

OTHER REASONS YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS: A HISTORY LESSON

IN THE BEGINNING (first 200 years):

"The story of the reform wrought by this Order (then the Third Order of St. Francis) has been written time and again. It has been called "the Great Reform"—the leaven society needed in the Thirteenth Century. Through the self-sanctification of those following its rule, the whole of society was affected. Serfs became freeman, the petty wars of the baronial class failed for want of soldiers to fill the ranks of the feudal armies; greed and avarice gave way to Christian charity; the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God, became a reality. Wherever they went, the Tertiaries, whose number was legion, carried with them the lessons of peace." (Survey of a Decade: The Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States, Fr. M. Poppy, O.F.M., & P. Martin, B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1935, p. 1)

THEN THIS (circa 1935):

"The growth of the Third Order throughout the world since Pope Leo XIII published his encyclical "Auspicato" has been marvelous, yet it has not been as widespread as it should be to effect the reform of which, under proper conditions, it is capable. In view of this there are still skeptics, even among those seeking a salutary means of reform, who refuse to believe that these means are at hand in the Third Order. There are millions of Catholics, otherwise devoted to their religion, who do not know the Third Order. There are bishops and priests, men of zeal and piety, who have failed to grasp the significance of the words uttered by the four modern pontiffs who have urged hierarchy and clergy to propagate the Third Order among the people." (op. cit. p. 3)

AND NOW THIS (1995):

"What is still lacking among the Secular Franciscans is the capacity to involve themselves in society with recognizable and effective initiatives. In a society concerned with 'image,' as ours is, the S.F.O. presents a very modest and drab face which certainly does not "make news," does not capture imagination, does not attract attention, not even on the part of ecclesiastical authorities, who seem to pay attention only to those movements which are capable of filling up plazas and carrying out grandiose gestures..." (Emanuela De Nunzio, O.F.S., Minister General, O.S.F., CIOFS Bulletin, 1995, n. 2)

SOME HOPE!! (1972):

Mario von Galli, S.J., states: "My feeling is that the Third Order could continue to have as strong an impact today as it did in the twelfth and thirteenth century, if it took the story of the wolf of Gubbio as the guiding principle of its activity. To be sure, it would also have to have its founder's feel for justice, his courage and spirit and faith-inspired imagination. It seems to me they [the expectations] were not fulfilled because attention was focused all too exclusively on one's personal life and the moderate use of worldly goods, and all too little on concern for other people. By concern for other people, I mean concern to establish ties of solidarity with those who are oppressed and whose human dignity is being violated. I mean concern to appeal to the conscience of others by one's own example and one's candid criticism, even as Francis appealed to the conscience of the wolf. Such conduct from a broad spectrum of lay people could represent a revolution today, even more than it did in the twelfth century." (Living Our Future: Francis of Assisi and the Church Tomorrow, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, IL, 1972)

AND MORE HOPE!! (1995):

"All of these examples lead me to believe that the S.F.O. might still represent a great evangelical force precisely to the extent that its members see themselves 'more strongly connected' to the Church by nature of their Profession—a solemn, public and perpetual commitment. So, without losing our identity and our physiognomy (with its characteristics of simplicity, humility, meekness, patience), without allowing ourselves to become contaminated by the germs of protagonism, we ought to become more capable of those courageous initiatives of which the Rule speaks, we ought to become more capable of 'coming out into the open.'" (De Nunzio, op. cit.)

THE FUTURE - THE NEW MILLENNIUM

A summary: Our Order was once worthy of its place in the Church because of how it addressed the needs of the society of its day. Then something happened and the Order lost its effectiveness and hasn't regained it to this day. There have been voices of hope as noted above but not too much in the way of revitalization has been realized. If this situation doesn't change, we must ask the very fundamental question: "Is the Order worthy to continue its existence?"

A proposal: Let us "Return to the excitement of the founding story so as to be re-energized to address the issues of contemporary society at their roots. To do so is to willingly enter into the Paschal Mystery (death) so that new life emerges. It is less about vision and planning, more about entering into the mystery of God's plan." (Sr. Brenda Hermann, M.S.B.T.). If each of us as individuals and then as small communities were to take this to heart, I am convinced that the S.F.O. would begin to reclaim its heritage.

If we fail to effect a basic change in the S.F.O., then our rather dreary existence will continue into the future. This is easy to predict because, if we keep doing the same thing, we will continue to get the same results. The results we have been getting the last several hundred years don't seem to match the needs of our contemporary society or the call to the gospel as expressed in our Rule.

The whole intent of the program of the Quinquennial Congress is to address the question of effective change for the future of the S.F.O. in this country. This is why it is so important that a representative from every local fraternity in the country attend the Congress.

Please pray for a successful Quinquennial Congress.

Pax et Bonum,

Richard Morton, S.F.O., National Minister and the Quinquennial Planning Committee

A SHORT HISTORY of S.F.O. CONGRESSES

Barbara O'Neill, S.F.O., discovered A Short History of the Third Order by Marion Habig, O.F.M., and Mark Hegener, O.F.M. We share excerpts with you in hope that you will choose to be part of the ongoing history of the S.F.O. by attending this summer's Quinquennial Congress. Since 1921, National Congresses of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis have been held every five years except that which was scheduled for 1946 but held the following year because of World War II.

First Congress. Chicago, 1921. All Third Order fraternities of the four jurisdictions in the United States were united in one Federated Organization with a Directive and Executive Council. A 1008 page report was published: *First National Third Order Convention U.S.A.*, edited by Fr. Hilarion Duerk, O.F.M., Chicago, 1922.

Second Congress. New York City, 1926. This Congress gave the first impetus to the Third Order's mission into two fields: recruiting the young and formation of fraternities at non-Franciscan churches and institutions. Its report was published with that of the third Congress.

Third Congress. San Francisco, 1931. The theme was social reform through individual reform. Subsequent literature proved its effectiveness. Combined reports of second and third congresses were published as *Survey of a Decade: The Third Order Secular of St. Francis in the United States* by Fr. Maximus Poppy and Paul Martin; B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, MO, 1935.

Fourth Congress. Louisville, KY, 1936. The work of the previous congress was continued and presented as a well-defined program of Catholic Social Action---the Three-Point Program of Popular Economics. Its report appears as two brochures: *The Franciscan Message for Our Times or The Present Position of the Third Order of St. Francis: An Interpretative Digest of the Fourth Congress* and *The Franciscan Heritage: Proceedings of the Fourth National Tertiary Congress* by Fr. Maximus Poppy and Paul Martin.

Fifth Congress. Pittsburgh, 1941. The twentieth anniversary of formation of the national organization was commemorated and the encyclical *Sacra Prope diem* of Pope Benedict XV. It witnessed to active participation of youth in the order. The report was published serially in *Franciscan Herald and Forum* then as a brochure: *The Fifth National Congress of the Third Order--1941: An Interpretative Digest of the Pittsburgh Congress and Its Sequel* by Fr. Maximus Poppy, Office of the National Secretary, St. Louis, MO, 1943.

Sixth Congress. Cincinnati, 1947. A return to Christ through the family was highlighted. The report was serialized in *Franciscan Herald and Forum*, and then it was published as *The Sixth National Congress of the Third Order of St. Francis, 1947*, edited by Philip Marquard, O.F.M., Office of the National Secretary, Chicago, IL 1948.

Seventh Congress. Milwaukee, 1952. The topic covered was the *Third Order Apostolate*; the Third Order of St. Francis, its root in the Gospel and it is necessarily apostolic. The report was published in the *Herald* and as *Seventh Quinquennial Third Order Congress*, Philip Marquard, O.F.M., Central Third Order of St. Francis Office, Indianapolis, 1953.

Eighth Congress. Boston, 1957. There was a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII *Auspicato*. The theme "The Franciscan Way of Living" was based on 1956 discourse of Pope Pius XII. The report was published in the *Herald*, 1957 and 1958.

Ninth Congress. Detroit, 1962. The theme was "The Third Order in the Life of the Church Today," in light of the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* of Pope John XXIII. More tertiaries attended its workshops, sessions and addresses than any previous congresses. The keynote address by Robert J. Alerding appeared in the *Herald*, Jan., 1963.

Tenth Congress. Philadelphia, 1967. The focus was on "Franciscan Renewal Today." Panel discussions, workshops and buzz sessions were integral to the Congress with references to documents of Vatican II. The keynote by Thomas Ricard and "Highlights of the Philadelphia Congress" were published in the *Herald*, September 1967, and the address by Hugh Morley, O.F.M. Cap., the next month.

Eleventh Congress. Santa Clara, CA, 1972. This was described as a "Week of Community" during which "Lay Franciscans, Sisters, and Priests prayed and lived together, seeking direction from the Lord, striving to understand what it means to be a Franciscan in today's world." A "Youth Congress" was held at Rensselaer, IN. "A Statement of Commitment" appeared in the *Herald*, November 1972.

Twelfth Congress. St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, August 4-7, 1977. The theme chosen for the Congress was "Evangelization, Francis' Gift to America---The Word Made Flesh in Our World."

Thirteenth Congress. University of San Diego, San Diego, California, 1987. The theme was, "Live, Learn, Love the Rule." More than 500 persons attended this memorable Congress. It was the first Congress to be organized solely by Secular Franciscans with the encouragement of Friars. The talks and small group discussions focused on insights into better understanding of the importance of each of the Apostolic Commissions: Peace and Justice; Family; Work and Ecology.

Fourteen Quinquennial Congress. Dayton, Ohio, August 2-7, 1992. The theme was "Christ's Faithful People: The Challenge and Response." The theme was based on the "Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Christifideles Laici of His Holiness John Paul II on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World." A vision statement summarized the recurring themes of the Congress: fidelity to and love for the Church and the Franciscan way of life, responsibility to rebuild the Church through our faithfulness to prayer and service to all people, centered on the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.

15th *Quinquennial* CONGRESS of
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER IN THE UNITED STATES



15th National Quinquennial:

A Preview

*"The Time is Now,
The Kingdom of God is at Hand"*

*Franciscans and the Coming of the
Third Millennium*

Facilitators will lead groups of 10-12 Secular Franciscans, divided into Congress fraternities, to explore the theme in daily subtext topics as shown below. Special speakers, homilies and reflections at the liturgies, and seminars will provide insights into the daily subtexts for further study by each Congress fraternity.

Wednesday, July 16	<i>"Telling Our Stories, Remembering Our Traditions"</i>
Thursday, July 17	<i>"Naming Our Present Experience"</i>
Friday, July 18	<i>"New Models for the New Millennium"</i>
Saturday, July 19	<i>"The Time is Now, The Kingdom is at Hand"</i>

Optional afternoon tours of the surrounding attractions will be available:

Hagley Museum/Longwood Gardens
Historic Philadelphia City Tour
Winterthur Museum/Longwood Gardens

Other Special Events:

Seminars on the subtext of "new models."
An evening concert by music composer and liturgist Marty Haugen.
Special interest sessions and evening socials.
A simple outdoor supper.

Arrangements have been for a block of rooms for those who wish to stay off campus for the Congress. The rooms will consist of either two double beds one queen size bed, bath with shower (bat with tub on request), phones, cable TV, computer jacks, smoking/non-smoking rooms. A continental breakfast is included. There are no pool facilities or exercise room. The motel is located just off I 95, two and a half miles from Clayton Hall. Rates for S.F.O. Congress participants: \$56.00 plus tax, \$5.00 for each additional person. Children under 18 are free. These rates will apply if reservations are made before June 30. Contact:

SLEEP INN

630 College Ave.

Newark DE 19713

Telephone (302) 453-1700 FAX (302) 453-17170

QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS PRAYER V

Lord, source of all wisdom and strength,
we are aware of your divine presence,
alive and moving within each one of us.
And so with confidence, we place our lives in your hands.

Inspired by Abraham and Sarah,
we have set out in faith to refound our Order,
believing that you,
who call us to leave the comfortable and familiar,
will reward us with brothers and sisters,
as numerous as the stars in the heavens.

Inspired by Deborah, Judith and Esther,
give all Secular Franciscans, male and female,
the virtues of these faith-filled women,
whose confidence in you and the power of prayer,
enabled them to shield their people from evil and destruction.

Inspired by Ezekiel, Isaiah and Amos,
we ask that you bring forth prophets among us;
ones open to your Word and your Holy Spirit;
passionate and fearless prophets who will cry out to you,
"Here I am, Lord!" "I love your people." "Use me!"

Inspired by Peter, John and Mary Magdalene,
we ask that you mold us into disciples and missionaries,
and teach us,
through the example of those first disciples and apostles,
how to persevere in faith, hope and love
without needing to know the end of the story.

God of Francis and Clare--of Richard and Emanuela,
of Friars and Poor Clares--of Third Order Regular and Secular,
GOD OF US ALL,
be with us at our Quinquennial Congress.
Protect and guide us in our work and in our worship
that we might bring glory to your name.

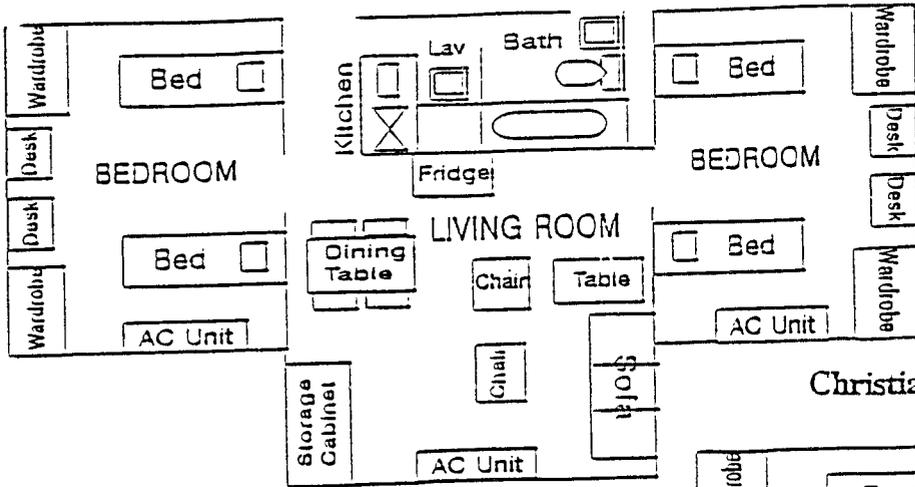
We ask your blessing upon us, our Congress and our Order,
in the name of the Father,
and of the son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN!

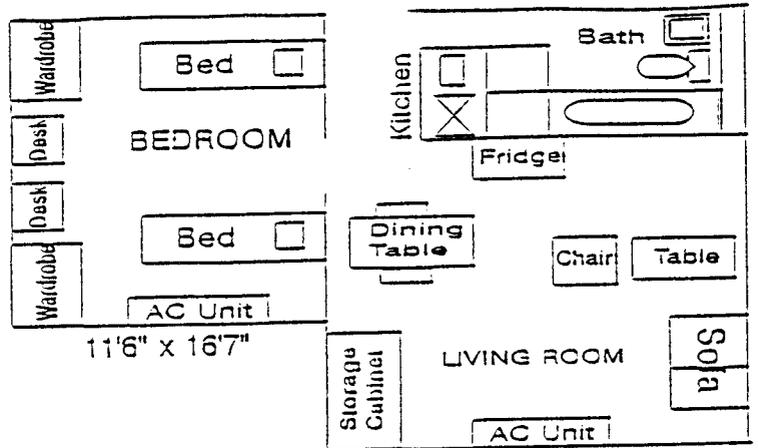
The Planning Committee hopes all Secular Franciscans will be involved in planning the Congress through this prayer.

The 1997 Quinquennial Congress, July 15-20, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware

Christiana Two-Bedroom Apartment



Christiana One-Bedroom Apartment



FLOOR PLAN OF APARTMENTS
COST DETAIL ON REGISTRATION

The University of Delaware is committed to assuring equal opportunity to all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, veteran, or handicapped status, or sexual orientation in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment practices as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes. Inquiries concerning section 504 and ADA compliance and information regarding campus accessibility and/or accommodations should be referred to the office of the ADA Coordinator. Inquires regarding Title IX and Title VI should be referred to the Office of the Director of Affirmative Action. Both offices are located at 305 Hulihan Hall. The phone number is (V) (302) 831-2835, (TDD) (302) 831-4552.

EXTRA SERVICES: Check if you wish information on the services listed below:

_____ Handicap access and services (Please specify needs)

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS: To request disability accommodations, contact Conference Services at least 10 days in advance of the program. 302/ 831- 2214 (voice), 302/831-4552 (TDD), 302/8831-7998(FAX).

_____ Shuttle buses from Philadelphia Airport or Wilmington Train Station
(cost will be approximately \$45)

_____ Afternoon bus tours (available for Thursday, July 17th)

_____ Day Sessions (if you are interested in one or more daily sessions only)

_____ Information on NON-PARTICIPATING family members costs and services
(Family members may stay in rooms at the room cost only, but meals are not included)

On the Road to Calvary

Carol Gentile, S.F.O., Chair, Family Commission, 136 Woods Avenue, Monaca, PA (412) 775-4248

I solemnly assure you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat, but if it dies, it produces much fruit. The man who loves his life loses it while the man who hates his life in this world preserves it to life eternal. John 12:24-24

When brother Francis saw the leper, he saw the face of Jesus. He responded to the leper with the love of God in mind. The kissing of the leper was a point of conversion for brother Francis. When I think of how courageously and willingly our Lord accepted his cross on the road to Calvary I think about our responsibility in carrying our cross. Do we see our journey to Calvary? Conversion comes when I look at the cross for answers and when I am willing to die to myself, take up my cross to follow Him. Difficult times and struggles of life will always be with us. Placing Christ in the center of our life anchors us to the true meaning of life which is Christ himself. Suddenly we are able to see, think and feel differently, which causes us to behave Christlike. The compassion and love of Christ changes us from the inside-out.

The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature. Ezra Taft Benson

Let's walk together on the road to Calvary:

Jesus is condemned to death. When I am a victim within my family, relatives, friends, workplace and would like to escape or find an easier way to deal with the problem, I find answers by asking, "What would Christ do? Do I see the face of Christ in that person?" As Franciscans we are called to be instruments of peace. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus takes up his cross. When I have no control in a situation, can I let go and put God in charge? I see you pick up the cross and carry it. I, too, must pick up my cross. I look to Christ as my model in life. We may say, "He can do it because he is the Lord." I am reminded that brother Francis was one of us. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus falls the first time. I just acted out of character. I wasn't Christian in thought, word or action. However, Christ forgives me. If the Lord forgives me my wrong doings, can I forgive others? Brother Francis reminds us where there is wrong we will bring the spirit of forgiveness. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus meets his mother. How many times our loved ones watch us as we take the journey with Christ. Brothers and sisters in Christ are there to support us as we should be there to support them. Brother Francis encourages us to bring harmony from discord. Through God's way we make sense in the world. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Simon of Cyrene carries the cross of Jesus. Our brother Francis never thought he had done enough for his beloved Lord and Master. I must endure my cross for the Lord, so I, too, will help carry his cross. I will stand tall when there are human errors and bring your truth to others. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. How many times have I wiped the face of Christ? Have I seen my brothers and sisters in pain? Can I be like Veronica? As a Christian and a follower of our brother Francis, I am obligated to console others, and to be humble enough to be consoled. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus falls the second time. The cross is becoming heavier for you, my Lord. Because of our imperfections we sin again and again. I ask myself, why can't I just abandon my cross? When I doubt the reason I carry it the Lord speaks to me again. Where there is doubt I must bring faith. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

The women of Jerusalem weep over Jesus. The more I try to comprehend the love that the Lord has for me the more I understand how I am called to love as he loves. For every time I see the crucified Lord I am reminded of how much my Savior suffered for me. We are called to love others unconditionally as our Lord loved us. Brother Francis encourages us to bring hope to others where there is despair. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus falls the third time. Sometimes I don't think I'm going to make it Lord, but I want to walk this journey with you. Help me to do it with love and dignity, to glorify your name. I must smother the slightest impulse to sin lest I offend my God. Where there is shadow, let me bring light. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus is stripped of his garments. Recalling our brother Francis who stripped himself of worldly goods, we are asked to look at our worldly possessions. How many suits or dresses or shoes can we wear? When we share these with others we bring joy where there is sadness. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus is crucified. When I am verbally crucified by others I will remember what Christ said to those crucified him, "Forgive them, Father, for they do not know what they are doing." If we accept our crosses, offering the pain for our salvation and for those who offend us, we bring ourselves and others to Christ. Christ loves all his children. In forgiving we are forgiven. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Jesus dies on the cross. On the cross Christ stretched out his arms to embrace the world with love. He died for all of us. When the journey becomes tougher, our love for Christ strengthens. The evil one will try anything to distract us from the Lord. For you, Lord, I live; for you I die. Always keep me at your side. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

The body of Jesus is laid in the tomb. Jesus said to his disciples, "If a man wishes to come after me he must deny his very self, take up his cross and begin to follow in my footsteps. Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." I will die for the love of Christ who died for the love of us. In dying we awake to eternal life. Yes, Lord, I will walk with you.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you see the sufferings of your life as the means of allowing you to participate in Jesus' way of the cross?
2. How has your share of the cross of Jesus helped you to turn more fully, to be converted to the Lord?
3. How do you respond to those who have a difficult time seeing the redemptive potential in the "crosses" they bear?

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Turned Toward the Lord: The Process of Change and Conversion

by Therese and David Ream, S.F.O., Co-Chairs, National Formation Commission

Even though large areas of our country suffer the effects of extended winter conditions, the calendar assures us that we have entered springtime, the season of budding new life, the season of transformation and change, the season of rebirth. In our Church the Easter season is also a special time of celebrating transformation and rebirth in the waters of Baptism, the chrism of Confirmation and the bread and wine of Holy Eucharist.

As Franciscans we are called by nature's season of spring and the Church's season of Easter to reflect on our own special vocation as the "brothers and sisters of penance," our earliest title. What does it mean to be penitents? In part it means being persons deeply aware of our own sinfulness (i.e. our inclination to self-election rather than choosing the love of God) and radically open to the grace of ongoing conversion of mind and heart which our Lord most generously bestows on those who will receive it. In the words which accompanied the imposition of ashes on our foreheads at the beginning of Lent, it means that we recognize our need to "turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel" which we have professed and which candidates will profess to be our way of life.

The late Father Thaddeus Horgan, a Society of the Atonement friar whose work as a Franciscan scholar was instrumental in the revision of The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, approved by Pope John Paul II in 1982, had this insight about the penitential characteristic of the Franciscan Third Order, Secular and Religious: "In the Penitential Tradition true faith and ongoing conversion of heart, or the total and continuous giving of self to God after the manner of the life of St. Francis, is the emphasized and distinct characteristic of the tradition: Horgan, T. (1987) Turned to the Lord, pg. 1. Pittsburg, PA: Franciscan Federation.

Our immersion into the Paschal mystery of Jesus—his life, death, resurrection and glorification—is a process never fully complete in our earthly life. We are constantly engaged in the transforming process of turning away from sin so that we may be ever more fully turned toward the Lord. Article #7 of The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order reads thus: "United by their vocation as 'brothers and sisters of penance,' and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls 'conversion.' Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily."

Article #7 of our Rule includes a footnote reference to Lumen Gentium, Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Chapter I, article #8 which teaches in part: "Christ, 'holy, innocent and undefiled' knew nothing of sin, but came only to expiate the sins of the people. The Church, however, clasping sinners to her bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal." This path of penance and renewal to which the Council Fathers referred is the path of the Church; it is most especially our path as women and men "who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi" (S.F.O. Rule, article #1).

How are we as Franciscans challenged to live out our efforts toward evangelical conversion in our everyday world? In continuing the pattern of reflecting on a common theme from various perspectives, the Apostolic Commissions have contributed articles intended to support our formation efforts—all of which should be directed toward fostering deeper understanding of an appreciation for the meaning of Franciscan conversion. In addition to these reflections, Father Richard Trezza, O.F.M., a wonderful Franciscan who serves not only as the friar member of the National Formation Commission but also as Spiritual Assistant to the Chairs of all the National Commissions, has written a very thought-provoking article about the opportunities for change and transformation which the regionalization process has brought about in our country.

Please read, study, pray about, share and discuss these reflections with the brothers and sisters in your fraternity. Remember to pray often the conversion prayer of our Seraphic Father which we have proposed for adoption as our "official" formation prayer as well: "Most high and glorious God, bring light to the darkness of my heart. Give me right faith, certain hope, and perfect charity. Lord, give me insight and wisdom so that I might always discern your holy and true will."

Would Your Region Like Some Assistance With Formation Workshops or Retreats?

The current members of the National Formation Commission wish to continue the practice of making themselves available to Regional Fraternities for conducting workshops and retreat experiences in support of their formation efforts. Rather than following a preset program, the Commission intends to design its offerings to meet the specific needs and expectations of the Region requesting the workshop or retreat. Those who are interested should feel free to contact Therese and Dave Ream by telephone at 1-888-UMBRIA2, or by e-mail ae06@truman.edu.

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Conversion

by Charles Spencer, S.F.O., Chair

Accepting change is not always easy. However, without change conversion is impossible. One is relative to the other. Observing the ongoing conversion of Creation can be of great help in accepting change in our own lives, welcome or otherwise. Creation offers countless examples from which we can find providential substance relative to every human emotion and experience. As Creation is divine, what it has to teach is also divine, if we are attentive.

For those who navigate the waterways, the river offers a perfect example of one's conversion process. It is to recognize the shallow places, yes, but also undisclosed depths. It is to identify with the ripples that disturb the peace, not to mention the snags, falls, swells and drought. It is also to recognize that every stretch of turbulence promises still water at the end. Although the river at times seems to stand still, it never does. It becomes larger and more settled with time and growth, providing a new view around each bend. The same is true for us.

There are hundreds of other examples, whether we reference winter to spring, night to day, clouds to sun, wind to calm, cold to warmth, fog to clarity, peak to valley, and on and on. If and when our spirit fades, one thing we can depend on, and that is change. As German poet and philosopher, Wolfgang von Goethe, wrote, "Life belongs to the living, and he who lives must be prepared for changes." The slow growing forest bears witness to the reward of patience. The plant growing from the cracks of a busy sidewalk bears witness to overcoming adversity. Life that takes root in a decimated barren landscape bears witness to the promise of resurrection and renewal. In creation we come to know God's great love through this ongoing conversion of which we are all a part.

Understanding that creation is a manifestation of God's love brings peace and acceptance to our own place in time, regardless of the situation. As Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), American poet, essayist and lecturer once wrote, "Each moment of the year has its own beauty, a picture which was never seen before and which will never be seen again." Given our love for God, we are to trust that we are moving in the right direction even when our lives seem in such disrepair. As Robert Harris (1849-1919), the Canadian artist wrote, "Even on stormy nights, above the clouds, stars shine." Although circumstances change, God's love does not. We have His promise.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) Share examples of your experiences in Creation that identify with conversion.
- 2) Is it possible for Creation to be destructive of itself? Explain.
- 3) In retrospect, have you ever known God to fail you in your time of need? Explain.

Teach Peace---Peace Schools

In the Franciscan spirit of peacemaking the Executive Council of NAFRA is gathering information to explore the possibility of developing a national project for the Secular Franciscan Order. We are gathering materials related to conflict resolution skills, tapping into creative rather than destructive behavior and classroom activities with the possibility of making a program available to schools. Thank you for the contributions you have sent.

We still need to know what programs exist. Can you help? Are you interested? What is going on in your community? Please send the names of contact people, sample programs and ideas to:

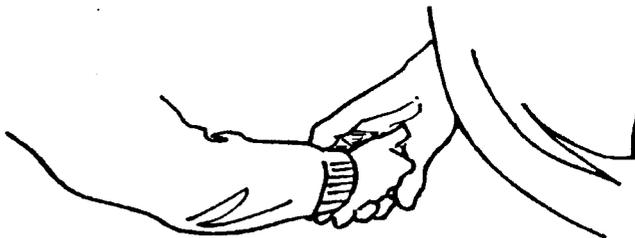
Patti Normile, S.F.O.

TAU-USA Editor

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A THEOLOGY OF WORK FOR CHANGING TIMES

Ed Zablocki, S.F.O., Co-Chair, Work Commission

Let them esteem work as a gift and a sharing in the creation, redemption and service of the human community. (art 16)

Then Your father worked at GM for 34 years, retiring at 60 with a great benefits package. Aunt Agnes worked until she was 70 at Joseph's, a women's fashion store, where she had been a sales clerk her entire adult life. Work in the not-so-distant past meant security; your job could be yours for life, if that's what you wanted. Your work was like your parish, something you could count on to be there.

Now Down-sizing. Right-sizing. Out-sourcing. Maquiladora plants. The transition from an industrial to an information society. Catch phrases that don't begin to capture the gut-wrenching change for millions of American workers and their families. Job security has become an oxymoron.

If you've lost a job and found a new one, the likelihood is it will be for less pay. Holding down more than one job has become more commonplace as a necessity to pay the bills. Even for those of us blessed with good jobs, life in the workplace now involves change as a constant. The average American worker just starting out in the workforce can now expect to experience not only numerous changes in positions held but several career changes over the course of their work lives.

How do we reconcile these dramatic changes with a faith perspective on work? The idea of work as a calling from God, a vocation, developed during the time of the Reformation. God was calling all persons, some to life as a religious, some to life in the world - all to a life of dignity through their work. Vocation implied stability and continuity — just as a priest was a priest for life so too should a person remain faithful to their calling — as a locksmith, a potter, a soldier or a merchant.

Clearly, for an ever increasing number of individuals in the modern world, the idea of a vocation doesn't fit with the reality of their work lives. A career change could be taken to represent a lack of faithfulness to one's initial "calling" and, consequently, become a source of guilt.

A way out of this dilemma is offered in the book *Work in the Spirit* by Miroslav Volf (Oxford University Press, 1991). Volf suggests that a Christian worker seek to recognize and use the gifts that the Holy Spirit has bestowed in God's immense generosity. "When human beings work, they work only because God's Spirit has given them power and talents to work....All Christians have several gifts of the Spirit. Since most of these gifts can be exercised only through work, work must be considered a central aspect of Christian living."

If work is the God-given means we have to use the gifts of the Spirit we have received — be they for organization, hospitality, teaching, design, healing, *ad infinitum* - then there is no inconsistency in our faithfulness to our calling (i.e., the use of our gifts) and changing jobs or even careers. Even if we are unemployed, we can be using the gifts we have been given in our daily lives with our family, community and volunteer organizations.

Our Secular Franciscan Rule and Constitutions are very much in keeping with an understanding of work as the use of our Spirit-given gifts. Our Rule implores us to "esteem work as a gift..." (art.16) while the Constitutions remind us that "For St. Francis, work is a gift and to work is a grace. Daily work is not only the means of livelihood, but the opportunity to serve God and neighbor as well as a means to develop one's personality." (art. 21)

Successful conversion to the brave new world of work requires a similar conversion to a new theological appreciation of work. Otherwise, we risk losing heart and losing God at work. Thank God that our Secular Franciscan way of life leads us to precisely the understanding of work as gift that we need to nourish ourselves in these harried, hectic times.

Dialogue Starters

1. What are some of the gifts that the Spirit has bestowed on you?
2. How do you express these gifts through work on the job, at home or through other commitments?



Regionalization...Is That All There Is??

by Richard Trezza, O.F.M., Spiritual Assistant, National Formation Commission

Regionalization...the biggest thing to hit the Secular Franciscan Order since the Rule of 1978! As with most changes which meet us where we live, regionalization has been perceived as a source of misunderstanding, anger and even division within our Franciscan family. But it is also a sign of movement, hope and cooperation among Franciscans of all Obediences.

For those who have not fully invested themselves in this Order-wise endeavor, regionalization will just mark the death of the Provinces to which the S.F.O. has been bonded (a relationship which, by the way, is still intact). It will be just another example of the higher fraternities telling the local fraternities what to do. It will just be another imposing structure to get used to or possibly to ignore.

However, in embracing the concept of regionalization, one will discover endless possibilities of experiencing meaningful Franciscan life. Those fraternities comprising a membership of five or six can now feel free to join with other fraternities nearby for support, spiritual development and recreation. The sharing of resources and personnel becomes possible and desirable. And, miracle of miracles...the S.F.O. has been successful in getting the friars from all Obediences to talk and work together!!

My belief is that the success of regionalization will come from the creative initiatives of grassroots local fraternities. Already in Our Lady of the Angels Region—northern New Jersey, Manhattan, Staten Island, Mt. Vernon and Yonkers—plans are being made to "cluster." Local ministers of the fraternities in Garfield, N.J. (Holy Name); Wood-Ridge, N.J. (Assumption); Hackensack, N.J. (St. Francis); and Elmwood Park, N.J. (St. Leo) have made plans to meet to see if it would be possible to gather on a regular basis—perhaps every two months. Maybe this will evolve into one meeting a month with the small local fraternity and the second meeting with the larger group. In this way, each fraternity would maintain its own identity without having to "merge" with another group. It would also have the advantage of being with a larger group for fraternal support. One can already see the beginnings of inter-fraternity apostolic activity, prayer and communal or "cluster" newsletters and, let us not forget one of the great hopes of the regionalization process, that of establishing regional formation programs.

In the northeast, geography has made it easy to begin to implement this inter-fraternal dream. If regionalization is to be all it can be, the Regions themselves and especially local fraternities should find creative ways to foster the Franciscan charism where they live cooperating with other fraternities of Franciscans in close proximity to accomplish communal goals and objectives.

Regionalization is quite consonant with the "shrinking" of the world through Internet and other rapid and instantaneous vehicles of communication. Isolation is a thing of the past and regionalization begins a process whereby individual Secular Franciscans and fraternities will find themselves bonding in different and exciting ways.

Any local fraternity council which has struggled to survive yet another year, who finds it difficult to inject some life into its fraternity and motivate its members, who feels isolated in its attempts to apostolic activity and is at a dead-end where recruitment and proper formation of new members is concerned, should find the possibility of carrying regionalization one step further as a beginning of an answer to some of these perennial problems.

The Guidelines for Formation, previously published by the National Formation Commission, would seem to find expression in an atmosphere where fraternities clustered together for the purpose of initial formation. A central meeting place—or perhaps an annually floating Formation Center (not so much a building as a location) could guarantee a pool of interested and trained formation facilitators. For sure there would be the local formation person, but in the regional scenario, that person would not have the responsibility of being the sole formation resource. They would track perspective candidates, report to the local Council concerning their progress and support the whole formational endeavor in the Region.

The nurturing of the local fraternity vis-a-vis those in formation, would be reinforced and bolstered by the regional formation "center." This could only enhance a perspective Secular's feeling of belonging to a larger group where good instruction and modeling are taking place, not to mention the sharing in many and varied apostolic endeavors.

Francis' dream did not happen overnight. It continues to evolve to this day. We should, at least, commit ourselves to the *dream* and the *journey* which would make Secular Franciscan life fuller, more effective, fulfilling and enjoyable.

PEACE TO YOU AND
ALL BLESSINGS



In The Trenches

by Mary Zablocki, S.F.O., Co-chair, Work Commission

I have an ancestor, an Irishman from County Clare, who lived in three centuries. Born in 1797, he lived all of the nineteenth century and died in 1904 at the age of 107. We as a family know a bit about him, that he was a poor Irish Catholic peasant and married the daughter of English landed gentry. We can only imagine the details of that story. We also know that during the potato famine, her mother, who had disowned her for marrying this Irishman, refused to take her back, but condescended to save her and her family from starvation by hiring her to work as a scullery maid in her kitchen. We know that he came to the United States around the middle of the 19th century and settled in Scranton, Pennsylvania. In 1901, at the age of 103, he underwent one of the first gallbladder operations and is written up in some medical journal somewhere. Finally, we know that he was, in my grandmother's words, "very childish" by the time he died.

I wish I could know him. I wish I could spend just one afternoon with him to hear first hand about his life. In 107 years, he lived through the Great Famine in Ireland, the War of 1812 and the Civil War, the institution and the dissolution of slavery, the Industrial Revolution, recessions and depressions, the Johnstown flood, the births and deaths of four generations!

I often wonder what he did? His life took him from near slavery to freedom, impoverishment to the founding of the first labor unions. Was he a man of great faith or did he let his faith fall away when the evil hand of hatred took his wife from him? Why did he come to America? He was already 57 years old when he left everything behind. Was it his choice or was he forced to leave Ireland?

This is a man who lived an extraordinary length of time. Did he also live an extraordinary life? I don't know. We know of no great inventions with his name on them, no great speeches he made, no amazing contributions to medical science (other than a very old gallbladder). But writing about Tom Maloney urges me to ask some questions about my own life. They are questions any of us could ask about ourselves.

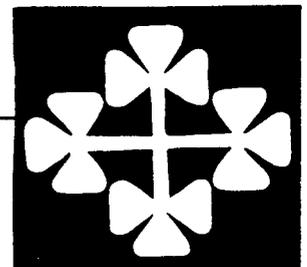
What will we leave behind? Will someone someday be able to trace our journey of faith? Will the stories told about us take our descendants through years of change and spiritual growth? Will any of us be remembered for being one who could always find hope and never give up, one who was busy being available to others that pain and physical limitations couldn't interfere? Will I be remembered for being a good friend? Will you be remembered for faithfulness or perseverance?

I cannot imagine what it must be like to be forced to get on a ship and head out into the water, leaving every familiar road and shore behind to go somewhere across the world. Our ancestors all did it. Even if we claim Native American blood, our ancestors were forced by circumstances to change against their will. Peoples across the world are uprooted now in numbers greater than ever before. And we have a problem changing our hair color, or hanging new paper in the dining room. But even if we do have trouble with change, whether it is our job we must change, whether we must learn to let go of a loved one, our home, our independence, we have choices. We can choose to change graciously or we can risk losing everything we are trying to cling to who we once were. We know we must change if we are ever going to effect change in our world.

As we who were born in this century look ahead to the next, we should take some time to reflect on the amazing changes that have taken place in our lives. We probably have had little to do with the big ones, the toppling of governments, war, world travel, space travel, technology, medical miracles, the great evils or the great heroism of this century. We may feel that we have been swept along in a tide of change, going forward with only a constant push from behind forcing us to keep moving. Sometimes we feel that we are controlled by the government, by our financial needs, by the pressures of Madison Avenue, by banks, health care providers, massive conglomerates of the Western world! Is that what we want to tell our great-great-grandchildren?

Do we want them to see us as sheep or as shepherds? Will it be more important to them how much money we made or what we did with it? What kind of car we drove, or who we shared the trip with? How popular or powerful we were or how charitable and compassionate? I know what I would ask Tom Maloney about his life. What kind of love for Margaret Webb made him risk both of their lives to marry her. How did he cope when he had to leave her buried in the ground when he came to America and what did he feel as the ship docked in Boston harbor. I can read what happened to the world during his life in any history book but I will not find his name in any book. But I don't want to talk to a great historical figure. He is my ancestor, I want to talk to him!

We too, are someone's ancestors. Whether we have children of our own is not important. Christ said that we could be His mother, His brother or sister, when we do the will of His Father in heaven. We are responsible for the generations to be born in the next century; we are the foundation upon which will be built the next millennium. Let us commit ourselves to leave them a legacy of gracious change, of prayerful consideration for the world they will inherit. We have been given the tools to build the kingdom of God. Let us pass them on well worn.



DIGNITAS

Proclaiming the Dignity of Work

National Work Commission, Secular Franciscan Order, U.S.A

Ed & Mary Zablocki, S.F.O., Chairs, 360 Beard Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14214 (716) 838-4178

Work Commission Members

Terrence McCarthy, Sr. and Ann Devine along with co-chairs, Mary and Ed Zablocki, constitute the National Work Commission. Terry lives in Tucson and is Minister of St. Thomas More Region. He is retired after years of experience in the construction industry in the U.S. and abroad and has sat on both sides of the table in labor-management negotiations. Ann lives in Hazleton, PA and serves as the regional work commission chair for Exaltation of the Holy Cross Region, comprised of eastern rite churches. Ann works for the Custody of St. Mary of the Angels of the Byzantine Franciscans and has received a degree in Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure University.

Los Tres Companeros Work Commission Survey

Paula Cahalan, regional work commission chair for Los Tres Companeros Region in central Texas included a survey in the January, 1997 regional newsletter, *Paz y Bien* (Peace & Good). Some of Paula's questions to members of her region included: "From what you know of Francis, what do you think he thought of work? How did he see the role of work in his life? Does being a Secular Franciscan have any impact on how you view work? Does it make any difference regarding the kind of work you choose to do? What about how you act at work?" **Dignitas** looks forward to reporting some of the survey results to you.

A Response from the Disney Company

The last issue of **Dignitas** addressed alleged abuses of Haitian garment workers by companies under contract to the Disney Corporation. In response to a letter protesting this situation, the Disney Director of Communications replied:

"Our review of operations in Haiti, which included an on-site inspection of the factories, has found that they are adhering to all applicable laws and policies. The median wage paid workers who make Disney-licensed goods is well above the Haitian minimum wage. As a result of contact we have had with the U.S. Embassy in Haiti regarding the manufacturing facilities our licensees there use, Ambassador William Swing has written to us that 'no visit by my staff has turned up any evidence of sub-standard working conditions. Even more compelling is information furnished by two separate reports (as yet unpublished) from the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs and the Tri-Partite Commission (an entity with representatives from the Haitian Government, labor unions and management). The contractors are not identified as having adverse working conditions, and furthermore, one report lists both primary Disney contractors among the five best factories in Haiti out of a field of 95.'....The real issue is not what the 20 percent of the Haitian labor force that is working is being paid. It is that of creating jobs and income and a standard of living for the 80 percent of the workforce for which there are no jobs."

As always, there are two sides to every story. *What do you think we as Franciscans should do?* Please write with your suggestions and/or to request a copy of the entire response from the Disney Company including an article from the Grand Rapids Press.

ASSISTANTS PREPARING ASSISTANTS

The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants to the Secular Franciscan Order, U.S.A., announce the Annual Meeting of Provincial and Regional Spiritual Assistants to the Secular Franciscan Order, to be held from September 16-19, 1997 (Tuesday to Friday), at Mount Saint Francis Retreat Center, Mount Saint Francis, Indiana. "Assistants Preparing Assistants" is the theme. Registrations and fees must be in before June 30, 1997. The cost is \$200.00. For further information, please write:

C.S.N.A.
3140 Meramec St.
St. Louis, MO 63118-4399
Fax: (312) 853-2361

Some of the speakers/leaders will be: Richard Trezza, O.F.M.; Kent Biergens, O.F.M. Conv.; Benet Fonck, O.F.M.; Therese & Dave Ream, S.F.O.; Bernard Tickerhoff, T.O.R.; John Pavlick, O.F.M. Cap.; Loren Connell, O.F.M.; NAFRA Leaders.

Education: Bishops' Public Policy Agenda

by Susan Burke, S.F.O.

Fraternity Ministers: Please Duplicate and make this article available to your members.

"All economic life should be shaped by moral principles. A fundamental moral measure of any economy is how the poor and vulnerable are faring." --A Catholic Framework for Economic Life, U.S. Catholic Bishops

Welfare reform legislation is making a serious difference in the amount of resources available to the people in our society who need the most help. The U.S. Catholic Conference is calling on Catholics throughout the country to urge their legislators to remedy some of the most egregious provisions in the new law, particularly those involving legal immigrants, food stamp recipients and vulnerable children.

"All people have a right to life and to secure the basic necessities of life (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, safe environment, economic security)." --A Catholic Framework for Economic Life

In its message to Congress at the 1997 Catholic Social Ministry gathering, the U.S.C.C. stated: "Throughout the welfare debate, the Bishops' Conference strongly supported genuine reform which encourages work, strengthens families, maintains an adequate safety net, and promotes both personal and public responsibility in overcoming poverty. The final bill did not meet these criteria. Through [the] budget process, there may be opportunities to repair some parts of the safety net that were torn in last year's legislation." Specifically, the Bishops support efforts to:

- +create jobs for food stamp recipients between 18 and 50 years old who must find work or lose their food stamp eligibility; change the rules, allowing them to receive food stamps if they cannot find a job or a workfare slot;
- +allow legal immigrants to receive Medicaid;
- +restore aid to legal immigrant children, the disabled, and the elderly through the Supplemental Security Income;
- +extend the five-year exemption for refugees to seven years.

The welfare reform law limits food stamps to three out of every 36 months for unemployed, childless, able-bodied adults aged 18 to 50. The law allows states to seek waivers from this cutoff for areas of high unemployment (over 10 percent) or insufficient jobs. Nearly half the states have requested waivers, but in many, only for areas of 10 percent unemployment, not for those with insufficient jobs. The U.S.C.C. is asking us to urge mayors, city council representatives, and county and city administrators to call on the governor to request waivers for areas that qualify. We can also petition our governors. Areas that qualify for waivers, but are not covered, are in California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia.

When making your case with local officials, remind them that waivers don't abolish work requirements, but simply avoid an arbitrary cutoff for people willing but unable to find work in high jobless areas; that cuts will affect grocers and the local economy adversely; that the affected group is very poor and likely without other means of public assistance; that state waivers do not entail additional state funds; and that emergency food providers are stretched thin.

Here are some other programs and legislation the Bishops' Conference supports:

- +WIC Supplemental Appropriation FY 1997: \$100 million to serve the 7.4 million participants now on the rolls of this nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC is the most cost-effective nutrition program for pregnant women and their infants and young children. The requested WIC budget for FY 1998: \$4.1 billion.
- +Health care for uninsured children, including those eligible for Medicaid but not enrolled, and for those whose families don't qualify for Medicaid but can't obtain or afford private insurance.
- +A global ban on anti-personnel land mines, strong leadership by the United States before the UN Conference on disarmament, and a permanent renunciation of U.S. use of land mines (the U.S. continues to use them in Korea).
- +Reform of foreign aid, refocusing more on alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development and less on military and trade objectives. Restoration of the cuts in development and humanitarian assistance programs overseas, support of the PL 4080 food assistance program and the International Development Association of the World Bank.

Write to your representatives to express your views and urge them to use their votes wisely. Remember: the law does not allow any nonprofit organization, including the Secular Franciscan Order, to support specific candidates.

Family Matters

Carol Gentile, S.F.O., Chair, National Family Commission 136 Woods Ave., Monaca, PA (412) 775-4248

INTERRELATIONSHIP OF COMMISSIONS

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me. Then the just will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison? The King will answer them: I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me. Matthew 25:35-40

HOW THE COMMISSIONS INTERRELATE AND FORM THE BODY OF CHRIST

A direct correlation and interrelationship or interconnectiveness exists within the Commissions. Activities we undertake as Franciscans are not single acts but part of a complex whole. Like a spider web made up of many threads, issues we face as Franciscans are made up of different parts. The "threads" of the issues are the perspectives of the separate Commissions. Together, actions of the Commissions form a perfect whole. Examples of apostolic activities described in Matthew:

<u>COMMISSION</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
Family	cook, serve, provide or donate food
Ecology	preserve, protect and prepare the ground
Peace and Justice	deal with the question, "Why do we have the hungry?"
Work	harvest and transport the food
<u>COMMISSION</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
Family	make the clothes or collect clothes
Ecology	sustaining creation and life for natural resources
Peace and Justice	protect human dignity; look at distribution of resources
Work	transport or physically provide clothes; buy material; provide with opportunity to help themselves
<u>COMMISSION</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
Family	assisting the homeless; adoption; foster a child
Ecology	preserve and conserve resources of the earth so there will always be a supply
Peace and Justice	advocate for the homeless
Work	physically build or remodel a home for the homeless; empower them to build with you/employ them
<u>COMMISSION</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
Family	nurture them to health
Ecology	protect them from what may cause illnesses (environmental toxins)
Peace and Justice	access good and equal opportunity health care
Work	volunteer in hospitals and nursing homes

The work of formation, especially ongoing formation, touches these areas by raising awareness, becoming knowledgeable about the Franciscan-Christian perspective on each issue, challenging and inspiring others to translate awareness into meaningful action. "Formation seeks to prepare the soil for the seed of effective Franciscan apostolic action to take root and bear fruit." When the Commissions are interrelated, then and only then, we will have created the perfect Body of Christ.

“LET PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION BE THE SOUL OF ALL THEY ARE AND DO”

by Teresa V. Baker, S.F.O.
National Formation Commission

St. Francis founded the three orders on Gospel principles, and our own Rule compels us to go from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel (Article 4). But how is this accomplished? What does it mean to take the Gospel into our everyday lives? What is an effective way of making it more than just words on a page or words that are proclaimed to us from the Liturgy of the Word?

One of the best ways by which we can incorporate the Gospel into our daily life is through the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*¹. This is a traditional form of applying the Scriptures to daily living. It has four basic principles, the “4 R’s,” if you would: Read, Reflect, Respond, Receive. We place ourselves in the presence of God by entering into the written Word.

The first step requires a careful, open and pensive *reading* of a Scripture passage. It could be the Gospel of the day or any other passage that is part of our daily prayer. (I mention Gospel here because it is the basis of the life of a Secular Franciscan; however, any Scripture passage will do.) This reading may have to be repeated two or three times in order to grasp the meaning of the passage or just to give oneself the space to settle into it. The second step requires a *reflective* understanding of the text. What was the Scripture passage saying in its own way? How does the passage translate into the trials and joys we face today? Do we understand the message God is trying to convey? (Study guides may be helpful here.) *Responding* to this message for our own lives is the third step of *Lectio*. How does the Gospel challenge us? What does God ask of us? Are we willing to respond to God’s invitation to live in closer union with Him? If so, what is the cost and how far am I freely willing to go? Finally, when we have completed this spiritual inventory, we sit back and gently *receive* the gracious gift God has in store for us, realizing that this “gift” may not always seem like a gift. It is in this step of *Lectio* that we sit and listen to God. Prayer, like any other form of communication, requires that we both speak and listen. Often we forget to do the latter. Either we don’t have enough time or we don’t want to hear. Again, your Spiritual Assistant would be an excellent person to lead this method of reading Scripture.

There are many other ways to read Scripture and many other ways to make Scripture your own. If this prayer form is already part of your daily communication with God, might I suggest three others: write your own paraphrase of the *Our Father* as St. Francis did; write a paraphrase of the *Hail Mary*, remembering that Francis asked Mary to watch over the Orders he founded; write your own meditations on the *Stations of the Cross*, since we are an Order of Penance and the Stations are a Franciscan institution.

We answered a call from God in becoming Secular Franciscans. We keep that call alive through daily communication with God through prayer. Our rich heritage offers us many diverse prayer forms. Try a new one. You may like it!

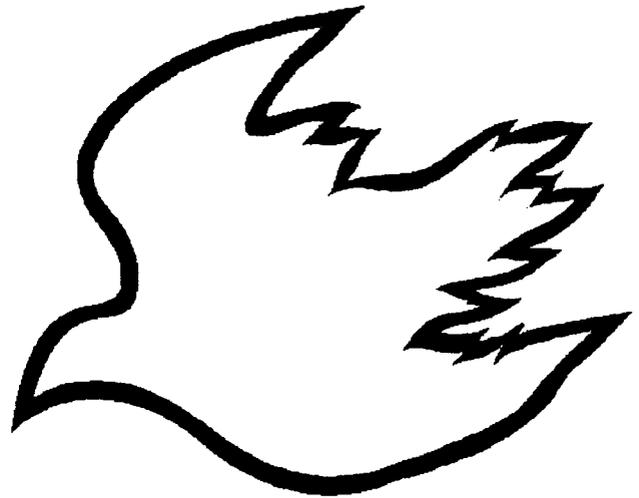
Happy Praying!

1. For a more detailed description of *Lectio Divina* see Too Deep for Words, Chapter 4, by Thelma Hall, r.c., New York. Paulist Press, 1988.

A Secular Franciscan Practice on Pentecost

by Ann Kramar, S.F.O.

Having just finished a novena and an Act of Consecration to the Holy Spirit, the Secular Franciscan was moving on to the Liturgy of the Hours. It was just after 6:00 A.M., and she wondered what St. Francis would have said, for the novena and consecration were by a group of priests of a different order. No worry, she thought. Francis himself would have embraced any effort to bring people closer to the Triune God. He prized minority and loved to see it in his followers. She prayed sincerely that good be done this day with no credit to herself, for she was entering on an activity that sometimes brought her posies. She knew she would have to lean heavily on God.



After listening to a sermon on the day's readings, the Franciscan headed out. The guards nodded good morning as she entered the drug addiction detox center, then stopped to let the nurses recognize her in case they had anything to say before she proceeded. Patients were at breakfast so there was time for socializing. Most were inner city people. She then made the rounds of the rooms, getting to know them, inviting them to prayer.

Discussing the Rosary, she acquainted them with the existence of their mother in heaven, the mother of Jesus, emphasizing that Jesus redeemed all people, regardless of creed or color, and became their brother, thus giving the world a mother, not to be worshiped, but to pray for them and to protect all the brotherhood of her son, her children.

Looking around, she estimated that about half of the addicts were attending and moved on to prayer. Following the pattern of the Mass, she tried to help them see themselves as God does, with sins and failures, but with deep and forgiving love, a love especially lavished on the poor and lowly. It was a joy to see the Spirit at work in them, yet a sorrow to realize how many were deprived of the tremendous gifts of the sacraments of baptism, of confession, of the Eucharist. They prayed for wisdom, for courage, for peace and joy. They read the readings of the day. They got to know more about God and were encouraged to use the precious gift of free will—to live as unsung heroes, people to be loved and admired, even by God himself.

Later there was a consolation. Two muscular men huddled near the dormant TV said that they were "going over the things said during prayers" in response to her "how ya doin'?" She had thrown them a challenge and they were leaders. But at once she recalled that to reach the leaders was O.K., but it was to the lowly that Jesus and Francis gave emphasis.

Thankful, she left for other areas, recalling how this apostolate had started simply with hospital visits, then prayers, then, to save time, gathering groups. In a few hours she had reached the final stop. Rehabilitation. It warmed her to see one girl whom she had so pitied a few weeks ago, almost incoherent, and alone. Now she was outgoing, smiling and happy with her progress. A man sidled up to her as she was leaving, showing a crumpled package with three cigarettes, asking if it could be delivered to a name in detox. Generally the policy is that some help is good during detox and nicotine may be helpful, so she agreed. The recipient turned out to be a pretty girl, gratefully taking her arm and saying that the Franciscan was needed if she could spare a little more time. In the room was a slight, middle-aged woman who had been crying. They talked and she asked to move into the privacy of her room where they sat together holding hands.

The woman burst into tears and wanted to tell her story. She was Catholic (not too common here) and a widow. Most inner city women have a man around for protection if for no other reason. At her husband's death she had his retirement income and got herself a man and the two had been into drugs. Apparently he was able to control himself, more or less, but she went off the deep end. Cruelty developed, drug prices rose. She was unable to regain the free will and dignity that is her right as a child of God. She accepted her responsibility for her dilemma. She accepted that she lived in the love of Jesus and with strong emotion declared her faith. Eventually the Franciscan helped contact her former pastor for confession and advice.

Thank God for the secular vocation and the countless unheralded ways in which it is manifested.

The Lampstand

"You do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket. You set it on a stand where it gives light to all the house. In the same way your light must shine before others so that others may see your goodness and give praise to your Heavenly Father."

(Matthew 5:15-16)



Over the years Franciscans have emphasized how important community is. Often we speak of a fraternity as a family. This aspect of fraternity support and relationship was brought home to St. Bonaventure Fraternity in Detroit in a dramatic way this April. Because St. Bonaventure is a large fraternity with cells and satellites it is hard to know everyone in the fraternity, but the ideal of a family is always emphasized.

Lyman Faust, whose wife was dying of terminal cancer, called the fraternity for help. He had just been released from the hospital himself and could not care for Geraldine alone. Lyman asked for someone who could stay with his wife during the late night and early morning hours. At the April 20th meeting Lyman's phone number was given to the fraternity.

At that meeting Bridget McAnish, a licensed practical nurse, herself unable to work full-time because of a disability, heard the announcement and took down the phone number. She had never met Lyman but thought to herself, "I could do that."

Returning home from the meeting, Bridget called Lyman and asked when he needed her. Lyman, with a sigh of relief, asked her to please come that night. Bridget went immediately to a home where she had never been, to help a man that she did not know except that she knew he was a brother in St. Francis. During that night, about midnight, Bridget watched Geraldine breathe her last breath as God took her home. Because of her training Bridget knew what to do.

She consoled Lyman, then called the proper authorities, family, police, hospice, funeral directors, etc. She helped Lyman with the clothes which had been chosen for the burial, and even ironed the dress Geraldine had picked. She stayed all night without sleeping and on into the day, until late afternoon when Lyman's daughter arrived from another city. Lyman was more than grateful that Bridget had been there and the blessing her presence was.

For Lyman, the fraternity had been more than just another organization to which he belonged. What a beautiful example Bridget showed to all of us. We thank God that we are truly family!

Editor's note: Marie Amore suggested *The Lampstand* as a way to tell the stories of Secular Franciscans who live Gospel to life, and life to the Gospel. Tell us about a Secular Franciscan you know. Please send articles to:

Patti Normile, Newsletter Editor
609 Amherst Ave.
Terrace Park, OH 45174
Fax: (513) 831-7542



A Different Kind of Garden

by Theresa A. Leone, S.F.O.
Blessed Katharine Drexel Region

Are you a person who enjoys gardens? There are so many different of gardens—fruit, flower, vegetable; formal and informal; small to large; well-tended to poorly tended, etc. Do you have any favorites or do you value the uniqueness of each one? Can you see beauty in a garden left totally to Mother Nature's care—one with a lot of weeds, where some plants are blooming beautifully and others are partially dead?

Have you ever considered comparing a person's soul to a garden? Recently I have, and not only have I found it to be entertaining but it also has made me more tolerant and more gentle—especially if I feel that the "garden" is not lush. I try to walk carefully so as not to crush any new growth and look diligently for "new flowers or vegetables." Because people tend to cultivate what gets the most attention, I try to compliment people on the "beauty" I find in their gardens. Generally, the beauty of a garden (or lack of it) depends on whether or not it has been tended solely by the owner or by a combination effort between the owner and a "profession" she/she has engaged to help. Personally, I have come to rely on the perfect "professional"—the Divine Gardner (the Holy Spirit).

Remember, God the Creator decides what kind and what size of garden he wants us to be, but it is up to us to cooperate with the Divine Gardner in order to make our garden as lush and as fruitful as He wants.



The Ladder

As I learned about the foundation of the Secular Franciscan Order in the Rule, Article I—that we are a true Order of the Church, sanctioned by Popes and Bishops from the time of St. Francis up to our own dear Pope John Paul II, I realized that this was the start of my ladder. As time went on, learning the Articles, I realized the need to hang on to each side. One side was Jesus, the other the Church. Each rung was the Rule of St. Francis, guiding and leading me to a stable calmness that at one point, I believe, saved my life as I went through a very difficult and fear-filled marriage.

My instructors taught me to *live* the Rule in everyday life, not to just know the words; to read the Gospel; pray; go to confession; attend Mass and receive the Holy Eucharist as often as possible. They taught that being Franciscan is not just praying and not just working—it's both. Just as faith without action is like a body without breath, one needs the other to be productive. To help others, to pray for others, to teach others, is our call to holiness. Article 5 tells us to encounter the living and active person of Christ in our brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, in liturgical activity.

I learned that living a life of penance does not mean that the Rule expected me to live in a dangerous situation. I learned "to cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for all life"—even my own. Franciscans learn to "promote justice by testimony of their lives and the courageous initiative to make choices in harmony with our faith." To promote justice in my life, I had to have the courage to leave this marriage to bring harmony back into my life and my faith.

Without my ladder of Jesus, the Church, the rungs of the Rule, the fraternity in the Order, the love and Franciscan common sense of friends, I would never have arrived at Rule 19, "the trusting in the presence of divine seed in everyone and the transforming power of love and pardon, to bring joy and hope to others" and to myself.

Upon profession we affirm our baptismal promises to live more fully the Christian life by a commitment of service within an Order and according to a way of life approved by the Church.

In this age of opinions and choices it is ever more important that we train aspirants and retrain the professed to seek and do the will of God, not our own, according to Church approved material. As we seek and reach to do the will of God, to follow the Rule and life of St. Francis, we can each climb our ladders to find the peace, love and joy of being Franciscan.



Family of Nazareth

In Guardian of the Redeemer Pope John Paul II devotes an entire chapter to a discussion of Joseph's work as a carpenter, as an expression of love, as the saint labored to support Mary and Jesus. Work was the daily expression of love in the life of the Family of Nazareth. The Gospel specifies the kind of work Joseph did in order to support his family; he was a carpenter. This simple word sums up Joseph's entire life. If the Family of Nazareth is an example and model for families in the order of salvation and holiness, so too, is Jesus' work at the side of Joseph the Carpenter.

St. Paschal Fraternity, Toledo

Conversion

Conversion will be incomplete unless I can recognize and begin to change the ways I say "No" to God in spite of the good effort to be a follower and disciple.

What saves? One who trusts not in self but in God.

One who trusts not in any good works that seem to call forward but in God's gracious goodness and His unmerited message.

We travel in faith and we are not spared the expense of pain, separation and uncertainty. We must reverence Jesus the Christ in our hearts—make Him our Lord and Savior. We must be ready to answer the faith and hope we have in Him.

I change not by how much I love God but by how much God loves me. I come to understand that who I am is not as important as who Jesus is.

How can I let God's grace fully work in my life unless I live with people who can affirm it, deepen and strengthen it.

By Fr. Clifford Herle, O.F.M., Troubadours of Peace Region

In a world like the West where money and wealth are the measure of all things, and where the model of the free market imposes its implacable laws on every aspect of life, authentic Catholic ethics appear to many as an alien body from time long past, a kind of meteorite which is in opposition not only to the concrete habits of life, but also to the ways of thinking underlying them. Cardinal Ratzinger

The Good News Herald of St. Joseph Fraternity, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Franciscan Clip Art

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His Internet address is:

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Samuel Epstein, M.D., Professor of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, School of Public Health, University of Illinois Medical Center; Chairman, Cancer Prevention Coalition, Chicago. Internationally recognized authority on the toxic and carcinogenic effects of pollutants in air, water, food and workplace. Author of seven books including award-winning Politics of Cancer and Hazardous Waste in America and Safe Shoppers Bible.

Lois Marie Gibbs (invited), Executive Director, Center for Health, Environment and Justice; has present workshops in 48 states and numerous foreign countries. Author, Love Canal, My Story and Dying from Dioxin.

Carl Grossman, Professor of Journalism, State University of New York, College at Old Westbury. Investigative journalist. Credited with the "best censored news story of 1996" by Project Censored, "Risking the World: Nuclear Power." Producer and host of the multi-award winning video documentary, "Nukes in Space."

Michael Hansen, Ph.D., Research Associate, Consumer Policy Institute, Division of Consumers Union; publisher of Consumer Report. Nationally known expert on biotechnology and food safety issues, including BSE (Mad Cow).

Andrew Kimbrell, Attorney (invited), Executive Director, International Center for Technology Assessment, addressing impacts of technology, including cloning and patents on life. Author of The Human Body Shop, addressing world-wide marketing of human organs. Identified by "Utne Reader" as one of the world's 100 leading visionaries.

Peter Montague, Ph.D., Director, Environmental Research Foundation and editor, Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly, one of the most respected environmental health newsletters in the country since 1986.

Friar John L. Ostdiek, O.F.M., Ph.D., Ecologist; past Board Member of medically oriented public works agencies; author of Creator, Creation and St. Francis.

Charles Spencer, S.F.O., Chair, National Ecology Commission, Secular Franciscan Order, U.S.A.

Pamela Tucker, Ph.D., Chief, Health Promotion Branch, U.S. Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, Atlanta, GA, addressing psychological responses to hazardous substance.

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FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL

Five years after the historic Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, environmental activists returned to Rio in April to review what has been achieved and to lay plans for the future. Objectives of this conference, called *Rio+5*, are:

1. Assessing the current state of sustainable development around the world;
2. Adopting an "Earth Charter" as a guide towards sustainable development;
3. Advancing recommendations to the U.N. for an Earth Summit review session;
4. Proposing a future global convention on sustainable development;
5. Promoting civil society initiatives and alliances to bolster sustainable development;

Delegates at the forum representing indigenous groups have been enthusiastic in support of the Charter but many delegates say it is too "nature-centered." One delegate pointed out that the draft makes no reference to religion or faith except when it speaks of "a strong faith in the possibilities of the human spirit." Another wondered aloud whether it wasn't only religion that divided those who view the planet as a loving mother from those who see it as a wild beast to be tamed and harnessed. Perhaps the very rich, with all the trappings of life, a nice home and warm clothing, see the earth as a bountiful provider with no need to face the elements. The poorest have no choice but to accept whatever nature provides. The ones in the middle see life as a never ending battle with disease, drought and other "bounties" that are provided. One religious N.G.O. delegate stated that he felt that developing countries are less concerned with "Mother Earth than they are with sustainable development in their own cultures." We shall see how this "Earth Charter" is accepted by the U.N. General Assembly.

A closing thought on environmental efforts. The State courts are challenging Federal courts on their power. A lower court found there were no grounds for the Federal government to regulate the clean-up of a hazardous waste site that did not have interstate implications. This is on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals. In another case the Court of Appeals found that a Federal program to remove lead from school drinking fountains violated the 10th Amendment. The court said this amendment prevents the Federal government from forcing states into implementing and enforcing legislative schemes. This is on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

(Thoughts gathered from Earth Times and contributed by Jim O'Neill, S.F.O.)

The correct address for Franciscans International is
345 East 47th St., New York, NY 10017-2301

*As brothers all, let us observe the Good Shepherd,
who to save his sheep underwent the suffering of the
cross.*

St. Francis of Assisi

Divine Love

Divine Love!

Sweet

Strong

Silent

Full of Compassion.

You lead us with Your Gentle Hand

Through the Violence and Wickedness of this World.

You keep us from harm,

You guide us in truth.

You console us through sickness and strife;

You are ever ready to hear our prayer.

No act or prayer is un-noticed by You.

You forgive us no matter how many times

We fail You by our deeds or omissions.

Welcome us when we leave this vale of tears

As You call us to our everlasting home with You.

Amen.

by Mary Surtman, S.F.O., St. Paschal Fraternity

NEXT TAU-USA DEADLINE July 20, 1997

Submit articles to: Patti Normile, S.F.O.

Editor, TAU-USA

609 Amherst Ave.

Terrace Park, OH 45174

Fax: (513) 831-7542

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S.F.O. NETWORKING CORNER

Below are names and addresses of Seculars interested in networking with other Seculars of similar interests. With courtesy and love, doors can open to new and rewarding friendships. To be listed, send name, address and interest/profession to:

Mary K. Mazotti, S.F.O. Networking
P.O. Box 2571, Arnold, CA 95223-2571

**Names will be printed once. Save lists.
Write to Mary and let her know how the
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St. Francis College offers a correspondence program on contemporary Franciscan living. First course, FRAN201, is a 3-credit course; cost, \$275. For information, contact St. Francis College, Loretto, PA, (814) 472-3219.

Franciscan Family Apostolate

More than 200 families still await sponsors. For information about supporting an impoverished family in India through the S.F.O. sanctioned Franciscan Family Apostolate, contact:

Alan Ouimet, S.F.O.
Franciscan Family Apostolate
303 Church Street
Guilford, CT 06437

Franciscan Family Apostolate may be able to provide a speaker for your regional meeting.

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PENPALS WANTED

John Surrige, S.F.O., Essex, England, is looking for fraternities or individual S.F.O. members who would be interested in becoming penpals with the same in England. His fraternity helps leper settlements in Africa and belongs to a Franciscan Animal Welfare group. Interested? Write:

6 Stonehill Rd.
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex, England SS9-4AY

Translators: Italian and Spanish

HELP WANTED: Translators are needed to translate from Italian to English and Spanish to English. If you would like to apply, please contact Richard Morton, S.F.O., National Minister, (612) 552-7809.

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