

FRANCISCAN LIVING

REMEMBERING MY FRIEND JERRY ROUSSEAU, OFS

By Jan Parker, OFS

Trusting in 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.

Article 11, OFS Rule

I first met Jerry at a National Chapter. He was there as Regional Minister of Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region.

I noticed right away that he was a member everyone looked up to. He also had a wonderful ability to explain complicated topics in a very simple and clear manner. I remember once there was some confusion about the financial report. Jerry raised his hand, and, with great respect for what the treasurer was trying to say, he explained that section of the financial report by using a common example that everyone understood.

"Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others." Article 19, OFS Rule

A few years later, when we very much needed a new national treasurer, many of us hoped that Jerry would accept a nomination. I remember very well approaching both Jerry and his wife Madeline to ask



about this. I knew it would be a difficult decision for him. He had already served many years at the regional level, and I knew that he and Madeline were looking forward to having more time for other important priorities in their lives. With great hope in my heart, I asked him if he would be willing to serve three more years, and take on the duties of national treasurer.

I can still see Jerry looking over at Madeline to see what she thought. Madeline looked right at me and said, "Yes, he can serve." It was a beautiful moment of sacrifice for the good of the Order.

Jerry was an amazing treasurer because he was an amazing Secular Franciscan. He was very pastoral in his approach to being treasurer, and he was

lighthearted, too. Once he wrote a column for the TAU-USA entitled "The Sermon on the Amount." He consistently referenced Article 25 of the OFS Rule, emphasizing that our financial support should go first to "the life of the fraternity," secondly to "the needs of worship," and thirdly to "[the needs] of the apostolate, and charity."

I never saw Jerry without his copy of the Rule. He always kept it close at hand, and most importantly, not only did he carry it with him, but he also lived it. He truly did. It had been a few years since our paths had crossed, but I was looking forward to seeing him and Madeline at the Quinquennial. Sadly, they had to cancel at the last minute for health reasons. I'm sorry I did not get to see him, but who he was and how he lived his Franciscan calling has made a big difference in my life. Be at peace, dear brother!

Peace,
Jan

"Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith. Article 15, OFS Rule



ThankYou! Bob and Mary Stronach

Bob and Mary Stronach, OFS, were honored at the Quinquennial for many years of service as chairpersons of the Public Relations Committee of the national order. Bob is a familiar face behind the camera, taking hundreds of photos at events like the Quinquennial and Chapter, while Mary has planned and written many articles about the events. Their gift was an image of a Tau crafted from photos and articles they have written for this publication over the years. Mary

was recently elected international vice-minister general, and Bob is editor of *Vox Franciscana* (*Franciscan Voice*), the CIOFS publication. Bob took all the photos at the Quinquennial except this one on the left.