

TAU-USA

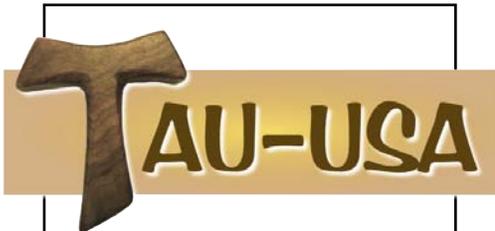
A PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN
ORDER

FALL 2013 - ISSUE 77



*Let us strive to be cheerful and
welcoming to all we meet, to combat
that darkness in ourselves and in others.*

Tom Bello, OFS - National Minister



Mission to Share the Vision

The TAU-USA, a publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order of the United States, is a vital communication link between the NAFRA leadership and all professed Secular Franciscans throughout the United States. The articles within the publication, while sharing the Secular Franciscan charism and vision, are intended to inform, inspire, and challenge.

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Contents

Minister's Message.	1
by Tom Bello, OFS *	
Sharing the Vision.	3
by Jan Parker, OFS *	
ConFab 2013.	4
by Bob and Mary Stronach, OFS *	
YouFra/World Youth Day	12
by Various Attendees *	
Spiritual Assistance.	16
by Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap *	
Ecumenical/Interfaith	18
by Anne Mulqueen, OFS *	
Summer Seminar.	20
by Pope Francis	
Franciscan Living.	22
by Francine Gikow, OFS	
OFS Disaster Response Team	23
by Jim Fleckinger, OFS	
When art and prayer merge	24
Smoky Valley Printing	25

Note: All articles followed by * have Spanish translations on the NAFRA website.

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THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER - USA

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

National Minister, Tom Bello, OFS

The Franciscan Command to Smile!

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Our Brother Bill Short, who blessed us at the Q, has a wonderful set of tapes entitled *The Treasure of a Poor Man: St. Francis of Assisi and Franciscan Spirituality* (www.nowyouknowmedia.com/franciscan.html). In this set, Brother Bill gives 12 enlightening talks about various aspects of Franciscan Spirituality. In the ninth talk, entitled “No Gloomy Hypocrites! Spiritual Joy to Frustrate the Devil,” Brother Bill relates how St. Francis in the Rule of 1221 as much as mandates the spiritual practice of showing joy to all without exception.

In the Omnibus of Sources, page 38, the Rule of 1221, Chapter 7, reads: “And all the friars, no matter where they are or in whatever situation they find themselves, should like spiritually minded men, diligently show reverence and honor to one another without murmuring (1 Peter 4:9). They should let it be seen that they are happy in God, cheerful and courteous, as is expected of them, and be careful not to appear gloomy or depressed like hypocrites.”

“This may be the only Rule in the Catholic Church that has a positive command about being cheerful,” exclaims Brother Bill! He then makes several points about what I call this command to smile.

First, paraphrasing Brother Bill, it is not true that this command arises merely to generate the simple-minded, jovial, heavy-set friars like one may see in the comics, the movies or on cookie jars. No. Brother Bill says that the Rule of 1221 may have come out of a time of considerable sadness and even doubt for St. Francis. The Order he had founded may have seemed to be growing away from him; he didn’t feel at times that he had a place in the Order. St. Francis may have even been tempted to leave the Order, Brother Bill suggests. Thus, this command arises out of a genuine struggle against a darkness of spirit.

Second, again paraphrasing, this command focused not merely on the individual, but on the effect the individual produced on the people the individual encountered. In other words, this command to be “happy in God, cheerful and courteous,” pointed as much outwardly as inwardly. Indeed, just one line before the command above, the Rule of 1221, Chapter 7, reads, “Everyone who comes to them, friend or foe, rogue or robber, must be made welcome.” (Ibid.)

I pause to ask myself, “Do I always greet everyone, without exception, with cheer and joy? I must answer that I do not, yet St. Francis exhorts his followers that welcome and gladness must be on our faces, even before a “foe, rogue or robber.”

More than this, these Franciscans were living in fraternity, and they must not show their inner doubts and depression to those with whom they lived and worked and prayed lest the others lose their own spiritual joy. Brother Bill relates how the others

around him constantly described St. Francis as “cheerful,” but when St. Francis felt that inner darkness, he would withdraw into prayer so as not to bring those he so loved down.

Again, I pause to ask myself, “Am I a cause of joy or do I bring sadness and doubt into the family circle, into the fraternity gathering?” And what about you?

Third, the deeper spiritual importance of this command to show joy was to combat the devil. Thomas of Celano writes in Chapter 88 of the *Second Life* in the , page 465:

“St. Francis maintained that the safest remedy against the thousand snares and wiles of the enemy is spiritual joy. For he would say, ‘The devil rejoices most when he can snatch away spiritual joy from a servant of God. He carries dust so he can throw it into even the tiniest chinks of conscience and soil the candor of mind and purity of life. But when spiritual joy fills the heart,’ he said, ‘the serpent throws off his deadly poison in vain. The devils cannot harm the servant of Christ when they see he is filled with holy joy. When, however, the soul is wretched, desolate, and filled with sorrow, it is easily overwhelmed by its sorrow or it may turn to vain enjoyments.’

“The saint, therefore, made it a point to keep himself in joy of heart and to preserve the unction of the Spirit and the oil of gladness. He avoided with the greatest care the miserable illness of dejection, so that if he felt it creeping over his mind even a little, he would have recourse very quickly to prayer. For he would say, ‘If the servant of God, as may happen, is disturbed in any way, he should rise immediately to pray and he should remain in the presence of the heavenly Father until he restores unto him the joy of salvation. For if he remains stupefied in sadness, the Babylonian stuff will increase, so that, unless it be at length driven out by tears, it will generate an abiding rust in the heart.’”

Again, to paraphrase Brother Bill, other spiritual traditions in the Catholic Church may stress seriousness and gravitas, but the Franciscan spiritual tradition takes joy very seriously. The devil’s “dust” and “an abiding rust in the heart” must be avoided both in ourselves and in our influence on others.

Yes, my beloved sisters and brothers, there is much in the world around us to cause great dismay. We see hatred and war, violence and abuse, poverty and starvation. Yes, there may be much in our families and fraternities to cause us to worry and doubt. We see faction and discord as we pray to be instruments of God’s great peace. And yes, speaking for myself, I am a fallen creature, always beset by the devil, the world and the flesh. Sometimes I fall down. Sometimes I don’t do what I should do to help others. Sometimes I may cause others to fall.

Nonetheless, as children of the same all-loving, all-forgiving, all-powerful God, as permanently professed followers of Sts. Francis and Clare in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, let us heed seriously this aspect of spiritual joy so firmly grounded in the Franciscan spiritual tradition.

Let us strive to be cheerful and welcoming to all we meet, to combat that darkness in ourselves and in others.

Let us never cease praying and working for our families and fraternities to be places where true spiritual joy in the Lord resides and where we are recognized by all as people “happy in God, cheerful and courteous.”

And may the Peace of Christ and the Spiritual Joy of Sts. Francis and Clare abide always with us, I pray in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Sharing The Vision

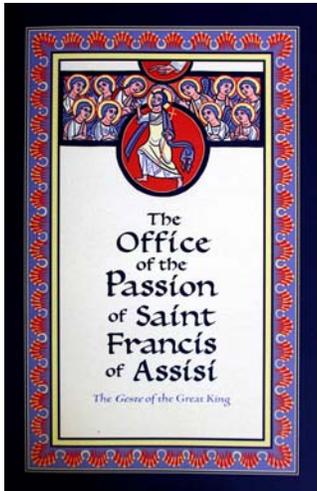
NAFRA Regional Executive Council Updates

by Jan Parker, National Secretary

Praying as Francis Prayed

“We should sing our prayer! Francis loved to sing!” When Rob Breen made this suggestion, I couldn’t have agreed more. We were at our March 2013 NEC meeting in St. Louis and Rob, Kent Ferris and I were brainstorming about the upcoming summer Confab. Yes, we should sing! And our prayer should be, as Rob stated passionately, *totally Franciscan*. What immediately came to my mind was a prayer written by St. Francis himself — *The Office of the Passion*..

I was introduced to the Office of the Passion a few years ago by a group of OFS brothers and sisters in Rolla, MO. How well I remember their prayer time! It was so joyful and ended with a strong, “So be it. So be it. Amen!” Afterwards, their minister turned to me and said, “We just don’t ever want to miss any of these delicious words!” This was my first knowledge of the “delicious words” of this office composed by our holy father Francis and sung by him seven times a day.



The book used in Rolla was a red hardcover entitled *The Geste of the Great King*. A later edition of this book has a more colorful cover and is called *The Office of the Passion of Saint Francis of Assisi*. No matter the title or edition, this little book is a treasure. One of its many wonderful features is an in-depth commentary that contains the literal translation, faithful to

Francis’ original prayers. This working text is a tool for understanding the spirituality of St. Francis, for example, how he uses certain phrases from Scripture to highlight what is most dear to his heart. Learning more about this little office helped me feel very close to Francis as I prayed it. What a gift to “pray as Francis prayed!”

We did, indeed, sing our prayer at the Confab, using the *Office the Passion*. and we will pray it again at our 2013 NAFRA Chapter; we will have books for every-

one to use and also available for purchase. This book and an accompanying CD are also available through Tau Publishing in Phoenix, Ariz. (602-625-6183).

National Commissions and Committees

Each September, in preparation for Chapter, our national Commissions and Committees submit reports summarizing their accomplishments and future goals. These reports are sent to the Regional Ministers and are available to any OFS member by request. Our Commissions and Committees are ultimately established to help us live the OFS Rule. They serve us all — nationally, regionally and locally — providing structures, resources and encouragement in their respective areas. The three national commissions, focus on Formation, Youth, and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. Our committees are varied and vital, and include Computer, Ecumenical/Interfaith, Fraternal Life and Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity. This year we are especially excited about four new committees set up to address national priorities: Task Force on Spiritual Assistance, Communications, Vocations, and Development. Aside from these groups, there are individuals appointed to serve in the areas of Archives, Historian, Minister of Vocations, Public Relations and *TAU-USA*. Praise God for the many individual brothers and sisters who commit hours of time and energy, often on a weekly basis, to help our Order grow and thrive! If you have a question about our Commissions and Committees, or would like to see any of their reports please contact me at jansfo@yahoo.com or call 636-734-9979.

National Executive Council Meetings are scheduled for Oct. 12-15, 2013, in Kansas City and February 6-9, 2014, in Portland, Ore.

Future dates to keep in mind:

2014 Summer Seminar on “Spiritual Assistance” - July 10-14 in Loretto, Penn.

2014 NAFRA Chapter – Oct. 21-26 in Lake Dallas, Texas.

An up-to-dated 2012 version of *Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order* is now available from Smoky Valley Printing.

What did Francis do?

What did Francis do?" Mike Bedesky, a guest speaker at the 2013 JPIC/ Youth Confab, answered his own question: "He gave up everything...and went out to create the Body of Christ in the community."

Bedesky, a member of St. Cecilia Catholic Church in Glen Carbon, Illinois, joined other board members of a faith-based community-organizing group, United Congregations of Metro-East (UCM), at the Confab's JPIC track.



MIKE BEDESKY

They spoke about relationship building that led to better interracial relations, faith-based commu-

nity organizing, and improvements to the community (e.g. change in schools with lead in drinking water; repairing homes with absentee landlords; fighting a condo development that would have displaced residents of a trailer park).

Pastor Charles Burton, UCM board president, put it another way: "We believe the work of justice is the work of Christ."



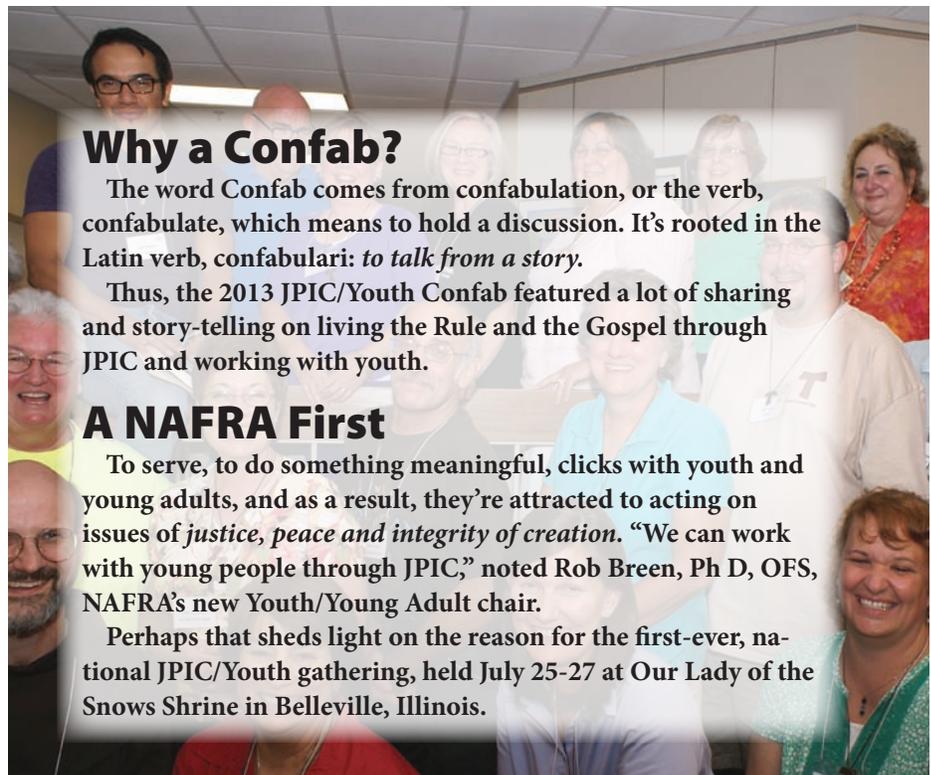
PASTOR CHARLES BURTON

There is a theological basis for this work, he said, which aims to "restore relationships" and "empower people to live whole." It begins with one-on-one discussions, in which



JPIC / YOUTH CONFAB

By BOB and MARY STRONACH, OFS



Why a Confab?

The word Confab comes from confabulation, or the verb, confabulate, which means to hold a discussion. It's rooted in the Latin verb, confabulari: *to talk from a story*.

Thus, the 2013 JPIC/Youth Confab featured a lot of sharing and story-telling on living the Rule and the Gospel through JPIC and working with youth.

A NAFRA First

To serve, to do something meaningful, clicks with youth and young adults, and as a result, they're attracted to acting on issues of *justice, peace and integrity of creation*. "We can work with young people through JPIC," noted Rob Breen, Ph D, OFS, NAFRA's new Youth/Young Adult chair.

Perhaps that sheds light on the reason for the first-ever, national JPIC/Youth gathering, held July 25-27 at Our Lady of the Snows Shrine in Belleville, Illinois.

there is genuine interest in the other.

"We call them sacred conversations," Pastor Burton noted.

These guest appearances came two days into the Confab to provide an example of JPIC in action.

The confab began with outgoing national JPIC Chair Kent Ferris, OFS, and Youth/Youth Adult Chair Rob Breen, OFS, addressing the Franciscan charism from their perspectives.

Ferris pointed to the Secular Franciscan Rule to show what JPIC was about:

- to live the Gospel (Art. 4).
- to be in the forefront of promoting justice. (Art. 15)
- to be bearers of peace (Art 19).
- to be in universal kinship with all of creation (Art. 18).

In other words, he concluded along with Franciscan leaders around the world, JPIC is part of our Franciscan DNA.

Breen noted he has had some success in “putting young people together in environmental issues” and that Secular Franciscans can work with young people through JPIC.

“Francis and Clare came to give a new charism to the world...through living the Gospel,” he said. This “continues to touch the hearts of young people today.”

He added: “I’m absolutely convinced that we’re in very parallel times, despite 800 years... We may be one of the keys for young people...because we have the Franciscan charism.”

In other words, “Franciscan spirituality can give meaning and peace to young people seeking something more out of life” in such a profane and secular world.

The opportunity to develop groups of Franciscan youth (called YouFra) necessitates a flexible approach. Breen explained YouFra this way:

- a flexible, adaptive fraternity environment.
- designed to be a temporary experience (to live the Gospel in the spirit of Francis and Clare) on a year-to-year basis.
- a year of formation.
- recognizing that young people are mobile (move on after graduating). “The hope is they’ll eventually have that hunger and come home.”



KENT FERRIS, OFS



ROB BREEN, OFS



THE CONFAB TOOK PLACE IN THE SHRINE CONFERENCE CENTER.

• open to Catholic youth and young adults. For practical reasons (such as the vetting required for adults to work with youth), Breen wants to focus on young adults, aged 18-27. Some attend-

ees, however, wanted equal focus on youth younger than 18.

The OFS is to YouFra what the friars are to the OFS, he noted, so Secular Franciscans need to journey with YouFra.

JPIC TRACK

In addition to UCM guests, the JPIC track sported three “faculty members.” Kent Ferris introduced them this way:

- Carolyn Townes, OFS, former JPIC animator for the OFM Holy Name Province, whose life purpose is to help create a spirit of peace.
- Kim Smolik, Ed D, executive director of Franciscan Mission Service, who has spent over 18 years as an educator, activist and administrator in a variety of social justice areas.

- Rhett Engleking, OFS, who manages Franciscan Action Network’s brand new Franciscan Earth Corps and whose passion is in creating community around practices of being contemplative in action.

Coming to live the Franciscan Rule (Gospel) and recognizing JPIC as a practical way to do that, involves a process of conversion (daily conversion as the Rule says), and of accomplishing real change in our lives, Engleking pointed out before offering a paradoxical view of embracing JPIC:

“It’s easier to LIVE yourself into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of living.”

Townes referred to JPIC as “simply the Rule in action.” It “supports the restoration of right relationships with God, with ourselves, with each other and creation.” It “isn’t just something we do; it’s who we are.”

Townes went on to remind everyone that St. Francis was called to rebuild the church. “But we are the church, and we need to start with ourselves.” Then “we can move from being bearers of peace to doing peace”... such as in the conflicts, vitriolic opposing views, and misunderstandings all around.



CAROLYN TOWNES, OFS; KIM SMOLIK, Ed D, AND RHETT ENGLEKING, OFS.

“We tend to dehumanize the other side,” she said. “We need to rehumanize the other side.”

“So how do we do peace?”

She offered five actions, assigning them to each letter of the word, peace.

P - Prayer, the beginning and the end, the source, the core. “In a life of prayer, our will and God’s will act together.”

E - Empathy, the ability to imagine yourself in another’s place and understand his/her feeling. “Empathy is being present, being with.” “People will forget what you said, what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

A - Active listening. Not selective listening. “Listening is probably the greatest opportunity to enter into another’s world.” It takes work.

C - Compassion. It recognizes suffering in others, and leads to a disposition to relieve suffering. “Compassion moves us from empathy to action.”

E - Evangelical love. Love others and expect nothing in return. Thomas Aquinas points to love as the effective willing of the good of the other. “Willing the good. No regrets. No judgements.”

Townes went on to say that Corinthians provides a blueprint to love. Love

is patient (self control), kind, humble, respectful, forgiving, honest.

“Love is transformative,” interjected Engleking.

“An enemy is a friend whose story we haven’t heard yet,” added Townes.

“You are lovable,” asserted an attendee. “God doesn’t make junk.”

A common concern arose among participants: How to involve fraternity members in JPIC?

The first step, speakers suggested, is to get to know one another, using one-on-one conversations and getting to understand where they’re coming from and what their interests and concerns are. Take simple steps. Ask what’s comfortable for them right now.

Look at Townes’ PEACE actions “as your tools” with “your fraternity,” participant Jane DeRose-Baman piped up. “We are all living the Rule together.”

Townes’ session ended with a discussion of feeling overwhelmed by JPIC. “That’s why we begin with prayer,” said Kent Ferris. “... There’s a risk of feeling you’ve got to do more... Just do your best.”

Added National Minister Tom Bello, OFS: “Your job is what God wants you to do this day.”



In the next session, Kim Smolik put the focus again on relationships. “To work JPIC, we need to build relationships.” The Franciscan charism calls us to focus on solidarity, to pray together, to act through a connectedness. “We trust that investing time in relationships actually has a product outcome,” even though the emphasis is “to live out the calling and not to be concerned about end results and product.”

She offered a discussion question: How have you been a bridge builder in your life?

One attendee related a presentation on immigration that helped dispel clichés and myths. Another pointed to a discussion that helped lessen tension between pro-life and peace-and-justice activists. “Be one people, not either/or.” A third offered: “When I get people together on a task, the shared experience can transcend differences of opinion.”



KIM SMOLIK

The idea of being a bridge builder transitioned to the next session, “*Bridging Our Disorder*,” with Rhett Engleking quickly pointing to such a need within fraternities.

“We want to live with a Franciscan heart, but we often don’t,” he said, suggesting that there are four “dis-orders” sometimes afflicting fraternities: discord, disengagement, disorganization, and disassociation (“We don’t reach out to other groups.”)

Participants broke into four groups to tackle those “dis-orders.” The one that zeroed in on disassociation, for example, pointed to such factors as being selfish and unwilling to learn and dialogue. The group suggested the following actions: Dialogue, education, mutual invitation, with training (formation) at regular gatherings and time spent together getting to know one another.

“All four disorders have a common theme,” said DeRose-Baman. “Selfishness. And that’s not in our Rule.”

Engleking noted that the value of doing one-on-ones, or “sacred conversations,” in the fraternity is that they can “rekindle” and “make it better.” The idea is to get to know someone, not do an interrogation, but to see a connection. “We have nothing to gain except the relationship with somebody else.”



RHETT ENGLEKING, OFS



YOUTH TRACK

Participants in the Youth Track were spending time in small groups addressing the future of YouFra in the U.S.

Noted Rob Breen: “We acknowledged this was an historic and sacred moment because we put together the strategy, goals and steps for implementing a nationwide YouFra movement.”

While primarily addressing 18 to 27 year olds, the YouFra strategy includes: outreach, formation, events and activities, structure/capacity building -- plus, Franciscan teen ministry.

The YouFra model is one of a small faith community, of gathering people into fraternity, paralleling the Secular Franciscan fraternity. “We’ll provide opportunity for service, prayer, social activities, and servant leadership development. It’s not an order, but a parallel organization that exists at the local, regional, national and international levels.”

“Historically,” he added, “we’ve always had Franciscan groups of youth, but now we have the steps and mechanism for them to set up and run their own organization. And that’s what we’re committing to, nationally.”

A key, he noted, is for youth to run YouFra themselves, with the guidance of spiritual assistants and Secular Franciscan animators, and sponsorship of a fraternity. “It needs to be adaptable and meet the needs of youth, and we recognize new YouFra groups will need leadership intervention until they develop their own servant leaders.”

The action plan coming out of the confab was to be submitted to existing YouFra groups and the Youth/Young Adult Commission for comment, and then to the October NAFRA gathering.

“One year from now,” Breen said, “we will have the basic handbook done to begin the formal formation and official creation of YouFra groups. That’s what we committed to.”



FINAL SESSION

Deacon Tom Bello, who managed to spend time in both Confab tracks, addressed a joint session the final evening, trying to sum up the past two days.

“How can JPIC and YouFra help us?” he asked.

“1. JPIC is the wholeness of our Rule lived out in action with prayer and contemplation.

“2. JPIC is the restoration of right relationship with God, with each other, with ourselves, with all of creation.”

He prayed for a yearly hands-on national activity or activities for JPIC and YouFra.

His prayer list for attendees returning home (like returning missionaries):

1. share stories of the confab.
2. keep the fire of faith & Spirit alive.
3. prepare yourself and others for life-long ministry to God and one another.
4. always see God in the other.
5. always neighbor with all in need.
6. be the Bridge.
7. keep our great Secular Franciscan Order alive and holy.

“I want you to be that relational bridge.”

“**What is the** Holy Spirit calling us to be ?” Bello further asked.

As we “come down from the mountain,” as we return home, “that is the question we have to face.”

“It’s clear to me the Holy Spirit is asking us...our new Holy Father” is asking us, to be a “presence” in the world.

Pope Francis issued a “call for saints” at World Youth Day in Brazil.

“All of you must go forth to do that.”

“Amen!” roared the applauding participants.

On that note, the evening turned celebratory, with participants breaking out in song and sharing funny tales.





SIDEBARS

Touched by Prayer, Song

The JPIC / Youth Confab was touched by a joy of prayer and song. Right from the welcoming dinner, the Confab opened with singing the Little Office of St. Francis (*The Office of the Passion of Saint Francis of Assisi: The Geste of the Great King*).

It was “written by our holy father Francis,” said NAFRA Secretary Jan Parker, OFS, who led the singing on a guitar along with Shrine pianist Heather Miller. “He prayed it seven times a day...and sang it.”

Thanks to finally having a good translation, she noted, English-speaking Franciscans can pray it. The office they distributed to attendees -- a third edition 2012 printing -- was first published in 2011. The book was put together by OFM friars Laurent Gallant and Andre Cirino, with music by Secular Franciscan Josef Raischl.

“As I use it, I feel a real connection with Francis...It brought me closer to him.”

She noted: “Like a troubadour, he tells the story of Christ...(and) brings us into the Paschal Mystery...You learn about his spirituality,” his understanding of what was most important.

“Francis was a singer, an actor,” added Youth/Young Adult Chair Rob Breen, OFS. “He even sang on his death bed.”

The office is “supposed to be sung,” to be “joyful, alive.”

Gift from Vietnam

Br. Donald Lachowicz, OFM, a spiritual assistant who just returned from an assignment in Vietnam where he taught English in a seminary, gave every attendee a Tau carved from coconut shells. Each was grinded, carved and polished by a Vietnamese seminarian.

“A gift from Tran Van Tuan, a Franciscan aspirant.”

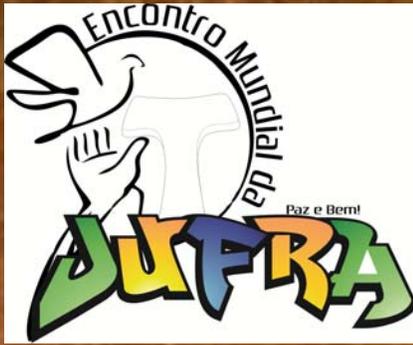


MOST OF THE JPIC TRACK PARTICIPANTS.



MOST OF THE YOUTH TRACK PARTICIPANTS.





The following article was written by three Northern California youth that, as members of the St. Anthony's Youth Franciscans, sponsored by the Sung Antonio Fraternity in San Francisco, were fortunate to attend the YouFra International Gathering and the World Youth Day in Brazil. All three young men are college students and council members in their YouFra group. Daniel Shin is the Secretary, Justin Yoo is the Vice Youth Minister, and Austin is the Youth Minister. We thank them for sharing some of their insights and reflections on this wonderful, unique experience.

**Daniel Shin, Secretary
St. Anthony's Youth Franciscans**

It's hard to describe how life changing the YouFra International Gathering (YIG) and World Youth Day (WYD) have been, but I'll start by talking about the amazing time I experienced at YIG. I think YIG was a more personal event than WYD, because there were only a few of us from each country, and we were able to grow closer by staying in a school together. As soon as we arrived at the school, other youth Franciscans were extremely welcoming. They cheered for us, gave us hugs and kisses, sang songs for us, and even offered to carry our bags. As YIG continued, we learned



Soil from all over the world was collected and then shaped into this JUFRA (YouFra) emblem.



One of the many group pictures we took during World Youth Day.

about YouFra fraternities in many different countries. We shared with each other the problems that youth faces today, as well as the great things that the youth are doing to help society.

World Youth Day was similar to YIG, but it was an even more life-changing event. After coming home, I realized how humbling the entire trip truly was. Traveling in a country and not knowing a word of Portuguese, I really had to be patient and do whatever it took to understand what was happening around me. I had to completely trust my group, fellow pilgrims and most importantly GOD to help me get through each

day. It was an incredibly fun experience, but it was definitely a difficult journey. There were many situations where I felt scared and vulnerable, but I've learned so much from each of these situations. I got to meet people from all over the world, try new foods, see amazing sites, communicate with a jumbled mix of English, Portuguese and body language, see the Pope, find close friends, dance and sing songs, and become closer with God. I wouldn't have spent my time in Brazil any other way.



A picture from our tour of Sao Jao Del Rei, a historic town known for its gorgeous churches.

Justin Yoo
Vice Youth Minister
St. Anthony's Youth Franciscans

The YouFra International Gathering was from the start a welcoming experience, with people from a multitude of nations ready to greet us as we got off the bus. After settling in, we immediately left for a concert, featuring both Christian music and local music. After experiencing the local dances and music, we went back to the school where the groups of different nations sat with each other and bonded, working through language barriers as best we were able. The next days were full of talks and presentations from some of the YouFra groups. We took a tour of the neighborhood, which had many churches and many art exhibits. The final night, all the nations present did a cultural presen-



Our host family: Pinheiro, Taina, and Lourdiha (The son, Tauan, took the picture)

tation and the night ended in dance. The next morning, after a short ending speech, we departed for WYD.

Upon arriving at our destination, we waited to go to our host homes. Our host family was very accommodating, warm, considerate and genuine. Luckily, out of the family of four, three could speak English. They made the whole experience much better, even giving a tour of the neighborhood and advice on travel. Thanks to them, we had more chances to experience the local cuisine.

WYD was spiritually up-lifting. In the morning, we would go to a meeting place divided up by language. The first thing after every breakfast was a catechesis where a bishop gave us insight into our Catholic spirituality. We followed it up with a discussion, where we talked with people from around the world. We wrapped up morning activities with a Mass. On the first day, we mostly spent our time at the pilgrim center waiting to get our pilgrim kits, and there was music and dancing, along with an open church to pray or meet new people. As Asians are very rare in Rio de Janeiro, and apparently in South America in general, we were asked for many pictures. Our Venezuelan friends from YIG helped us out with those. On the second day, the main event would be the mass at night at Copacabana, a landmark of Rio. The rosary was said in five languages, which was inspiring, and performances by talented singers from many different nations. The feeling of fellowship in God transcended language and brought the crowd a feeling of unity. This feeling was present once again on the next day, when the people gathered saw the Pope arrive, who was amazing. On the second to last day was to be a long hike to a special location where we would once again see the Pope and have Mass, and where the next

location of the WYD would be announced, but due to the uncharacteristic rainy weather making the location too muddy, it was changed to Copacabana, and a new walk was made to keep tradition. The walk displayed Rio in all its various faces; the beautiful beaches, the crowded streets, the gentle parks and roads, and even a favela (shanty town), and the walk ended with a teeming Mass singing in praise, which continued

long into the evening. The next day, we celebrated Mass one last time with the Pope, who presided over a record 3 million people, the largest Catholic gathering ever, and then we departed back for the States. WYD



This was our catechesis site (Imaculada Conceicao Parish), where we met every morning with other English-speaking Pilgrims.



We were very popular for pictures, as you can tell!



People from all over the world came up to us asking for pictures. It was like we were movie stars!

was an awesome and humbling experience that showed me just how many other people hold as strong a faith in God as I do, and how we as Christians are not alone; we have all our brothers in Christ all around the world.



We did some sight-seeing as well. This is Jardim Botânico, Rio's world-famous botanical garden.

Austin Yoo
Youth Minister
St. Anthony's Youth Franciscans

Rather than focusing so much on the details and individual events of YIG, I think my YIG experience can be comprehensively summed up in one simple story. At the gathering, I met a man named Luiz, a truly amazing individual from Panama who quickly became a lasting inspiration and influence on me. During the three days I spent with him I never saw him without a huge smile on his face. He danced and praised with all his heart, and brightened our days with a genuine warmth that seems so hard to find in this day and age. He always greeted me with a hug, told me all sorts of tales about his life back at home, and when I was sick he would constantly check on me to see if I was doing better. Even when someone stole his brand new electronic tablet (which are much more expensive in Panama than in America), instead of becoming understandably stressed or angry, he kept that same ear-to-ear grin and said "Things like that don't matter. I can always replace them. What's important is this time I have with all of you, because this is an irreplaceable experience with very beautiful people. So no matter what I am happy to be here".

His unfazed, ever-thankful attitude simply blew me away. How could he wholeheart-

edly admire someone who had robbed him of his hard-earned belongings, at an event that was supposed to be a meeting built on practicing good morals? I, as well as our Franciscan brothers from all over the world who were gathered there during those eventful three nights, should strive to live with the same kind of heart and positivity as he does some day, and I think he serves as a shining example of the brotherhood in which the Franciscan tradition is so ingrained. I've always complained about how loving my brothers and sisters unconditionally is such a difficult thing to do, yet here was someone living that virtue out right in front of my eyes. Thank you Luiz: you and the many incredible individuals I met during my time at YIG helped set the tone for the rest of my World Youth Day experience. Although our time was rather short, we were able to deepen our faith and form a genuine union of nations; whether or not we could speak the same languages, we communicated through our shared purpose of becoming better Franciscans and disciples of God.

However, compared to the close-knit camaraderie of YIG, World Youth Day was a little underwhelming at first. While it was still an amazing experience, the interpersonal interaction was usually limited to people excitedly asking us for pictures, and it became a test of



A picture of Luiz and I on the last day of YIG.

patience more than anything. Buses were hectically scheduled and always crammed with people, the weather was rainy and downcast, there was more time spent waiting in line than anything else...still, even among the little trials we were constantly faced with, there was clarity to be found. I believe that God had a purpose for everything, and that he tested our patience to in turn teach us the virtue of patience. Be-



From the Mass of Nations; the altar was surrounded by the flags of every country that attended YIG, which was symbolic of our spiritual unity in Christ.

sides, wasn't there so much to be joyful and thankful for? We had a beautiful, welcoming, host family who provided us with all our needs and a loving home, received spiritual enrichment at our daily catecheses that opened our minds to the true meaning of being a disciple of Christ, experienced the diverse culture and sights of Rio de Janeiro, and congregated with 3 million other Catholic youth from all over the world to praise the Lord in one united voice, which in itself is already pretty tremendous. Also, even if we weren't able to meet and speak with as many people as we would have liked, just watching the enthusiasm and energy they worshipped with should have been an inspiration for me to look at things more positively. Though I am only realizing all these blessings as I look back on my trip, I now know that there was and still is much to learn from the time I spent in Brazil.

Seeing the Pope was indeed a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but the common element that highlighted both YIG and WYD was the people. I know it's starting to sound redundant, but I'm so glad I went on this trip and met all these wonderful individuals, many of whom I still keep in contact with today. They are the reason I look back on this trip fondly, with newfound knowledge under my belt. If anything, I wish I studied Portuguese a little more; we lucked out in that Gladys Veloz, one of our fellow group members, was able to translate for us, but it would have been great if I had been able to speak the language on my own. I'll definitely keep it in mind for the next World Youth Day in Poland! Thank you to everyone who supported us, both financially and spiritually, throughout this trip, and presented us with the opportunity to become a more holistic, passionate Catholic—we couldn't have done it without you.



CNSA

News & Views

Franciscan Life in the 21st Century

Lester Bach OFM Cap

MEANDERINGS

I began to prophesy as I had been told, and as I prophesied there was a rattling sound and the bones all fitted themselves together. As I watched, sinews appeared upon them, flesh clothed them, and they were covered with skin, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me: "Prophesy to the wind, prophesy, O man, and say to it: These are the words of the Lord God: Let winds come from every quarter and breathe into these slain, that they may come to life." I prophesied as I had been told; breath entered them, and they came to life and rose to their feet, a mighty company.

He said to me: "O man, these bones are the whole people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is gone, and we are cut off.' Prophesy, therefore, and say to them: 'My people, I shall open your graves and bring you up from them, and restore you to the land of Israel. You, my people, will know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from them. Then I shall put my Spirit into you and you will come to life, and I shall settle you on your own soil, and you will know that I the Lord have spoken and I shall act!'"

Ezekiel - 37:7-14 (REB)

As I read these words I am aware of their truth. People felt hopeless in the face of many difficulties. They had no one to stimulate their spirit. They began to believe that their journey was over and everything was finished for them as a people. No hope. No faith. No strong people to show love since they were all dying. So God gave them a powerful message that was filled with hope and a clarity about God's concern for them. In fact, it is clear that GOD is the source of their hope and GOD breathed life into them and they became a great "company."

I suppose there are times when a fraternity might say. "We're all too old. We don't understand much about this way of life. Our numbers are dwindling. Lots of folks argue with one another but rarely dialogue. We set up commissions and committees and something happens for the better - for a while. Then we settle back into our normal spirit without much zip in our steps. We dare to call it the Franciscan way of life!



Not everyone feels this way. Many feel we are on the brink of new life, realizing that it requires a vibrant commitment. Our Church and our world need what we have to offer. At our profession we consecrated our lives to the Trinity to express the OFS Rule and make this life appear wherever we are. At least for a while we moved in a good

direction. It was not the time for mediocre dedication coupled with a bland spirit that attracts no one in particular. Rather, we remember how life came to a young lady in the Gospel who was actually already dead and people were mourning her passing as they gathered to support the

Fall - 2013



A look at coming events

People prepare for upcoming events. Therefore, here are two events being prepared for *spiritual assistants* (& others too!) in 2014.

Mark the dates on your calendar. You can get needed information from Cyl Maljan-Herbelin OFS. Cyl is executive Secretary of CNSA. Here is her name and address:

Cecilia Maljan-Herbelin OFS
1933 Tudor Drive
San Jacinto, CA 92583
cylmaljan@earthlink.net
cell: 412-513-9729

Programs for SAs in 2014

July 10 to 13th, 2014

*Summer Institute
at St Francis University
Loretto, PA
Focus on Spiritual Assistance*

September 24 & 25, 2014

Wednesday & Thursday
Marytown
Libertyville, IL
(Fly to Chicago, IL)
Workshop for
Provincial and Regional
Spiritual Assistants

family. Listen to this story of hope.

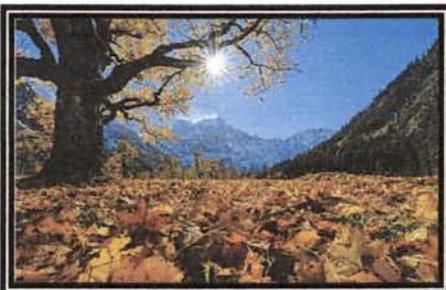
While he was still speaking, a messenger came from the president's house. "Your daughter has died, why trouble the teacher any more?" But Jesus, overhearing the message as it was delivered, said to the president of the synagogue. "Do not be afraid, simply have faith." Then he allowed no one to accompany him except Peter and James and James's brother, John. They came to the president's house where he found a great commotion with loud crying and wailing. So he went in and said to them. "Why this crying and commotion? The child is not dead; she is asleep;" and they laughed at him. After turning everyone out, he took the child's father and mother and his own companions into the room where the child was. Taking hold of her hand, he said to her, "Talitha cum' which means, Get up, my child." Immediately the girl got up and walked about - she was twelve years old. They were overcome with amazement!

Mark 5: 35-42 (REB)

A few questions to consider: How do we react to the dying of a fraternity? How do we deal with people who leave fraternity life for no apparent reason? How do we deal with one another when we disagree? What do we do when actions and attitudes ignore the Constitutions or people create their own interpretations and do whatever pleases them? How well do we listen to seculars who clearly state that faithfulness to the OFS Rule and Constitutions will bring new life to dry bones? What is the Spirit asking of us? How many members actually read the OFS documents? Or Vatican II documents? How do faithful secular Franciscans support a true Franciscan spirit? How faithful are the members to their responsibility to discover vocations to the OFS? How can we become a more vibrant and life-giving people? How helpful are the regular gatherings? How is the relationship between the SA and the council? When Jesus takes us by the hand, will we grasp the opportunity to bring new life to the OFS or simply follow the *"We always did it this way."* approach? How helpful are you in building the Kingdom of God through your Franciscan life?

Conversion is no easy process. Can we honestly say of ourselves that our *human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily!* .. and actually DO IT? (cf. OFS Rule #7). We can't ignore what we have professed to be. We will blossom and grow, attract and embrace others, when we are faithful to God's will as expressed in the OFS Rule and Constitutions and other helpful documents.

The Trinity is present and dwells within us. They accept our consecration to the OFS way of life. They are present to help us be what we find difficult to achieve. The Trinity takes us by the hand and gently but firmly invites us to *"Get up, me lads and lassies - be faithful and live what you have professed to be!"* Your lives will show the world what it is like when people show persistent love for the Trinity and one another. Love is fundamental to our Franciscan life.



The Lord's love is surely not exhausted, nor has his compassion failed; they are new every morning, so great is his constancy. "The Lord," I say, "is all I have, therefore I shall wait for him patiently."

Lamentations 3:22-24 (REB)

Another new biography of St. Francis



Francis of Assisi by Andre Vauchez, draws on a vast body of scholarship on Francis of Assisi. His research covers many years and is a comprehensive and authoritative version

of Francis' life.

The author is a professor emeritus at the University of Paris.

Schools for spiritual assistants are growing in many regions. These programs are encouraged to share a number of appropriate topics:

- ✦ SAs are people of faith, dedicated and faithful to the Church, the *People of God* and the *Community of love*.
- ✦ They learn about the responsibilities of a spiritual assistant at different levels.
- ✦ Attendees need knowledge of Franciscan spirituality and the role of the OFS and SAs as they work together.
- ✦ Attendees need skills in dealing with people and using effective ways to deal with conflict and differences of opinion.
- ✦ Attendees should be familiar with the Constitutions and various statutes that guide the OFS and the spiritual assistants. (cf. *Essential Documents of the OFS*)
- ✦ The program should help create a "community spirit" among the spiritual assistants in a region. SAs need to be comfortable in supporting one another, meeting together as frequently as possible.
- ✦ Attendees learn the limitations of a spiritual assistant so they don't act like "saviors" or "directors." SAs *collaborate* with councils and the members. It is a vital quality for SAs.
- ✦ Attendees learn to use the tool of dialogue in the interaction among OFS members as well as with others.
- ✦ Non-Franciscan attendees have a special need for learning about Franciscan theology and spirituality.
- ✦ SAs need to model the qualities of a Franciscan life.
- ✦ SAs keep in touch with their 1st Order/TOR connections. Mandated by the Church, SAs serve as a link between the 1st Order/TOR and the OFS.

Add your own ideas to help create programs that develop *suitable and well-prepared* spiritual assistants.





Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Walking Together

by Anne Mulqueen, OFS

In my last article for *TAU-USA*, I said the next article would focus on *growing in communion*. However, in the time between that article and this one, an important event took place: the first meeting of the current Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee. It didn't take long for us to realize that we couldn't address *growing in communion* until we knew where the OFS was in that process. And so with this article, I am enlisting your help so that we can serve you more effectively.

Several of you may be too young to remember that before Vatican II, it was generally assumed that the Catholic Church was *the one and the only Body of Christ* and that all other Christian churches were regarded as separated or unorthodox. Vatican II changed this "interpretation" to include other denominations in the Body of Christ. The Roman church expanded its interpretation of the Body of Christ to include Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants. Thereafter, a number of ecumenical endeavors began.

After the council we began to experience joint prayer, collaboration in social ministry, and ecumenical theological education at Catholic universities. Since November 21, 1964 – almost 50 years ago – when Pope Paul VI promulgated *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism, it appears that we may not have paid a meaningful amount of attention to this decree nor given it a place of importance in Secular Franciscan formation.

Therefore, the Ecumenical-Interfaith Committee (EIC) would like to test that assumption and determine whether or not it is true. We decided that this column in *TAU-USA* would be an ideal vehicle to revive an ecumenical and interfaith dialogue in our Order.

In April of this year, the EIC held its first meeting in Massachusetts. The agenda was loosely constructed and saturated in prayer. Since it was the first time we had gathered as a committee, significant time was allotted to getting to know each other and finding out where the Spirit has been leading us individually in regard to ecumenism and interfaith ministry. The meeting was timed so the member of EIC could stay on to be participants in a workshop given by the Joint Committee for Franciscan Unity (JCFU), which followed immediately after the committee meeting. The JCFU is made up of The Third Order Society of St. Francis (TSSF), an Anglican/Episcopal order; the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF), an order of Protestant denominations, independent Christian churches, and Catholic communions; and the OFS, which we all know means *Ordo Franciscanus Secularis*.

As the EIC meeting progressed, it became apparent to the committee that we had no idea of how much the general membership of the Secular Franciscan Order knows about other Christian and non-Christian faiths. It became obvious that we could not serve you without knowing what you want and what you need from us. We needed to know where to begin.

Slowly but surely the Holy Spirit led us to go straight to the source of that information – you! And that is why we are asking you to take some time and answer a few very important questions so that we can serve you – not as we think you need – but as you actually need.

A short email to amulqueensfo@gmail.com will be sufficient. Don't worry about grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. – we want **just the facts!** Therefore, I am giving you an outline for your

answers. If one of the questions does not apply to your situation, simply skip over that question. And so we begin:

1. The name of your regional fraternity and your name.
2. May we contact you for follow-up?
3. Does your local or regional fraternity participate in any ongoing ecumenical and/or interfaith interaction?

And if so, with which denominations or faiths do you interact?

How – education, worship, outreach or another way?

4. Is there a local council of churches or interfaith community in the area in which you live and if so, please describe?
5. Does your parish have any Christian educational offerings featuring ecumenical or interfaith issues and if yes, please describe?
6. How familiar are you and your fraternity members with the Vatican II documents, especially *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Christian unity), *Nostra Aetate* (non-Christian religions), and Blessed John Paul II's encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* – (“that they may all be one...”)?
7. In your Inquirers/Candidates' formation groups, do you discuss or visit other churches, synagogues, mosques or other houses of worship as part of their preparation and if yes, please describe:
8. Considering the various kinds of ministry in your fraternity, on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important) how would you rate the importance of ecumenical and interfaith relations to your fraternal life?

I know that not all of you will agree with the need for further effort and education in the areas of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. But I do want to initiate a dialogue with you in a reciprocal and respectful manner. The E-I Committee and I serve at your pleasure. Our

guiding principle is the command of Christ in John 17:21, “*that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*”

Whatever information you may be able to provide is greatly appreciated. We will do our best to serve you and your fraternities during our term of office.

Wishing you peace and all that is good,

Anne Mulqueen, OFS
Chair – Ecumenical-Interfaith Committee

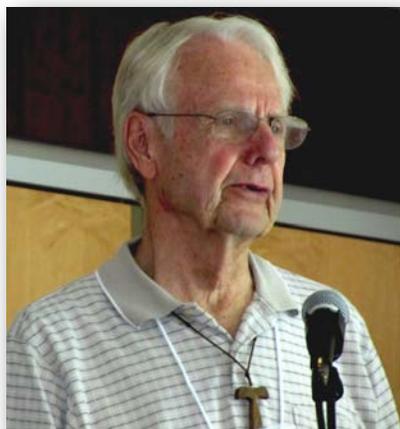
Committee Members

Delia Banchs, OFS
Michael Carsten, OFS
Mary Lou Kreider, OFS
John Szczepanski, OFS

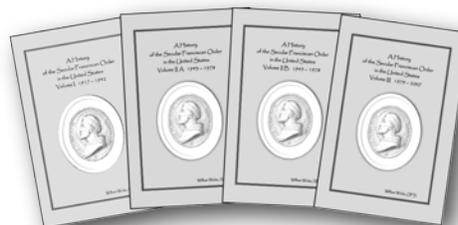


“Dialogue should help to build bridges connecting all people, in such a way that everyone can see in the other not an enemy, not a rival, but a brother or sister.”

Pope Francis



5TH SUMMER SEMINAR FOR THE OFS



FINDING OUR HISTORY

A Theatrical, Multi-media Presentation

Highlights of the History of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States

Written and Produced by Bill Wicks

The *Finding Our History* Summer Seminar was a three-day event consisting of five acts exploring a variety of pivotal topics important to the historical development of the Secular Franciscan Order. They included: formation of a national organization, promotion of the Third Order Franciscans, *The Hour of St. Francis* radio and TV programs, the Franciscan Peace Award, the Civil Rights involvement, the formulation of the **Rule of 1978** and more. The presentation used a variety of formats: skits, dramatic readings, music, PowerPoint, photographs, video and discussion. The follow is a recap of the highlights of the first day.

A BRIDGE TO EVERYWHERE

Seminar Reflection by Rodney Knier, OFS
July 5, 2013

On the second floor of the DiSepio Institute at the St. Francis University in Loretto, Penn., is “a bridge to nowhere” with the tree of Eve at its head. That’s just the opposite of what some 60 Secular Franciscan participants and five TOR Friars experienced on July 5 through 7.

As Ghandi once said, “To the good man the whole world is good,” and so the seminar participants saw how Bill Wicks’ *History of the Third Order* portrays the Secular Franciscans helping one another’s goodness to help foster a reformed world through gospel living.

We followed Bill Wicks and the cast of actors as they walked us through the formation of the National Organization. Through skits and dramatization we saw:

- the history of the Secular Franciscan order in the United States from 1917–2007 with the formation of a national organization
- how the vital reciprocity among the three major orders of the OFM and the TOR worked with the third order

Franciscans to influence society as correlated with major world events

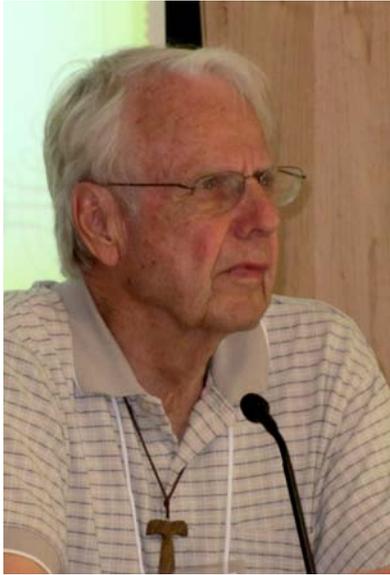
- how notable Franciscans helped the Tertiaries from their first national organization, which met in Chicago in 1921, to celebrate the 7th centenary of the forming of the Third Order on the feast day of the investment of the first Tertiaries, Blessed Luchesius and his wife Bonadonna, by St. Francis himself.
- how the Kulturkampf of Otto Von Bismarck of Germany effected a major immigration to the United States by exiling Franciscans Friars and Tertiaries from Germany, and how many Tertiaries helped the clergy escape severe persecutions at the time by holding secret meetings

The early Sacred Heart Province led the other major Franciscan Provinces to form the National Convention in 1921. *The Franciscan Herald* pioneered communication for Third Order members at Quincy, Ill., Teutopolis, Ill, Joliet, Ill and San Diego, Calif.

The evening of the first day featured viewings of *The Hour of St. Francis* as aired from the 1940s through the 1980s, morphing into major television programs and telespots.

*An Interactive Theater Presentation of the History of the Secular Franciscan Order
in the United States 1917-2007*

Presenters:



William Wicks, OFS
*Historian of our Order and
Former National Minister*



Cindy Wesley, OFS
*Minister, Bl. Junipero Serra Region
(Northern CA and Nevada)*



Jim Wesley, OFS
Editor, TAU-USA

Elizabeth Allen, OFS
Former National Secretary



*Seminar hosts from Lady Poverty Region including
Pat Serotkin and her late husband, Bob.*



*Bill Wicks
introducing
a skit with
a few dance
moves.*



*Participants has an opportunity to view historical
display boards and memorabilia.*



*Jim Wesley and TOR friars reading through a meeting
dialogue debating the civil rights issue.*

FRANCISCAN LIVING

To Act Like Francis

By Francine Gikow, SFO

“Look good man, what do you think about this fellow [an unworthy priest] who has care for this parish? He keeps a concubine, and it is clear to all that he is guilty of many sins. Can such a man administer or do anything which is not tainted?”¹

With this question, a man with an “agenda” confronted Francis about his opinion.

How do you think you would respond? How could you act like Francis did? How can we integrate our Franciscan ideals with the real world of messy circumstances and act, while upholding our ethics, with compassion and love?

Carolyn Towne, OFS, in this summer’s Confab, gave us some Franciscan action steps to guide our response by her P_E_A_C_E mnemonic. (Peace is for prayer, E is for empathy, A is for active listening, C is for compassion and E is for evangelical love.)

Note: everything begins with prayer! Francis knew that without prayer, he could not respond to others with a loving heart. As Jean Moore, FSPA, states in her recent article in *The Chord*, “...ensure that the value and acceptance of prayer and contemplation are inherently part of the process.”² Empathy, active listening, compassion and evangelical love express the love of God, which we find in prayer. Without deep and ongoing prayer, we cannot be transformed into someone reflecting God’s love to others. Only then can we integrate it into action.

Sometimes we find ourselves responding to situations like Francis’ in comfortable, familiar but definitely not so Franciscan ways! We close the door to truly transforming responses if we don’t pray and think about how we can respond consistently with our Franciscan values

But what should we do when people confront us with an “agenda” designed to trap us? Jean Moore offers us some ideas on how we can identify Franciscan-centered responses by analyzing how our ethical approaches make a difference in what we do. She iden-

tifies four aspects of how we can make ethical decisions³. The first is our search for **Truth**. In other words, what do we think is really going on here? What is the overall context and history? Secondly, we look at the possible **Consequences**, i.e., who is going to be affected and how? What are the negatives and positives? Thirdly is **Fairness**. What is fair and just? Is there equality and consistency? Finally, what is the **Character** of the situation? In other words, what are the people’s motivations, character traits (or both) in this situation? By looking at these aspects of an ethical decision we can prevent an automatic non-Franciscan reaction to a situation.

With prayer and ethical pondering, we are open to learn a new habit of looking at all the options and to carefully consider how to respond. Through prayer, we learn an interior sensitivity to these four ethical considerations, which help us in our response. If we do all this with empathy, active listening, compassion and evangelical love, then we can act like Francis did. After a while, this habit of prayer permeates who we are and what we, do thereby changing our responses. We are transformed by the Holy Spirit and give birth to Him in the world!

So how did Francis respond to the person who was trying to trick him into betraying the office of the priesthood? Francis, *“realizing the evil intent of the heretic, went up to the priest in the presence of all the parishioners, knelt down before him and said: “I do not know whether these hands are such as this man says they are. But even if they were, I know that they can in no way lessen the power and the efficacy of the sacraments of God. These hands remain the means through which many of God’s benefits and graces flow to the people. That is why I kiss them, out of respect for the things they administer and out of reverence for Him by whose authority they do so. Having said this he knelt down in front of that priest and kissed his hands, to the confusion of the heretics and their adherents who were present.”⁴*

¹, Stephen of Bourbon, “Dominican Hagiography” in FA/ED II: The Saint. 788.

² Jean Moore, FSPA “A Process for Integrating Franciscan Values into Life” *The Cord*. Vol.63 #3.248.

³ Jean Moore, 238.

⁴ Stephen of Bourbon, 788.



***“Diapers! Please, we need
diapers!”***

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM?

by Jim Flickinger, OFS

The mother looked squarely at me and then flitted her eyes back and forth between me and her toddlers, hoping that I too would turn to look at the children and appreciate the situation.

Diapers. This weren't what I had expected to be the most desperate need of families who, at gunpoint, had just fled from Kosovo into a Macedonian refugee camp. Yet looking across the camp I saw hundreds of infants and toddlers in soiled diapers or no diapers. In their flight to safety these children and their parents had escaped with the clothes on their back. For the older refugees, clothing was one of the least concerns. What they had would last. But that was not the case with the little ones. They needed a change — not in a month, but now.

Getting diapers wasn't complicated. I drove with two friends to Skopje, bought nearly a half semi-load of diapers, and delivered them to overjoyed parents.

Although the purchase wasn't complicated, it was and is an example of the need for, and the flexibility of, non-governmental aid. Non-governmental aid, too, is more than just the purchase of goods. It is spending time (sometimes sitting in the dirt or on a brick) talking, sharing coffee or a cookie, loving, praying, and just being there to listen.

Disasters come in many forms — not just from war, but also from natural disasters: hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes and fires.

For several years consideration has been given to forming a Secular Franciscan team that could respond to disasters in our country. Basically, we would develop a list of Secular Franciscans or others who might be available to help in the event of a national emergency. At the same time we would begin collecting and warehousing relief supplies. And when a disaster strikes in our country, the team who would go to work assessing needs, arranging the purchase and/or shipment of relief items, and contacting Secular Franciscans for “boots on the ground” help.

No final decision has been made on whether formation of a response team is feasible or desirable. Secular Franciscans can certainly do relief work individually or through other organizations. Yet there is merit, too, in our presence as Secular Franciscans. We might not be able to solve all problems, but we can solve some. We would like your thoughts and comments on the idea. Send comments to Jim Flickinger, OFS, 1456 Blythe Drive NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504, or to flickingersfo@prodigy.net or by phone to (616) 453-9104.

**PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE
NEXT QUINQUENNIAL GATHERING!**

**When: July 1-6, 2016
Where: Denver, Colorado**

In 2021, the Secular Franciscan Order of the United States will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the first National Congress of the Third Order of St. Francis. Normally, the Quinquennial is held every five years, but since there are only nine years until the 100th Anniversary Quinquennial, the next Q is now scheduled to occur in 2016 so that there will be five years to prepare for the 2012 Quinquennial. Stay tuned for more details.



Wanted: Executive Director for *The Dwelling Place*, a small Franciscan retreat/prayer center in rural Mississippi. The Dwelling Place, founded on the charism of St. Francis, offers both hospitality and prayer opportunities for renewal of spirit, mind and body.

These occasions are provided through private or directed retreats, prayer and spiritual counseling and weekend retreat experiences for those who seek peace, joy and healing. For more information, contact Mary Horrell at www.dwellingplace.com, email address: dwellingpl@gmail.com or telephone 662-738-5348.

When art and prayer merge

Prayer and art sometimes combine to create something stunning. Witness St. Francis and his Canticle of the Sun, a joyous poetic expression of kinship with all of creation.

A more recent outburst of spiritual creativity revolves around events in the life of Francis -- a book (on CD) of original poetry and art produced by members of St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity in Oakville, Missouri. It's titled, *On the Path of Peace: 12 Wondrous Stories in the Lifeline of Saint Francis*.

"Our fraternity has been using this series as a formation tool for our monthly

gatherings," notes Poet and Formation Director Rita Baughman, OFS. It has been in the works since the fall of 2010 and was completed earlier this year (2013).

The seed for the project was planted by a deceased Secular Franciscan, Mujana Darian, a talented sculptor. She created 12 sculptures depicting milestones in Francis' life, which are now on display at the Poor Clare Monastery in Oakville. The book is a reflection of prayerful meditation on each sculpture, with Artist Howard Schroeder, OFS, painting and writing about his interpretation, and Baughman penning a poem after gazing

on the illustration and seeking inspiration. Sometimes the inspiration takes an unexpected turn, as when, for the story of the wolf of Gubbio, she wrote a poem from the wolf's point of view, called "Hunger."

Each reflection is then rounded out with quotes from original Franciscan writings about the scene, and a concluding prayer. There are also questions for group discussion or meditation.

Anyone interested in purchasing the CD may email Howard Schroeder, OFS, at fieryfx@earthlink.net. The cost is \$25.

-- by Bob and Mary Stronach, OFS

Hunger

*Food for the soul, the mind, the body
All different, yet life's necessity
My selfishness sought to cause the ache
The ache of solitude, pride, physical desires
The results satisfied my growling mind and belly*

*Yet only momentary happiness was evident
Like sin, its brief pleasure turned to gloom
With each bite, my need grew
Its taste made sour by my own avarice
Hunger controlled and ruled my sins*

*Then the inconspicuous stranger appeared
His brown garb blended with my wooded home
He approached fearlessly, looked into my eyes
His gentleness drew me in*

*He knew my transgressions, spoke as a friend
My cravings were curbed by his peace
He offered a pact, non violence for angst
Transformation has become my relief*

*The aches I once felt, that consumed my soul
Were controlled by this tranquil desire
To peacefully live among my past foes
And end inner violence as well*

Rita Baughman, OFS



Illustration
by Howard
Schroeder, OFS

What it takes



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