



Issue Number 17

The Newsletter of the National Fraternity

Fall 1997

## Thank You

Thank you, Richard Morton, for all your work with the National Fraternity. For six years you have so much time and effort to fulfilling the office of our Servant-Minister. This has been a challenging time in life for you and your family. In 1996, you made *25 trips* for a total of *95 days*. In 1997, you have made *22 trips* for a total of *104 days*. This does not begin to tell how many hours and days you spent at home working for the Secular Franciscan Order.

Thank you, Karol Morton, for sharing Richard with us. Your loving support and kind understanding has been invaluable, too. Richard was elected to position of National Minister, but you were a First Lady, with him when possible, but always encouraging him.

## Letter from the National Minister

It is with admiration and appreciation for what Richard Morton has accomplished in serving our Secular Franciscan Order that I humbly, with some apprehension, assume the position of National Minister. It is good that there is continuity of leadership from the past to the present. Of the seven elected members of the immediate past Executive Council, four are returning. Our very capable treasurer John Sanborn returns for a third term. Former Councilor Kay Pelletier is the new Secretary and I trade the Secretary position for the servant position of National Minister. Also, both the newly elected Vice Minister Marie Amore and Councilor Mary Mazotti have served on past Executive Councils. The "new kid on the block," Juan Lezcano is not new to leadership. Juan has served as Secretary and Vice Minister for Troubadours of Peace Region. Laura Haukaas will continue her excellent service as International Councilor to complete the final three years of her six year term.

Fr. Steve Gross, O.F.M. Conv., remains President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants to the Executive Council which translates into another year as Spiritual Assistant to the Executive Council. David Ream, who was appointed Formation Director in October, 1996, will continue as an invited member of the Council as will newly elected Marge Stein who was elected to replace Connie Smith as alternate International Councilor. As you can see, your Secular Franciscan Order is in good hands with this diverse, talented and experienced group of servant-leaders.

The first order of business of the newly elected Executive Council was to reappoint all of the appointed leadership positions since appointed positions are automatically dissolved with the end of the term of the past Council. Here, too, we are blessed to have such a talented group of men and women serving in these important positions.

I ask that you have a fraternal patience with us during this transition time. We thank you for placing your confidence in us and we won't let you down. It is my personal promise that the National Fraternity Executive Council will listen to you Regional Ministers and quickly respond to your requests, will include you in the conducting of business of the Order and will provide timely communication on the planned events that enfold at the Executive level. With this in mind, we expect a fraternal and timely response to our requests of you---we will hold you to task.

I must beg your prayers---first that the Holy Spirit guide us in all our endeavors--and second, that we as members of the executive Council will have the health, stamina, time and wisdom to provide loving care to the Order that we all love so much, so that we may, with you, do the work of the One who sends us and do it with that special charism given to us by our blessed Seraphic Father Francis of Assisi.

Peace and Good,

Bill Wicks, S.F.O., National Minister

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## Report on NAFRA Meeting in St. Louis

### The members of the newly elected Council of NAFRA

Minister	William Wicks
Vice Minister	Marie Amore
Treasurer	John Sanborn
Councilors	Juan Lezcano and Mary Mazotti
CIOFS alternate Councilor	Marguerite Stein

The Council of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (NAFRA), U.S.A., met from October 15-19, 1997, at the Retreat Center of the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Louis, Missouri with the St. Clare Region hosting the gathering. Regional ministers representing 31 regional fraternities in the United States, chairpersons of various ministries, spiritual assistants and observers representing the more than 17,000 Secular Franciscans from 722 fraternities around the country were in attendance.

At the opening of the annual meeting National Minister Richard Morton, S.F.O., advised that he has contacted Minister General Emanuela De Nunzio regarding the devastating earthquakes in Assisi, Italy, to learn what support NAFRA-U.S.A. might provide to the people and the town of Assisi. The General Minister advised that no determination of damage is possible until the aftershocks cease. Richard reminded the gathering of Francis' call from the Lord, "Go and rebuild my Church," stating that the Church is people first.

Richard commented on July's Quinquennial Congress in Newark, Delaware. More than 500 members attended. They were inspired by the call to rediscover the spirituality that provides the foundation for the Secular Franciscan Order. He cautioned that the number who returned home "on fire with the Spirit" after attending the Congress represented only 2.6% of the total membership. It is the task of each person who participated in the Congress to continue igniting the fire within their communities.

In summarizing recent activities, Richard noted:

- ◆ Franciscan youth participated in *World Youth Day* in Paris in August. Earlier youth activities of the S.F.O. (known as the Third Order) ceased some time ago. The S.F.O. must again to build a lasting youth program.
- ◆ At the Conference of Spiritual Assistants meeting in September, a program for training spiritual animators was approved for publication. The lesser number of friars available as spiritual assistants is heading toward a crisis. Friars and Seculars are responsible for training and motivating spiritual assistants. A *National Convocation of Spiritual Assistants*, sponsored by CSNA and NAFRA, is scheduled for 1998.
- ◆ President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, Fr. Stephen Gross, O.F.M. Conv., reported that the course on certification for spiritual assistants being reviewed for promotion. Spiritual Assistants are not spiritual directors, but animators and guides for Seculars toward a "Franciscan charism of the heart."
- ◆ An Ecumenical Committee has been established to lay a foundation for understanding brothers and sisters in the Franciscan tradition who are not Catholics. Fr. Paul Ojibway, S.A., will assist in this endeavor as his order focuses on ecumenism. This summer Fr. Stephen Gross, Vice Minister Jerry Rome and Secretary Bill Wicks represented NAFRA at a conference of Anglican Franciscans in New Orleans.
- ◆ In presenting the budget, Treasurer John Sanborn reported on the \$500,000 *Duns Scotus Secular Franciscan Formation Trust Fund* granted to NAFRA by the Friars of St. John the Baptist Province has been invested and revenue from the trust will be available for use by late next year.
- ◆ CIOFS Councilor Laura Haukaas reported on the International Family (see CIOFS).
- ◆ Fraternal life Co-Chair Jerry Rome announced new visitation guidelines designed to standardize visitations. Use

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is optional. Jerry reminded that the heart of the Order is in local fraternities. A professional team is available for Regions with serious personnel problems. Regions requiring such service may contact Jerry Rome or Jerry Friga.

- ◆ A final Regionalization report was made on the project begun in 1988. Documentation for Tau Cross Region, the 31<sup>st</sup> regional fraternity in the county, was accepted by Minister Bill McGovern.
- ◆ Mary and Anthony Mazotti, Co-Chairs of the Youth Commission distributed packets of information for establishing youth groups to Regional Ministers. Youth can range in age from preschool to college age. A Guide for Franciscan Youth and Young Adults will be published. There are eight official youth fraternities in the U.S.A.: one Korean, one Vietnamese, three Spanish-speaking and three high school. S.F.O.'s were advised to start with small youth groups and allow the youth to help in planning. Youth are to create their own communities.
- ◆ Vocations Director Marie Amore reported that the 1-800-FRANCIS phone number has produced 2070 telephone inquiries about the Secular Franciscan Order since 1995. Those calls required at least 4140 letters to be sent, one to each inquirer and one to a fraternity near the inquirer. Marie challenged, "How can we get more members?" She said they come because it's like falling in love. The attraction must be Francis and Clare and the fraternities alive with Jesus. She offered guidelines:
  - +Do I know and identify with Francis to allow him to be my guide to Jesus?
  - +Are peace and joy apparent in my life?
  - +Do I live what I preach?
  - +Do I contribute to fraternity gatherings by sharing my faith?
  - +How do I help my fraternity to become what we can be?
- ◆ Formation Co-Chairs David and Therese Ream encouraged use of *Franciscan* prayers at gatherings. Because the Gospel is the central formation force, we must be Gospel-charged people. We must reach out to ecumenical groups and other Franciscan groups in the Catholic Church. Secular Franciscans must seek new ways to create fraternity for a new image in the future---no business as usual. Long-range planning proceeds for prudent use of the *Duns Scotus Secular Franciscan Formation Trust Fund*. The Commission has developed a Franciscan resource list soon to be available from Barbo-Carlson printers.
- ◆ Applications for a new Peace and Justice Chair will be accepted until October 31.
- ◆ Family Commission: Carol Gentile represented NAFRA at the *World Food Summit*. She has been asked to work with the Assisi Diocese Family Life Office. Collaborating with Charles Spencer, Ecology Chair, the Family Commission protested a chemical waste incinerator in Darlington, PA. Plans for the incinerator are temporarily halted. To get people interested in Commissions, she reminded that you can only give someone your passion.
- ◆ Ecology Chair Charles Spencer advised Regional Ministers to seek qualified ecology chairs. We need knowledge about environmental issues. *A National Ecology Conference* is planned for 1998. The *Wildflower Restoration Project* is available to fraternities as a fund-raiser. (See information elsewhere in this issue.)
- ◆ Work Commission Co-Chairs Mary and Ed Zablocki reported signature-gathering to protest sweatshop conditions and child labor situations used by some clothing manufacturers. Information will be forthcoming about professional reflection groups to focus on conditions in the workplace. The Cord will publish an issue celebrating the 20th anniversary of the S.F.O. Rule.
- ◆ Returning Executive Council members Jerry Rome and Jerry Friga were thanked for contributions to the S.F.O. The *All Commission Conference* scheduled for 1998 has been postponed until 1999.

The day's session included participants sharing the good things done in their fraternities. The afternoon concluded with Eucharist with Fr. Benet Fonck, O.F.M.

On Saturday, October 18, George Irving reported on the meeting of Regional Fraternity Ministers:

- ◆ Budget recommendations were made, audit plans were announced.
  - ◆ Interregional activities between fraternities that exist near boundaries were discussed. Local fraternities in such situations are asked to decide regional affiliation with approval of regional councils.
  - ◆ Ministering to Friends of Francis and others interested in following Francis will be discussed by a committee composed of Gloria Jean Staley, Ann Corro, George Gulis and Ken Beattie.
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- ◆ Spiritual Assistance was deemed top priority for fraternities at local and regional levels. Requests for assistance must be made by Secular Franciscan Fraternities. Friars need to respond. Regional Ministers requested more concrete plans for the 1998 Convocation for Spiritual Assistance.
- ◆ Richard Morton's contribution to the Secular Franciscan Order-U.S.A. was noted and praised. NAFRA announced intent to contribute to a charity of Richard's choice. Richard later announced that he would like contributions to be made to a fund for the *Spiritual Assistance Conference*. Checks payable to *NAFRA-Richard Morton Fund* may be sent to: Richard Morton, S.F.O., 3191 71<sup>st</sup> Street E., Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076 or Treasurer John Sanborn, S.F.O., 1611 W. River Parkway, Grand Island, NY 14072. Contributions are tax deductible.
- ◆ Ken Beattie was selected as facilitator for the 1998 NAFRA Ministers' Meeting.

Doug Clorey, S.F.O., the International Fraternity Councilor from the National Fraternity of Canada, presided at the Chapter of Elections on Saturday, October 18. Fr. Carl Schafer, O.F.M., Spiritual Assistant from Curia Generalizia Dei Frati Minori, Rome, Italy, served as the friar witness for the elections. As election procedures began, Doug reminded the assembly that in their call to holiness they are called into relationship with God in prayer, called to fraternity, called to rebuild the Church in the largest sense. Before commencing with elections, he played and sang a song he composed: "He [Jesus] is alive, walking beside us . . ." Fr. Carl Schafer, O.F.M., spoke of the closure of the regionalization process as not being an end but a beginning of the process deepening unity. Using the symbol of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, which many visited on Friday, Fr. Carl said each segment of the arch was built and rests on another segment. The placing of the final segment, like the receiving of the final Region, illustrates the beauty and strength of unity of the arch and of the S.F.O. in the United States.

All was not work at the meeting. A day apart found participants touring the Old Cathedral in St. Louis, exploring the Gateway Arch and dining at the Top of the Riverfront, attending "Breaking Through," a play about St. Clare. Festive meals, gathering with song and fun created bonds of fraternal friendship.

### Franciscan Ecumenism

The Ecumenical Committee, composed of Fr. Steve Gross, O.F.M. Conv., Jerry Rome, David and Therese Ream and Bill Wicks, met with Atonement Friar Paul Obijay, S.A., in St. Louis in October. Friar Paul is Director, Greymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute, Washington office. The gathering was to help educate committee members on the present day movement by the Church toward reconciliation with other faiths and to plan possible future connection with members of the family of Francis whose worship is different from our tradition. This reconciliation is an integral part of our charism; St. Francis' inclusive intention was exhibited by his conversation with the Sultan. It is also a prayer of Jesus in John 17:21

PHOTO right: Newly elected National Officers and Election Facilitators: (1 to r) (Front) Mary Mazotti, Councilor; Marie Amore, Vice Minister; John Sanborn, Treasurer; (Back) Rev. Carl Schaefer, O.F.M., Gen. Spirit. Assist., witness for Church; Kay Pelletier, Secretary; William Wicks, Minister; Doug Clorey, Canadian CIOFS Councilor, election presider.



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## Endings---New Beginnings

In each life there comes a time for endings and that time arrived several weeks ago for me as National Minister. After serving the National Fraternity for six years as Minister, my period of service ended with the installation of William Wicks, the present National Minister on Saturday, October 18, 1997, in St. Louis, Missouri. Bill is from Santa Maria, California, and is the first National Minister from the west coast. This is another indication that the National Fraternity is truly "national." In fact, this completes the geographical rotation begun with Jim Lynch from Philadelphia (east coast), myself, from Minnesota (mid-continent) and now Bill from California. I am confident that each of us will give Bill our full support and will keep him, his wife Frances and his entire family in our prayers.

I wish to thank everyone, especially Karol, my wife, and my family for allowing me to serve you as National minister these past six years. I also thank the Lord for having watched over me, for keeping me in good health and for gracing my life with so many good people who have supported me, kept me on the "straight and narrow" and became brothers and sisters to me. For all this I will be eternally thankful.

If, along the way I have offended anyone, I apologize. I also apologize for, what at times, may have appeared to be unresponsiveness on my part to your letters, concerns, etc. All I can say is that I tried to do the best I could within the limitations of the time and talent I was gifted with.

Reviewing the past six years, there are two highlights which stand out in my mind. The first is regionalization and the second is the Quinquennial Congress.

Regionalization started with significant doubts in the minds of many. I never had any doubts that regionalization would be eminently successful and that it was absolutely necessary if the National Fraternity was ever to begin a process of renewal. This past October the last regional fraternity was established, thus completing the process. My thanks go out to all those who helped to make this happen in such a peaceful manner.

The Quinquennial Congress held this past summer was also very successful. From what I have been gathering, those who attended the Congress left with a new fire and passion to more fully live the Rule and with a greater appreciation of the meaning of community in the life of the Order. I ask those who attended the Congress to, first, keep the passion and fire alive in their own hearts and secondly, and just as importantly, to communicate that same fire and passion to the others in their fraternity and to those they meet along the way. May each of us take to heart the three challenges I presented at the close of the Quinquennial Congress:

√let us believe beyond all doubt that God dwells within us as the God within:

√may we realize that the God within moves us to seek the abundant fruits of fraternity in the midst of its many trials;

√let us move beyond ourselves as individuals, utilizing the energy that fraternity give us, to liberate those without hope.

As for my future, there are several interesting options which I have yet to fully sort out. So pray for me that I will be responsive to the direction of the Spirit in my discernment process. I am personally dedicated to the continuation of the refounding process begun at the Quinquennial Congress and will do whatever I can to further incorporate it into the life blood of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.

So again, many thanks and may the Lord bless each and everyone of you. May you continue to journey in His presence.

Fraternally,

Richard Morton, S.F.O.

November 1, 1997



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# National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States

## Annual Report to CIOFS

Membership 12/31/96		Fraternities 12/31/96	
Professed	17,097	Regional	31
Candidates	1,145	Local	722
Inquirers	752	Emerging	50

**REGIONALIZATION:** With the closing of all provincial fraternities at the National Fraternity meeting at Marywood Center in Orange, California in October 1996 the reorganizational efforts are complete. This work began in October 1987 when a committee was formed to begin the process. The first region was established in 1991 and the last four in 1996. This has resulted in a spirit of unity, sharing of resources and an understanding of the single identity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. This revitalization was emphasized at the Quinquennial Congress held July 15-20, 1997.

**QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS:** More than 500 Seculars and friends from the U.S., the Virgin Islands, Australia and Mexico came together in unity and a spirit of joy for our 15<sup>th</sup> Quinquennial Congress. Small Congress fraternities met throughout the week to discuss topics, beginning with "Telling Our Stories, Remembering Our Traditions and Naming Our Present Experience." Sr. Brenda Hermann, M.S.B.T., and Br. Paul Michalenko, S.T., facilitated the process, urging us to let go of all that prevents us from being instruments of change in the world and to return to our fraternities to ignite the spark of the spirit of Francis and Clare as we move toward the Third Millennium. Surely, "Now is the time, the Kingdom of God is at Hand" was the appropriate theme for the Congress.

**FORMATION:** Workshops and retreats are presented throughout the U.S. Efforts to establish regional centers of formation that would be centrally located is one of their goals. This commission is responsible for the publication of formation materials and has an Inquirers Handbook in progress. The correspondence course offered by St. Francis College in Loretto, Pennsylvania, will have two additional courses available by September, 1997. One of the Co-Chairs of the Formation Commission is a member of the National Executive Council.

**YOUTH:** Established in October, 1995, the Coordinators have a committee and will present Guidelines for Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Ministry for council approval at the October 1997 National Meeting. Although still in the beginning stages great progress has been made and enthusiastic groups of youth are developing, though not in great number. A contest to write an essay, "How St. Francis Is Affecting My Life," was held with the winner, George Tinoco, receiving an expense-free trip to the Quinquennial Congress. George read his winning essay at the Congress.

**APOSTOLIC COMMISSIONS:** Commissions are encourage to expand their roles to a team approach if they have not already done so. This encourages participation and input by a broader membership and more availability to give workshops and presentations. Inserts in the National newsletter, TAU-USA, by the Ecology, Family, Peace and Justice, and Work Commissions continue to be a resource for use by lower levels of fraternity. As a result of the tremendous respect for the work accomplished by our commission leaders, they have been involved in giving presentations at National and International events. The *National Wildflower Initiative*, established in 1991, continues to promote gardens in addition to *National Wildflower Week* celebrated in May. These wildflower plants are receiving wide acceptance. The *2<sup>nd</sup> National Ecology Leadership Training Conference* is planned for June 26, 1998. An *All-Commission Conference* (Ecology, Family, Formation, Peace and Justice, Work, and Youth/Young Adult) is planned for summer 1999 at St. Bonaventure University in New York.

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**FRATERNAL LIFE:** Prior to the National meeting a short workshop was presented to voting members who are attending their first National meeting to acquaint them with the process and to establish a hospitable atmosphere. They were grateful for this effort to give them an understanding of procedure. The co-chairs of this committee are preparing "Guidelines for Visitation" for approval by the National Council.

**REGIONS:** It is taking time for some regions to complete organization. With the transfer of members and fraternities, the updating of records is underway and should be accurate in 1997. This will assist in prompt reporting to National at the end of the year. Many regions have very interesting newsletters and all schedule workshops, conferences and retreats to promote unity in the region. Often these well-attended gatherings involve several regions. Most ministries are individuals serving in their community and church but some local fraternities have major apostolates to the poor. One fraternity makes monthly treks to Baja (lower California) with food and clothing for the poor.

**SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE:** The President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) will rotate every two years on the National Executive Council. The lack of spiritual assistants continues to be a problem. Recognizing this need the CNSA, collaborating with the National Formation Co-Chairs, is preparing a correspondence course to prepare spiritual assistants and certify animators.

**COMMUNICATION:** Subscriptions to our national newsletter, TAU-USA (published four times yearly) continue to increase. Over 1000 copies of *Living by Faith*, a letter published for the ill, the aged, the shut-ins and the handicapped are mailed monthly. A Secular Franciscan has accepted the responsibility to prepare and edit this letter. For many years this work was done by the friars. With a database manager to update records and an increase in the use of electronic mail the National Fraternity is improving in all areas of communication.

Dialogue with other Third Orders and with neighboring national fraternities is encouraged. As a result Maria Luisa Lecal Garcia, National Minister and International Councilor of Mexico, attended our National Council meeting in October 1996.

The National Fraternity continues to implement programs to reach the goal of renewal of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States.

Submitted by Laura Haukaas, S.F.O., International Councilor

### **CIOFS HEADQUARTERS**

#### **Help Needed**

Since 1991 the Capuchins have provided office space at no charge to the International Office of the Presidency. The present contract ends in 1999 and the Curia of the Capuchins has notified the Presidency of their need for those offices. It is urgent that an office be purchased before that time. At the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order held in Rome, July 7-14, 1996, a motion was approved unanimously to seek funding by donations for the purpose of purchasing an appropriate office and necessary equipment to make use of more modern means of communication (FAX, Internet) and possibly the publishing of a CIOFS Bulletin and other documents. As generous Franciscans we are now asked to contribute to our own spiritual family and to the spread of the Franciscan message in the world. You may send your check to John Sanborn, National Treasurer, 1611 W. River Parkway, Grand Island, NY 14072. Please mark your check for NAFRA-CIOFS Office Fund.

# Meeting of Presidency of CIOFS Held

by Laura Haukaas, Councilor to CIOFS

A meeting of Presidency of CIOFS was held in Rome, May 30 to June 4, 1997, with all members present.

The Commission for Revision of the General Constitutions reviewed all proposals and will make suggestions to the Presidency so that a draft can be sent to National Councils before July 31, 1998. The General Chapter of 1999 will be the decision-making body. Francisco Cortez, chairperson of the commission, presented the results of their study.

To improve communication a weekly newsletter will be presented on the Internet. All National Councils will be asked to adopt E-mail. As communications from the higher level rarely reach lower levels a guide on how to communicate is recommended.

The Bolletino urgently needs translators of French, Italian and Spanish into English and English into these languages. The Secretariate is also seeking volunteers to help publish this newsletter.

Franciscan youth were represented at the International Meeting of Youth in Paris. They participated in two separate meetings, one for youth delegates and one for those interested in Franciscan Youth. A guide to use in the work of Araldinie (groups of Franciscan children) has been prepared by Alicia Gallardo, CIOFS Councilor to the Spanish-speaking nations. This booklet will be translated and distributed to all National Councils.

CIOFS Councilor for the English speaking, Marianne Powell, will adapt the U.S. Document, Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leaders, for worldwide use in consultation with material obtained from other nations. A member of the Presidency who is responsible for a project may seek assistance outside the Presidency. Andrea Hambleton, National Secretary of Great Britain will assist her. Richard Morton, National Minister of the U.S., and Marianne will represent the S.F.O. in working out a proposal for a statue for Franciscans International in connection with the Conference of the Franciscan Family. Marguerite Stein, S.F.O. Canonist, is assisting the Revision of the General Constitutions Committee.

Plans are in progress to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our new rule under the slogan, "The Rule: Gift of the Spirit Leading to the Father." Orientations will be sent out at the end of 1997 to conscientize the Order for the celebrative year 1998-1999.

Canadian S.F.O. National elections were held on May 25, 1997 in Aylmer. Francoise Malboeuf was reelected National Minister. Presiding at the elections was Laura Haukaas, International Councilor of U.S.; the friar witness of the elections was Carl Schafer, O.F.M., General Spiritual Assistant, Rome. Representing the 11,524 S.F.O. members from 323 fraternities were the voting delegates from the three western Canada (English speaking) regions and two eastern provinces (French speaking). The National Fraternity of Canada is working toward total regionalization.



## Attention Language Translators and Newsletter Writers

Are looking for a way to use your special skills for the Secular Franciscan Order? Individuals who are able translate from French, Italian and Spanish into English, and English into those languages, are urgently needed. Individuals interested in working on a newsletter are also needed. Call Laura Haukaas at (770) 814-0154 or send her an e-mail at [lhaukaas@bellsouth.net](mailto:lhaukaas@bellsouth.net) for more complete information. She will check out the qualifications of potential volunteers and send them on to the Secretariate.

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## Earthquake in Assisi

A message from the Communications office of the General Curia of the O.F.M., October 1, 1997

**Earthquake in Central Italy** On September 26, 1997, two severe earthquake shocks struck, among other places, those places dear to the heart of every Franciscan, especially Assisi.

**Communique by the Ministers General** The four Ministers General of the Franciscan Orders issued a joint press communique. They expressed sorrow at the tragic death of two friars and two technicians, manifested their sympathy for the victims and solidarity for the thousands of persons deprived of their homes.

They announced, as sign of mourning and by reason of exclusion from the Basilicas, the Solemnity of St. Francis on 4 October would be celebrated with a single Eucharist on the piazza in front of St. Mary of the Angels.

**The Minister General, O.F.M.** Immediately after the earthquake, Br. Giacomo Bini, at the time absent from Italy, wanted to be present at the places of the tragedy in the person of Vicar General Br. Stephen Ottenbreit; the General Definitor, Br. Antonio Ricco; the Director of the Office for Nuns, Br. Herbert Schneider and the Office for Communications of the General Curia.

### **The Situation of Our "Places"**

*Saint Mary of the Angels:* The Basilica is closed due to heavy damage: the vault, the lateral and central naves, the tambour of the cupola. The Porziuncola Chapel itself is miraculously intact. The friary suffered structural subsidence and seventy friars have been evacuated. Many are living in tents, others in neighboring buildings.

*Saint Clare's:* The Basilica of Santa Chiara has suffered very heavy damage to load-bearing structures: it has been closed to pilgrims. The convent shows signs of serious subsidence in foundations and load-bearing structures. For an indeterminate period the Poor Clare Sisters are being given shelter in the friary of St. Mary della Spineta in Fratta Todina, sick nuns in the monastery of Montecastrilli. Five Poor Clare Sisters have remained, sleeping in a tent, to guard the body of St. Clare. Not even World War II succeeded in making the Poor Clares leave the Protomastero.

*San Damiano:* Only recently restored, this has suffered serious damage to the church, St. Clare's infirmary and the load-bearing walls of the friary. The fifteen novices has been transferred to Perugia.

*The Monastery of San Quirico:* The seismic shocks have rendered the building unsafe. The community of Poor Clares has been given hospitality in our friary in Amelia.

*The Chiesa Nuova:* The little church built on the paternal house of Saint Francis has been closed as unusable. Here, too, the friars have been evacuated.

**Solidarity** The first impetus of solidarity by the friars of the Seraphic Province has been to the Poor Clares in various ways, above all by receiving them into their own friaries. The friars in temporary profession, under the guidance of their educators, are giving voluntary help in the camps of people evacuated from their homes. Our Office for Nuns is in constant touch with all our sisters.

**Invitation** The Ministers Provincial are asked to pass on this information to the friars, the Franciscan world, our friends and the media, so that a real chain of solidarity may be created.

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**Further Updates** The night of 7 October was one of the worst when another earthquake, measuring 4.9 on the Richter scale, caused more damage to the tympanum of the facade of the basilica's left transept. The tremors continue. There are more reports of cracked frescoes and stricken bell towers.

Work is underway to minimize further harm to the structures, to repair existing damage and to save and repair as much of the art work as possible. There is speculation that parts of the areas may reopen within weeks, but the most optimistic prediction is the opening of the upper basilica for the year 2000.

The United States Senate has approved a resolution offering technical assistance of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery of Art and other museums in restoring the art work of the Basilica of St. Francis.

From Friar Gilberto Cavazos, O.F.M., in Rome: As of November 10, all the shrines are still closed. Tremors are coming at a rate of two or three a week. "It is like a war torn city."

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## On Becoming a Franciscan Prayer-er

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

It's not a typo. The focus this issue is prayer, not a static collection of words to God but becoming persons who pray (pray-ers) in a dynamic, relational sense. Prayer becomes a verb not a noun, an action not a thing.

In the new millennium, if we are truly to be Secular Franciscans vitally charged with the passion of the Good News which Jesus brought and Francis lived so well, we must become radical (Latin, *radix*, at the root) pray-ers. We do not refer to endless multiplication of words as though we need to tell God again and again our troubles or needs. Our challenge in becoming Franciscan pray-ers is to be more fully aware of the constant presence of our loving God outside and in our world, among, between and *within* us. Francis knew that God-most-high was at the same time God-most-low through the mystery of the Incarnation. He left this insight to us as a spiritual heritage. Authentic Franciscan spirituality is always incarnational spirituality.

Sacred Scriptures provide innumerable examples of pray-ers, most noteworthy of whom was Jesus. The Gospels are filled with snapshots of Jesus the pray-er, constantly aware of God's presence in his life, engaged in filial dialogue with his Father. *Dialogue* is a key to understanding prayer; dialogue requires two persons to communicate, a process which requires alternate stances of active speaking *and* listening.

For those blest with the gift of a Franciscan vocation, the first section of Article 8 of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order expresses the importance and centrality of prayer. "As Jesus was the true worshiper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they [the Secular Franciscans] are and do." Our experience of prayer is to be the very soul of all that we are and do. This exhortation at the heart of our Rule reminds us of the responsibility we Franciscans have to fulfill St. Paul's words, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Article 8 further instructs us to place primary emphasis on participating in the formal public prayer of the Church: "Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ."

The General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order (Articles 17.4, 24.1) places our vocations as Franciscan pray-ers solidly within the context first of our own families, then our fraternities and finally in the local Church and society. The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order provides a structure and context for more formal, publicly celebrated experience of being Franciscan pray-ers when we pray in common. The appendices contain a wonderfully useful and convenient Lectionary of Scripture and Franciscan readings, some prayers of St. Francis and suggestions Secular Franciscans may consider in fulfilling responsibilities set forth in Article 8 of the Rule.

Now is the time for each of us to examine the quality of our lives and experiences as Franciscan pray-ers. Our Seraphic Father challenges each of us, as he challenged companions of his day, "Brothers and sisters, let us begin for up to now we have done little or nothing." How aware are we from moment to ordinary moment in our daily lives of the intimate presence of our Divine Lover? How responsive are we to God's gentle, persistent caresses? How available do we make ourselves to engage in love talk with God which leads us to deeper and fuller union with him and each other---with all that is of God? The call to become truly Franciscan pray-ers is the challenge extended to each of us as our common reflection for our ongoing Franciscan transFORMATION.

May God give you peace!

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## Seven Days Without God Makes One Weak

Carol Gentile, S.F.O., Chair, National Family Commission, Secular Franciscan Order, U.S.A.  
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“To you who hear me, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you and *pray* for those who maltreat you.” Luke 6:27-28

Our Lord shows us through example the importance of prayer. When our Lord went to the garden of Gethsemani, he prayed to his heavenly father. “Abba (O Father), you have the power to do all things. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you would have it, not as I. When he returned, he found them asleep. He said to Peter, ‘Asleep Simon? You could not stay awake for even an hour? Be on guard and *pray* that you may not be put to the test. The spirit is willing but nature is weak,’” (Mark 14:26-38).

Daily Mass, praise and worship, create in us a willing desire to love our Lord with our *whole* heart. When those difficult moments enter into our lives, we will remember to seek out our Lord with our *broken* hearts. Our situation may not change but we may change the way we understand things.

Pope John Paul II has said that prayer must become the dominant element of the family. We are reminded that daily prayer and reading of the Word of God strengthens the family.

Setting the example: My parents had an altar in our home. On the altar my mother placed a beautiful statue of the baby Jesus and she made the most eloquent garments for the baby Jesus. We were reminded daily of the purpose of the altar. My mother’s actions spoke louder than words. My father fulfilled any request she had including buying the altar for her. I remember one question my mother would frequently ask her children, “What did you do for God today?”

### Prayer of the Family

Heavenly Father, you have given us the model of life in the Holy Family of Nazareth. Help us, O Loving Father, to make our family another Nazareth where love, peace and joy reign. May it be deeply contemplative, intensely Eucharistic, revived with joy.

Help us to stay together in joy and sorrow in family prayer. Teach us to see Jesus in the members of our families, especially in their distressing disguise. May the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus make our hearts humble like his and help us to carry out our family duties in a holy way. May we love one another as God loves each of us, more and more each day, and forgive each other’s faults as you forgive our sins. Help us, O Loving Father, to take whatever you give and give whatever you take with a big smile.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, cause of our joy, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Holy Guardian Angels, be always with us, guide and protect us. Amen

*Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

#### Activities

1. Discuss a time when you had to trust God and accept a circumstance.
2. Discuss a time when St. Francis totally and completely became transformed.
3. What can we do to prepare for our transformation/our daily conversion?

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# Action

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The Secular Franciscan Order, being active contemplative is the vehicle by which we are brought from life to gospel and gospel to life. Contemplation transforms love into reason and it's from reason we are brought to the forefront of courageous initiative promoting, sharing, seeking, witnessing, striving, etc., in fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity. It's within this balance the Secular Franciscan Order expresses its charism and identity. If we don't find ourselves at the forefront of promoting justice by the testimony of our human lives, then what is our identity? In other words, are we living what we preach or are we waiting for the time to arrive, still referring to the *Rule* of nearly 20 years as the "new" *Rule*? It makes one wonder how many Secular Franciscans might be questioning their own identity and whether the Secular Franciscan Order may be harboring misguided Carmelites or Dominicans. The question often asked is if the Secular Franciscan Order were to dissolve tomorrow, would it be missed? The answer lies in the apostolic effectiveness and creativity of our actions, which grow out of prayer and contemplation, strengthened by the sacraments.

Although obligated to apostolic action, it's a broad open-ended term, without limitation and should not be cause for confusion or hesitation. It's a matter of bearing witness, whether it be a walk in the woods to strengthen the Franciscan concept of universal kinship or to testify to its exploitation. Both are worthwhile acts.

It is true, without knowledge there can be no viable voice, thus looking into a concern is an action in itself. The question often presented to the Ecology Commission is, "What should I, or we, be doing?" Although the question may indicate a desire to learn or a need for direction, a lack of awareness, it may also indicate timidity or possibly even an attempt to escape the discomfort of the obvious. It was Francis who said, "No one showed me what I ought to do except the Lord Himself revealed it to me." Ignorance is bliss, yet what does this bliss have to do with being a brother or sister of penance. As some one once wrote, 95% of life is showing up, in other words, bearing witness, whether it be in person, by phone or in writing. We need not be brilliant or articulate, only to be present to the moment of need in a humble and peace loving way. After all, it is what we profess to do and who we are.

However, remembering it is not the issue or situation that gives birth to an act of justice, regardless of the apostolate but rather one's spirituality, formed and rooted in Christian reverence, humility, charity, detachment, purity of heart, peace and love. We are driven to recycle, for instance, not because it is a good thing to do but because our Franciscan identity brings us to that threshold. It is a spiritual act. Joy comes from doing God's will. We need no other reason. It is the Spirit that calls us to bear witness to those issues and situations that shock our faith, realizing also the spirit lives because of justice. It is our duty and obligation to respond. Our growth and worth as Franciscans depends on it.

Questions for reflection:

1. What deterrents prevent apostolic action?
2. What is necessary to enliven the apostolic life of Secular Franciscans?
3. What is likely to be gained individual and collectively from bearing witness?



# Dignitas

## Proclaiming the Dignity of Work

*Ed & Mary Zablocki, S.F.O., Co-Chairs, National Work Commission, Secular Franciscan Order, U.S.A.  
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### New Work Commission Member

Pauline Cahalan, S.F.O., Regional Chairperson of the Work Commission for the Los Tres Companeros Region is the newest member of the National Work Commission. She lives in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area in Cedar Hills, Texas. A report of her survey of Secular Franciscans of the Los Tres Companeros Region follows.

### Franciscans and Work

*By Pauline Cahalan, S.F.O.*

Several months ago, when the Los Tres Companeros newsletter was sent out, included was a form asking questions about how Franciscans thought about work. Fourteen people filled out the survey and returned it. Between talking with people at regional functions and reading survey responses some viewpoints regarding being a Franciscan and working emerge.

Regarding St. Francis and the role of work in his life, one respondent said, "It was a healthy and obedient way to serve God and was necessary to develop a surrender to God." Another reply, "He thought it was a God given option or a gift (allowing him) to create, to produce the best one can for the benefit of all." A couple replied, "Francis put people first in the 'restoration' of the church and saw them as the people who would be enriched by his efforts to 'love' them." A teacher wrote that Francis saw "work is action, work is a joy, (albeit subtle and deliberate), work is presence." Work as a gift that brings us joy??? How many of us see our work that way? I have a long way to go in that department but I guess that is what our journey is for. We keep moving along, working on changing attitudes which don't fit the Franciscan way.

Franciscans do all types of work: in and out of the home, volunteering and working for pay. We are *everywhere!* We have opportunities in all kinds of places to spread Franciscan JOY. The respondents were in activities such as being a Catholic school teacher *and* caring for a mother with Alzheimer's; hospital Eucharistic Minister plus involvement in programs assisting women in jail and others; distributing goods to the needy; constructing a Franciscan community; daily pickup and delivery of packages; sacristan; Meals on Wheels; repair work on homes of poor elderly; praying; working with St. Vincent de Paul; a physician's assistant; wife and mother; sanitation engineer, driving truck, supervising crew; working with and raising money for an animal shelter; cleaning the church; working with hospice; direct sales; working in soup kitchens; inviting families to improve the quality of religious reading materials in the home; caring for and walking with a terminally ill husband on his final faith journey; visiting the sick; transporting people to health care; various roles in the local church community; working with the Knights of Columbus.

Would you believe it? *All of this of just 14 people.* If each of us does just one or two of these things weekly imagine how many lives we touch! When asked about the significance of the Tau with the crossed arms and hands one think I say is that I am Christ's hands now, that He works through me. It is our choice if we see this responsibility of work as a gift or a burden. If I just look at "one day at a time" and take time to listen for God's presence and guidance throughout the day, then I can take the time to see and appreciate the joyfulness also. Do you see "work" as a burden or a joy?



(To be continued)

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## **“We’re sorry, but you’ll have to wait!”**

By Fr. Richard Trezza, O.F.M., National Formation Commission member.

If you have read the recent actuarials concerning the decline of vocations to the priesthood and religious life throughout the Catholic world, you can't help but be moved to lift your heart and voice in prayer for the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The Secular Franciscan Order must also be concerned about recruitment and its appeal to perspective members---especially among the youth.

You may find the title of this article to be strange, but it is an all too frequent statement made to those who would seek entrance to our fraternities. Imagine saying, “Sorry, but you’ll have to wait.” to a person coming to us with the hope that the Secular Franciscan Order may be the answer to their vocational discernment. Prospective S.F.O. inquirers are usually told to “wait” because the local formation programs have already begun and they would be difficult to fit in.

Could it be that our neatly packaged “September to June” Formation “Classes” may be turning away some good people? Is there another alternative to the formation “Process” that will allow people to enter whenever they perceive the Spirit to be inspiring them instead of according to our fraternity schedules? I say *yes*. During this exciting time of regionalization and clustering according to districts and especially while we’re still on fire from the recent Congress in Delaware, why not broaden our understanding of how the process of formation could be even more effective?

I propose a situation where formation is experienced through a team approach---ideally on the regional level. There would be no such thing as starting in September as is done in a school year. Formation has nothing to do with “classes,” “school,” or “graduation.” Rather, formation, whose first agent is the Holy Spirit, is an open-ended affair. People approach us when they are ready. People make professions when they are ready. The existence of the Rite of Temporary Profession in the S.F.O. Ritual is evidence that some adjustments must be made in the process for the working of the Holy Spirit and sensitivity to individual discernment.

With this in mind, why not a “revolving” formation situation? An ongoing process into which anyone may be invited at any time. The formation team would choose suitable formation material from the list of resources suggested by the National Formation Commission. I am reminded that formation manuals are much like parish hymnals---you never seem to find the right one to fit all the needs of the parish. The same with formation material. There probably isn't just one book to meet all situations. Be creative! Use the best from a couple of sources. The members of a formation team would normally be better acquainted with some manuals more than others. The team approach guarantees much needed variety where formation is concerned.

The regional formation team would then settle upon a curriculum in accordance with regional guidelines. Normally, the corpus of knowledge which needs communicating to candidates doesn't have to be done in a chronological way, although there are things which prospective Secular Franciscans should know right away. They could be discussed in special sessions above and beyond the regular formation gatherings.

A formation process would necessarily concern itself with the *Rule* and *Constitution*, Franciscan spirituality, etc. Anyone could enter into these discussions at any time during the process, anytime during the year. The person elected formation coordinator for a local fraternity would have the responsibility of tracking a candidate's progress through the formative process and for reporting back to the fraternity council.

From time to time, special sessions would have to be held to treat special questions which might arise or which were previously addressed with the other candidates.

This type of a regional formation setting takes time, vision, planning and fraternal cooperation. Let us continue to implore the Spirit for ways to be creative while still being true to our Franciscan callings.



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# Family Matters

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## The Greater Vision

*God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. (I Corinthians 12:24-26)*

On Wednesday, August 13, 1997, the Ecology Commission Chair came to Beaver County, Pennsylvania. Charlie Spencer, S.F.O., came to voice his opinion on a serious decision that would affect generations to come. A local hazardous waste facility was proposing to expand operations to incinerate chemical waste from around the country. This was opposed by over 100 residents of this small rural community because of many known and unknown health risks associated with this process. Charlie asked the board of township supervisors why they would want to make a decision that may have a negative impact on the quality of life in the community for generations to come. A local television station filmed Charlie as he spoke.

The townspeople thanked Charlie for driving from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania to support their cause. Charlie received applause suited for the President of the United States.

I saw families with their children desperately waiting on a decision. This is truly an example of the interrelationship of our Franciscan Commissions.

Later that evening, we spoke with the chairman of the township supervisors. I shared my concerns for the health risks involved with the situation. I asked him to think with his heart and to consider the families and children for generations to come that may be exposed to this health risk.

This is an example of the interrelationship of the Commissions becoming a reality. The Peace and Justice Commission and the Work Commission would certainly have their places here. The Commissions are like parts of a body. The whole body is made one. The Commissions are all parts of the whole, the whole body of Christ.

## Prayer for Society

*O Jesus, come back into our society, our family life, our souls and reign there as our peaceful sovereign. Enlighten with the splendor of faith and charity of your tender heart the souls of those who work for the good of the people, for your poor. Impart in them your own spirit, a spirit of discipline, order and gentleness, preserving the flame of enthusiasm ever alight in their hearts. May that day come very soon, when we shall see you restored to the center of civic life, borne on the shoulders of your joyful people.*

Pope John XXIII



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## In the Trenches *by Mary Zablocki, S.F.O.*

I once heard a story about two monks who enjoyed an occasional cigarette and were discussing the best time to have a smoke. Brother George and Father Ronald both wanted a cigarette while walking about the grounds of the monastery, praying. Father Ronald offered to ask permission of the abbot.

A few days later they met in the orchard; Brother George asked Father Ronald how it went with the abbot. The priest shook his head, the abbot would not permit it. After they parted ways, the young brother decided to talk to the abbot to learn if the abbot would change his mind.

A week later Father Ronald saw Brother George in the orchard again and was very surprised to see him smoking a cigarette under a tree as he prayed his Office.

“Brother George!” he exclaimed, “Did the abbot not say this was forbidden?”

“No, Father, I went and asked him and he gave me permission.” replied the young man.

“How can this be? I asked him it was all right for me to smoke while I prayed and he said ‘Absolutely not!’” The bewildered priest scratched his head.

“Perhaps it was the way you asked, dear friend. I asked the abbot if it was all right if I prayed while I had a smoke and he thought it was a fine idea.”

This is one of my favorite stories. I see two messages resonating in differing ways over and over in my daily life. The first is how we ask for something. The phrasing of our petition. A prayerful petition to God or a practical request for more work supplies can be very important to the response we receive. I do not mean that God is fickle or manipulable but often we ask God for something we think we want and do not get it. God, who knows our heart and desires only what is good for us never grants that which will harm us or pull us away from him. If we ask for what seems like just the thing we need we are vulnerable to our shortsightedness and limited view.

The other message from the story is that we must pray while we work, often without realizing it. Some jobs are conducive to prayer, with others it seems impossible. A window washer prays as the ropes lower her from the roof. Her prayer is that the straps were not made on a Monday morning or Friday afternoon when most mistakes are made. It is easy to envision police, firefighters, surgeons and school bus drivers praying for the grace of safety and skill. Priests pray, monks and nuns pray, sisters pray, people who are retired and have a lot of time pray, mothers home with sick children pray, farmers in touch with land and seasons pray, soldiers pray.

We who are in controversial government jobs, teaching in secular institutions, pushing papers, jobs where we are alone in an office and on the phone, driving in traffic, flying, dealing with demanding clients, standing before judges, helping people file for bankruptcy, divorce or child custody, who wrestle a special ed student into a seat, deliver babies of crack addicted mothers, defend the rights of rapists or lock people in cells--- when do we pray on the job? Sometimes the only time we pray is after dark, when we pray for protection from muggers and panhandlers on the parking ramp.

How do we pray as Francis prayed, the way we want to pray? Do we exist in a state of prayer as we go about our tasks, silently in communion with God, simply being in God’s love, moving in God’s grace, raising and lowering our voices as we speak the necessary words for work, touching and reaching with our hands as we build the kingdom of God, gazing upon the people and tools of our trade with the eyes of a beloved child surveying gifts at our fingertips? I don’t think so.

More likely we exist in a state of anxiety as we squeeze too many tasks into too little time, noisily in communion with machinery, being on hold as we listen to a computer tell us to “press one” if we want to remain on hold for twenty minutes or “two” if we want this message to be repeated in Armenian. We raise our voices in anger, and lower them when the boss walks into the break room during good gossip. We do not gaze upon the tools of our trade, we rummage through papers looking for a check for five thousand dollars or a contract that should have been mailed yesterday. We scroll up and down a computer screen frantically searching



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for information while our blood runs cold as we realize that we've lost it forever. We pour over the want ads desperately searching for something in our field, ready to take anything that will pay the mortgage.

John Michael Talbot prays at work. Sure he does. He prays for a living, in his brown robe with his lovely little community of prayer. Francis prayed at work, but it was easier then, there were not as many distractions and he had a brown robe and a little community of prayer, too. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just chuck the whole mortgage-car payment-tuition thing and join a nice little rural community of believers who pray and sing God's praises all day and never have to deal with the principal from hell or the boss with horns? Sure. Let's all live in a monastery. But, wait a minute. Wasn't the beginning of this article about two monks? Monks who weren't sure how to pray? Do we really think that woods and trees, huts and brown robes make prayer any easier?

Ask your friar friends if they pray more heartily or more serenely in their habits. See if your firefighter friends pray more easily in the woods surrounded by burning trees and airplanes praying chemicals over their heads. Imagine a hermitage with no windows, just a roof and walls, you alone with God and creation, drifting deeper and deeper into contemplation. Then imagine the warmth of your body and the light of your candle awakening a nest of snakes who decide to checkout who is praying on the roof. This lovely scenario was related by a jolly Irish Maryknoll missionary who not only lived to tell it but actually wanted to go back to Africa where it happened!

So. No more excuses. We do not need permission from our bosses to pray at work. We do not need silence, a place to go and hour to get there or to wear a brown robe to set the mood. We do not need to sing or chant or even speak aloud. We simply need to place ourselves in the presence of God, who is everywhere and soak in his love. We need only to desire God's grace and it is ours. It may not show itself in ways we recognize, but that is fine. We are a people of faith so that should not matter. Even without proof, we believe that God is with us and nothing, not even death, can separate us from that love. So, whether our tool is a gun pulled from a holster or a paintbrush dipped in a pallet of colors, we are beloved of God. Our *real* job is to spread the truth of that love. Our real prayer is the expression on our faces as we look at the world with the eyes of God. Let's get going. We have a bus to catch, a clock to punch, a job to do.

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### **Commissions Conference Update: New Date Set**

The date for the Commissions Conference to be held at St. Bonaventure University has been moved from July 2-5, 1998 to June 24-27, 1999. At the Quinquennial Congress many Seculars provided feedback, asking that the proposed date be changed. The reasons were two-fold: family commitments over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend and difficulty in traveling at that busy time. Over Labor Day weekend, the Commissions Conference Planning Committee, including representatives from St. Bonaventure University, met at the University. It was discovered that the only viable alternate date during the summer of 1998 was in direct conflict with the already scheduled National Ecology Apostolate Leadership Training Conference to be held June 20-26, 1998.

While the Commission representatives express our regret at this unexpected delay, we believe that we will have a better conference to offer in 1999. First, all the Commissions will be represented; secondly, there will be more funding available from the International Center for Secular Franciscan Studies Endowment to help cover costs; thirdly, in two years, more of the regions should have regional commission positions filled. It is still the intent to invite regional commission chairs to attend the conference at no cost (not including transportation). Of course, all Seculars are cordially invited. Start planning now to attend. Details will be provided in forthcoming issues of TAU-USA.

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## Youth/Young Adult Commission Reports

**Commission** Co-Chairs are Mary and Anthony Mazotti; team members are Kathy Taormina and Deacon Oscar Perez, S.F.O., Eileen Costa.

**Quinquennial** The National Secular Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Commission held its first workshop during the Quinquennial Congress at the University of Delaware. Mary and Anthony explained the birth and purpose of the Commission in the Secular Franciscan family. They brought the group to date with activities of the commission.

Oscar explained how he began a youth fraternity, San Juan de Capistrano in Texas. "Youth need a Christian outlet for activities and socializing," he said. Giving suggestions on beginning a youth fraternity, and the importance of "having heart," Oscar stated youth know if you are serious about them, their future. George Tinoco, of San Juan de Capistrano, writer of the winning essay on the topic, "How Is St. Francis Affecting My Life," was awarded a trip to the Quinquennial. His essay was a moving, personal witness of himself, his fraternity and his family.

Kathy spoke of the new handbook for youth fraternities to be published in spring 1998. It may be used to help start a new youth/young adult fraternity or to enhance an existing one. A hands-on manual, there will be sections to be photocopied for fraternity use. New and updated ideas from around the world will be added later.

A panel discussion with Oscar, Kathy, George, and Cassandra Oryl, a member of Tau Peter Youth Fraternity, Riverside, New Jersey, was presented.

Other youth fraternities were represented: Sr. Bernice O.S.F., Tau Peter; Sophia Villerreal, YOUFA group, St. Francis Chapel, El Paso, Texas; Br. Maurice, Tau Fraternity, South Huntington, NY and forming fraternities.

The commission was represented at a Mass: Deacon Oscar assisted Fr. Stephen Gross; George, Cassandra and Kathy carried up the offertory gifts. National Minister Richard Morton invited George to read his winning essay after the closing liturgy.

**International YOUFRA** The International YOUFRA meeting was in Paris, France, August 20-21, 1997. For the first time the United States was represented at an international meeting of youth. NAFRA sent three delegates: Mary Mazotti; Kathy Taormina; Jessica Underwood, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Franciscan Youth Fraternity, Chandler, Arizona. Others present: Oscar, and wife Elena; Eileen, and husband Bob; Francis Pyune, Korean youth fraternity member from La Habra Heights, California.

They met with Fr. Ben Brevoort, International Spiritual Assistant for youth, and members of Franciscan youth fraternities worldwide. Representing Franciscan Youth Delegates and Franciscan Youth Festivals were: Italy, Portugal, Germany, Argentina, Spain, Netherlands, Philippines, Croatia (Bosnia/Herzegovina), Canada, United States, Brazil, Japan, Chile, Mexico, France, Czechoslovakia and Lebanon.

Grouped according to language, we explained how our country's Franciscan Order handled and enhanced our youth and young adults. Accomplishments and problems, progress and setbacks were shared. The spirit was of solidarity and need for youth fraternities. The spirits of Francis and Clare permeated meetings.

Pedro Nuno Coelho of Portugal, International Youth representative to CIOFS, announced a Jubilee Year of the Rule with the theme "The Rule: Gift of the Spirit, Leading Us to the Father," to begin June 24, 1998 and conclude with the S.F.O General Chapter of 1999. It will be 20 years since Pope Paul VI approved the present Rule.

Youth around the world joined World Youth Day celebrations. On Friday, August 22, we made a human "Brotherhood Chain" around the city of Paris. In the evening we made a pilgrimage to Longhamps for a candlelight vigil where Pope John Paul II baptized and confirmed six youths from six different continents. The night was spent under the stars. The next morning an estimated 1.6 million people celebrated Liturgy with the Pope.

Pope John Paul II announced World Youth Day will be held in 2000 to coincide with the jubilee in Rome, Italy. May the United States again be represented with good news of our Order's youth to report to the world!

## Franciscan Fest 1997

The Franciscan communities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, held Franciscan Fest July 11-12, 1997. There was a 100% increase in the number of participants. All branches of the Franciscan family were represented. It was held at Youthtowne in Clinton, a facility owned and operated by a Catholic Pittsburgh native who donates time, facilities and money to the betterment of Christian values among the youth of the Pittsburgh area.

"The Word Made Flesh: Christ, St. Francis, Us," was the theme. In keeping with the 1997 Jubilee theme of Christ, the Fest tried to show how the human sides of Christ and St. Francis relate to us in the secular world. The youths tried to see the person of Christ in others by pondering the lives and actions of Francis and Clare.

Oscar and Nabor Contreras of San Juan de Capistrano Franciscan Youth Fraternity, spoke of forming a youth fraternity; Nabor gave a testimony of what Christ and St. Francis mean to him in his daily life. Carol Gentile, S.F.O., Chairperson, National Family Commission, spoke on seeing Christ in others and mentors in our lives for support and guidance.

The bonding of the youths and young adults from differing backgrounds and cultures proved to the youth that their lives are more parallel than thought. They share concerns about family, school, the world today, their faith, the Church. They enacted skits, shared prayers, designed celebrations and enjoyed each other's company, in the spirit of Christ and with a special Franciscan flavor.

A candlelight ceremony dedicating the peace pole closed Friday. Saturday's liturgy was celebrated with the participants decorating streamers to be added around the altar; donations of baby items to the area's poor, were a part of the procession during the Mass.

Photo at right was taken at the close of the International Franciscan Youth meetings in Paris, August 1997. L-R: Francis Pyunc, Temp. Professed S.F.O., (California); Mary Mazotti, Franciscan Youth Co-Chair for S.F.O.; Fr. Ben Brevco, International Spirit. Assist., Cap.; Jessica Underwood, Temp. Professed, (Arizona); Kathy Taormina, Franciscan Youth team member; Fr. Zvohimir Brusac, International Spirit. Assist. O.F.M.



The two-day event held many wonders and blessings for all who witnessed the power of the Spirit moving through the youths and young adults. July 17-18 has been designated for Franciscan Fest '98. See you there!

## Queen of Peace Regional Fall Gathering

The National Youth/Young Adult Commission was represented at the Secular Franciscan Order's Queen of Peace Regional Fall Gathering in Mound, Minnesota. The theme was "Youth Ministry," Kathy was a speaker.

Who are the youth of today: what do they need; what do they want? Kathy said St. Francis appeals to youth because of his youth experiences and need for conversion. She talked about the National Commission for Youth/Young Adults: why and when it was formed; what it has accomplished; where it wants to go. A pre-publication copy of the new A Guide for Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Ministry was shared. Concerns of the day included how to start a Franciscan youth fraternity and how to reach the children of members of the Secular Franciscan Order. The Guide will answer many questions. Kathy gave practical answers.

Two youths from Brainerd, Laura Shively and Sarah Bernu, spoke on what they are involved with and how to reach youth at their level. Not in a Franciscan youth fraternity, they are interested in St. Francis and may pursue that avenue in the future.

Many innovative programs are in the works. One, "The Little Friar," is geared to elementary grade children but can be enjoyed by all ages. Marc Leger, S.F.O., is the author and designer. The Holy Spirit will surely lead the Seculars in this region who are interested in working with the youth to love and nurture the spiritual hunger of the youth and young adults of today.

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## How A Franciscan Approaches Work and Prayer

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

For St. Francis, work served to avoid great temptation and foster great good. St. Francis, in the fifth chapter of his *First Order Rule of 1223*, wrote:

*“Those brothers to whom the Lord has given the grace of working, should work faithfully and devoutly in such a way that with idleness, the enemy of the soul, excluded, they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, to which everything else must give service.”*

The temptation that work helped avoid was idleness. Francis understood idleness as a great danger and threat to the soul. “I want my brothers to toil and exert themselves, lest if they give way to idleness, they stray into forbidden paths with heart or tongue.” Also, “All brothers should endeavor to keep hard at good occupation, because it is written: ‘Always be doing some good work, so that the Devil may find you busy’ (St. Jerome, Ep. 49). Thus servants of God ought always keep at prayer or some other good occupation.”

Work can help foster our life of prayer and centeredness in God, if done with the proper disposition. Dave McKenna says in *Love Your Work!*, “Daily labor has a way of engaging the mind and spirit so thoroughly that we can become obsessed with our tasks.” According to St. Francis, work that is done both faithfully and devoutly can avoid the pitfall of obsessiveness and can nourish a prayerful disposition. Fr. Arcadius Smolinski, in *“The Spirit of Prayer in Work”* (*The Cord*, 1958, pp. 338-49) elaborates on the meaning of working faithfully and devotedly:

✠ What does it mean to work **faithfully**? St. Bonaventure explains this. It is to perform the work with due consideration for self and neighbor (*Opera Omnia*, v. 14:581). This is accomplished by working with the conscientiousness which implies knowledge of the object of the work before us.

✠ What does it mean to work **devoutly**? This is to take God into consideration. The work itself should be directed to God’s glory. St. Paul says, “Whatever you do, work at it from the heart as for the Lord and not for men.” (Col. 3:23). Work with devotion requires “a reasoned and deliberate act of will whereby one’s one’s intellect and will have nothing else in view but the will and glory of God; the end in mind is union with God.” (St. Albert the Great).

Work that fosters a spirit of prayer is work done faithfully and devoutly. Work done faithfully and devoutly is work directed in loving service to our fellow man for the glory of God. Fr. Daniel McClellan, O.F.M., notes in *To Evangelize American Culture: A Franciscan Approach*:

“For Francis, work for the sake of personal wealth and power was work that oppressed. Work leading a person to attend to the needs of others was grace... To use well what God has given is to use it for the sake of others since ‘to each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.’” (1 Cor. 12:7).

Work can fan the flames of the spirit of prayer but it is from a life of prayer that good and Godly work proceeds. Fr. Smolinski quotes Dom Jean Chautard on the relation between the active and contemplative life:

✠ Good Works (as in the Apostolate) should be nothing but an overflow from the inner life.

✠ Active works must begin and end in the interior life and, in it, find their means.

✠ The active and interior lives are completely interdependent.

Fr. Smolinski attributes to Fr. Matheo a saying that beautifully sums up this reflection: “The apostle is a chalice full to the brim with the life of Jesus and his overflow pours itself out upon souls.”

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## Approaching Franciscan Mission Service

by Joseph Nangle, O.F.M., Executive Director, Franciscan Mission Service

To observe good-willed individuals wrestle with a call to overseas mission is to see God at work. Recently the staff of Franciscan Mission Service had that profound experience, as we interviewed candidates for our January 1998, Orientation Program.

So much goes into the discernment and selection process of prospective missionaries, both on their part and ours. One has to keep clearly in mind through that it is God who does the calling---we are merely instruments for validating the call.

Our discernment weekends, like the one just concluded, combine prayer, interviews, meals together, recreation and general sessions. These activities allow F.M.S. to know the candidates and vice versa---all with an eye to the possibility and advisability of overseas mission.

The interviews with prospective missionaries best highlight areas of discernment which both they and F.M.S. must cover. For example, and above all, we engage in serious conversation with each candidate about his or her faith life--what sort of relationship each has with God, how his or her spiritual journey has developed, how the sense of vocation to mission has come about. Often, what emerges from these conversations are quite remarkable stories of God's pursuit of the individual, often through twisting pathways of life.

Other areas of concern, as the candidate and F.M.S. seek to determine God's will, include psychological health, social adjustment, family influences, political interests and of course the person's motives for volunteering with Franciscan Mission Services.

As we concluded our discernment weekend, it was clear that those who came on it did, indeed, show very positive signs of a true vocation to the mission experience we sponsor. They returned home to pray and reflect about their reactions to the days spent with us. Their next step will be to enter our three month orientation program, during which time the discernment process will continue. Successful completion of orientation will bring them to commissioning as Franciscan lay missionaries and placement in one of the Family's overseas missions.

We ask for the prayers of all Secular Franciscan brothers and sisters for these generous souls who sense God's call to mission work. As a footnote, let me say that none of our candidates, though enamored of St. Francis, was a member of the Secular Franciscan Order. *Where are our S.F.O. brothers and sisters? Are you called?*

### Are You Called?

#### Some Requirements:

- ✓ A committed person of faith in the Catholic tradition with the capacity and dedication to deepen his/her life in God and the willingness to incorporate Franciscan values.
- ✓ Able to give three years in overseas service.
- ✓ Single or married, generally between 23 and 60 years of age (this is not rigid).
- ✓ Prior cross-cultural experience and or a second language are valuable but not absolutely required.
- ✓ Health care providers, teachers and social workers are especially needed; others are welcome according to backgrounds and skills.

For further information write to:

Franciscan Mission Service

P.O. Box 29034

Washington, D.C. 20017-0034

Telephone (202) 832-1762; Fax (202) 832-1778

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## Small Faith Communities and Social Awareness

The following is from a presentation by Fr. Robert Egan, S.J., at St. Ann's Church, Spokane, Washington. The presentation followed the departure of friars from the parish. It provides a tool for growth by challenging S.F.O. fraternities to draw on their own resources.

Part of what we do in communal social analysis is sort out what claims our attention. We search for common ground by asking, "What is it that we can pretty much agree upon or be attentive to for a sustained period of time?" Part of what we struggle with is the shift in awareness of the Spirit and letting it into our lives. The choice before us is the question of maintenance or change of existing structures. Are we to maintain or transform them and which structures?

We are called to make redemptive responses to *Zones of Deadness* within society. What are underlying issues that drive and determine culture? Resist the thought that only experts can answer that question. We "answer" in ongoing dialogue. Reality is ever-changing. Be open to respectful dialogue in your community.

What obstacles prevent action on issues needing transformation? What process can bring change? Suggestions for moving forward follow:

✦ Gather in small communities---tell your stories---build relationships--call upon the Spirit.

✦ Listen-converse-speak. Let the "other" claim your attention then tell your story, your hurt, your longing, your hope, your sharing of what moves your heart and what breaks your heart. Stay in sustained conversation.

✦ Study. Create a *Learning Community* open to the Spirit. Reading is a must for individual and communal growth. Bring in speakers whose experience is other than your own.

✦ Discern. Take time to determine priorities.

✦ Act. Do something, no matter how small.

✦ Reflect on the outcome. What went right and wrong.

✦ What obstacles hinder the building of community solidarity? What inhibits commitment? What personal sacrifices are needed to stay in sustained conversation?

✦ Sustained conversation requires courage, civility, openness to others' spirits. To assume beforehand to "know" what the other person is going to say cuts off conversation. The focus is to share in seeking the core of truth. To do this one must study. Information must be gathered related to the issues facing society. Quality information comes through reading relevant material chosen for content and inspiration.

✦ Discernment comes after doing the above. You come to judgment by paying attention to your own heart.

According to Aristotle, to do anything well one must be a person of virtue. You must come from a selfless, unbiased, courageous state. A shared love of virtue with one another is powerful---it is shared love of God. ✦ Finally, we act. Do something. Take a risk. The most important act is to take the next step possible for you. Reflect, take the next step, etc.

✦ Develop a habit of mind that seeks common ground. We may not agree on *x*, *y* or *z*, but we can agree on *w* and act on that. This is the common ground that unites us. Ask who are the people who care about what we care about in the political world? The social world? The economic world? Identify with people whose values we recognize as common to ours.

✦ Resist cynicism. Hope is different from optimism. Hope has to do with faith in God who makes all things possible. Who knows what love may be able to do? Resist cynicism---it's so alluring. Stay in the conversation. Refuse to "demonize" the "enemy." All you have to do is refute them.

Issues driving our culture include:

✦ Poverty and economic injustice. Inequality of wealth is a major concern. The middle class is disappearing. Uncertainty prevails in the market place, leading to instability in all aspects of life. The American Bishops have an excellent letter on *Economic Justice for All*.

✦ Oppression occurs through unjustly restricting, trivializing or demonizing whole categories of people---an obvious example is the tragedy of African-Americans.

✦ Violence and intentional cruelty cause us to ask: What goes on in our own hearts that allows this to go on in our society? An in-depth analysis is waiting to be done as to why we have so many gangs, filled prisons, dysfunctional families and child abuse.

✦ Preservation of natural environment relates to our lifestyle, one based on an economic system of endless consumption. What will be left for our grandchildren?

✦ We need virtuous, skilled people to address the sickness in society, leadership that solicits the best qualities and energy of the community and focuses it. This is a Sacred Trust.

Suggested reading: *Fighting for Life*, Walter Ong, S.J.

[Above notes courtesy of Jim Snider; provided by Bill Niggemeyer, S.F.O., of the National Formation team.]

## Mother Teresa's Spirit Need Not Die

An Editorial by Patti Normile, S.F.O.

As we watched on television or in the news media as the world mourned the death of Mother Teresa, we knew in our hearts that a great saint had left our midst. Someday she will undoubtedly be a Saint, that is with a capital S. That will be the Church's confirmation of a life lived for the glory of God.

If we looked closely at those who filed past her body, we saw the complexity of India etched in the faces of the mourners---Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, young, old, men, women, children, rich and poor. *Poor*---that's a word for which we in America do not know the deepest meaning. *Poor* in India is to be without family or friends to help---for they have died or are equally helpless. *Poor* in India is to feel swallowed up in a black hole of emptiness and hopelessness. Perhaps that is why a notorious area of Calcutta was labeled the Black Hole of Calcutta.

Mother Teresa filled that vacuous hole in the lives of millions with an element that was a salvation in the midst of desperation. She filled it with love.

I once saw her when the friars of St. John the Baptist Province invited her to Cincinnati to celebrate Francis' 800<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was invited because of her innately Franciscan spirit. So tiny---her head did not come near my shoulder and her face! So beautiful! I remembered what my 7 year old daughter had commented as she stared closely at my face on our drive to the library one day, "Mom, do you know your face is full of wrinkles?!" I don't remember my response (probably something like, "We'd better have your little eyes checked, sweetie.") but I do recall going into the library where a brand new book was displayed. On the cover was a life-sized photo of Mother Teresa. Not a silly millimeter of her wondrous face was without a wrinkle. I called Christy over and said, "Honey, if that's what a wrinkled face looks like, I'm overjoyed to have one."

When Mother Teresa spoke at an outdoor Mass at the St. Francis Center for Peace and Renewal, one message came through the simple talk she delivered. "Love one another. Love the unborn. Love the old. Love the unlovable. Love as God loves." Her message had such power because she *lived* it! And now she is gone.

A first thought might be, "What will the world do without her?!" It seems alarming for a troubled world to lose the goodness that she embodied in life. But her goodness and faithfulness is not lost. It is but a seed that is planted. It can grow in each one of us. While other Orders of the Church diminished, the Missionaries of Charity flourished in numbers and in ministry.

A seed of her kind of ministry has been implanted in the Secular Franciscan Order. Secular Franciscans support two projects that Mother Teresa must surely be smiling upon from heaven.

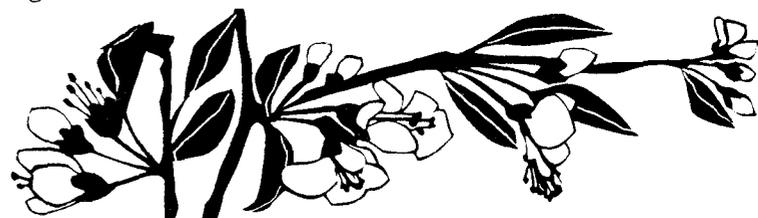
Franciscan Family Apostolate has for more than 26 years provided for the basic human needs for almost 1000 impoverished families in India on an ongoing basis. It is a family-to-family ministry of love that links those who, through no fault of their own, are unable to provide food, shelter or medical care for themselves and their families with Secular Franciscans who wish to share from their hearts.

Alan Ouimet, S.F.O., who began this mission service returns to southwest India each year to visit with the beneficiaries and to insure that funds are properly distributed to the families. One of his major regrets is that he has a long list of families who do not have sponsors at the present time. Sponsors are needed to contribute a minimum of \$15 per month to help a family. Mother Teresa's love for the poor in India can continue through more Secular Franciscans who choose to sponsor families.

On another continent where poverty, disease and lack of education hold people in bondage, another project begun by Secular Franciscan Jim Flickinger continues. In the Amazon region know as "Green Hell," victims of Hansen's disease (leprosy) struggle to exist. Jim has made repeated trips to the region to assess their needs, to comfort the hopeless and to work with Secular Franciscans in the area to help their own people. He takes contributions gathered through *Amazon Relief*, another Franciscan rooted project. These funds are administered by Secular Franciscans in the region. Jim also continues to visit Bosnia to bring help where he can through *Bright Light*, a project he initiated during the war in that country.

Goodness and faithfulness like Mother Teresa's doesn't die; it moves to new hearts and grows there as love. If you would like to help the poor or suffering in India, the Amazon or in Bosnia, look for the advertisement for Franciscan Family Apostolate and Amazon Relief in this issue of TAU-USA.

St. Francis said to his contemporaries and he says to us, "Let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing." That is not to discredit what we as individual or fraternities have done. His admonition is a reminder that there is so much to be done that we must continue to begin again and again and....



## The Lampstand

"You do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket. You set it on a stand where it give 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)

### Global Evangelization

by Mary Lou Berton, S.F.O.



The United States Bishops challenge us evangelize in our parishes and world. Our parish presented an evening on: Personal, Community and *Global Evangelization*. Reflecting on *Global Evangelization* which I was to address, my father came to mind. He instilled in me the desire to reach beyond my family and parish. Paydays he would go around asking for pennies (no bills, dimes, etc.) at the Pennsylvania R.R. where he worked. When the amount was built up, he gave it to a priest at the Capuchin parish, St. John's, on 31<sup>st</sup> St. in New York City. He collected \$6,000, a lot then. Justice is not an option but a part of my life as a Catholic Christian. As a Secular Franciscan I learned through Francis that the gospel can and must be lived in every age.

While raising a family, writing was the *only thing I was able to do*, but that indicates a minimum! I learned to do what I can and leave the rest to God. Nothing is small in His eyes. God is stretching us. We don't know what we are capable of until we are challenged!

I am a member of Franciscan International, a group at the United Nations. News of my brothers and sisters starving in Somalia increasingly concerned me. What could I do? Could the Seculars in our province do something? The provincial spiritual assistant advised we call Br. Kevin Smith, O.S.F., at the U.N. His first words were, "The Holy Spirit must be working overtime. I just hung up from the Apostolic Administrator for Somalia. He will arrive tomorrow to address the U.N. on the crisis." I was invited to meet with Msgr. Burton, a Franciscan, to discuss a letter writing campaign. After writing to the fraternities in the province I met with our pastor who agreed to a sign-up Sunday for our parish.

It was an exhilarating working with others. God was saying, "Take a small step and let me do the rest."

## Famine and the Noodle Factory

Some 150 Franciscan leaders of 12 Secular Franciscan fraternities in North and South America have agreed to work to establish a noodle factory in North Korea to help alleviate that country's famine. Their first effort was a benefit concert in September featuring popular gospel singer Jung Shik Kim, held at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan. It was sponsored by the Secular Franciscan Korean Martyrs Fraternity and the St. Francis Church Korean community.

A leadership workshop was held during August at the Cardinal Spellman Retreat Center, in the Bronx. Paul DiLena, S.F.O., regional minister and Fr. Matthew Gaskin, O.F.M., spiritual assistant to the National Fraternity, gave a summary of the S.F.O. Quinquennial in Delaware and also reflected on Franciscan identity. Other themes of the gathering included spirituality, fraternity structure and the Rule and Constitution. Korean speaking Secular Franciscans from Brazil, Argentina, California, Quebec, Ontario and the United States were quick to respond says Fr. Francis Kim, O.F.M., fraternity spiritual assistant who is putting together a team for the project.

This food for thought led to discussions regarding Korea's current famine and ways to help the victims. Suggesting that Franciscans could build a noodle factory in a poor coal-mining village in North Korea, Fr. Francis acknowledges the government there, generally unreceptive to "missionary" activities, has requested this help to stem the starvation. A New Jersey priest has already built such a factory. "I feel it will get worse," said Fr. Francis of the famine. "It didn't happen overnight."

The noodle factory project will be an example of refocusing resources and will hopefully bridge many branches of the Franciscan family, including the S.F.O., the O.F.M. friars in South Korea and Franciscan brothers and sisters in the United States.

Although the government keeps strict control and there is only one Catholic church building in North Korea, a priest was able to celebrate *Mass publicly* after opening a noodle factory. It is an opening.

For further information or to learn how you or your fraternity may assist in this urgent work or to make a contribution, please contact Fr. Francis Kim at (212) 736-8500.

## Endless Adoration

Another gift of Secular Franciscan Jim Flickinger has surfaced. Jim has initiated *Bright Light*, a relief effort in Bosnia that has led him to personally deliver more than \$5 million in aid during and after the civil war years. *Amazon Relief* is another project by which Jim links Secular Franciscans in the United States with S.F.O.'s in the Amazon who aid victims of Hansen's Disease (leprosy) and poverty in an area known as Green Hell. In his spare time he serves on the Board of Trustees of Franciscan Family Apostolate, serves meals to the homeless in Grand Rapids, cares for his family and participates in his S.F.O. fraternity.

Encouraged by friends, Jim recently recorded an audiotape of music of praise. His gentle voice brings peace as one listens to the songs.

Upon hearing Jim's musical prayer it is not difficult to understand where he finds the time, energy, wisdom and love to carry on his many works of love--- in addition to being a practicing attorney.

A limited number of tapes are available for purchase for personal or fraternity use. For ordering information, contact Jim at 124 East Fulton, Suite 100, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503; phone (616) 458-3994; fax (616) 458-2410; e mail, [fppc@voyager.net](mailto:fppc@voyager.net)



*to console...  
to understand..  
to love...  
to be an  
instrument of  
peace.*

## A Call for Photos

Do you have a few photos from the Quinquennial you are willing to share? Phil Beebe was too busy to get any photos but would like to have some photos.

He also has the masters if tapes of the speakers at the gathering and can have copies made locally.

You may write him at: Phil Beebe  
RD #1  
Seven Valleys, PA 17360

## Fraternity Milestones

On the Feast of St. Clare, August 2, members of first class of the Brother Jacoba Community were professed during a Mass at St. Peter's in the Loop in Chicago. Those professed were Eunice King, A. Nowak and George Wingerter. Friar Johnpaul Cafiero, O.F.M. is the spiritual assistant.

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Pacem in Terris Fraternity, St. Francis, Minnesota, was canonically established August 3, 1997. Mass was celebrated in the barn at Pacem in Terris (while three donkeys in the barn looked on) by Bishop George Speltz and Friar Valerius Messerich, O.F.M.

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St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity, Barberton, Ohio, celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October 19. St. Frances Cabrini Fraternity, Akron, joined in the celebration, including who were originally members of the celebrating fraternity 51 years ago.

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On December 3, St. Paschal's Fraternity in Chicago, will mark its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a Mass and celebration at St. Peter's Church in the Loop. This fraternity was established at Maryslake Retreat house in Westmont, Illinois.

## S.F.O. Promotional Video

St. Francis Region of the Secular Franciscan Order is producing a Promotional Video to present a proper image to those expressing an interest in the Secular Franciscan Order. If you have any suggestions or ideas please contact one of the people listed below.

Rock de Spain 28275 Rawlings Rd.,  
Hemet, CA 92544  
Phone (909) 766-1308

Diane Halal 11741 Cherry St.  
Los Alamitos, CA 90720  
Phone (310) 596-3162

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Secular Franciscan Order Wildflower Sale & Restoration Initiative

*Offer limited to fraternities east of the Rockies, excluding the Gulf Coast, due to climate.*

St. Francis told his brother-gardener that he should always make a pleasant flower garden and “cultivate every variety of fragrant herb and flowering plant, so that all who saw the herbs and flowers would be moved to praise God.”

Draw Attention to God’s Glory in Creation While Raising Funds to Support your Own Fraternity Apostolates!  
Two complete perennial wildflower gardens, one for sun, one for shade, of 10 potted seedlings (not seeds) each, with transplanting instructions, wildflower catalog and Franciscan *Thank You* included  
The cost is \$34.95 per garden (\$66.95 for two), shipping and handling included.  
Fraternities retain \$8.95 (\$14.00 for two) per garden ordered.

Simply type your fraternity name and mailing address on space provided on a flier ( contact Charlie Spencer for a flyer or design your own), make copies for each member of the fraternity, requesting they copy and post around the community and with media. Then wait for mail orders to arrive, forwarding them to Sunlight Gardens who ship gardens at planting time, UPS directly to those who order then .

**These also make excellent Christmas and other special occasion long-lasting gifts while also enhancing the environment!**

For further information contact:   Andrea Sessions, Sunlight Gardens (423) 494-8237  
Charles Spencer, S.F.O., National Ecology Commission (413) 737-7600

*Consider having your fraternity donate and plant a garden at a park, school, church or shelter in celebration of National Wildflower Week is May 3-9, 1998.*

Order Now! Send name, delivery address (no P.O. Box numbers, please), zip code, phone and check payable to fraternity named below for \$34.95 per garden or \$66.95 for two, shipping and handling included. Please specify *Woodland Garden* or *Meadow Garden*. Please type or print the information.

Orders must be received by March 1, 1998

In case of over demand, species of equal value may be substituted. Thank you.

Fraternity \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/area code \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

The *Woodland Garden* requires shade with plants spaced on 18 inch centers.

The *Meadow Garden* requires sun with plants spaced on 3 foot centers.

Each wildflower garden consists of prime nursery stock. Species are both hardy and tough perennials selected with the beginner wildflower gardener in mind. Plants are wrapped in 3 1/2 inch pots, boxed together and shipped directly to each customer in early spring. Transplanting instructions are included.

The Woodland Garden           how many \_\_\_\_\_

The Meadow Garden           how many \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost                       \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## A Letter from Francis to Clare about Christmas

*by Barbara Bernas, S.F.O.*

Assisi  
Winter 1224

My Dear Sister Clare,

How kind of you to ask how you can help the brothers in Assisi prepare for Christmas while I am away preaching in the country.

I know there is much to be done. Food must be prepared for the many brothers and sisters who will return from their work to celebrate the feast with us. And food must be prepared to share with the poor. The townspeople will expect us to arrange another manger scene and Midnight Mass. We must locate animals and torches, even a baby! We must find a priest for the mass and deacons to assist.

You know that in my heart Christmas, the feast of love, is my favorite feast---the one I wish would never end. It is the time when the poor should be treated royally and the animals are not only welcome but necessary to our worship.

But, dear Sister Clare, do not let yourself or any one of us get caught up in the busyness. That is false preparation for the great Christmas feast. God would have us prepare quietly, in our hearts and in our living. We must pray and wait for the Incarnation but be prepared for it at every moment. Look at the faces of the lonely and befriend them. See Jesus in the hungry and feed them. Put seeds on the road for the birds. And stop to thank God for the beauty of the moon on a cold, dark night.

This is how to prepare for Christmas.

Pax et Bonum,  
Your little Brother,  
Francis

*I hope that all of us can learn what Francis means in this letter this Christmas. Barbara*

## Letters from you.....

On behalf of the St. Cloud Fraternity, we would like to thank all the Secular Franciscans which helped us raise over \$10,000 for the Immaculate Heart of Mary Fraternity. These funds were used to help individual members with immediate basic needs, along with portions being used to help citizens within the Grand Forks area. They still need prayers as they try to rebuild the basics before winter sets in. It is good to know that we are there for each other---as fraternity.

Franciscan Resources would also like to thank all who helped us at the Quinquennial in Delaware. Many took over taking care of the tables when we were at meals or indisposed. Patient waiting for our return to make sure that we know what was sold while we were gone. All of you are in our prayers---in a special way. It is wonderful to be with Franciscans.

Pax et Bonum!  
Jim & Sis Hein

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Secular Franciscans have a special call to generosity with our Franciscan Charism to the minster of the Missionaries of Charity Order, founded by Mother Teresa. Her heart and thus her Order was deep in the tradition of St. Francis of Assisi. As Seculars we should embrace them with offers of spiritual, monetary and material support. Please take a moment of your fraternity time to consider what you might do to recognize the presence of St. Francis in their work and welcome them to the Franciscan way of life.

Charlene Ann Collins, S.F.O.  
Mt. St. Sepulcher Fraternity

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The members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Fraternity are overwhelmed by the generosity of our brothers and sisters throughout the United States. We have lost many material things and some priceless memories because of the flood. We have learned much about what God is telling us, to put our trust in Him. In the end, our material possessions are not the most important thing. We have learned what it means to be refugees and depend on others for help.

We will never be back to normal if you consider "pre-flood" as normal. Our lives are all changed. Many of us lost everything in our basements. We now know what it feels like to wash clothes at a friend's house. A few lost everything.

Our thanks pour out to you for your prayers and contributions to our flood relief. Those members receiving aid are appreciative of your generosity and support through prayers. It means much to us as we cope with all the loses and frustrations caused by the harsh winter (eight blizzards) and flood.

All the Catholic Churches and school received substantial damage. We are all sharing what we have with each other.

Pax et Bonum,  
Regina L. Monnig  
Corresp. Secy, Immaculate Heart of Mary Fraternity.

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I'm not sure that "better late than never" applies here, but I wanted to pass on that, as I recall the events of the Quinquennial, there was no public "thank you" to the Franciscan Brothers, Bob Herrick and Phil Bernier, for the beautiful music they provided at the liturgies---nor to Marty Haugen. Marty was thanked profusely for the concert, but no mention of his contribution to the liturgy.

I thought the music was understanding and the Brothers are deserving of some mention.

Thank you and God Bless,  
Patricia Mulligan.

## The Bookshelf

by Patti Normile, S.F.O.

Footsteps in Assisi by Sara Lee Jobe, S.F.O. has been awaiting review in TAU-USA due to the space-crunch of information for the Quinquennial Congress. The delay seems timely in view of September's earth-quakes that shook the paths taken by Footsteps. The opening page asks, "Where is the spirit of Francis to be found? The buildings, art, legends and holy places become signs that call us to look beyond; he is not likely to be found in the remembrances presented to the eye and the ear. Look for him, instead, in the spirit and attitudes of the people---those which lead to caring and love, serving and concern, prayer and humility; we find Francis in those who live in his spirit."

While those who love Francis and Clare and treasure Assisi mourn the physical damage done, Sara's book reminds us where the spirit is truly found. Concern is for lives taken or altered by the quakes.

Beneath a sketch done inside San Francesco, Sara writes what might be prophetic thought. She comments that Francis might have been "uncomfortable" with the "grandness" of his house of worship. She continues about the Eucharist, "Let the whole of mankind tremble, the whole world shake and the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the living God, is present on the altar..."

Footsteps is a small, vibrant volume that moves from prose to poetic text to prayer to picturesque scenes of Assisi. Sara draws with pen and ink; she paints with words of love for the town that clings to the side of Mount Subasio like it clings to its most favored son and daughter, Francis and Clare. One almost hears songs of the birds declaring dawn or sealing sunset though the word pictures. One can almost feel cobblestones beneath sandaled feet while reading.

The book is sprinkled with quotes from Francis and Clare's writings and from Scripture. Fr. Kenan Osborne, O.F.M., Franciscan School of Theology [FST], Berkley, calls Footsteps, "...a very gospel book." It is a book that captures the spirituality of place.

Footsteps in Assisi is the product of Sara's weeks of retreat in Assisi that culminated in a course paper written for her Master's Degree in Theology at FST. It is published by Paulist Press, 86 pp., \$6.95. Footsteps is a simple book, simply beautiful.

## Seculars at the United Nations

by Jim O'Neill, S.F.O.

In a message to the United Nations at the opening session of its 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, Pope John Paul II cautioned that the international body should not become a cold administrative structure but must serve as a place where all members of the family of nations feel at home. The Pope offered his blessing on the work of the new U.N. session, expressing hope that members would work not only for their own national interests but also the benefit of the common good. If this be the case, the U.N. would perform a useful service, for which the world has a distinct need.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that prayer is a personal act but when individuals pray as a group it can foster solidarity among all peoples. Today let us do both. At the ecumenical prayer service, Annan remarked that religious leaders are among the "most powerful forces for change," and could offer a great deal of work to the U.N. since men and women of faith have great influence on the conduct of groups and individuals. The Secretary-General urged delegates to make the 52<sup>nd</sup> session known as the "Reform Assembly." This session of the General Assembly has the power to make or break the U.N. If it uses power with great concern and institutes badly needed reforms for the good of the organization and does not weaken them to coincide with narrow self-interests, internal and external, it will be successful.

Whatever happens will not please all. Someone or some government will be unhappy. It must be kept in mind by the delegates that reform sometimes brings discomfort. Some reforms will upset part of the system as it is now. Other reforms may bring discontent to the capitols of the world. Discontentment should not block the efforts. When this session is concluded, the U.N. will be ready to enter the new century, energized and renewed or it will be headed towards the history books. May we have a reborn U.N., a United Nations to be used as an instrument of peace.



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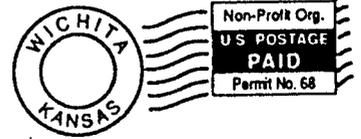
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"He would recall, not without tears, what great want surrounded the poor Virgin on that day [Christmas]. Once when he was sitting at dinner, a certain brother talked about the poverty of the Blessed Virgin and recalled the want of Christ, her son, Francis immediately arose from the table and, with great sighs and many tears, ate the rest of the meal on the bare ground. For this reason he said that this virtue that shone forth so eminently in the King and Queen was a royal virtue. And when the brothers were discussing at a gathering which virtue does more to make one a close friend of Christ, Francis, as though making known to them a secret in his heart, answered: 'Know my sons, that poverty is the special way to salvation; its fruit is manifold, but it is really well known only to a few.'" From Celano II

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