

TAU-USA



Issue Number 37

The Newsletter of the National Fraternity of the
Secular Franciscan Order in the United States

Winter 2002

**Results of the 2002
Poetry Contest!
See page seventeen**

(This
painting
was first
prize!)



**NAFRA 2002
Scrapbook
See page thirteen**

**The Ongoing
Formation section
begins on page four**



**World Youth Day
Report on page
fifteen**

*We build a more fraternal
and evangelical world*

TAU-USA

Winter 2002, Issue 37

The National Fraternity
of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA

Mr. and Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO, Editors

www.nafra-sfo.org

TAU-USA (USPS 020-616) is published quarterly by the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA, 1615 Vine Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. Application to mail at Periodicals Postage Rates paid at: Cincinnati, OH 45203 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to TAU-USA, Box 189, Lindsborg, KS 67456-0189

Purpose and Audience

TAU-USA is a vehicle of communication within the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. Our mission is to provide an effective, appealing forum for presenting information in the areas of Ongoing Formation, Regional and National Fraternity news events, and the sharing and promotion of the Franciscan vision and spirituality in an uplifting, Franciscan manner. This publication is intended to allow the National Fraternity to disseminate information to the regional and local levels of fraternity, and also to allow members throughout the country to communicate with one another, fostering a sense of community nationwide.

Next TAU-USA Deadline

The deadline to submit articles for the next issue of TAU-USA is March 27, 2003. Please submit articles to:

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Subscription Information

For subscription information or change of address, contact the Subscriptions Coordinator:

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Guidelines for Submission of Articles

We welcome your submissions to the newsletter. To increase the likelihood of your submission being printed, we offer the following guidelines:

- Please ensure that articles do not exceed 500 words;
- Please understand that articles may be edited for length and clarity;
- Submissions received after the deadline for a particular issue will be given consideration for the *following* issue.
- In the Franciscan interest in ecology, please try to send submissions in electronic format (e-mail or floppy disc), instead of on paper.

Letters to the Editors

All correspondence sent to the editors becomes the property of the editors, and may be published in TAU-USA. Please state in all correspondence whether you wish to have your name withheld.

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Farewell from the Editors

The Autumn 1998 issue of TAU-USA was our first as its new editors. This one is our last. We would like to take this opportunity to bid you all farewell.

Our sincere gratitude goes to those who have truly been brothers and sisters to us.

Peace and Love,
the Outhwaites



The Secular Moment

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THE SECULAR MOMENT HAS ARRIVED! This is a bold, almost self-serving, statement, isn't it? But, the realization is here for the grasping. These times are screaming for us, as lay servants, for help. The environment is ripe, as never before since the time of Saint Francis.

Wow! Did I write that? If it is prophetic, it is scary, isn't it? What do we have to do to fulfill our calling to "warm the world" which, as you can see is growing cold. A simple answer is to intently live our Rule that calls us to go from Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel. The Rule does not call us to go from Gospel to Church and from Church to the Gospel, although Church is a necessary part of our calling. Our Rule calls us in our life, as each of us live it out daily, some in ordinary ways and some in extraordinary ways, each to his own calling.

God calls his own to build up the kingdom during specific times in Church history. Certainly, Francis and Clare answered the call during their time. Prior to their entrance, only monks and clerics were assumed to have the call to perfection. Now, we all are. During their time, Bonaventure and Scotus were called to do scholarly works for the Church; Kolbe, to give sacredness to life

by offering his. But do we have heroes among us today? The answer is yes. We have Jim Flickinger, SFO who serves a leper colony in Brazil; we have Hal Seiber, SFO whose heart welcomes all, regardless. Both were recently honored with our SFO peace award. We have Jerry Friga, SFO (page 14) who lived his Franciscan calling everyday. Most likely these saints would not think of themselves as Saints; they would not be so presumptuous. And, we have you and me. All of you do live good lives, while striving to live your SFO Rule. And, most of us live heroic lives.

We just don't define it as such. When I hear your stories, I see Franciscan heroes. What you do is holy: just as holy in your own life situation as those designated heroes of the Church. Accept this, please!

The Holy Spirit is working in the Church and in the world. We have, especially in past judgments, limited the work of the Spirit to the Church. One of our challenges, as Secular Franciscans, is to connect the two. This is what Francis did in his time. He offered Gospel living to all that would embrace it, not just the certified religious. He proved that you did not have to leave the world to be

holy. Please know this. You do not have to leave the world to be holy. Holiness is attainable in the way we live our life in the world. The "about time" wonderful message of the Second Vatican Council is that we are all called to the same holiness.

One of the keys to "warming the world" is to recognize that we do not ignite the fire in others, we just fan it. What do I mean by that statement? I mean that the fire is already within the other although perhaps only simmering under layers of pride, pain and neglect. It is our calling to glean out the divine in each encounter. God is present in everyone. We are being presumptuous when we speak of bringing God to others. Article 19 of our Rule calls us to *trust in the presence of the Divine seed in everyone, and in the transforming power of pardon and love.*

I exhort you to go into the garden of the world. Greet those whom you encounter as Saint Francis would, without predisposition – to Francis, even the thief was welcomed as a brother. Connect with the Divine seed. You do this by listening to the heart of those you encounter. It might not be the "standard" way of evangelizing, but a spiritual connection will be made with that Divine seed, and transformation will happen. Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI tells us that if we are to evangelize, we need to know the vernacular of the day. Prosper Rivi, OFM Cap. in his publication *Francis of Assisi and the Laity of His Time* writes, Francis ... "generally made

use of the vernacular language to give voice to the strong religious instinct of the people." Who better knows the vernacular of the world then we who are immersed in it. If we act as pseudo clerical Christians using church language, we will not know how to talk the talk of the average person, many of whom have strong spiritual instincts, but are misdirected. If we look for holiness solely in Church or at meetings, we are self-containing ourselves. We, who live in the secular world (which we cannot prejudge as evil since all was called good by our creator) and

experience the ways of the secular world, are the ones who must bring about change. This is best accomplished by our understanding of, and connecting with, the Divine seed that is in everyone whom we encounter. When someone says, "The kingdom of God is within you." Your response should be, "and also within you," as it is within everyone. So, as you go about bringing warmth to a world that seems to be getting colder, find it there, also, in the many forms of the Divine that may seem hidden, and rejoice in it. Now, read the first paragraph of Article 19 of our Rule of Life, and live it.

The Holy Spirit is working in the Church and in the world. We have, especially in past judgments, limited the work of the Spirit to the Church. One of our challenges, as Secular Franciscans, is to connect the two.

"Called to Build a More Fraternal and Evangelical World":

Why? *Adveniat Regnum Tuum!*

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This final TAU-USA ongoing formation section for 2002 takes its direction from the general theme of this year's National Secular Franciscan Quinquennial Congress, "Called to Build a More Fraternal and Evangelical World." These words, of course, are taken from article #14 of our *Rule of Life* and they serve to remind us of the mission that Christ through His Church has entrusted to us.

Here is something we have stated in many different ways in our writings and spoken addresses during our six years of service as co-Chairs of the National Formation Commission: ***we are Franciscans not so much for the sake of our own personal growth in holiness, but rather for the service of the Church and the world.*** Together with all the baptized members of Christ's Faithful people we have been given a precious and invaluable share in God's very own divine life and love. But for us there is even more!

We have been entrusted with an additional gift, a living participation in the very charism of our Seraphic Father Saint Francis. As a consequence we are called to follow Jesus as Francis followed Him, we are to live His Gospel

with Francis as our guide. We therefore have the duty to "make present the charism of [our] Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church" (*SFO Rule*, article #1). Our own salvation and personal growth in holiness come about not as ends in themselves, but as the byproducts of our actively promoting the "life and mission of the Church." The experience of being a Franciscan certainly has a very deeply

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private dimension to it, but it is essentially a very public proclamation of how the grace of God is at work within the one thus called; our profession of the *Rule* makes it so. We are called not only "to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi" (cf. *SFO Rule*, article #1), but we must also "proclaim Christ by [our] life and words" (cf. *SFO Rule*, article #6).

Humanly speaking, we look around ourselves at all the serious and complex problems which confront our

Church and our world today and we may be tempted to throw our hands up in despair and say, "What can I possibly do to make a difference? I'm only one little person!" It is precisely at moments such as this that our faith perspective needs to "kick in," that faith perspective

which assures us that through our Baptism we are no longer isolated individuals, separated from God and from one another. We have become living members of the Mystical Body of Christ substantially united to Him and to one another. The two beautiful feasts (All Saints and All Souls) we as Church celebrate at the beginning of each November remind us that we can never be truly alone, that we participate in the Communion of Saints for all time and for eternity. Our profession has also made us members of the Franciscan Family.

Article #14 of our *Rule of Life* instructs us that we Secular Franciscans are to go about our God-given task of "building a more fraternal and evangelical world" not just by ourselves, and not just in the company of other Franciscans or just other Catholics or even just other Christians. Rather, we are to work "***together with all people of good will***" in the common endeavor to "build a more fraternal and evangelical world." Some of us may say to ourselves, "Surely this attitude of such radical, open-armed inclusiveness has got to be some kind of a mistake! What about those people who don't look and think and act the way we do? What about those people who don't have the same set of values and beliefs that we do, who don't pray the way we do? Do we have to include them, too, in this equation?" The answer is an unqualified YES! Our *Rule* does not give us the option of choosing to work with just a few people of good will or just some people of good will or even just most people of good will. The challenge for us as well as the hope and the promise is to be willing to find common or at least complimentary initiatives with ***all*** people of good will.

Such an awareness also serves to help free us from the very human tendency to associate ourselves only with those who are very much like ourselves. It also saves us from lapsing too easily into the pietistic phase we have so often heard (and perhaps have used ourselves) that we are called to be ***in the world but not of the world.*** At the heart of any authentically Franciscan spirituality is a profound appreciation for the mystery of the Incarnation. When at a particular moment in human history, in obedience to the Father's will, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the eternal Word of God came ***into*** the world and became part of that world. While losing nothing of his divinity, Jesus became fully human, even to the point of experiencing the effects of sin although He himself remained sinless. So, like it

...continued on page eight



New Directions

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In recent years the National Ecology Commission has undergone numerous changes. In this article, newly appointed NAFRA Ecology Commission chairs, Jane and Bill, identify new objectives for the commission.

As National Ecology Commission members, along with John Eckert, SFO, and then chairman, Justin Carisio, SFO, we met in September 2001 for the purpose of defining objectives for guiding the U.S. fraternities on ecology issues. Our discussion resulted in a three-pronged approach to ecological formation and encouragement:

In this day and age, even the most frugal SFOs are under constant threat of having their possessions possess them....

1. **Simple Living** – In this day and age, even the most frugal SFOs are under constant threat of having their possessions possess them, pulling them farther away from their relationships and commitments to God and to the world at large. In this area, our plan is to focus on how our lifestyle choices impact other humans and the natural environment. Often our decisions have a negative impact on God's creation. To quote from Keith Warner's article, "Out of the Birdbath!!" (The Cord, April 1998), "Compulsive greed and chronic indifference are the two greatest obstacles to a health relationship with creation. I fault mainstream Christianity and Creation spirituality for failing to acknowledge that sin has an ecological dimension. We North Americans are grasping for so much wealth that it cannot possibly be sustained. Our society's lifestyle is robbing from the underdeveloped world and from nature's ability to restore herself. We are refusing to accept our place, and this is a classic definition of sin."

2. **Universal Kinship** – Recalls concern for the marginalized, a well-known Franciscan theme. Who are the ecologically marginalized? Those plants and animals and habitats and ecosystems which are being pushed toward the brink of oblivion as a direct result of human development. Butterflies and hummingbirds are beautiful and easy to love. But can we, along with Francis, kiss the lepers? The frogs and snakes? The vultures and pigeons? The Catechism of the Catholic Church (pp 580-581) states: "Animals are God's

creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless Him and give Him glory. Thus, men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which Saints like Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Philip Neri treated animals."



3. **Environmental Peacekeeping** – This concept seemed to arise as if by magic during our September 2001 meeting. Of course we all know the real Source of inspiration here, for our prayers for guidance were sincere. Gradually, out from the depths of our hearts, each of us related stories from our work experiences in

Butterflies and hummingbirds are beautiful and easy to love. But can we, along with Francis, kiss the lepers? The frogs and snakes?

which we sat across the table from alleged/traditional "enemies of the environment," and watched in amazement as the Spirit worked to resolve our differences. Rather than playing the "blame game," which usually ends in more polarization, we treated our counterparts with respect and even warmth to which they gratefully and positively responded. Besides producing results which far beyond our expectations, this type of peacekeeping is an effective example of Franciscan spirituality.

We plan to develop these themes into programs, presentations and other resource materials for dissemination to SFOs across the United States.

Consider...

Recycling is certainly a critical part of respecting God's creation, however, it is just the beginning. Understanding the sin dimension of environmental abuse, and the necessity of personal repentance, will lead us to a deeper level of commitment to living Articles 11 and 18 of the SFO Rule.

Article 11: "...seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs"

Article 18: "...respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High,' and they should strive to move away from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship."

This challenge is meant to be lived more than discussed. To quote Richard Rohr, OFM: "You don't think your way into a new kind of living. You live your way into a new kind of thinking."

We invite SFOs who may be interested in serving on the National Ecology Commission to apply. Please see the announcement on page twenty of this issue of the TAU-USA.

Being Christ to others and seeing Christ in others

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"The right time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near!" (Mark 1:15)

God established His Kingdom here on earth and later sent His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, by His life, death and resurrection founded His Church. After more than 2000 years, the work is still in progress. People of God are still striving to make it whole and complete. As Secular Franciscans, we are being exhorted through Article 14 of the Rule, to evangelize, to help spread the Kingdom among the nations. We are being called to build a "more fraternal and evangelical world".

Service is not only doing bulk mailings for a school fundraiser or helping out at Bingo night. But taking our children to a local soup kitchen will make them aware of how poor people get their daily meals, they will be touched.

Richard Portasik, O.F.M. envisions a fraternal world as "one in which divisions, class distinctions and rivalries are replaced by mutual cooperation, understanding and charity". To Russel Murray, OFM, fraternal world is "where we choose in love to respond to God's grace at work within us by embracing one another as sisters and brothers in the Lord."

An evangelical world according to Portasik is, "one in which gospel values, i.e the teachings of Jesus, are promoted and lived". Secular Franciscans must bring the "good news" to everyone they come in contact with. The gospel takes root in the closest of personal relationships which is the family - husband-wife, parent-child, brother-sister. Secular Franciscans can be very effective in evangelizing by being Christ to others and seeing Christ in others.

We are called to act like God. According to Leonard Foley, OFM "being Christ is not only giving one's life on the cross." It is giving shelter to the homeless, feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty, it is giving clothes to those who have nothing to cover their backs, it is caring for the sick and being concerned for those who are not employed.

We are called to be Christ. As every child acts like his father or mother we are to act like God. God loves all of us and so should we. God created us in his image and likeness. He placed us in this world together and so we must accept and help each other in the spirit of Christ. Therefore, we see Secular Franciscans assisting the

poor, the homeless, the alcoholics and the stranded. Like St Louis IX of France and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, patron and patroness of the Secular Franciscans, they built hospitals for the sick and personally took care of their wounds.



In many occasions Jesus reminds us that love impels us to care for our neighbors. We do not have to go far beyond our backyard and those who are yards away. Our closest neighbors are the people in our family.

However, to Jesus there is no limit on how far the family extends. It even extends to all corners of this world. Love your neighbor in practice and service and not only in theory and prayer. Service to others who are in need is following Jesus' example to love one another.

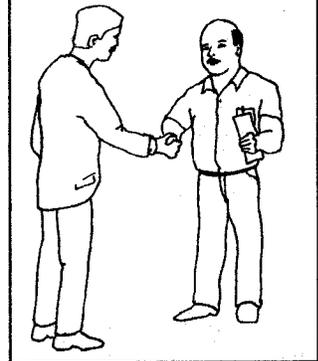
Service is not only doing bulk mailings for a school fundraiser or helping out at Bingo night. But taking our children to a local soup kitchen will make them aware of how poor people get their daily meals, they will be touched; or showing them the dilapidated house that your neighborhood plan to fix up for a low-income family, they would know how hard it would be for the family to live like that. These open a child's eyes to the needs of people around them. When the need is evident, people generally want to help. Service that touches the soul is the best - the kind of Christian spirit of service. Fr. Russel stated that the "evangelical mission cannot be performed from a position of power. It must be performed from the position of a servant - the very position Christ took at that Last Supper, when he took a towel and washed His disciples' feet."

Christ came to this world not to be served but to serve.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How can families live out their faith with the closest people in their own backyard and those who are yards away?
2. How can you be Christ in your own home? at work? at the store? at the bus stop? at a party?
3. How can you see Christ in the other person?

Love your neighbor in practice and service and not only in theory and prayer.



ON GOING FORMATION

Can you build a more fraternal and evangelical world if you never get out of the birdbath?

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We recently attended a Franciscan prayer service at which the friar presiding suggested that Saint Francis should be taken "out of the birdbath". His point was that Saint Francis was not really the quiet, passive animal lover preaching to the birds, as he is so often depicted. Rather, Francis was a radical evangelizer, fired up with the vision of God's loving community and inspired to do everything he could to build a more fraternal world. Francis preaching to the birds was actually a creative way of getting around the Church ruling that only ordained ministers could preach; so if people happened to hear what Francis was preaching to the birds, so be it.

Francis saw the world, as he believed God intended it, with all creation interconnected and wonderful, because all creation comes from God. His vision so well expressed in the Canticle of Creation is a vision in which every part of creation glorifies God by its mere existence. The fraternity of all creation is understood: we humans are in relationship with Jesus, our brother; every aspect of creation is in relationship with God, our father.

Like everything he did, Francis based his worldview on the gospel. In the book *A Dwelling Place for the Most High*, Thadee Matura, OFM, expands our understanding of the source of Francis' vision of community. Matura gives us this passage from Francis' own writing (RegNB22, 32-40):

Let us have recourse to Jesus as to the shepherd and guardian of our soul, who says: "I am the good shepherd who feeds my sheep and I lay down my life for my sheep." All of you are brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not call yourselves teachers; you have but one teacher in heaven.

Matura suggests that these gospel texts are the basis for Francis' conception of community. Christ is the good shepherd, central to the flock. It is because of Christ that the community is able to maintain itself. (Matura, p 26) And it is in community that we have the chance to see Christ in each other as we each individually have had different understandings of how God works in our lives, and we need to hear that from each other.

Then, alive with the vision of community, Francis exhorted the brothers to live a life based on Christ's instructions: "Let them love one another as the Lord says: This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. And: Let us love our neighbor as ourselves." (Matura, p 27.) Living in community with these holy guidelines is the basis of all we do to bring about peace and justice in our family, community and world.

As we live our lives in the spirit of St Francis we Secular Franciscans must act like Francis: we must first embrace the vision of a more fraternal world, a loving community, but we can't stop there, for that would be staying in the birdbath. We must, as the brothers did, go out and put our love of neighbor into action. We need to understand that "neighbor" is a much broader term than we normally like to define it, especially in our times, where communications and the media has extended our neighborhood to the whole world community. We need to step out of our comfort zone, like Francis did when he embraced the leper, or visited the Sultan. This is not an easy task! There are so many places around us where the vision of the peaceable kingdom doesn't exist, so many instances of war, poverty, violence, injustice, and terrorism. However, perhaps the key is with the Good Shepherd. When, like Francis, we make Christ the very center of our lives, everything we do flows from him. Our actions reflect the gospel to everyone we touch. This is the evangelization to which we are called. As we do our apostolic work, as we carry out our everyday activities, by our very being we share the vision with others. This is how we can preach the gospel through the daily activities of our lives, and some times even use words...

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does our preaching of the gospel with our lives reflect the New or the Old Testament?
2. How well do we "love our neighbor as ourselves", and who have we defined as our neighbor?
3. Does our fraternity truly feel we are a Christ centered community? Does our Region?



Psalm 23 (For the Work Place)

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from an issue of *ONLINE WITH FAITH*, an electronic newsletter which is a ministry of Faith Lutheran Church, Springfield, IL, Glen VanderKloot - Pastor.

The Lord is my real Boss, and I shall not want.
He gives me peace, when chaos is all around me.
He gently reminds me to pray before I speak and to do all things without murmuring and complaining.
He reminds me that He, not my job, is my Source.
He restores my sanity every day and guides my decisions that I might honor Him in everything I do.
Even though I may face absurd amounts of e-mails, system crashes, unrealistic deadlines, budget cutbacks, gossiping co-workers, discriminating supervisors, and an aging body that doesn't cooperate every morning, I will not stop-for He is with me!
His presence, His peace, and His power will see me through.
He raises me up, even when they fail to promote me.
He claims me as His own, even when the company threatens to let me go.
His faithfulness and love are better than any bonus check.
His retirement plan beats every 401K there is!
When it's all said and done, I'll be working for Him a whole lot longer and for that, I bless His Name.
May God bless each of you with an inspirational year in which all those you encounter experience Christ's love radiating through you and that you grow in your understanding that everything you do in life to further God's kingdom is the work you were put here to do and gives God honor and glory.

Questions for Discussion:

1. As a Catholic and a Secular Franciscan, how do I define the word "work"?
2. Which line(s) in the psalm above mean(s) the most to me? Why?
3. Do I have a proper perspective of work in my life or do I need an attitude adjustment about it?

THE WORK COMMISSION IS RE-ISSUING A BUMPER STICKER THAT SAYS, "THANK GOD IT'S MONDAY. WORK IS A GIFT. GIVE IT WITH LOVE." + THE 1-800-FRANCIS NUMBER. THEY ARE \$1.00 EACH. PLEASE CONTACT ME THROUGH THE INFORMATION ABOVE FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

"Called to Build a More Fraternal and Evangelical World"

...continued from page four



or not, we are very much of the world as well as being in the world. Though we strive always to be effective countercultural witnesses of Christ's Gospel of life and love, we as Franciscans cannot afford to walk through this world holding our noses to safeguard ourselves against the stench of the sin we encounter. Otherwise, how can we truly embrace the world and its people with both arms wide open? And if we fail to embrace the world as Jesus did, how can we become instruments the Lord can use in its redemption? After all, the whole purpose of our efforts "to build a more fraternal and evangelical world" is not for the sake of the world as an end in itself, but rather "so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively" (cf. *SFO Rule*, article #14).

In the Our Father which the Church prays many times each day, we find the plea, "*Adveniat regnum tuum! Thy kingdom come!*" Amen!

Come, Lord Jesus!

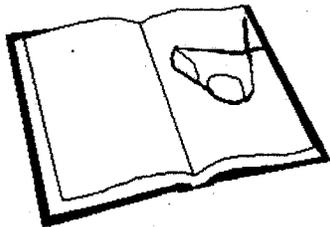
May God give us peace!



"To Build A More Fraternal And Evangelical Life"

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When I sat down to write this, I read and reread the theme of this ongoing formational article. I questioned myself as to if I even really understood the words "fraternal and "evangelical". These words are used and bantered about so much, that I wondered if I had lost or confused their meanings. So I opened my trusty Webster's Dictionary, and pondered the words before me.



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Fraternal is an adjective meaning "of or being a fraternity; exhibiting comradeship" and *Evangelical* is an adjective meaning "of or relating to the Gospel; zealous in preaching or spreading the Gospel." But the word that threw me most was the small, simple word, "more"! *More* is also an adjective that quite plainly means "greater."

When we use the word "more", we are believing and stating that whatever we need "more of" already exists in some form or amount somewhere in our world. That being said, it gave me pause to think. Is there a fraternal and evangelical life out there now? Does it presently exist in the context of the youths of our Order, our Church or our world?

The answer to both of those questions is a resounding **YES!** I witnessed both fraternity and evangelism during the World Youth Day 2002 celebration in July of this year in Toronto, Canada.

Fraternity, or comradeship, was highly evident everywhere we went, from our sleeping accommodations to our catechetical sites, from our meal times to our evening entertainments. The youth, traveling in groups, dressed alike, spoke common languages and gathered around each other when sitting or standing. But if you took a closer look, more was evident. They shared food and water with each other, they helped each other carry packs and equipment and they watched out for each other to make sure no one was lost or trailing behind.

These were the truer signs of fraternity. The care and concern that they gave to each other eventually found its way out into the bigger group at large. Even with the obstacle of language barriers, somehow everyone knew what one another needed. One news reporter spoke of how he had never witnessed so many young people in one place; at one time together...yet there were no fights, no riots or no major problems. We became comrades, companions on the journey, and eventually friends.

When we use the word evangelism, most of us think of going out and spreading the "good news" among those who do not know of it, or those who do not share our common religious beliefs. But what about evangelizing our own? Who spreads the "good news" among lapsed Catholics or lukewarm Catholics? Who tells the youths of today that the Church loves them and holds them in a special place in her heart? Who fires-up and stokes the flames of our fellow Catholics who have become lackadaisical in their faith?

During World Youth Day 2002, the youth of the world not only witnessed and evangelized the world, but also witnessed and evangelized each other! They showed that it was okay to actually pray aloud in public, to wear crosses and T-shirts that spoke of Christ, to carry around rosaries, and yes, even to sport religious tattoos! The youths' methods of evangelism are not always like our own. They may seem new or drastic and "in your face" at times, but they are out there. They are out there and will not be silenced by a Church, or an Order, who will not listen.

The Secular Franciscan Order, which was started by a radical youth, needs to step up to today's challenge. We can only build a more fraternal and evangelical world by first starting within ourselves, then taking that out into our fraternities and finally out into the world. The youth of today's Catholic Church provides us with a profound opportunity to do just this in today's society.

Do not be afraid to learn from them and journey with them into the Kingdom that God demands that we all build. May we always be blessed by the zealous witness of our youth and learn to support them in anyway possible.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How have you tried to build a more fraternal and inviting atmosphere for youths and young adults in your home, your Church, your fraternity, and your Region?
2. Who and where are the people we should be evangelizing? Do we limit our efforts to only those who we feel comfortable with, or do we reach out to all?



The youths' methods of evangelism are not always like our own. They may seem new or drastic and "in your face" at times, but they are out there. They are out there and will not be silenced by a Church, or an Order, who will not listen.

Introducing...

the new National Ecology Commission Co-Chairs



About Jane: In 1985, I earned a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Notre Dame. My career path led me to environmental protection work with the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. I have worked to further develop and implement regulatory programs geared towards minimizing or preventing the pollution of surface and ground waters. My responsibilities have included facilitating discussions with people representing varying interests; writing rules/regulations and policy documents; developing training programs and training staff. I was professed as a SFO in 1995 and have served as a Minister of a Local Fraternity and Regional Ecology Commissioner for the Saint Thomas More Regional Fraternity. I reside with my husband, Brian Bamman, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am a member of Saint Anthony Fraternity in the Archdiocese of Albuquerque, New Mexico and Our Lady of Guadalupe – Empress of the Americas Region.

About Bill: In 1981, I earned a M.S. degree in Freshwater Fish Ecology at the University of Louisiana. I've been working as curator of Natural Sciences at the Lafayette Natural History Museum and Nature Station in Lafayette, Louisiana for the past 16 years. As a writer, I have been contributing weekly articles in a nature column for the local newspaper for the past 17 years, and have authored numerous papers dealing with ecological restoration issues, as well as three books: Native Gardening in the South¹, A Cajun Prairie Restoration Chronicle², and Birds of the Gulf Coast³. With my wife, Lydia, we have operated Prairie Basse Native Plant Nursery and Ecological Consulting since 1987. I was professed as a SFO in 1991 and have served as Minister and Formation Director for a local fraternity. Currently, I am a member of Saint John's Fraternity, Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana and Saint Joan of Arc Region.

¹ 1992. Prairie Basse Publications.

² 1995. Gail Vidrine Collectibles.

³ 2001. LSU Press.

the new National Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair



Kathy L. Taormina, SFO has been married for 24 years to her best friend, "saint" Tim and has four children, Elizabeth ~ 22, Lori ~ 19, Timothy ~ 15, and Sara ~ 11.

She has been working with Catholic youth since 1978 and with Franciscan youth since 1993 when she helped to organize the "Franciscan Fest" retreat in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has served on the YYA Commission for the past six years. She has certification as an

Advanced Catechist and as a Youth Worker for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Kathy was professed in 1994 in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, her state of birth, and served there as a Formation Director and local Minister for the Portiuncula Fraternity. Her daughter Elizabeth is a temporary Professed SFO, and Lori has recently begun the Franciscan Youth of the Twin Cities.

In her home Parish in Minnesota, she serves as a Lector, a Eucharistic Minister and has been the Coordinator for World Youth Day. She has attended the 1997, 2000 and the 2002 World Youth Days, and at all three, she represented the Franciscan Youth of the USA at their delegate meetings.

Her prayer for the future includes seeing the USA Franciscan Youth blossom, grow and gain the status in our Order and our Church that they need and deserve. She would like to see a true Franciscan Youth program and strong presence at the next Quinquennial in 2007!



We do not ask the young people to abandon their uncertainties, questions, or criticisms. Rather, we ask all those who call themselves Christians to allow themselves to be guided by Grace to encounter Christ in the Church, through the sacraments, prayer, and the reception of the Word.

Pope John Paul II, International Youth Forum's message to the world's youth, August 26, 1993

First Impressions...

First time attendees of a NAFRA Meeting, Jane DeRose-Bamman and Bill Fontenot share their reflections of this year's gathering.

Although in my work and in my service to God, I know the benefit of "meetings," I do not jump at the chance to spend one entire week in one. However, at the end of September, I agreed to serve as one of the co-chairs for the National Ecology Commission and therefore needed to participate in the week-long annual NAFRA Council Gathering - two weeks later in Rochester, Minnesota. I had participated in annual Regional Council Gatherings in Arizona and recently the Quinquennial Congress in New Orleans, but never in a NAFRA Council Gathering - so I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I received the packet of information in the mail and immediately noticed how packed the agenda was for five and one-half days. My reactions were: "Oh no, what have I gotten myself into?" and "What can we possibly have to talk about for that length of time?" I soon realized this event didn't meet my expectations for a "typical" meeting.

Firstly, I reviewed the agenda and discovered that the occasion was labeled a "gathering" instead of

"meeting." Secondly, I noticed that it was held at a place called the Assisi Heights Community Center managed by Franciscan Sisters and that the schedule included gathering for prayer and liturgy each day. These details made me realize how the NAFRA Council takes seriously the call to let the Holy Spirit lead the servants of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. Thirdly, I got it straight that this was the annual gathering of the NAFRA Council - the NAFRA Executive Council, the Regional Ministers from the 33 Regional Fraternities in the U.S., and the four National Spiritual Assistants. The Chairs for the National Commissions and the Committee Chairs also participate. I was looking forward to meeting my sisters and brothers from across the country.

I was surprised to see that this gathering was similar to the local fraternity meetings, but just longer. It had the four elements of a fraternity meeting: Prayer/Liturgy, Ongoing Formation, Business, and Social.

Prayer/Liturgy. The liturgies were quite powerful. Each morning, the morning prayer focused on a different commission topic - great to take back and to share with the Regional and local fraternities. The evening Liturgies were prayerful and invigorating. Many were especially moved by the Memorial Service



on Wednesday evening, where each Regional Minister came forward to light a candle and to read the names of the Franciscan family members who died in the last year. We prayed for our deceased brothers and sisters as we have faith that they have prayed and continue to pray for us. We also witnessed the presentation of the Peace Award to Hal Siebers, sfo, Greensboro, North Carolina. Quite inspiring.

Formation. The new Formation Commission Chairs, Teresa Baker and Anne Mulqueen, led us in a discussion on Secular Sanctity, how the Beatitudes and Articles 5-19 of the SFO rule apply to us. Much food for thought to remind us that we are called to be secular and Franciscan at the same time....that we are called to live in the world, it is our dwelling place so we must work to transform it.

Business. This year, the main topic discussed at the gathering was the proposed revisions to the National Statutes of the Secular Franciscan Order. The discussions proved to be lively. I was amazed at how many different perspectives there can be on what one phrase can mean. The NAFRA Council did manage to include a "work-out" because it often called for a "stand-up to count-off" when voting on the various motions. It seemed that the participants were up and down numerous times. On Saturday, the many voices of the NAFRA Council reached consensus and approved the revisions. Now the revisions will be sent to the Council of the International Secular Franciscan Order for its review and anticipated approval. Also, this year's NAFRA Council gathering included a new feature: "What's happening in the Regions." Each Region had two minutes during which to highlight the best accomplishment in the last year...or to mention areas that it is working on.

Social. Every meal was a social time. Participants tried to sit with different folks at each meal as a means of getting to know our brothers and sisters as well as to "exchange" ideas on how to deal with situations in each Region. Of course, I was interested in learning about each one's journey to the SFO. Interested participants also toured Rochester, Minnesota including the Mayo Clinic's art displays. (Really the art is quite impressive!) The tour also included historic Mantorville and dining at the Hubbell House restaurant. Each night, we gathered to socialize some more after the formal agenda items were completed. The Queen of Peace Regional folks did a wonderful job of hosting this event. The warmth of the people of the Queen of Peace Regional fraternity and Rochester made up for the cold days. Those folks had connections for it even snowed one afternoon to the delight of the participants from the warmer parts of the country.

With the week long gathering over, I was very glad to get home and grateful for the opportunity to participate in the NAFRA Council gathering. I wish to thank those who serve or have served. I pray that more of us are open to serve in this way, if this is the Lord's desire for us.

Jane DeRose-Bamman

Basically, I'd just like to echo Jane's eloquent and thoughtful comments regarding the annual NAFRA gathering held in October 2002 in Rochester, MN. I'd also like to reiterate the impact that frequent community prayer had on our spirits.

The priests and deacons who headed up our daily liturgical services were so inspired by what (in my opinion) best could be described as an especially intense presence of the Holy Spirit. This resulted in awesome liturgies, which themselves inspired our daily work and conversation -- sort of indicative of what real community feels like.

Another personal high point was the ongoing formation session, hosted by new National Formation Commission co-chairs Anne Mulqueen and Teresa Baker. Teresa used Fr. Prospero Rivi's writings on "Francis of Assisi and the Laity of His Time" (Greyfriars Review, Vol 15, 2001 Supplement) in challenging us to re-examine the penitential (sp!) aspect of our way of life in drawing ourselves ever closer to God's directions and blessings. Anne's juxtaposition of the Sermon on the Mount with the SFO Rule inspired us to redouble our efforts and prayer life toward a spirit of ongoing and daily conversion as well.

I'd like to close by thanking Jim and Sis Hein, Kay Peltier, Kathy Taormina, Mike Polson, and all the other Queen of Peace region SFOs for their wonderful, jovial hospitality.

Bill Fontenot

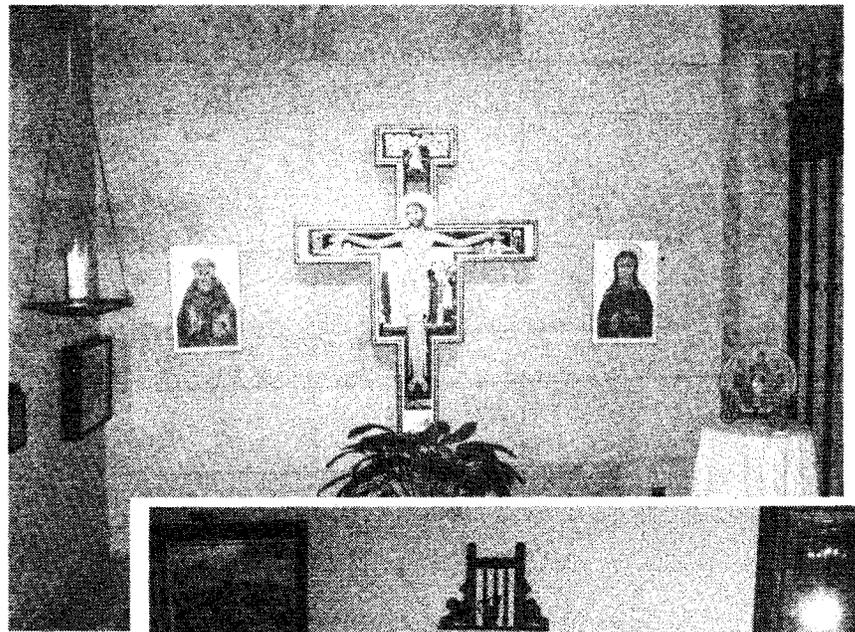


Lester Bach, OFM Cap Installed as President of the CNSA



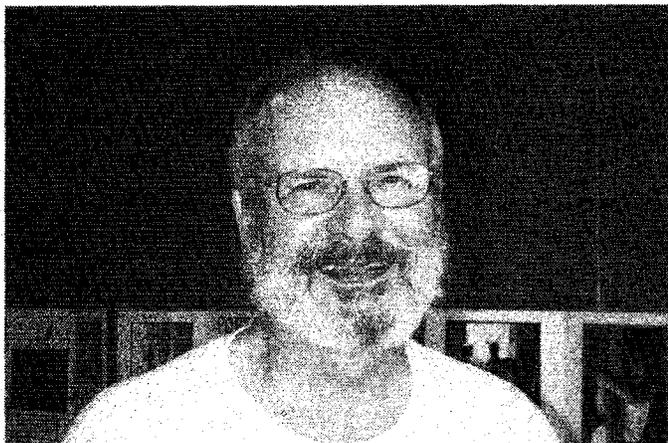
Pictured above, the National Executive Council congratulates Father Lester after his installation as the new President of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants during the 2002 NAFRA meeting.

Left to right: Deacon Oscar Perez, SFO; Father Loren Connell, OFM (outgoing President), Elizabeth Allen, SFO, Father Lester, Bill Wicks, SFO, Diane Halal, SFO, Marie Amore, SFO, and Juan Lezcano, SFO.



Requiescat in Pace

Jerry Friga, SFO



Our friend and brother in Saint Francis, Jerry Friga passed away at his home in the loving presence of his family on October 31, 2002. Jerry and his wife of 42 years, Marilyn, had enjoyed being with all of their Franciscan family at the Quinquennial in New Orleans. Shortly after returning to their home in Franklin VA, Jerry was diagnosed with his terminal illness.

Jerry was the embodiment of Franciscan servant leadership. Despite his many significant worldly accomplishments, his obituary in the Virginia Pilot newspaper said simply: *He was a dedicated educator, a servant of his community, and spirit-filled member of the Franciscan Order. Above all, Jerry loved his family. His most treasured times were spent out in nature with his wife, children and grandchildren.*

Jerry was indeed a spirit-filled member of the SFO. In the 1980s he was part of the Southeast Regional Formation Team, under the aegis of the National Formation Commission. Jerry was the guiding light behind the development and production in 1994 of the **Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership**. This resource was revised in 1998 and contains an enormous wealth of information, spiritual and practical tools that we all can benefit from. An avid and effective educator, Jerry was also involved with the creation of the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life at St Francis University in Loretto PA to provide distance education in Franciscan Studies. He was serving on its board at the time of his death. In addition, Jerry served as a NAFRA Councilor from 1994-1997.

Jerry had just retired in June from his position as President of Paul D. Camp Community College. He had a tremendous impact on both the college and the community that it served. He worked in the area of racial reconciliation in that part of southern Virginia where he lived. He had just begun work to develop a Boys and Girls Club to serve the youth of the area.

At Jerry's funeral mass his younger son, Paul, read the Peace Prayer of St Francis. Paul said his father's life always reflected the values expressed in the Peace Prayer. Jerry lived the vision of Francis and taught it to his children through his example. His life of love and

service taught it to those of us who were lucky enough to know him as well.

As it said in the obituary, "above all Jerry loved his family." This was shown so clearly by Michael, Jerry's older son, speaking also at the funeral mass. Michael told the assembled friends and family that Jerry had prepared a notebook during his illness, with information the family would need. It included one single page under the category "philosophy of life". Michael invited the 6 grandchildren to demonstrate what it said with gestures that Jerry had taught them. It is this:

- ❖ Listen, listen to the voice of God. (cross your arms over your heart)
- ❖ Give thanks to God. (raise your arms in praise)
- ❖ Reach out to those around you. (open your arms and reach out)

Always the educator, Jerry gave his grandchildren and us, since we in his Franciscan family are also his heirs, a loving way to remember both him and the vision he lived by. Thank you, Jerry. We will miss you.

(If anyone is interested in honoring Jerry, donations can be made to his special project, the Boys and Girls Club "In honor of Jerry Friga for the Franklin VA Boys and Girls Club" and sent to South Hampton Roads, 3415 Azalea Garden Road, Norfolk VA 23513.)



The final riddle for human beings is death. In looking to Christ, man learns that he himself is destined to live. Christ's Eucharist is the pledge of life. The one who eats Christ's flesh and drinks His blood already has eternal life (see John 6:54). Finally, in conquering death by His Resurrection, Christ reveals the resurrection of all; He proclaims life and reveals man to himself in his final destiny, which is life.

Pope John Paul II, *Ad Limina* address to Bishops from Los Angeles and San Francisco, July 8, 1988

"You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world..."

World Youth Day 2002 ~ Toronto, Canada

Kathy Taormina, SFO

National Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair

The XVII World Youth Day officially opened on Tuesday, July 23, 2002 with the celebration of the Liturgy officiated by Cardinal Aloysius Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto. The theme was "You are the salt of the earth; You are the light of the world" from the Gospel of Matthew. In his opening homily he reminded us of the words of Saint Paul, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." "To be with Jesus" is the finest description of a disciple's being and life."

Catechetical Sessions started each day on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday we were treated to the Archbishop of Baltimore, Gordon D. Bennett. He reminded us that our baptism has two distinct parts, "the first is consecration, but the second [and maybe more importantly] is the obligation." He taught us the five ways of "How to be SALT" are:

1. pray - daily
2. sacraments - especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation
3. scriptures - the "need to know"
4. make the faith your own!
5. Live for GOD!

Wednesday afternoon found us participating in the Franciscan Fest at Saint Bonaventure Church sponsored by the Toronto area Franciscans. Vocational tables were set up and the youth had the opportunity to participate in rosary making [we made over 20!], clay making [we made a family of Franciscans and Religious]



World Youth Day 2002. Group from Minnesota with Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Delegates

and listening to live music. We met up with Jean-Paul Lacroix, Franciscan National Minister of Canada and enjoyed some picture taking.

On Thursday we traveled to Saint Francis of Assisi Church in the section of Toronto known as "Little Italy". Four delegates represented the United States, Bill Wicks, SFO, National Minister, Diane Halal, SFO, National Councilor, Kathy Taormina, SFO, National Y/YA Commission and Elizabeth Taormina, SFO, young adult. We were welcomed by Father Ivan Matik', OFM, International Conference of General Spiritual Assistants from Croatia, now serving in Rome. Franciscan youth from fifteen countries met, sang, prayed, shared their country's youth stories and celebrated the Eucharist as one Franciscan family! The countries represented were: Brazil, Chile, Madagascar, India, South Africa, Costa Rica, Canada, Portugal, Slovenia, Italy, Spain, Peru, Chile, Malta and our delegation from the US along with Korean youth from Manhattan, New York. After a wonderful Italian lunch provided by the church was enjoyed by all, we walked while singing to Exhibition Place to participate in the welcoming ceremony for John Paul II with the rest of the World Youth Day participants from around the world.

During the opening ceremony, the Pope stated, "Today He calls you to be the salt and light of the world, to choose goodness, a choice to live in justice, to become instruments of peace." Over 200,000 youth and young adults welcomed the Pope and the World Youth Day Cross with chants of "JP2 - We love you!" He closed the ceremony by praying, "Make them men and women of the Beatitudes!"

Friday found us with the Archbishop of Toronto, Richard Grecco back in our catechetical session, who spoke on the Beatitudes and told us that we only "have a right to

pursue happiness, not a guarantee to have it!" We had free time to enjoy Toronto and our host families during the afternoon, but a large group of our youth chose to return to the Franciscan Fest to make more rosaries...unbelievable!

Early Saturday morning as the sun was just rising and the fog was slowly burning off, we were joined in Morning Prayer at the GoTrain station as we began our pilgrimage walk to Downsview Park for the evening vigil. The train took us a part of the way, and then we walked the remaining 6 kilometers to our

campsite. We were joined and surrounded by the Kenyan and Singapore youths, who swiftly started exchanging shirts and trinkets, the Italian youth and the Korean youth in our little square of the Park, along with a multitude of frogs!

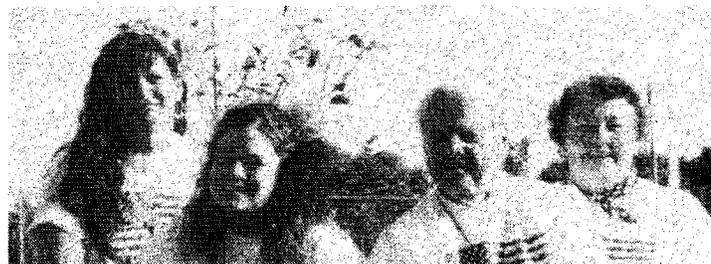
John Paul opened the vigil by stating, "In you, gathered from the four corners of the world, the Church sees her future, and feels the call to the youthfulness with which the Holy Spirit always enriches her. The enthusiasm and joy that you are showing are a sure sign of your love for the Lord, and of your desire to serve him in the Church and in your brothers and sisters." With music, prayer and thousands of vigil candles, we prayed into the night, and a music concert sang us into the new day.

We were awakened Sunday morning by a drenching rain, which soaked everyone and everything! By breakfast the rain gave us a short break to regroup, repack and try to find dry clothing. But shortly thereafter, the rain returned with a vengeance! The rain came with gusts of wind and umbrella-snapping power, and we proceeded to return to our host Church to ready ourselves for our flight home.

John Paul II, during his homily, called the youth "apostles for the Third Millennium" and told us that "we are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son." He announced that the next World Youth Day would be held in 2005 in the city of Cologne, Germany. In his closing he quoted the words of Saint Augustine, "We have been happy together in the light we have shared. We have really enjoyed being together. We have really rejoiced. But as we leave one another, let us not leave Him!"

We returned tired and worn to the United States, but full of inspiration and hope not only for the youth of the world, but especially for the youth of the United States Catholic Church! The group of 20 youth and adults from my home parish who traveled with me are now pursuing and questioning the beginning of a Franciscan Youth Fraternity here in the Twin Cities area...God does work in mysterious and wonderful ways!

Until 2005 in Germany...



SFO Youth Young Adult Delegates: Kathy Taormina, SFO, Elizabeth Taormina, Bill Wicks, SFO, Diane Halal, SFO

Unity in Christ and Saint Francis

Marcella Bina, SFO
Chair, Ecumenical Committee

The Ecumenical Committee of the National Fraternity of the SFO was formed in 1997 in response to a mandate by the national fraternity to develop "fraternal relations with non-Catholic associations inspired by Francis", as stated in Art. # 103 in the 'General Constitutions of the SFO.'

Since 1997 the Ecumenical Committee has developed vision and mission statements, set goals with recommendations and guidelines, adding plans for the implementation of these guidelines. Also, the committee has produced a resource, 'A Secular Franciscan Ecumenical Guide'.

Meeting annually since 1997, the Ecumenical Committee originally was composed of members of our SFO plus a Society of the Atonement Friar serving as spiritual advisor.

This year the committee expanded the comprehensive focus of the committee by inviting leadership from two non Roman-Catholic Franciscan communities to serve as liaisons from their respective orders: The Rev. Masud I. Syedullah, Episcopal Priest and Minister of the Anglican/ Episcopal Third Order Society of Saint Francis (TSSF). This association has a membership of about 650 in the Anglican community throughout the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, and parts of South America. The other Franciscan dimension is represented by The Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF). The OEF is an ecumenical body (50-55) of Christians who maintain a devotion to Saint Francis and Saint Clare. The community is bound together by a common rule and structure of accountability.

At the Ecumenical Committee's meeting in September 2002 the representatives from the three secular orders of Saint Francis met in common pursuit for unity. The participants quickly discerned that at the core of our vocations is a common Franciscan charism. Thus this would be the starting point for the current group in forming a working relationship. With this foundation the group made plans to recommend the creation of a new model for the three Franciscan Communities represented to begin the historic first steps toward Franciscan unity.

Recent major accomplishments of the committee are as follows:

- supplied materials and staff for a display table at the 2002 Quinquennial Conference
- gave workshops for the 2002 Quinquennial Conference
- prepared and distributed a 'Secular Franciscan Ecumenical Guide' brochure
- collected a list of names of individuals interested in ecumenism. The committee plans to send regular mailings to these individuals to keep them posted on the committee's work
- composed a prayer for Franciscan Unity

2002 TAU USA Poetry Contest

We are pleased to announce that we received over one hundred submissions for the 2002 TAU-USA Poetry Contest. All three judges were most impressed and edified by the honest sharing of the writers' life experiences. If you are interested in seeing color photographs of the prizes, they may be viewed at <http://www.vendage.net/glassworks>

All prizes were handcrafted by Vendage Glassworks, and donated by Mr. and Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO.

First Prize

My Magnificat

*Helene Gillogly, SFO
Brevard, NC
Brothers and Sister of
Saint Francis Region*

My spirit is joyful because of the Lord;
My heart is lifted up in praise and thanksgiving
because the Lord blessed me with Godly parents who trained me
in the way I should walk.
Like a palm tree, my roots run deep to drink of the Living Water.
He refreshes my soul.

The Lord God fashioned a beautiful, faithful man.
He presented him to me at a young tender age to be my husband.
He crowned him with wisdom and wit.
He made him virile to produce many children.
The Lord allowed joy and laughter into our lives;
He also allowed sorrows but the sorrows did not overcome us.

The sorrows pulled us down but, because of the Lord, could not over shadow us.
We gave each other space.
We rose from the depths of sadness
to grow together in our love for God through Jesus Christ.

The Lord blessed us with three boys and two girls.
We worshiped God as a family, ever mindful of His tender, loving care.
In our 18th year of marriage, the Lord was with us in our deep sorrow
when our dear son, our first born, was taken up to be with Him.

I felt tossed and battered by the winds of destruction.
As a palm tree, I was bent down and wondered if I would break.
Could I ever stand tall and firm again?

I cried out to the Lord.
Would my spirit feel joy ever again; would my lips ever smile again?
He answered me. He would not leave me orphaned.
I found joy in my two daughters and two sons,
My grandchildren too give me great comfort.
The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

He is my Father, I trust in Him.
My Lord God in whom I find hope.
Then the Lord took me by the hand and led me to a place of comfort.
I ate and drank of His precious countenance
and I knew that all would be right again.

I love Him, I trust in Him, I shall follow Him every day of my life.
I rejoice that He is my God!
Amen, Amen.

Second Prize

One in Christ
(In memory of Mr. Ashton)

Joanna Madorma, SFO
Culpepper, VA

Saint Margaret of Cortona Region

A gnarled ancient oak
he sits alone.

His skin is black and wrinkled,
weathered from the many
seasons of his life.

His clothes are soiled and dirty.
The stench of sickness and age
fill my senses
as I clasp his outstretched hand.

His unshaven face is rough as I kiss his cheek.
I look at him.
Christ looks back at me.



Honourable Mention

Ascent

Dorothy Swartz Foley, SFO
Jamaica, NY
Tau Cross Region

Sandaled feet wend
mountainward with care
not to stumble
up the path to prayer.

Greenery and rocks
accent ascent
as Feathered quoir
chirps in merriment.

After struggling
to reach the crest,
brown-robed friar
in dire need of rest

of mind and body
and of spirit
finds perfect peace
on silent summit

where heavenly
and earthly entwine
in prayerful homage
to the Divine.

Third Prize

Most High, All Gracious, All Loving God

Anne M. Twitchell, SFO
Pleasant Hill, CA

Blessed Junipero Serra Region

Elegant Set Designer, surrounding our planet with
wondrous space,
Sky studded, like hand-tied quilts, with myriad of stars.

Mother earth, fertile soil, sand-filled deserts, reservoir of
minerals,
gases, precious gems, quaking, erupting, spewing fire
and lava.

Source of bounteous life-sustaining air,
trees, plants, grasses, flowers in their forests, meadows,
marshes,
gardens, forever synthesizing oxygen anew.

Oceans, rivers, bay waters, streams, fish-filled creeks,
thirst appeaser,
gurgling, flowing sounds soothing the psyche;
raging torrents, flooding, washing away peace and earth.

Luminous moon, man's latest frontier, controlling ocean
tides, waxer
and waner, lovers' romantic backdrop, turner of our
monthly
calendars.

Scorching sun, burnishing the day with light, warming
our bones,
supplying our bodies with necessary vitamins C and D.

Exquisite Engineer, Creator of animals, beasts, birds,
and butterflies,
creatures of the sea, whales, minnows, plankton,
amoebae, algae.

Grand Conductor of a new-born's lusty cry, leaves
rustling, bat wing's
flutterings, lovers' whisperings, basso frog's croaking, a
chorus of a
never-ending echo of Your Spirit.

Choreographer of the cosmos' dance of life
causing attraction of opposites:
neutron, proton, yin, yang, ovum, sperm, balanced,
unbalanced.

Allurer of our souls,
Mirror of Your awe-inspiring love—all a reflection of Your
brilliance.



Honourable Mention

Lady Wisdom

Karen R. Lezcano, SFO
Federal Way, WA
Troubadours of Peace Region

She is enduring strength ~
who has the ability
to do all things that life calls her to do.

She is compassionate and understanding,
She is encouragement to those who need encouraging.

She is successful and accepting of those who are less
successful
or who are not accepter because of their success.

She is a teacher and a listener ~
to those who are far away from me
to the whispers of the hopeless
to the plea of the forgotten
to the cry of the anguished
to me.

She is of humble and simple heart,
She possesses the gift of knowledge.
It is she I want to imitate.

She is spirit and comfort ~
to all who may be lost and afraid.

She is spirituality ~
because she comes from God.

She shines with luster and radiance ~
because she is a precious jewel of priceless value,
whose brightness will never fade away.

Because she was present at the creation of the world,
she possesses a special understanding of the world
and it's workings.

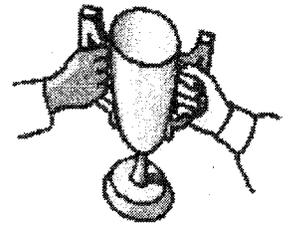
All should attempt to pursue her
for she reveals the right ways to live and behave,
And for this, she is worthy of all she possesses and
personifies.

She is love ~
Because she comes from God.
And because of who she is ~
she is Lady Wisdom.



Kathy Majerus, SFO Receives Award

On December 4, 2002, Kathy Majerus, SFO was awarded the Medical Award for the Everyday People, Everyday Heroes Award. This was awarded at the 5th Annual Everyday People, Everyday Hero Breakfast sponsored by



the American Red Cross, Billings Gazette and Saint Vincent's Healthcare of Billings, Mt. The recipients are given their awards for their acts of heroism in the face of adversity and for going above and beyond the call of duty, to make Billings a better place to live.

Medical care providers are accustomed to following established practices for the successful treatment of medical conditions. But, when the condition is a critical shortage of affordable dental care for kids, the protocol isn't in place. So, Kathy Majerus, SFO took a leap of faith when she joined the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile crew earlier this year. Partnering with Saint Vincent's Healthcare to address this great need, Kathy helped define the protocol for dental care delivery at this dental office on wheels, one of only 12 in the nation. In addition to serving as a dental hygienist on the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, Kathy has also recruited area dentists to pitch in and even went to truck driving school so she could serve as a back up driver for the 40-foot long mobile clinic.

Driven by a passion for helping those in need, Kathy does more than care for teeth, she cares for people. She talks gently to young children whose mouths are so filled with decay that the pain makes them fear even the slightest touch. She talks respectfully to parents about proper brushing techniques and eating habits. Kathy has cared for the teeth of more than 800 children this year and is determined to serve as many children as possible in order to make a positive difference in the lives of families in need.

In her acceptance, Miss Majerus quoted Mother Teresa as far as what motivates her work. Someone once asked Mother Teresa how they could help her with her work. Her response was, "Stay at home and help the poor in your own backyard, the only difference between my poor and your poor is that your poor are better dressed. Being raised Catholic, Kathy contributes her parents' strong faith and example as the reason for her work. "I always prayed for a job that would make a difference, it is an honor and blessing to have this opportunity on the Care Mobile. I just didn't know it would come with a set of car keys." This is another example of how God answers prayers.

Kathy has been a traveling Dental Hygienist in rural Montana for 20 years and a professed SFO member of the San Damiano Fraternity in Billings for the past 10½ years. San Damiano Fraternity is part of the Our Lady of the Rockies fraternity in Montana and Northern Wyoming. Miss Majerus has served as a past minister for her fraternity.

Ecology Commission Members Needed

The Co-Chairs of the National Ecology Commission invite Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the positions of member of the **National Ecology Commission**. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the National Ecology Commission;
- be willing to communicate your passion and desire to promote the Commission to others;
- provide a summary of some of your ideas to promote the Commission; and
- be able to attend at least two four-day national meetings yearly.

Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by June 1, 2003 to:

Bill Fontenot, SFO
217 Saint Fidelis Street
Carencro, LA 70520-6019
337-896-9187

and

Jane DeRose-Bamman, SFO
737 Valverde Dr SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
505-268-0512

EcologyCommission@msn.com



Youth Commission Members Needed

The National Youth/Young Adult Commission invites Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for membership on the **National Youth Commission**. Applicants must:

- have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the Youth Commission;
- have some experience in working with youth as a leader (for example, Franciscan youth groups, parish youth groups, CCD, Scouts, etc.);
- be able to work with, and share ideas on starting and animating Franciscan Youth groups; and
- be able to attend one National Commission weekend meeting annually.

The Commission encourages multi-cultural candidates to apply. Interested Secular Franciscans should mail resumés by June 1, 2003 to:

Kathy Taormina, SFO
Chair, National Youth/Young Adult Commission
920 Whitney Drive
Apple Valley, MN 55124
Phone: 612-997-2243

Meet Your National Executive Council...

We thought it would be a good idea to give all of us in the Order an opportunity to get to know our brothers and sisters on the National Executive Council a little better. Therefore, we recently sent to each of them a questionnaire to solicit interesting personal information. We will publish the results in upcoming issues of TAU-USA.

Meet the National Vice Minister



Name: Marie Elizabeth Amore

Husband's name: John (deceased)

Children: Six boys and three girls

Hometown: Detroit, MI

Current: Clinton Township, MI

Year Professed: 1950 (I was just a child)

Occupation: retired self employed salon owner.

Hobbies: Exercising, music, reading

Favorite story about St.

Francis: Francis and the Friar who was hungry

Favorite saint(s) Our Lady and St. Joseph

Favorite way to relax: Listening to any music by Puccini. while reading a good book.

One favorite scripture quote: Mt. 22:39 "Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, whole soul and mind and with all your strength and your neighbor as yourself."

Favorite movie: I see too many movies. Can't pick one.

Favorite book, I read many, many books. Can't pick one.

Pet Peeve: Labels on the back of the clothes I wear. They scratch!

Personal Strength: Support from my family and fraternity cell group.

Personal Weakness: Chocolate

"If I could do it over again..." I'd play more!

The thing that makes you most happy to be a Secular Franciscan: The brothers and sisters, the friars and the many opportunities for spiritual growth.

The thing we should work on to improve the SFO: In Fraternities at every level I believe it is so necessary to improve *ongoing formation* that will emphasize the spirituality of what it means to be a Catholic, Franciscan. I believe from that kind of ongoing formation we can do what is our mission: to proclaim Christ in our words and actions while we are instruments to build a world, beginning with our own local fraternities, where everyone is treated like family with the values of Jesus.

FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE SEMINAR INVITATION AND REGISTRATION

"The Blessing of Penance: Our Past, Our Future"

Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, Director of the Franciscan Institute, would like to invite you to attend the first Robert M. Stewart, OFM Seminar entitled **"The Blessing of Penance: Our Past, Our Future" – A Reflection on the Rules and the Ways of Life of Secular Franciscans.** The seminar will be held from June 19-22, 2003 at St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, New York. The seminar is being supported by the Franciscan Institute's Center for Secular Franciscan Studies and is intended as on-going formation for national and regional leaders in the SFO.

The seminar will honor the memory of Fr. Robert M. Stewart, OFM, who passed away on September 1, 2001. Fr. Stewart was the first coordinator of the Center for Secular Franciscan Studies, established in 1995. Fr. Stewart's book, *De Illis Que Faciunt Penitentiam (Concerning Those Who Do Penance) – The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation*, charts the development of the different ways Secular Franciscans have been called to live out the gospel calling throughout our history. The seminar will consider this history going back to its origins in the penitential movements of the 11th and 12th centuries.

The seminar also provides the occasion to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of our present Secular Franciscan Rule on June 24, 1978. With the development of the Pauline Rule and its call to continual conversion as the central theme, featured speakers will explore how this call can be realized through a deepening life of prayer and contemplation. In the spirit of the New Orleans Quinquennial Congress, we will reflect on how we can more faithfully live out our calling to build God's kingdom in the midst of the world.

The cost for the seminar is \$195. Space is limited so please register early. Registration will begin at noon on Thursday, June 19th. Dinner will be served from 5:30pm. The conference ends with lunch at 11:30pm on Sunday, June 22nd. Any questions may be addressed to Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO at (716) 838-4178 or zablocki @acsu.buffalo.edu. We look forward to seeing you for a time of learning, fellowship and celebration.

Registration Form: "THE BLESSING OF PENANCE: OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE"

Conference cost is \$195. Please include a deposit of \$ 50 made out to "Franciscan Institute." Thank you. Space is limited. Please register early. Mail to: Seminar Registration, 360 Beard Ave., Buffalo, NY 14214

Name _____ Region _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Address _____ Email _____

Please check or circle as appropriate:

Please indicate who you would like to room with if possible: _____

Do you need handicapped accommodations? No / Yes Do you have dietary restrictions? No / Yes
Please describe the nature of your special needs and how they can best be met:

Travel Plans: Please indicate how you plan on traveling to St. Bonaventure which is 80 miles southeast of Buffalo in western New York State. Major air carriers and car rental companies serve Buffalo Niagara International Airport. If you are able to get to St. Bonaventure on your own it would be appreciated but we will have a limited number of vans providing transportation on Thursday and Sunday for an additional \$25 roundtrip.

I will be: Driving flying and renting a car Flying/ needing transportation from airport
Please indicate airline, flight and arrival time if known: _____

Special Accommodations: If you will be arriving in Buffalo on Wednesday, June 16th and will need to take a van to St. Bonaventure on Thursday there are rooms reserved for "The Franciscans" at the Quality Inn for \$59 (716-633-4231). If you are arriving early at the University in Allegany, NY or staying after the seminar or would like hotel accommodations rather than those on campus, the Country Inn and Suites, right across the street from the University has rooms available at a special rate of \$80/night for two queen size beds. Call 716-372-7500 and mention the "Franciscan Conference."



SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER USA
1615 VINE STREET
CINCINNATI OH 45202

October 31, 2002

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

The Right Honorable Tony Blair, MP
10 Downing Street
London, England

Dear President Bush & Prime Minister Blair:

Peace and all things good! We are the leaders of the Secular Franciscan Order, USA and on behalf of our fellow Secular Franciscans, we are saddened by your proposal to go to war with Iraq and we are deeply distressed at your first-strike stance. The Secular Franciscans belong to a lay Order of the Roman Catholic Church around the world, and we represent over 17,000 Secular Franciscans in the United States.

As members of a Roman Catholic Order founded almost 800 years ago by Saint Francis of Assisi, we are compelled to take a stance for non-military action in Iraq. We, Secular Franciscans, try to follow Francis' example to bring the Gospel into our lives in very real ways. Francis was an advocate of reconciliation between factions that only viewed each other as the enemy. In this obsession over one person, the United States appears to be willing to inflict untold hardship and suffering on an innocent and powerless civilian population. A new bombing campaign would only kill more innocent people and worsen their already desperate plight. While we have the capability to do this, it is not what our nation should be about. It is not what we would want to have visited upon ourselves, and we should not be about visiting it upon others.

We do not believe in the use of chemicals, biological or nuclear weapons – by any country. We understand your concern regarding the real possibility of a cataclysmic event being perpetrated by a non-cooperative nation that has chemical and biological and, possibly, nuclear weapons capability at their disposal. However, your effort to justify a war with Iraq is not, in our opinion, the preferred option to bring about a permanent solution to the existing serious dilemma.

We ask you to honor existing U.N. Resolutions and to cease planning for the use of military force in Iraq. Your proposals are counter to the principles of the United Nations Charter and virtually every rule of international relations developed since World War II. We side with the statement of the United States Catholic Bishops Conference, which asks you to roll back your war momentum and to act in accord with the spirit of the United Nations.

Respectfully yours in Saint Francis,
William Wicks, sfo
National Minister (for the executive council and commission chairs)

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