they could not participate because of a different faith, or inability to make a full commitment to the order, can now share in the charism of Francis as affiliates.

The amendment states that “those, who, without belonging to the SFO, wish to participate in its life and activities according to Franciscan principles and teachings, may be welcomed by the local fraternity, so as to make their communion living and effective.”

Individuals must indicate their desire in writing and the local fraternity council will decide. Affiliates will not have the right to vote, but may “share the experiences and activities of the fraternity.” The number of affiliates is limited to no more than 40 percent of active professed members. Regional councils may “establish their own guidelines for the acceptance of affiliates.”

Jan and Clare Compose Quinquennial Theme Song

Inspired by a PowerPoint presentation about the 2007 Quinquennial, Jan Parker, SFO, and Clare McCluggage, MD, SFO, brought their musical talents to bear and, in a span of a day, composed a Quinquennial theme song with original music.

They performed the song, "One God of Us All," for regional ministers and delegates gathered for morning prayer on the last day of the national gathering, and received a standing ovation. The song will be incorporated into a new version of the PowerPoint presentation to help promote the "Q" to regions and local fraternities.

NAFRA's PR team, Mary



Jan Parker, left, and Care McCluggage receive accolades from National Minister Patrick Mendes after performing their original "Q" theme song.

and Bob Stronach, announced that when the new presentation is ready, it will

be made available to regional ministers and possibly posted on the NAFRA website.

Geographic Groups: Keep 3 Councilors, Study Commissions

Regional ministers broke into geographic groupings to discuss issues of common interest. They also were asked to consider whether to:

- reduce the number of national councilor positions, from 3 to 2, or even 1;
- explore action on the Apostolic Commissions.

The consensus was to keep three councilors, and evaluate the Commissions. As a result, the assembly voted to form an ad hoc committee to review the Commissions and report back next year.



Kay Francis with Multicultural Committee.

Engage the Multicultural: Learn from One Another

With the 2007 Quinquennial having a multicultural theme, outgoing Minister Carol Gentile, SFO, pointed to the multicultural section of her state-of-the-order report as being "all about inclusion, not exclusion." She told the gathering of Secular Franciscan leaders: "We need to learn from each other...because we are all God's people...and if we come to know each other, we'll love one another."

Gentile praised the work of NAFRA's Multicultural Committee, chaired by Sonia Bernardo, SFO, and singled out a representative from the Syro-Malabar (India) Rite, Kay Francis, SFO. Francis took a moment to say she found a "spiritual connection and feeling of brotherhood" at NAFRA, and that she was thankful to be able to work with SFOs to set up a formation program for members of her rite.



Multicultural Chair Sonia Bernardo, SFO

NAFRA CHAPTER: A Journey of Prayer for Those Who Should Have Passion for the Gospel

Presider David Bouchard opened the Chapter of Elections with prayer, reminding everyone "that the whole process over the next few days is one

of prayer and reflection." Daily Mass enhanced that sense of reliance on prayer and movement of the Holy Spirit, thanks to the friar spiritual assistants who took turns celebrating the Liturgy.

Called to be itinerant people, on a journey, on a pilgrimage through life, "God has given us time to...live the Gospel," National Spiritual Assistant Bart Karwacki, OFM Conv., said in his homily. But, "are there things you haven't done in regard to your spiritual life...your spiritual journey?"

International Spiritual Assistant Mike

Higgins, TOR, noted: Like the blind man sitting on the side of the road in Mark's Gospel, Jesus "calls us out of blindness, out of darkness, out of exile, and says 'come follow me'.

"Let us have courage to get up and go to Him!"

National Spiritual Assistant Lester Bach, OFM Cap., issued a challenge:

"We can't really go to Mass, and then leave and step over the poor." Being Franciscan means having "passion for the Gospel and compassion for everyone."



Fr. Bart



Fr. Mike



Fr. Lester



Teresa Baker, SFO

FORMATION SESSION

With Profession, SFOs Enter New State of Existence

“Profession is a gift of the Holy Spirit... a declaration... a promise. It is a solemn ecclesial act.”

Thus began the on-going formation session by National Formation Director Teresa Baker, SFO.

The spirit “consecrates and transforms those professing,” she continued. “...they place their lives totally in God... (Profession) is not an act of the moment. It establishes a

new state of existence... a total transformation... a personal commitment for life.”

We promise “to live the Gospel according to the charism of Francis in the Church.” We are called to a Franciscan, evangelical vocation -- one in which we do not have an agenda,” she said. “We must meet people where they are. Be open and aware; and then respond.”

“Profession demands a

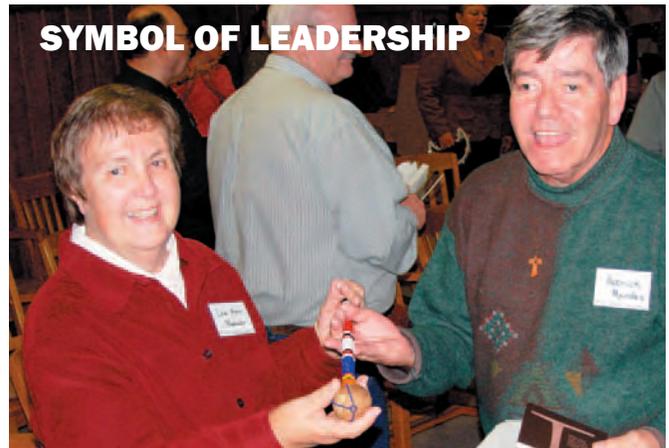
radical life... Francis did not set up norms, but a way of life,” noted Baker. Like Francis, we are called to repair the world and bring it to where God desired it to be, but that can only happen if we have quiet time to hear God’s wishes and to be obedient to them.

“Francis spent 62% of his life in prayer and solitude... Look what he accomplished.”



FRANCISCAN CHEER

Secular Franciscans can be known for cheer and warmth, but a visit to Hsu’s Genseng Enterprises sparked a dose of hearty laughter as a tour guide touted interesting physical benefits of using genseng products. Regional ministers and other national leaders got to spend an afternoon checking out not only the largest producer of American genseng, but also one of Wisconsin’s largest dairy farms, a 3,000-head operation milking 500 cows an hour, and the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum featuring gardens of wood, stone and metal sculptures (below).



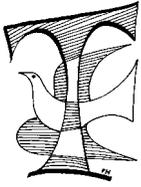
SYMBOL OF LEADERSHIP

Lee Ann Niebuhr, SFO, vice minister of the host La Verna Region, presented an African Massai Rungu (baton) to new National Minister Patrick Mendes. A symbol of power, respect and dignity accorded to respected leaders, she said, the Rungu was obtained by former La Verna vice minister Don Ryder, SFO, who has made several trips to Kenya and made a commitment to the Massai tribe to help raise funds for a village well.



JESUS RULES

Dave Bouchard, international councilor from Canada who presided at the elections, said he was going to take home outgoing Minister Carol Gentile’s words: *“In this chapter, Jesus Rules... Don’t trip over Him in your haste to get things done.”*



In the midst of conflict and division...

By David Moczulski, OFM, S A
Excerpts From August 2006 SFO National
Peace & Justice Publication

The happenings in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, Israel, and Iraq have moved all of us. What is it that is really needed to achieve peace in a world of escalating conflict? God must be involved. "In the midst of conflict and division, we know it is You who turn our minds to thoughts of peace. Your Spirit changes our hearts: Enemies begin to speak to one another, those who were estranged join hands in friendship, and nations seek the way of peace together." Eucharistic Prayer II (Reconciliation)

Statements:

It has become common and even expected that whenever a tragedy hits, a war begun, some injustice coming to the public eye, that people of good will publish a "Statement" calling on the government for action, for people to rise up and to express moral outrage. Statements serve a very important purpose. They can give a moral authority to a cause and provide a rallying cry to stop unjust actions. At times, I think we have had enough statements. I think we need to turn our minds to the Spirit of God. In April 2002, at a time of another crisis in the Holy Land, Fr. Giacomo Bini, OFM (the former Minister General of the Order Friars Minor) called "all friars Minor of the World, contemplative Franciscans and all lay Franciscans to add a time of personal prayer each day for peace" (Vatican Press Office, April 5, 2002). I remember not long after that visiting a Poor Clare Monastery and the sisters lighting a candle at the beginning of their Evening Prayer and spending a few minutes of silence prayer for peace in the Middle East.

Reflection:

Some who read who read this reflection feel sympathy and compassion for the people of Israel. The protection of their country is paramount. Some who read this say that the people of Lebanon are the innocent by-standers of Israeli aggression. Perhaps most do not realize that the war is continuing in the Gaza Strip and in Iraq. I will not even attempt to give an account of the numbers who have died, because, no doubt, the figures will be out-of-date by the time you read this. This reflection is not about who is right and who is right and who is wrong. It

is about what we can do to help bring about peace and end the senseless killing.

Action:

Please consider taking the advice of Brother Giacomo and take some time each day and pray for peace. Ask you fraternity minister to devote a minute or two of silence at the start of your next fraternity meeting so that the gathered community can pray for peace.

Prayer for Peace 2003

By Brother Hermann Schalück, OFM

O one God of all peoples and nations,
You created the earth and the cosmos,
in their beauty and also in their frailty.
All cultures and religions are on their way to you,
the origin of all that has been created.
You want all to be for one another
not a threat, but a blessing.
Our one world should be, by your will,
a peaceful home for all.
You chose the Orient to make known to all
Your many names.
Abraham is a father in faith for Jews, Muslims,
and Christians.
He listened to your call in the region
between the Euphrates and Tigris,
the present day Iraq.
In a special way, you promised life and future
to the old and new People of Israel.
As Christian men and women, we thank you
for our Lord and Brother Jesus Christ.
He is our Peace.
He came to knock down walls and to give to all,
without distinction, life and a future.
We know ourselves to be in communion with
the Churches of the Orient.
They witness to the Gospel of Jesus,
to the liberating power of his non-violence
and to his Resurrection.
We also pray to you in unity with all our brothers and
sisters of other religions,
especially those who have their origin in the Middle
East.
In all of them you instilled the hunger and thirst
for justice and a deep desire for peace.
All are in mourning for the victims of hatred
and violence.
All are called to collaborate in the construction
of a new world.
We, therefore, beseech you: Continue on page 12.

Minister's Farewell



By Carol Gentile, SFO

Until we meet again!

My dear brothers and sisters,

It has been a gift from the Lord to have served you for the past thirteen years, first as your National Family Commission Chair, then as your National Apostolic Commissions Coordinator, and lastly, as your National Minister.

I address you always, as my dear brothers and sisters, because we are, in fact, by God's Calling, and confirmed by St. Francis, closer than blood relatives.

I have met many of you, Franciscans, throughout my travels in the USA, and internationally. I will cherish all the moments that I spent with you. I am also, truly blessed to have come to know many of my religious brothers and sisters. There is no question that we are one family and that the Spirit soars in the "Order."

Although I will miss seeing you, the memory of our encounter, will never be forgotten

The challenge that I have taken on as your National Minister is addressed in the following statements. Please continue to:

- Acknowledge that Fraternity life is a privileged place and more importantly, a sacred place

- Witness to one another – by encouraging everyone to have a voice in every aspect of our ministry
- Live the Rule instead of building structures to figure out the Rule
- Be inclusive of all of God's people Catholic and non-Catholic
- See the face of Christ in all people (multicultural) and build a relationship with them
- Look to the future and encourage intergenerational activities
- Have leaders that represent the people we serve
- Walk with the Franciscan religious to make the charism of Francis present in the life and mission in the Church and to complement the Franciscan religious by making this charism credible and operative in the world

Remember, this is accomplished by BEing and DOing the Word made flesh – whom we come to know through Scripture, encounter in Eucharist, and imitate within the Church – through a spirituality of simplicity, a fraternity of harmony and partnership, and an apostolate to bring alive our precious Jesus through LOVE.

Secular Franciscans not only live their ministry in their personal life, but they also live out their ministry in the world. Our personal life needs to reflect our ministry as well.

That being said, my responsibilities as a wife, mother, grandmother, and daughter-in-law have taken on a new ministry, one that I accept with open arms.

Therefore my brothers and sisters, **until we meet again**, I send to each of you a Franciscan hug and kiss. May we love each other the way Jesus loved us.

Love, your sister, Carol

"Christ became what we are so that we could become what he is."

St Irenaeus, 2nd century

FRATERNITY



By Teresa Baker, SFO
NAFRA Formation Chair
Tbakersfo@aol.com - 603-432-9135

Family
Relationship
Allegiance
Trust
Earnestness
Reliance
Necessary
Intimacy
Truthfulness
You

As I sit here reflecting on our recent local fraternity elections and on the national elections, I share these thoughts with you.

These are the words that truly spell out what Fraternity means to me. First and foremost Fraternity is **family**. When we moved to NH, a friend sent a card; in it was inscribed:

Family is those persons, who

share your hopes and your dreams. Rarely do members of the same family grow up under the same roof! As fraternity, we come together to share our Franciscan hopes and dreams.

Fraternity demands **relationship** and to Franciscans, this means equality. We do not choose our relationships in fraternity; God has already chosen them for us. Each person who is in fraternity is brother or sister to us. We may like one person more than another, but all are to be received equally.

Our **allegiance** belongs to the fraternity, first and foremost before any other commitment we have outside our own families. Emanuela de Nuncio reminded us that if there is a conflict between a parish ministry and our gathering, we are to choose the gathering.

Trust is necessary for the fraternity to survive. Trust is not demanded; it is earned. It is earned by reverencing the persons who choose to share with us.

Earnestness demands that we be sincere with one another and with the world. We are not to be Franciscan for the short time we spent together each month. We are to be Franciscan in the world. We do not come together to be Franciscan; we come together to have our Franciscanism nourished so that

we go out and share our Franciscan values in the world.

Reliance asks us to be dependent on one another. Francis reminded his brothers that they were to make their needs known to one another. The fraternity cannot help us if we do not make our needs known. Fraternity is **necessary** for our way of life; fraternity is our way of life. Who better to challenge us to live the gospel than our brothers and sisters who have promised the same? Who better to support us in our efforts to make the gospel come alive in the world, if not our fraternity?

Intimacy is the goal of fraternal life. We are not to be strangers to one another. Do others recognize us as brothers and sisters? Again, Francis told the brothers that they were to greet each other with a holy kiss.

Truthfulness is a necessary component, if any relationship is to grow. We must always speak the truth, with kindness, to each other.

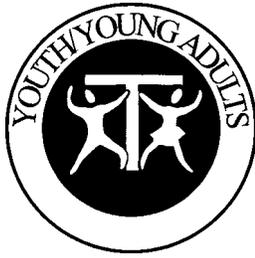
You are my sisters and brothers in fraternity. Without you, I have no Franciscan family, no Franciscan connection. You are God's gift to me and I thank God for each and every one of you.

Peace Prayer 2003

Continued from page 10

Have mercy on all the victims and on all the offenders.
Put an end to the spiral of violence and hatred.
Let all of us,
especially those who bear responsibly,
Be ever more convinced that the way to peace
is not that of war and violence,
but of building peace
Through non-violence and justice.
Let your peace flow like a river
Through all our deserts.
Lord, give us strength and endurance
To pull down the mountains of misunderstanding,
To fill in the trenches of hatred
And to level the paths
Towards a more just
And a more peaceful world order.
Let the arms of destruction be laid down soon,
And let the melody of peace and reconciliation
Resound throughout your entire creation.
O one God with many names, make us all
Instruments of your peace.

FRANCISCAN YOUTH CONGRESS



By Kathy Taormina, SFO
Youth/Young Adult Commission National Chair
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FAMILIES IN THE MIDDLE YEARS



Ken and Kim Flanagan, SFO
NAFRA Family Commission Co-chairs
kflanagan@catholic-charities.org
219-661-2815

 **FYYA**

 **YOUTH CONGRESS**

 **JULY 3-8, 2007**

 **STEUBENVILLE, OH**

 **PLEASE BRING A PAIR OF SNEAKERS and SOCKS TO DONATE TO THE PILGRIMAGE**

 **“LOVE WALK”**

ALL Q ATTENDEES MAY DONATE SNEAKERS & SOCKS!

 **SEE WEB SITE FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION AT www.franciscanyouthusa.com**

 **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN DRY SOCKS for the FYYA OHIO RIVER “STREAM TEAM”**

We continue our series addressing family life cycles: The middle years can be some of the most challenging of times. Between children who begin to more directly assert their independence, parents beginning to feel the impact of aging, a growing sense of one’s own mortality and, in recent decades, parents while still raising their own children needing to assist their own aging parents, who are in need of additional support. These challenges require a great deal of shifting of roles.

The parental role changes from primary caregiver of children to being in a role of a guide and mentor to them. As parents, the realization, sometimes by just looking in the mirror, of having to cope with their own aging process becomes apparent. Some tasks that used to be so easy to do now need to be paced during this stage of the life cycle. In terms of caring for aging parents, the role of caregiver begins to become more dominant which creates a whole set of emotional issues and challenges. The people who used to support us now begin to become dependent on us for their care and we can begin to feel more and more isolated in juggling these multiple demands.

However, just because there are challenges, does not mean there are not opportunities, also. This can be a time of evaluating one’s life and relationships, dealing with a healthy degree of pride in what one has been able to accomplish (due to cooperation with God!) and an opportunity to put aside some unrealistic goals and visions of oneself. This can open us up to the new possibilities that our life situation propels us towards. Our relationship with others can enter into new depths and free us from some of our earlier life hang-ups. This stage of life can also be an opportunity for our relationship with the Lord to take on new dimensions and provides more opportunity for the development of a spirituality that prepares us for the future and life eternal.

Provided below are some items for consideration regarding our middle years within our families and ourselves:

- Use this time to evaluate commitments and responsibilities and discern if these commitments and responsibilities are what God is asking of us at this time in our life or do they need to be altered.
- Prioritize family related responsibilities and set realistic timeframes for accomplishing tasks in order to help reduce overall stress levels.
- Be sure to set aside some time for daily prayer in order to stay connected to the source of life.
- Sometimes, not only family life, but also organizations can be in the “middle years” of existence and the need to evaluate their usefulness, effectiveness and your relationship to them may need to occur.
- Take time to enjoy “being” with family over “doing” for family.

TREASURE HUNTING

By Sharon Deveaux, SFO
National Archivist
SharonX@earthlink.net

The main goal and activity of the Archives will always be to preserve and catalog the records given by the various men and women who have served the National Fraternity. However, while going through these records, sometimes there is information that indicates the existence of other materials that should be in the Archives, but are not (yet). Commemorative medals from the First National Convention in 1921, Chicago.

- Name tags (ribbons), also from the First National Convention.
- The scapular and cord given at the profession ceremony.
- A “habit,” worn most by women.
- The Annual Peace Award from any year.
- “Third Order Forum” a series of publications about the Third Order.

If you have these or information about them, please e-mail me.

Thank you.

Sharon

RECRUITMENT FOR NATIONAL ECOLOGY COMMISSION CHAIR

To fill a vacancy, the NAFRA Executive Council is soliciting applications from SFOs interested in serving as the Chair of the National Ecology Commission. Applications are due by January 15, 2007. The Executive Council intends to select the person(s) early in 2007. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the National Ecology Commission;
- be willing to communicate your passion and desire to promote the Commission to others;
- provide a summary of some of your ideas to promote the Commission
- be able to write four articles for the TAU-USA newsletter yearly; and
- be able to attend at least two four-day meetings yearly.

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in applying, send your resume along with a letter responding to the above criteria and a copy of your certificate of profession by January 15, 2007 to:

Jane DeRose-Bamman,
Apostolic Commissions Coordinator
737 Valverde Dr S.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87108
505-228-6851
janedbsfo@msn.com

BROTHER JUNIPER



By Fred McCarthy,

MULTICULTURAL COMMITTEE



SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER / U S A

“We - Though Many - Are One in Christ”

By Sonia Bernardo, SFO
NAFRA Multicultural Committee Chair
Jsbernardo@msn.com

Multiculturalism, the theme of the Quinquennial Congress 2007, is well chosen and challenging, as it will lay the groundwork for our Franciscan core -

“Who do we say we are?” As the QC Planning Committee works and plans for this big event, it gradually unfolds the fact that the Franciscan family is a culture itself, within the Roman Catholic Church. Culture is defined as “a system, usually a closely knit system of traditions, beliefs, myths, rituals, moral codes, etc. in which a group finds its cohesion, its orientation, and a sense of purpose. Within its own limits, it helps the members of the group to grow, and it is for them a means of integration.”
Blessed Simplicity by Raimundo Panikkar

In one of his talks at a multicultural event, Fr. Steve Gross, OFM Conv, former Multicultural Committee Spiritual Assistant stated, “The Franciscan family is a culture by itself and has a particular way of behaving and believing. It even has its own language. For example, we talk about the ‘Rule.’ It has rituals like the Profession, symbols like the Tau, and a structure set up by the Constitution. It has economics, our ‘fair share.’ It has an organization of local, regional and national levels. And politics, sometimes called points of view, on what it means to be a Franciscan.”

The Multicultural Committee logo says it all! The Tau - representing the Franciscans, composed of many different strands or cultures, focusing on our common Franciscan identity that cherishes each component of - knowing, loving and serving each other, by welcoming cultures different from our own with open minds, open hearts. Barbara Smith noted,

“We see the richness of our cultures, as they are woven into and out of the tapestry of our lives.”

The colors of the rainbow remind us, too, of how light is refracted into all kinds of colors through a prism. It is the light that God made, the light of the world that comes to us in all the colors. The refraction into all kinds of color reminds us that the human race comes with all kinds of backgrounds, all kinds of colors and all kind of differences. If we accept them as gifts from God, not as something to be avoided or feared, and not as something that stops our unity into one family, then we understand how marvelously diverse are the gifts of God. If difference is a gift, a present to be made public so that it can be shared, then God’s love will be burning bright. And Jesus is the light of the world!

At the Quinquennial Congress, in July 2007, in Steubenville, Ohio, the Multicultural Committee will celebrate God’s gift to us, our diversities. As we celebrate, we will also experience the completeness and beauty of God himself. We celebrate our diversity and, at the same time, our solidarity, recognizing that we are children of the same father, brothers and sisters in Christ, different, not better, not worse.

The Committee has planned to offer a two-night Festival of Cultures featuring the diverse cultures present in the SFO. A consciousness-raising of the multicultural areas including foods, dance, music and its instruments, crafts, history, customs and traditions, values, behavioral patterns, etc. will be the highlight of this festival. The Koreans, the Mexicans, Filipinos, Indians, the Vietnamese and the American Indians are preparing a very rich and varied presentation. Hopefully, some more cultures will come forward to share. In both Festivals, the two basic themes are expressions of joy and expressions of shared experiences. Festivals are not meant to be celebrated alone. This time of joy is meant to be celebrated in harmony with the whole Franciscan community. Studying the various components of each culture can be enlightening. Sharing celebrations of other peoples can enrich our lives and help us understand our own beliefs better. Through the understanding and respect of our diversity and cultural uniqueness, they can bring us together and, through grace, help the Church spread Jesus’ Good News. Celebrating diversity and celebrating culture means celebrating family and we are one big Franciscan family that can bring peace and solidarity to the world.

SO COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US!

Big Ben-London-England



Photo by Bill Wicks, SFO

Unrelenting Time

By Frances Wicks, SFO

Unrelenting time advances
And so must we
To abide with Perfection
In eternity.

May the Lord bless you with a peaceful, pleasant, and productive New Year filled with His bountiful blessings and grace. Ed.

Millennium Lullaby for Baby Jesus

Heleni Pedersoli, SFO
Copyright ©2001

In the morning I shaped green boughs
Into a wreath nailed to the wall
Sprinkled with tiny stars to
Sparkle through the night.
Bright bubbles in rainbow colors
Found their place upon the tree
And the lacy garlands
Like filigree adorned the hall.

In the evening I baked cookies,
Filled a pie, shaped candied fruit in tiny balls,
While bread was kneaded
Hard and sweet upon the plank
And little eager faces with floury hands
Helped make the season right.

At midnight, I placed your tiny body
In cold manger bed

And listened for the voices of angels singing Gloria.
Yet, all I could hear were soft cries of babies
Being born into a new millennium
In so many Bethlehems, around the world.
May all of them have a nativity
And infancy and adolescence, where hope,
And peace, and joy will reign
Where soldiers' sharpened swords
And Herod's cruel hands
Will never deign snuff out the tiny flames.

Sleep, little baby, you are one of us.
We cradle you in fleshy arms,
Swaddle you with love
Shower you with gifts wrapped in gold
Surround you with frankincense and cinnamon
And bathe you with myrrh as a reminder—
A shroud will one day your body enfold.

I Never Knew

By Rita Baughman, SFO

I never knew that I could dance
To glorify my Lord
I never thought the joy I felt
Could magnify my words

I thought that my expressive praise
A shame would surely bring
But as the praise rose in my heart
I couldn't help but sing

My singing was exuberant
My love had overflowed
And soon my body danced with joy
To show love for my God

I thought of Francis ever free
His inhibitions gone
I read of how he left his world
To give to God alone
He didn't care if he looked strange
His folly mattered not
He only knew he had to praise
And serve those we forgot
The suffering, the poor of heart
He cared for with much glee
As he remembered Jesus say
"That you do unto me"

So sing and dance and play your tunes
And serve all those in need
Express yourself in Holy ways
And Jesus will be pleased



A Plan for Peace

By Bruce Snowden, SFO

On August 13, 2006, the Anglican Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, began a week of prayer and fasting for peace in the Middle East, certainly very commendatory (NCR 8/25/06). As a Secular Franciscan, I respectfully propose the following peace initiative relative to the Iraq/Afghanistan War.

In 1219, St. Francis of Assisi traveled to the Holy Land then under Moslem control, passing unharmed through enemy territory, until he got to Sultan Melek-al-Kamil. Once there, Francis proposed terms of peace between Moslems and Christians. The Sultan agreed, but the Christian leaders refused. In commemoration of that meeting between the Sultan and Francis, I am urging a meeting between appropriate Moslem and Christian leaders, to discover a way to end the Iraq/Afghanistan War, asking the warring sides to accept a cessation of hostilities during the Assisi Peace Venture. I further suggest that the proposed APV commence on a Franciscan feast day, or on a day chosen by Moslem participants, hopefully to conclude with a positive outcome. Obviously, all of this will be inclusive with the U. S. Administration, Congressional, Coalition and Governments of Iraq and Afghanistan involvement, in appropriate ways.

Maybe I'm just a "dreamer"—well Scripture does say, "Old men shall dream dreams." At seventy-five years old, I qualify! Some may say, "He's just a stargazer!" To which I say so were the Wise Men from the East!

Ed Shirley, SFO, Appointed National Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Chair

Ed Shirley is the Chairperson for the newly refocused Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee. Ed was born in Kansas City, MO (he says that he was very young at the time). He now resides in Austin, Texas, where he is a member of Sacred Heart Fraternity in the Los Tres Compañeros Region. Ed has been professed since 1980.

When asked about his first priority, Ed replied, "My first priority will be to assemble an Ecumenical/Interreligious team (OK, Committee, but I view us as a team). I will form the agenda in consultation with the team, but my general plans are to continue to build relationships with Non-Catholic Secular Franciscans, to build bridges to Non-Franciscan Non-Catholic Christians (I don't say "Protestant," since that would leave out the Orthodox), and to make inroads to dialogue with Non-Christian religious traditions, particularly lay movements in those traditions. Like the old Sarah Lee cake commercials, "everybody doesn't like someone, but nobody doesn't like St. Francis."

What will Ed do first? He says, "I think I would probably move in that order, though obviously, some of it will happen in tandem, and will be opportunity-driven (and when dealing with regional committees, obviously, this will be driven by the local flavor).



Ed Shirley, SFO

Give me a sense of humor, Lord,
Give me the grace to see a joke,
To get some humor out of life,
And pass it on to other folk.

THE WORLD OF CHILDREN

The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so he can tell when he's really in trouble.

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor thy father and thy mother," she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

Five-year-old Billy couldn't wait to tell his grandfather about the movie he had watched on television, "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea." The scenes with the submarine and the giant octopus had kept him wide-eyed. In the middle of the telling, Grandpa interrupted the boy, "What caused the submarine to sink?" With a look of incredulity Billy replied, "Grandpa, it was the 20,000 leaks!!"

The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.

Three-year-old Benjamin put his shoes on by himself. His mother noticed that the left shoe was on the right foot. She said, "Ben, your shoes are on the wrong feet." He looked up at her with a raised brow and said, "Don't kid me, Mom. They're the only feet I got!"

Little Bobby was overheard praying: "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am."

Sister Rose asked her first graders why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. Little Amy replied: "They couldn't get a babysitter."

The catechism lesson was about how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when hearing how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and she said, "Johnny, what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

We could learn a lot from crayons: Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.

I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She would tell me, and always she was correct. But it was fun for me, so I continued. At last she headed for the door, saying sagely, "Grandma, I think you should try to figure out some of these yourself!"

A mother invited some guests to dinner. At the table, she turned to six-year-old Rosalie and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mommy say," the mother answered.

Rosalie bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Sister Celestine decided to have her third grade class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible—Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse. Little Rickey was excited about the task—but, after much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23, individually in front of visiting parents, Rickey was nervous. But when it was his turn, he stepped to the front of the room and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."



The Regional Roundup

By Sandy Neal, SFO
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Salinas, CA 93906
mark-sandy@att.net

Bros. and Sisters of St. Francis Region

Ecology workshops are planned for 2007 By Dr. Jim and Sue Taylor, SFO, BSSF Region Ecology Commission co-chairs. A workshop on how to organize and conduct an eight-session course on voluntary simplicity within each of our local fraternities was held on Feb. 3 at St. Francis Church in Raleigh, N.C.

The ecology workshops focus on (1) bringing the meaning of voluntary simplicity to all of our brothers and sisters in the BSSF Region, (2) exploring the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for the earth, and (3) acknowledging the connection between our lifestyle choices and the condition of the earth.

St. Francis Region

A **New Year's Renewal Retreat** is planned for Dec. 30, 2006 – January 1, 2007 with Fr. Richard Mc Manus, OFM and Dan and Linda Mellon at the Old Mission Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.

St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Los Angeles, CA invited members of the Region to attend the Nov. 4, 2006, Premiere of **"Room at the Inn,"** a film by **Gerry Straub, SFO** of the San Damiano Foundation.

LaVerna Region

A **Jubilee celebration** was held in Milwaukee for **Helen Krueger, Marjorie Narlock** and **Fred Klotz**. Also honored was Rosie Nichols, on her 25th year as an SFO. Their fraternity supports the city prison ministry. **The Wisconsin Rapids Fraternity** works at the Neighborhood Table project serving the poor. They also make donations to the area food pantry and help to fund the shelter for families, who are victims of abuse. **The Marathon Fraternity** collects and makes supplies for the missions. They make use of pill bottles, make 5X7 squares for quilts, make bandages and soap pads. **The Woodruff Fraternity** makes Franciscan note cards and Tau crosses to raise money.

The Capuchin Friars are Celebrating their 150th Anniversary



Capuchin Friars

The Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order recently celebrated two events to honor the 26 friars who were celebrating jubilee years. The two celebrations, one in Detroit and one in Wisconsin, honored 26 friars' their years of service totaled 1,215 years!

The Capuchin Province of St. Joseph
1927 N. Fourth St. Milwaukee, WI 53212
www.thecapuchins.org



Capuchin Friars

Lady Poverty Region

Alma Lane, SFO, (of 11944 Edgeview Ave, Conneaut Lake, PA, 16316), collects **socks for tots** and now teenagers, too. With the help of family, friends, and others, Alma was able to collect and distribute 1,004 new pairs of socks to seven different organizations, this year. She started collecting socks, after she noticed that a little boy's feet were bleeding and he had no socks on that day. The teacher said that his parents couldn't afford them. At the time she was showing Head Start Children her doll collection. This Secular has been collecting socks for seven years, now.

Restlessness and Expectation

By Francine Gikow, SFO
Franciscan Living Editor

Christmas is approaching and with it expectation. I remember not being able to wait for Christmas day and opening presents as a child. It was the same as an adult, waiting for my children to arrive. Sometimes we say we can't wait, but we don't have a choice in the matter and so we do.

Our spiritual life is like that too. St. Augustine said, "My soul is restless until it rests in you, my Lord." And so it should! We find the Lord in the restlessness. He is there for us in the yearning. As Franciscans, we love. We love God and others. But because we love, we are also frustrated in this love. It is a fact of life for the loving Franciscan, that we have unfulfilled love here on earth. If we did not love, then we would not deserve our label as the "seraphic order."

Since Christmas is the time of the Incarnation, we grow closer to this experience of love at this season than in many others. It may also be a time of frustration. It is here when we see Christ as a baby in the crèches of the world. We marvel over how God loved us so much that He stooped to share our human form. He is Emmanuel - "God with us" - but He remains apart and illusive!

If we truly believe that God is truly with us - even when we are not aware of it - then we are not as frustrated in our yearning. It is in the limited understanding of our mind that this frustration happens. We believe in our *heart and in faith* that we are not alone, but it is in our *logic and mind*, we feel abandoned.

In order to unify my mind, will and heart to God, I have endeavored to play a little game. It is based on the classic "consciousness examen" technique used in many spiritual exercises. In the morning, I pray that I might be granted the grace to see Him in the everyday, in the interactions of my family and work and friends. Later at night, I review the day's events to see if I can discern where God was present during the day. Many times, I have realized that I don't have to wait until the end of the day; I can now see Him in so many different ways and during so many different times. With His grace, I recognize Him, just like the disciples recognized him in the breaking of the bread!

Surely, God is with us! He is Emmanuel!

New Quinquennial Theme

Many cultures - through Francis - in Christ
The 17th Quinquennial Congress
Steubenville, Ohio
July 3 - 8, 2007

To Register for Quinquennial

See Registration Form on page 24.

Fill out the form and mail with your payment to the address on top of the form/ or phone the number/ or log on to the Website on top of the form.

Save \$40.00, if registration fee is received before April 27, 2007.

Are You Planning A Vocation Search for Your Fraternity???

Print [A Guide to Public Relations](#), a PR manual for the SFO for local, regional and national levels by Mary & Bob Stronach, SFO, Public Relations Co-chairs, from the following Website: www.nafra-sfo.org/pressroom/nafra_pr_manual-1-1.pdf

Franciscan Magazines:

(Something for everyone)

St. Anthony Messenger

28 W. Liberty Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

The Cord

St. Bonaventure University
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

Greyfriars Review

C/O The Franciscan Institute
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New Easy Aids Test

Mary Cashin, SFO, RN, MA is a member of Little Portion Fraternity in TAU Cross Region. As a nurse, she is getting the word out about a simple, non-invasive test called **AIDS saliva test called "Ora Sure,"** which costs about \$12.00 and can be read in one visit. The test can detect if the HIV virus is present from 14-21 days, after the virus is contracted. Mary is hoping that other Seculars will help get the word out to help the HIV virus from being passed on.

Little Weeds

Passing the Test

By M. Marko, SFO
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Brother Jacoba Community
St. Peter's in the Loop, Chicago, IL

A+

You probably figured that once you were done with school, you wouldn't be taking too many more tests - unless you chose to. Magazines often run do-it-yourself types of tests. You know the sort: "What kind of husband/wife are you?" "What do you look for in an artichoke?" "Is your cat psychic?" You answer the questions, add up your points, and find out whether you should continue as you are, join the Foreign Legion, or seek professional help. Yup, these tests can be fun - and the best part is, you don't have to take 'em unless you want to.

But are you really done with tests of the mandatory sort? Or is it possible you're being tested continuously, day in and day out? No and yes respectively. The testing is mandatory in that you have no real way of avoiding it. And this testing *is* going on all the time.

If you're putting Francis' outlook and attitudes to work in your everyday life, you'll have a better chance of coping with this constant testing. Because coping is the way you pass life's tests. No score is involved; no certificates are handed out at year-end. Basically, you just muddle through. But if these tests are viewed as challenges rather than as bad experiences, you're halfway to coping already. Granted, life throws us a real biggie now and then; but what I'm talking about here are the little tests, the ones that make up your everyday life.

So what are these tests? Oh, they're a variety of things. Sometimes they're people, sometimes they're situations. Sometimes you can almost see them coming, sometimes they catch you totally off guard. How do you cope with them? Well, the first thing is to recognize them for what they are. Once you've done that, as I said, you're halfway there. What happens if you don't pass? Y'flunk life? No. Nothing so drastic. However, life can be a lot easier if you pass more often than not.

F'instance, there's this particular person who just pushes your buttons. In fact, you get the feeling they've installed a few extra! They don't mean to

affect you this way. Quite the contrary, they'd give you the shirt off their back. Unfortunately, it would feel like they were still in it! Sometimes, you can avoid them; other times, you have to do your best to be patient. If they have the same affect on other people, they may be insecure and/or lonely.

Some people are one-time tests: the chain-smoker in line in front of you, the rude store clerk, etc. Keeping in mind that they *are* one-timers will help you hang on to your cool (and pass the test).

The situations that test us are legion. Those red lights when you're already running late; getting home, digging into the bag, and finding that Burger King did it their way, etc. Life throws us these little curve balls everyday.

Some folks always seem to be in a good mood. Nothing ever fazes them. Yet, if you spent the day with them, you'd notice that their life is not that different from yours in that things don't always run smoothly for them either. So why the silly smiles on their faces? They've caught on to the tests and deal with them in such a way that they pass them. ('Course, then again, they may be squiffed. But we'll assume they're sober. I'm sure most of them are.)

A sense of humor helps a lot. Don't ever take yourself so seriously that you get bent out of shape when you find yourself unintentionally playing the clown. And don't ever get so caught up in little things that they become larger than life. My acid test is simple: something happens; I ask myself if anyone will die as a result of it. The answer is invariably "no." That out of the way, I get on with my life.

Some folks flourish under pressure. Give 'em a deadline, and they're in hog heaven. Me, I don't work well under pressure. Unfortunately, I don't work at all without it. So I'm constantly looking for that middle ground. I guess that's one of my tests. But as I usually find it, I guess I'm passing! A lot of it has to do with priorities.

If Francis had been worried about the condition of his clothing, he might never have had the nerve to visit the Holy Father. If he'd been too concerned with what he was going to say, he might have ended up making it so flowery and affected, no one could understand. As it was, he simply stated his feelings, from his heart, as best he could. He always did his best. After all, he was doing everything for God, so it had to be his best. And maybe that's the real secret of dealing with the tests: keeping in mind that they're opportunities to practice our Gospel life. And in the game of life, if you do your best, you'll pass the test. Which rhymes. But it also makes good sense. Try it!



CNSA NEWS & VIEWS

Reports – Information – Recommendations – Reflections
For spiritual assistants at all levels

By Lester Bach OFM Cap

PROVINCIAL & REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT'S MEETING CNSA – Easton, PA – Sept 19-22, 2006

The members of CNSA and the Regional and Provincial Spiritual Assistant, gathered at St. Francis Retreat House in Easton, PA. They discussed the vision and structure of the SFO (with talks by Carol Gentile, SFO and Lester Bach, OFM Cap) and the development of lay leadership in the SFO (with input from Bernard Tickerhoff, TOR).

There were continuing discussions on the state of spiritual assistance in the USA today. The naming of the SFO members, as spiritual assistants was affirmed, at both the local and regional levels. A program for training the SFOs for this important ministry should cover all aspects of spiritual assistance, including how they form the link to the larger Franciscan family. A new book for training purposes will be published in 2007.

WHO APPOINTS SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

The appointment of spiritual assistants is the prerogative of the major superiors of the First Order/TOR. That authority may be delegated to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant (Friar) of a First Order/TOR Province.

No SFO Council, at any level, has the authority to appoint spiritual assistants at local, regional, national or international levels.

A local council should be consulted and may recommend candidates for SA to the Provincial or Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the 1st Order/TOR province to which a fraternity is bonded. cf. GC. Article 88.3 – 91. 1, .3 / Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO – Article 5.1, .3, .3 – Article 11.2

The Provincial or Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the 1st Order/TOR province that established a fraternity appoints the Local Spiritual Assistant. Provincials or PSA's with fraternities in a region appoint Regional Spiritual Assistants after consulting the regional council. The Provincial Spiritual Assistant is free in

making the appointment. He is responsible for appointing *suitable and well-prepared* people.

ARGHHHHHHHHH!

Sometimes the publication of books and materials for formation is met with: Not another one! I just bought one and now you offer another! Soon I'll be broke trying to keep up!

Having contributed to this situation, I can only say that nothing stands still. The minute a book of mine is published, I consider ways I want to change it as new ideas and insights come my way. Fresh ideas sneak into my life and out comes another book.

I can't do anything about the economics, but I can say that I hope each new book adds something to what is already published. In fact, I consider a new book an improvement on the older one. Both have value, it's just that I want to share fresh ideas and facts that come my way. That often requires another publication. Use them all – and let them "assist" in enriching our dedication to the Franciscan way of life!

Having said that, please be prepared for a new book for training people to serve as local and regional spiritual assistants. It is titled *Franciscan Family Connection* (FFC). Published by CNSA, it is a much more complete program than *Life-Giving Union*. CNSA recognized the need for an upgraded book. We realized the need for material not only for training local spiritual assistants, but also regional spiritual assistants. We hope to have it published next year (2007) in time for the Quinquennial.

BE IN TOUCH

We have mentioned this before, but it bears repeating. When a local council or a regional council wishes to have a fraternal and pastoral visitation, they should notify the higher council and/or CNSA/NEC not less than six months before a chosen date. Like all of you, members of higher councils also have busy lives beyond their service in the SFO.

It is a boon to their personal schedules to have plenty of time to schedule visitations. Please be courteous and give the people involved plenty of time to arrange their schedules. Visitors look forward to visitations and elections. Sharing with their brothers and sisters is a privilege. You can help us by your courtesy in making the request in plenty of time.

ST. ELIZABETH - PRINCESS OF HUNGARY

The minister general of Third Order Regular has published a lengthy letter on St. Elizabeth. Here are a few ideas from that letter. (E-mail – mingentor@tiscali.it)

+“Elizabeth was a Hungarian princess born in 1207. She was daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary and his wife, Gertrude of Andechs-Meran.

+ When she was fourteen, she married Ludwig IV, Landgraf of Thuringia, in the church of St. George in Eisenach. They had three children, Hermann, Sophia and Gertrude. Elizabeth became a widow in 1227, when she was 20 years old.

+ She made her public profession in the Third Order on March 24, 1228. She dedicated herself to serve the poor. In 1229, she placed the hospital that she founded in Marburg under the patronage of St. Francis. Elizabeth gathered some companions into a small fraternity of prayer and penitence. She herself lived the life of a penitent. Like Francis, she ministered in the world to serve people, rather than in a cloister away from the world.

+ Elizabeth died at the age of 24, after a life of service as wife, mother, and dedicated Franciscan. Her contemplative prayer moved her to concern and service to the poor.”

The SFO Minister General , Encarnación del Pozo, OFS, writes in her letter on St. Elizabeth: “We intend to celebrate this centenary (800th centenary of St Elizabeth’s birth) in two stages:

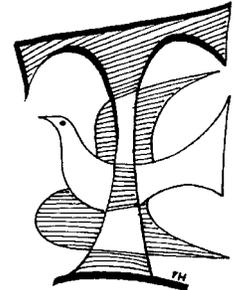
+ The first year: from November 17, 2006, to November 17, 2007, together with the entire family of the Third Order, supported and accompanied by the First Order, will be dedicated to learning more about the spirituality of Saint Elizabeth.

+ The second year, from November 17, 2007 to November 17, 2008, will be celebrated especially by the SFO and will be dedicated to going into further detail on the secularity of our vocation, inspiring ourselves through our Patron.

...For the whole duration of the centenary, a spiritual thought on St. Elizabeth and a brief reflection on the concrete life of Secular Franciscans today will be published on our Web page: www.ciofs.org.”

DON'T RUSH!

+ The SFO way of life is a lifelong commitment. Serious initial formation and continued ongoing formation is needed to keep the vocation alive and well. Rushing or skipping segments of formation because we think someone already “knows,” is usually not a good decision. This also applies to newly forming and emerging fraternities.



+ When people transfer to another fraternity, for whatever reason, the fraternity to which the individual transfers may invite the transferee to engage in some formation in the new fraternity. Though fraternities follow the same structure, each fraternity has a culture of its own. A new person needs time to get a sense of that culture. The local council decides on the timetable, but it is healthy to give the transferee time to get acquainted. This “cushion of time” would militate against the individual immediately running for office in the fraternity.

+ A newly professed person should not ordinarily be immediately elected to an office in the fraternity. Newly professed people need time to experience fraternity life after profession. The Constitutions put it this way: *The fraternity has the duty to give special attention to the formation of the newly professed, to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging.* (GC – Article 44.2) There is little encouragement in the Constitutions to elect newly professed to the council, while they are still trying to become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging. If a fraternity lacks candidates for the council or the fraternity, serious reflection on the direction of the fraternity may be needed. Honest discussion about recruitment might be in order. At times, dialogue about the fraternity’s future might bear fruit. The local council can invite a regional visitation to dialogue about the situation. Options can be developed through common sharing. Franciscans are not afraid of reality. We deal with it honestly and prayerfully – together.

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