

sfo National News

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Newsletter of the National Fraternity SFO - USA
P.O. BOX 9237, Washington, DC 20090-0237

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PAX ET BONUM

When the editors of the Franciscan Herald announced their intention to discontinue printing, it was suggested that a publication of a different form might better serve our Order's current needs. With this in mind and with a strong desire to open new channels of communication, the Executive Council of the National Fraternity decided to initiate this newsletter.

Obviously this little paper is no substitute for the Herald. But with your support and with the grace of God, it can grow into a vehicle suited to today's requirements.

The National News will be an authoritative voice for the National Fraternity. It will concentrate on items of national interest. We hope you will find the material suitable for inclusion in your province or fraternity newsletters.

We also request your help. We would like news of your province. Also information on workshops, congresses, pilgrimages, courses and any function that is open to members from outside of the sponsoring group.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

COMMITMENT TO SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Trying to decide what to write in a newsletter such as this can be perplexing. So much has been written, by so many knowledgeable people, that I wonder if there is anything left to be said. However, I feel that it will be fruitful to exchange some thoughts on leadership within the Franciscan community. Mindful that most of you are leaders in the Secular Franciscan order, I will attempt to share my thoughts on leadership from a Franciscan point of view. Perhaps an exchange of ideas can be started that will enrich all of us to make us more effective in our roles. This in turn will strengthen the Order.

Service is an underlying gospel principle of Franciscanism and an integral part of the Rule. "Mindful that anyone 'who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself,' let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service." (Rule, Art. 14). When given responsibilities, it is by the very nature of our vocation as followers of Francis, that we are called to fulfill them in the spirit of service.

Flowing from the general call of all Franciscans to serve, most of us have been asked to take on a particular form of service, that of being a leader, a presider, one having a role of authority in our various provinces and at the national level. We are at the same time both servant (minister) and leader (presider), hence the term servant-leader. Not self-proclaimed and power hungry, but people called forth by the community to serve the community and to provide the leadership necessary to help the community reach its ultimate potential.

Richard Morton, National Vice Minister

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SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT S. F. O.

The Spiritual Assistant of the Secular Franciscan Order should be a person of virtue, one who truly tries to emulate the virtues of Christ and St. Francis in daily life. In other words, a Christo Centric person, who keeps abreast of the mind and teaching of the Church and Order. A person who assists the secular membership in bringing the Gospel ideals to the market place of the world in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

The Spiritual Assistant is a member of the fraternity council who assists in decision making, sharing ideas, inspiring leadership, and reconciling, etc. However, the Spiritual Assistant's main concern is the spiritual development and growth of the S.F.O.

The Spiritual Assistant exercises pastoral care of the fraternity by:

- a) conferences, exhortations, homilies, prayer
- b) by presence and advice,
- c) through fraternal sharing of one's life,
- d) through spiritual direction, and
- e) by challenging membership, etc.

Briefly a spiritual Assistant is a person given to Gospel life in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, and strives to share the richness of gospel ideals with the S.F.O. A Spiritual Assistant shares the fraternity council responsibilities, but does not dominate or control the council. The spiritual Assistant keeps abreast of the Church, and Order and shares material with the membership of S.F.O. so that they can become more dynamic and enthusiastic in transforming the world into Christ.

In a 1986 issue of Letter From Rome, Carl Schafer, O.F.M. in the article "Authoritative Assistants", says: "St. Francis following the example of Jesus, remodeled the structure of superior/subjects. The superior becomes the minister, and the subjects become members of a fraternity. The relationship is no longer one of superior to subjects but of minister and servant to one's brothers and sister. In the modern context of the Secular Franciscan Order, the minister is no longer a friar but a secular leader, and the friar has the authority of an assistant to the fraternity.

Fr. Ulric Buening, O.F.M. Cap.
National Spiritual Assistant

COMMISSION REPORTS

FAMILY FOCUS.....Report from the National Family Commission

Brothers and Sisters,

At the National Fraternity Meeting of October, 1985 the members of the Family Commission determine a two point thrust:
SPIRITUAL....Encourage Family Prayer (Family prays together a set time each week, at the convenience of family members.)
TEMPORAL....Encourage Secular Franciscans to become more active in changing, shaping and monitoring those institutions and services which have an impact on families.

In line with our temporal program, last October the Seculars were asked to back the recommendations of Attorney General Meese's Commission on pornography. We asked the Seculars to encourage the members of their local fraternities to write to President Reagan and to the Attorney General to ask them to support an aggressive program.

In answer to my letter, President Reagan, stated that over 150,000 Americans wrote letters on this issue. I know that Secular Franciscans were among that number. Now the Attorney General has developed a seven point program which includes 95 percent of the Commission's recommendations. All of us across the country can play an important role by supporting the effort to enforce anti-obscenity laws at the State and local levels as well as at the Federal level.

For future activities of the family commission, watch this newsletter. See you in San Diego!

Marie E Amore
Co-chairperson, Family Commission

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FORMATION COMMISSION

At our meeting in Arizona earlier this year the Commission decided to increase its membership so that the Formation Commission would be representative of the entire U.S. We invited five individuals who had attended one of our workshops to be a part of the meeting in Albuquerque. As a result of that meeting we now have a representative in the NE, SE, Central, NW and SW. The idea is to establish area workshop/formation teams who would then train like teams in their area. In other words it would be more of a "training the trainers" thing. All were enthusiastic and agreed to begin seeking out area people to assist in this. Though we cannot dictate I think most of us feel there needs to be some standards for our formation program, and particularly some understanding of the Guidelines. That means that future workshops (except for the one scheduled in Nov. 1987 in Staten Island) will be presented by area people with one or two of the commission to help in presentations. No definite decisions were made. We plan to meet 14-15 Aug. immediately following the Congress. The new members are well qualified and the five of us on the Commission are very pleased with their willingness, eagerness to get some program in the works.

Material supplied by June Carpenter, National Formation Minister and Laura Haukaas, Commission Secretary

RECOMMENDED READING

Here are three books that are Franciscan in spirit although their authors do not belong to a Franciscan order.

WHY NOT? Daring to Live the Challenge of Christ by William J. O'Malley, SJ
Sixty-three meditations on the Gospel which are interesting and original.
(Alba House, New York 1986, \$6.95)

THE GOSPEL WITHOUT COMPROMISE by Catherine de Hueck Doherty
It will make you reevaluate your Gospel living (Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame,
Indiana 1976, \$2.95)

HIS WAY BY Father David Knight
An Every Day Plan For Following Jesus. Recommended by the Formation
Commission. Emphasizes the importance of conversion.
(St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, OH 1977, \$3.50)

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SOURCES

GUIDELINES FOR INITIAL FORMATION, is available from Guidelines for Initial
Formation, P.O. Box 5815, Akron, OH 44372. \$5.00 plus shipping.

THE RULE OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER is available from Walt Stichart,
32579 Callahan Rd., Scappoose, OR 97056, \$1.50.

WAY OF LIFE (reflections on the Rule) is available from FRANCISCAN FRIARS,
232 S. Home Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15202. \$3.50 plus shipping, discounts
10-19 copies-10%, 20 or more 20%.

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MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

We extend our sympathy to June Carpenter, National First Vice Minister,
whose husband Roger passed away May 2 after a brief illness.

We also extend our sympathy to Marie Amore, National Vice Minister, whose
husband John passed away on June 30 after an extended illness.

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LATE NEWS

Jim Lynch, National Minister, has been invited to meet with Pope John Paul
II during the Pope's visit to San Francisco. Jim will be representing our
Order when a number of lay leaders are presented to His Holiness.

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The National Congress still has some room. It is an important means of
communication. Please promote attendance. See you in San Diego!

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