



FRANCISCAN STUDIES REFLECTION

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This summer, St. Bonaventure University and the School of Franciscan Studies hosted several Secular Franciscans in July in its presentation of another chapter in the tome of Franciscan Studies. Instructed by Julie McElmurry, *The Testament of St. Francis* highlighted multiple considerations imbedded within the *Testament*.

An overview of Franciscan writings introduced the seminar, followed by the background of the *Testament*. All participants were asked to copy the *Testament* into diaries that were provided. This activity had a dual effect. First, it became a sound way of digging deeper into the reality and meaning of the *Testament*, and, secondly, it generated a gift to give to someone else. That someone else became another member of the class. This was and continues to be the essence of

the Testament — read it, digest it, live it and pass it on.

An enjoyable role play of a press conference with St. Francis was enacted to enhance and enliven the wording of the *Testament*. Reflections contrasting and comparing 13th century thought with 21st century thought seemed to launch the entire *Testament* into current reality.

Rules for hermitages were presented and subsequently sampled in one class session using a “mother/son” approach. The resounding reaction was that it was a profound introspective experience with positive results.

Other presentations were offered the participants. Father David Couturier, OFM Cap, Executive Director, Franciscan Institute and Franciscan Publications: Dean, School of Franciscan Studies, delivered a powerful presentation. On another afternoon, Father Michael Calabria, OFM, entertained us with a special talk on Islam and Franciscans.

A late afternoon trip to Mount Irenaeus Franciscan Mountain Retreat, including the celebration of the Eucharist, rounded out the eventful week.