

THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY
of
THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Newsletter



Summer, 1991

MARY AND THE EUCHARIST

James David Lynch, SFO
National Minister

Very close are the links that unite our Blessed Lady to the Holy Eucharist. We need God, and our hearts naturally go in search of him. The pagans of old and of our time, even the most primitive, worship a god or gods and are constantly making for themselves images of their false gods. God granted us Christians the grace and the opportunity of satisfying our need of God by means of the mystery of the Incarnation, and later by means of the Holy Eucharist.

The Son of God came down from heaven and dwelt here on this very earth. He dwelt here amongst us just as one of us. We could see him, know him, speak to him, touch him, and love him as any other friend or companion. But a day was to come when he would die and pass from this world.

Before that day came, he arranged for a continued Incarnation. The Holy Eucharist was the means he devised. He would remain with us until the end of time, not now under the appearance of a child of man, but under the outward appearance of bread. He is really with us, and we with him. We can speak to him and love him and become inti-

mately united to him. Food, by assimilation, becomes one with the eater; so, Christ in the Eucharist becomes one with us. The Holy Eucharist is a continued Incarnation. It is the application of the Incarnation to each of us. This is how God satisfied the craving we have for him.

God indeed has given us the gift of the Incarnation. Did he not give it to us through Mary? And this second gift of the continued Incarnation is given to us also through Mary. Mary is still giving and presenting her Child to the world as she gave and presented him to the shepherds and magi. Let us thank Mary for the gift of Jesus in our tabernacles.

O Mary, help me to live as a faithful disciple of Jesus for the building up of Christian society and the joy of the Catholic Church. I greet you, mother, morning and evening; I pray to you as I go upon my way; from you I hope for the inspiration and encouragement that will enable me to fulfill the sacred promises of my earthly vocation, give glory to God and win eternal salvation, O Mary! Like you in Bethlehem and on Golgotha, I too wish to stay always close to Jesus. He is the eternal King of all ages and all peoples.

Pope John XXIII

TO BE MORE UNITED

Emanuela De Nunzio, OFS
Minister General

The ICSFO Presidency, elected October 1990 by the Chapter at Fatima, presents you with this first 1991 issue of our Bulletin, at least partially renewed. Its typographical face doesn't yet correspond to the level of an international Order of world dimensions; its contents are still limited to some essential announcements...but we intend to respond to one of the most insistent requests made by the participants of the Chapter: a demand for more intense, more widespread, more frequent communication in the Order.

To intensify communication means certainly to risk more, to counter problems frontally, to adopt a more "transparent" style, clarifying any decision including the reasons behind it; but it means also to show more confidence in others and to accept fully the concept of shared responsibility. Shared responsibility meaning not only "to divide" responsibility, but above all to adopt a style:

- where communication becomes habitual, normal;
- where trust, esteem and mutual acceptance open human and spiritual relations of unsurpassable value;
- where the certainty of being listened to induces among the many and varied national realities a feeling of belonging to a single Order more loyally and fully.

To reach this goal, the Bulletin will be published four times a year. It should be clear that this frequency makes it impossible to continue publishing as many separate editions as there are languages present in the ICSFO. We decided, therefore, to publish one single edition, giving the most important communications at least in English and in Italian (possibly also in Spanish). Items

arriving from different nations will be given in their original language, with short summaries in the principal languages.

...Through these small things, we can feel ourselves more united and, precisely through the strength of this unity, propose to the world the ideals our Seraphic Father has planted in our hearts and put into our hands.

Ed. note: private subscriptions to the CIOFS Bulletin are available; an offering to cover expenses is requested. Based on U.S. currency, the cost is estimated at \$2.00 per issue minimum. Send request/offering to:

Segretaria Centrale OFS
V. S. Teodoro 42
00186 Roma, Italia.

LETTER FROM ZAMBIA

(Excerpts from a letter carried by the SFO Newsletter of Australia and New Zealand.)

Having introduced the SFO in Zambia I would like to inform you that we are badly in need of Christian literature, particularly relevant for the formation of our SFO. Any generous contribution from you in this regard would highly be appreciated. We have been running formation workshops in various regions; but in order to achieve effective results there is need to read as much Christian literature as we possibly can.

Clement Milambo, SFO
National Secretary
P.O. Box 81600
Kabwe, Zambia,
Central Africa

If anyone can help, please ship materials directly to Clement. Suggested items: bibles, any Franciscan biographies and histories, the Rule, commentaries on the Rule, general Catholic reading.

THE GOLDEN TONGUE

Rev. Francis Lonsway, OFM Conv.
National Spiritual Assistant

The month of June always makes me think of Saint Anthony of Padua. We celebrate his feast on June 13. Since it is a "summer time" feast, it probably is a day like many other days for us. However, because he was a contemporary of Saint Francis of Assisi (1195-1231 A.D.) Saint Anthony's life and work invite special consideration.

While he joined the Franciscan Order so that he might be a missionary to the Saracens, ill health prevented Anthony from reaching that goal. He quickly became renowned for preaching and was entrusted by Francis with teaching theology to the friars at Bologna. That was risky business because the study of theology required books, and books were rarely in the hands of anyone except the rich.

Furthermore, the only place one could find many books was in the university towns, a setting where it was necessary to live in larger, more stable houses close to the schools, clearly a danger to the preference for huts and hermitages of the early friars.

In addition, there were enough heresies around at that time, among them, the Albigensian, to make one wary of the study of theology no matter where it took place.

There was also a host of itinerant preachers about the countryside, some of whom were faithful to the Church, but others, dissidents which added cause for concern.

Hence, the mandate to teach the clerics was clearly a measure of Saint Francis' confidence in Saint Anthony, not an unfounded trust.

Two recent volumes, *Praise To You Lord* and *Seek First His Kingdom*, highlight the beauty of Saint Anthony's prayers and the scope of his sermons. Both are only glimpses of his monumental work, *Sermones dominicales et festivi*.

The smaller of the two volumes, the collection of prayers, includes prayers to the Trinity, to the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let me share one prayer with you.

"Christ the Lord,
we ask you humbly
gather us under the wings of your love,
keep us alive
with the water of remorse,
with the air of contemplation,
with the earth of humility,
so that we may be worthy of joining you
who are life itself.
With your help,
who are blessed throughout the ages.
Amen." (II/394)

It is not remarkable that this prayer is Franciscan-like. However, because of its call to the fundamental elements of life, water, air, and earth (ground), we must be reminded of our stewardship of the world.

Our Commission on Ecology of the National Fraternity, ably chaired by Justin Carisio, SFO, teaches us some basic things we can do to preserve and enhance the world in which we live. Saint Anthony of Padua reminds us that such concern has a clear theological dimension and is, in fact, part of our life with Jesus himself.

It was recently reported that the difference between a terrorist and a liturgist is that one can reason with a terrorist.

FRANCISCAN BARE MINIMUM: RADIANCE FOR THE JOURNEY

Dr. Marguerite B. Stein, SFO,
Canonist

For whatever reason, you have chosen not to accept an elected office in your fraternity for a time. Let's say that you are in the midst of a hectic business and family schedule and now you are examining that busy life in search of a way to organize your time and still remain faithful to all of your commitments, including the Franciscan.

You say to yourself, what is the bare minimum required in each compartment of my life? You are tempted to start with your work or family obligations. Don't do it. Do what Francis did: BEGIN WITH GOD. Make time for daily personal prayer.

In his Testament, Francis describes the form of prayer that was used in the first days of the Order:

When God gave me some friars, there was no one to tell me what I should do; but the Most High himself made it clear to me that I must live the life of the Gospel...Those of us who were clerics said the Office like other clerics, while the lay brothers said the Our Father,...Although I am ill and not much use, I always want to have a cleric with me who will say the Office for me, as is prescribed in the Rule.

All the other friars, too, are bound to...say the Office according to the Rule. Testament.

Murray Bodo, in his *The Way of St. Francis*, which deals particularly with Franciscan spirituality, has drawn up for us "a sort of canon of Franciscan prayer" using Celano's description of how Francis prayed. It includes the following:

Make all of your time a holy leisure in which to inscribe wisdom in your heart.

When visitors or any other business disturbs you, it is better to interrupt your prayers than to end them. Then, afterwards, you can return to them again in your deepest center.

Retreat to places of solitude where not only your soul, but also your body, can relax with God.

Do not neglect any visitation of the Spirit. Even when some business is pressing or you are on a journey, take time to respond to the touches of grace; taste the sweet manna in frequent snatches.

When you go on a journey, always stop to pray, remembering the story of Francis returning from Rome in the rain and how he dismounted his horse and stood for a long time in the drenching rain. For he used to say, "If the body tranquilly takes its food, which together with the body will become the food of worms, how peacefully and tranquilly should the soul not take its food, which is God himself?"

In chapter two of the Rule, we Seculars have a few clear directions to follow:

1. We follow the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, seeking the Father through Christ; and we carefully read the gospel, going from gospel to life and from life to gospel (¶4).
2. We seek to encounter Christ in others, in Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity (¶5).
3. We go forth among all people, proclaiming Christ by word and example and living in communion with the Pope and his clerics (¶6).

4. We conform our thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of radical interior change, or "conversion"; and human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily (¶7).

5. We let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all we are and do; we participate in the Mass and in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church (¶8).

All of us know that the Franciscan life, like the clear diamond that it is, shines with numerous other facets: work, honor for priests, love for Mary, equality, courtesy, poverty, purity of heart, service, peace, ecology, obedience...how difficult even to list what composes our charism.

Hoping that the busiest Secular will find a way to radiate these attitudes, today we emphasize the thought that it is only through prayer that we ourselves come near the Radiance we want to reflect.

Once Francis sought advice: Should he content himself with the practice of prayer and contemplation, or should he engage in evangelical, apostolic works? His advisors replied, both. Thus, as followers of Francis, as we engage in our missionary vocation of visible work and example of living, we recognize that our strength comes from the Holy Spirit.

When Christ was giving his final lessons to his apostles prior to the Ascension, we are told in Acts 1:8 and 2:17-18 that the coming of the Holy Spirit will make them witnesses and prophets. Pope John Paul II tells us in his recent encyclical on missionary activity, *Redemptoris Missio*, that this coming:

fills them with a serene courage which impels them to pass on to others their experi-

ence of Jesus and the hope which motivates them. The Spirit gives them the ability to bear witness to Jesus with "boldness".

(January 22, 1990; ¶24)

Later in that document, speaking of the apostolate of the laity "to strive so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all people" and pointing out that seculars especially are called "to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering these in accordance with the will of God," the Pope says that the field of the laymen "is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics" (citing Code of Canon Law c. 225; *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 6, 13; *Lumen Gentium* 31; *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 70) at ¶ 71, 72.

Very close to the end of that document, we read: "The characteristic of every authentic missionary life is the inner joy that comes from faith" ¶91.

How much prayer must we find time for? We suggest an hour a day -- twenty minutes for morning prayer, twenty minutes for readings, twenty minutes for evening prayer and examination of conscience. Plus Mass and Communion, if at all possible. Get away from the family or the office rush -- they can spare you for twenty minutes at a time. Find a broom (or other) closet. Relax and enjoy it; behavioral science types and stress counselors, today's gurus, are behind it (for the wrong reasons, but quote them to your critics and see how the denunciation disappears).

Raoul Manselli, in his *St. Francis of Assisi*, published in 1981 and recently released by Franciscan Herald Press in an English translation, notes that Francis, who was given the tonsure by Innocent III on the occasion of the approval of the first Rule, was a cleric and,

cont. next page

therefore, from that point onward recited the Office of the Church of Rome. The lay brothers recited the Our Father, which has its roots in the Gospel's quotation of the words of Christ himself which emphasize that all are children of God.

He then makes the very interesting point that:

It was the daily reading of the office, along with the remaining liturgy of the Mass and the other sacred functions, that served greatly to provide a modest theological and scriptural education both for the saint and for his companions.

We can learn from this: Never is a moment of prayer wasted, particularly if we require of our mental muscles a real involvement with the words of the psalms and readings in the full office of the Church. Sure, there will be days when we can only mutter the Our Fathers in traffic enroute to the office, but a little advance planning, rising a bit early, parking under a tree on the way home, and we can reap...RADIANCE!

AND FRANCIS WILL BE PROUD OF US.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPORT

At its March meeting, Hickory, North Carolina, the Executive Council announced that Justin Carisio, SFO, would be one of the speakers at the 1992 Quinquennial Congress. Justin is Chairman of the National Ecology Commission; he is also Minister of San Damiano Fraternity, Wilmington, Delaware.

OVERHEARD

Concerning a man proposed for some parish work: That guy efficient? He could foul up a one car funeral.

FROM THE EDITOR

Some issues back, we mentioned that the National Executive Council had said that the purpose of the *Newsletter* was to "inform, educate, and spiritually enrich." With each issue, we have tried to follow that mandate more fully. With each issue, there is an increase in private subscriptions, and your comments certainly indicate that we are succeeding. Now, the promise of a quarterly CIOFS bulletin opens another avenue.

But we still have a long way to go. Please carefully read Fr. Carl's article, "Regional Fraternity - Key To Unity". We are one Order. Our understanding and acceptance of this depends upon our knowledge; knowledge depends upon our exposure to information and education; exposure depends upon communication.

The National Fraternity is communicating; the *Newsletter* is sent to all national and provincial officers, including local fraternity ministers. The rest is up to you. Please consider it a moral obligation to pass on the contents to the local members either by making copies for them or encouraging private subscriptions. One subscriber wrote that the *Newsletter* was the one thing that convinced him that he belonged to a world-wide Order. If that is our only fraternal link, it is not a good comment for 1991.

Private subscriptions are \$2.00 per year (four issues); Canada, \$3; others, \$4. Make checks payable to NAFRA and send to:

National Newsletter
R. D. 1, Box 1251
Brandon, VT 05733

Private Subscribers, please note the date below your name and address. First subscriptions are due for renewal before the September issue.

BORN TO VOLUNTEER

Barbara Ritter Garrison

I always thought it was love that made the world go around; but according to the latest survey, it's not love, it's volunteers. It was also discovered that:

- 1) for every paid employee there were three volunteers actually doing the job,
- 2) behind every "success" was a half-dead volunteer whose name no one could quite remember, and
- 3) God so loved the world that God sent a volunteer.

The word volunteer comes from two Swahili words: *vol* which means to kill one's self, and *unteer* which means without pay. Anthropologists, in trying to ascertain the first "volunteers," have thought perhaps they originated when Moses parted the Red Sea. However, others place them in Columbus' time, claiming that old Chris didn't discover America but the abandoned set of an amateur theater group.

What still baffles authorities on the subject is how person number one convinced person number two that they would want to do the same thing - only for nothing. Some say it was probably the church who came along preaching "money is evil, we'll take it off your hands" - and then gave out the work of God to do (like building fancy churches with big rectories and heated garages).

Wherever and however the origins of volunteers, it is hard to imagine the world without them. Why, doctors would be selling nylons and M&Ms in the hospital gift shops; and parishioners would be playing bingo without cards. Their importance is such now that Clairol has come up with a new hair shade called "Volunteer Gray", and changed their slogan to "If I have but one life, let me live it as a volunteer." And the Book of the Month Club is now sending out (in a very large envelope) someone to read the book to you.

Since the only real qualification to be a volunteer is a listed phone number, and since education and experience are not requirements, the future could find such situations commonplace:

- brain surgery done by an auto mechanic who "likes helping out" and has Wednesdays free,
- scientific research projects headed by high school dropouts who want to make their parents proud,
- the presidency of the United States filled by an Avon lady who thought she could change the face of the nation.

In great demand everywhere, the basic model volunteer can now be customized to suit your group's particular needs:

- A parish sodality breakfast volunteer can come with a slot that dispenses pancakes which, with a small adjustment, also flips out slightly greasy bingo cards.
- A volunteer fireman in a small community can come equipped with a high-powered hose that can spray water, foam, and butter-cream frosting (for the monthly bake sales).
- A poppy seller can have six legs and a photographic memory for those people who say, "get me on the way out; I don't have any change."
- A co-worker selling his kid's Girl Scout cookies, candy, and raffle tickets will have amnesia every time he tries to approach anyone and will end the day having bought and eaten all his own cookies and candy bars (providing a service both to the organization and his co-worker victims).

Yes, volunteers are definitely responsible for most of the kindness that takes place in the name of humanity. It's time to give tribute, for without them it would be difficult to explain the "good news", much less get it delivered to your door.

From Precious Jewel Person: Reflections on the Spirituality of Everyday Life by Barbara Ritter Garrison, ©1990. Available from ACTA Publications, 4848 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640, 1-800-397-2282.

REGIONAL FRATERNITY KEY TO UNITY

Rev. Carl Schafer, OFM
Conf. of General Spiritual Assistants,
Rome

According to the Rule of Paul VI of 1978, the Secular Franciscan Order is a single Order, with only one Rule, one set of General Constitutions, one only International President (Minister General), one only International Council and with a structure of its own.

The Secular Franciscan Order is not divided according to the Obediences of the friars. It does not allow of any division or separation according to the Obediences of the friars. There are no "Obediences" in the SFO.

True, there is a bond through its canonical establishment, between the local SFO Fraternity and one of the four Franciscan Orders of friars, but the SFO is not identified with any one of these Orders. The Secular Franciscans are not friars or religious. They do not make a vow of obedience to anyone. The Minister General of the friars is not the Minister General (International President) of the seculars. The Regional Fraternity of the SFO is not identified with the Province of the friars.

"Interobedience" or else the word "interobedientiality" has been used to refer to the grouping of SFO fraternities that are assisted spiritually by different Orders of friars. However, it is not a legitimate way of describing the only single SFO, because the term signifies only a cooperation, a collaboration between the religious Obediences.

The General Constitution, Art.1.5 (following the Rule, Art.20) says, "[The Secular Franciscan Order] is divided into fraternities of

various levels - local, regional, national and international. Each one has its own juridical personality in the Church." These fraternities at the various levels are coordinated and united among themselves according to the norm of the Rule and of the Constitution.

The structure of the SFO is based on the grouping of local fraternities into larger fraternities on the levels mentioned in the Rule. The grouping is not according to an Obedience of the friars, but according to territory or by reason of some common aim.

The SFO General Constitution in Art. 29.1 says, "The local Fraternities are grouped into fraternities at various levels: regional, national, and international, according to ecclesial or territorial criteria or norms of some other nature."

It is obvious from Art.61.1 that the unity of the one single Secular Franciscan Order remains intact, independently of the various Franciscan Obediences: "The Regional Fraternity is the organic union of all the local Fraternities existing in a territory or that can be integrated into a natural unity either by geographic proximity or by common problems or pastoral realities. It assures the link between the local Fraternities and the National Fraternity, with respect to the unity of the Secular Franciscan Order and with the collegial integration of the various Franciscan Obediences that happen to take care of spiritual assistance in the area."

This article does not allow the possibility of setting up a Regional Fraternity composed exclusively of local Fraternities assisted by one Obedience of friars. It does not foresee the possibility of converting the present obediential Provincial Fraternities into Regional Fraternities, simply by changing the

name from "Provincial" to "Regional". Instead, the Regional Fraternity comprises all the local Fraternities assisted by all the Obediences of the friars in the area.

We note that the word "interobedience" does not appear in the Rule or in any article of the Constitution with reference to the SFO. It must not be used in reference to the SFO, since this word gives rise to a false idea of the unity of the Secular Franciscan Order. In practice, this word transfers to the SFO the divisions, both juridical and of other kinds, that come from the Orders of friars.

Some countries face great difficulties in arriving at the one SFO. Where there is more than one Regional Fraternity based on the Obediences of the friars, within the same geographical area, the result is not a single Regional Fraternity. Where there are several National Councils formed on the same obediential base, the result is not a single SFO National Fraternity, but rather several, parallel national entities. The desired unity does not yet result from the formation of an "interobediential" National Council above the various "obediential" National Councils.

While I admire and encourage every effort made by regional and national councils to meet "interobedientially", I see interobedience as an intermediate step towards integral unity. Such efforts emphasize the fact that the different regional and national fraternities are not united. Instead, they are collegial assemblies. Then the assembly disperses, each entity goes its own "obediential" way.

Although the local fraternity is dependent on a particular Obedience of friars for its establishment and spiritual assistance, that fraternity does not thereby form part of an

Obedience of the First Order or of the Third Order Regular. It does not make sense any more, for example, to refer to a fraternity as the SFO of the Friars Minor, or the Capuchin SFO, or the Conventual SFO, or the SFO of the Third Order Regular. It makes even less sense when some Tertiaries ardently identify themselves as "Friars Minor", "Capuchins", "Conventuals" or "TOR", or when they talk of "our Third Order", while at times they discourage association with "their Third Order". These ways of thinking and acting derive from the times of the Secular Third Order of St. Francis, inspired by the Constitution of 1957 that speak of interobedience in the Third Order.

But there is a growing number of secular leaders and assistants who are working for unity beyond "interobedience". They are building from below, grouping local fraternities into zonal or diocesan fraternities, which are then grouped into a single Regional Fraternity.

Without a doubt, the Regional Fraternity is the key to the unity of the SFO. Only when all the Regional Fraternities are formed from all the local Fraternities in the area, under a single Regional Council, can a single united National Fraternity emerge.

In order to achieve a single SFO National Fraternity, the greatest difficulty to overcome will be, certainly the collegial integration of the various Franciscan Obediences that provide spiritual assistance in the area (Cf. Art 61.1 of the Constitution).

From a talk given by Fr. Carl Schafer, OFM to the Secular Franciscans, Naples, Italy, May 19, 1990 and reprinted in Letter from Rome to the Assistants. This article will continue in the Sept. issue of the Newsletter and will feature "Questions People Ask".

ST. CASIMIR PROVINCE LIVES!

Dr. Sarah K. Ledoux, SFO,
Provincial Minister

Some forty years ago, the Franciscan Friars fled their native Lithuania to escape Communism and to preserve their Franciscan heritage. One group settled in Kennebunk, Maine.

The refugees were determined to preserve their Lithuanian culture and language. They built a Boys High School, taught religion, the language, and culture of their native land. The boys were expected to become Third Order members; this was the beginning of the Secular community. (In time, many fraternities developed in various parts of the country.) However, times changed, and the Lithuanian influence waned or became diluted. The Kennebunk Friary remained, but this cloistered shelter had little or no Secular participation. The hiatus lasted for thirty years; the last profession on record was in 1959.

[Background of the author: Sarah is from a strong WASP background, predominately English who were early settlers in America. Despite religious differences, she was sent to the College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois, because of a generous scholarship and the proximity of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

She was fascinated by the "strange behavior of priests, and nuns, and in particular their devout participation in a ritual called Mass." In obedience to the family tradition of intellectual curiosity, Sarah investigated Catholicism, absorbed the faith as if she were a thirsty sponge, and was received into the Church during her sophomore year.

The girls were expected to join the Third Order, which she did; she participated in the

apostolate to the Joliet State Prison, singing in the choir, sharing the gospel, and being scared to death when the barred doors clanged and locked behind them.

Then came years of isolation. After St. Francis College, she studied and traveled in Europe for three years. After marriage and the adoption of children, Sarah eventually returned to her profession; she became a school principal, Superintendent of Education, and part time professor. The Ledoux family summered in Kennebunkport and attended daily Mass at the monastery.

When her husband died suddenly at age 59, Sarah took early retirement and moved to Kennebunk. As a summer resident, she was already involved in volunteer work and was well known at the monastery. The transition to full time resident was simple. After Mass one morning, a friar jokingly offered her a brown habit. She told him she already had one which would be her shroud. Recognizing an opportunity, he asked if she would be interested in reviving the SFO in that area.]

November, 1986, notices were sent to the local churches, inviting those interested to come to the monastery to learn about the Order. A few people came. Letters were also written to fraternities in the Province that were thought to be English speaking. Only one reply was received; it stated that the fraternity had been disbanded years ago.

March 20, 1988, seven made their first profession in the chapel in Kennebunk. We had invited anyone and everyone to attend, and they did. The simple but beautiful service created a great deal of interest, and we were immediately able to begin new formation groups.

In just over four years, there are now two Maine fraternities and one in New Hampshire; there are forty professed and twenty in initial formation. Outlook - unlimited.

Our relationship with the established though usually inactive fraternities has not been encouraging. We continue to invite them to join our activities; some do not even respond. But we have not given up; we try to be non-threatening and, above all, patient.

Our approach to attracting new members is usually via informal get-togethers. Our motto is "have love; will travel!"

Trying to revitalize the old while developing the new is never easy. Four years ago, there was one friar and I; I wore every Secular hat. Now, each fraternity has its elected council, and we have a good, working Provincial Council.

One of our greatest difficulties was the acceptance of individual differences and the merging of diverse age groups. With the younger members, there was the problem of what to do with their children, if both parents were interested in the Order. At first, a brother instructed the children; then, he was transferred. Now, the parents have organized religious instruction for the children, and it's working.

As for our differences, we can follow the Church and the SFO Rule without being assembly line people.

A lot of work? To be sure. But we are the first to realize that we are only instruments, doing God's work, for we are nothing in ourselves.

LAST MINUTE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT UPDATE

The National Minister just phoned the following information:

The English Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin, has appointed the Rev. Camillus MacRory, OFM Cap. to the National Conference of Spiritual Assistants. Fr. Camillus, Provincial Spiritual Assistant of Our Lady of Angels, succeeds the Rev. Ulric Buening, OFM Cap. Fr. Ulric is the Spiritual Assistant of St. Joseph Province and also served as National Spiritual Assistant. Further details, next issue.

THE NEW PSALMODY

The TV is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
It makes me lie down on the sofa;
it leads me away from the faith.
It destroys my soul.
It leads me in the path of sex and violence for
the sponsor's sake.
Yea, though I walk in the shadow of Chris-
tian responsibility,
there will be no interruption, for the TV is
with me.
Its cable and its remote control, they comfort
me.
It prepares a commercial before me in the
presence of my worldliness.
It anoints my head with humanism and
consumerism.
My coveting runneth over.
Surely laziness and ignorance shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house watching TV
forever.

CONFRONTATIONS

Dr. Joseph Halka, SFO, Chair, Work Commission

When the United Nations Coalition Forces confronted the forces of Iraq with war after five and one half months of fruitless, frustrated negotiations, urgent questions were raised about the justification for such a radical and fateful decision. Had all avenues of diplomatic discussion been exhausted? Had sufficient time been allowed for application of sanctions? Would the hoped for good, the liberation of Kuwait and its peoples, merit the terrible cost in human lives and property? As in many human situations, men and women of good conscience were divided.

Some Franciscans appealed to the example of the ex-soldier, former prisoner of war, Francis of Assisi to bolster their argument. After all, his soldiering days had preceded his conversion. Other Franciscans pointed to the example of the crusader, chaplain, and papal diplomat, John of Capistrano. After all, his soldiering days had followed long after his conversion.

Francis deplored the depredations of the crusaders against the forces of the Sultan of Egypt and won for himself and his friars the freedom to pursue their peaceful ways of prayer in the Holy Places and sometimes to die there as martyrs. John urged on the defenders of Belgrade against the depredations of the Sultan of Turkey and won for the Slavs of southern Europe their freedom on the fringes of Christendom. Were not both saints? Were not both true to their inner vision? Were not both men of peace?

Every year confrontations of lesser scale, but more immediacy arise in the workplace. Negotiations break down between employer and employees, because of bad faith, bad communications, or bad motives. Resort to force is made in the form of the strike. The outcome for management or worker is never secure, the good achieved never certain.

Often nowadays, the corpses of failed corporations strew the battlefields after such conflicts. Often when the strike is prolonged or there is division of opinion among the workers as to the justification of the strike, or the motives of the negotiators is questioned, resort is made to force of arms.

Where are the peacemakers to be found amid these domestic wars? Where is the concerned debate? Where the urgency of Franciscan intervention?

The danger to personal property and even personal safety is no less on these home fronts than on faraway desert sands. War is always an admission of failure. Strike is always an admission of failure. Sometimes these cannot be avoided, because of the intransigence of the warring parties. If evil must be confronted in our personal lives, in our homes, then so must it be confronted in our workplaces, in our institutions.

Prayer is never weak in the hands of peacemakers. Diplomacy is never daunted in the hearts of men and women of good will. No enemy can be presumed unforgivable, irreconcilable. The enemy is us, as Pogo said, equally in need of forgiveness, redemption, mercy, and reconciliation.

GENERAL CONSTITUTION

According to the Rev. Carl Schafer, OFM, General Spiritual Assistant, the English translation of the new General Constitution has been completed. The next step will be its approval by the International Presidency of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Mrs. Marianne Powell, SFO, of Denmark is credited with the translation; she is a member of the Presidency.

NATIONAL ASSISTANT APPOINTED

The English Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor has accepted the resignation of Fr. David Eckelkamp, OFM, as a member of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants. Fr. David will be succeeded by Fr. Lawrence Landini, OFM.

Fr. David served the Secular Order for many years in many positions. In addition to serving terms as president or secretary of the Conference, he was Provincial Spiritual Assistant to Sacred Heart. He was also a local assistant to many fraternities.

Fr. Larry is already well known to the Secular Franciscan Directive Board. He was appointed Spiritual Assistant to St. John the Baptist Province in July, 1986. Since its inception, he has served as the friar member of the Regionalization Committee. As a special apostolate to shut-in Seculars, he writes a monthly paper, *Lift Up Your Hearts*.

Before coming to the Seculars, Fr. Larry was the Director of Lumen Christi Retreat Center, Shriver, LA; Associate Professor and Assistant Director of the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University, Olean, NY; and Professor of Church History, St. Leonard College.

In the fall of 1988, he assisted in the creation of the curriculum for the School of Medieval Studies for the Pontifical University Antonianum, Rome. This fall, while continuing with the SFO, he will be directing and teaching in the spiritual formation program of the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, OH.

Father holds a Master's degree in Liturgy from Notre Dame and a Doctor of Church History from the Gregorian University.

Subscriptions to *Lift Up Your Hearts* may be had from the SFO Provincial Office, 1615 Vine St., Cincinnati, OH 45210. Write for costs.

THE VINEYARD

Gloria N. Shriver, SFO
Newsletter Staff

"What did we do that was wrong? How did we fail?" How often we have heard or said those words. So many of us face the devastation of having children who abandon the Faith, and we become guilt-ridden.

Two Seculars, Rosemary and Arthur Schneider, of Padre Pio Fraternity in Raleigh, NC, did something about it.

With the approval of their pastor, they started a family support group called "Solace". The idea came to them because of the pain they were feeling after two of their children left the Church for another Christian tradition.

When they discovered that others in the parish were suffering the same pains and frustrations they were feeling, they decided to take action. They founded the group which has been a resounding success; it currently numbers about fifteen parents, both couples and single parents.

The Solace group meets once a month. The meeting is centered around the sharing of feelings about members' experiences and uses scripture and prayers to help initiate the sharing. It helps them to realize that they are not alone with their hurts, and the Lord's healing begins to work as they share with each other. Only people who have suffered the experience are allowed to attend so as not to inhibit open and honest sharing.

There is evidently a need for this in the Church, because, in one year's time, the idea has caught on and is growing. There are now three other Solace groups in North Carolina and one in New Jersey.

More information can be obtained by contacting the Schneiders at (919) 626-3722.

FRATERNITY RECORDS

Laurence M. Herbert, SFO
Newsletter Staff

The records of a fraternity are a vital part of the life and history of every fraternity. I am sure we all have heard horror stories of lost records and the problems that result from trying to find information that was in those records.

The first and most important record that a fraternity obtains is the document of establishment. Copies should be made and kept in several different locations. The original could be kept in a file drawer at the parish or retreat center where the fraternity meets. Copies should be given to the minister, secretary and spiritual assistant of the fraternity for safe keeping. The copies should be given to succeeding officers at the end of the term of service to the fraternity. Many provinces (regions) ask that copies of the document of establishment be sent to the provincial/regional for safe keeping also. Ask your regional minister if copies are kept on the regional level. If they are not, then suggest it.

The membership records of the fraternity, with names and dates of reception, profession and death should be kept in a bound ledger. Loose leaf and spiral bound notebooks can have pages removed and lost. A ledger book can be purchased for a few dollars at a stationery or office supply store. My local fraternity uses the ledger book and records pertinent information on facing pages. The right hand page has columns for the name of the individual, date of reception, profession and death. The left hand page is used to note transfers and any other relevant information.

Minutes of both fraternity and council meetings should be kept in a bound notebook also.

These minutes are as important as the record of the fraternity; they should be kept in one place and made available upon fraternal visitations. Frequently the fraternal visitor will make notation in the minutes as to the date and purpose of the visitation and sign the minutes book.

Nowadays personal computers are commonplace and a fraternity may want to keep its records on computer. That is a fine idea, but don't forget that magnetic data is very fragile and succeeding council members may not have a computer. If your fraternity does use computers, use them as backup for the manual records.

NATIONAL DIRECTORY UPDATES

Provincial Ministers:

St. John the Baptist #3, p. 2

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St. Mary #13, p. 3

Rev. Zachary Grant, OFM Cap
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(203)348-6122

Conference of National...p. 7

OFM - Rev. Lawrence Landini
OFM Cap - Rev. Camillus MacRory

Conference of General...p. 10

OFM Cap - Rev. Ben Brevoort

ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA, SFO, PENITENT

Elizabeth M. Ryder, SFO

At some point in our pilgrimage, most of us ask ourselves a few questions. If we are in initial formation, we ask do we have a vocation. If professed, we ask is the vocation still alive. At any time, we might ask if we need it.

The lives of many Franciscan Saints would answer those questions, but one in particular answers all of them so emphatically. Margaret of Cortona, born 1247, died 1297, just fifty years old, and when the Order was young.

When Margaret was seven, her very pious mother died, and her very impious father paid little attention to her welfare. Two years later, he remarried, and the woman was the prototype of all nasty stepmothers. Cinderella had it easy.

By the time she was eighteen, she had lived a thoroughly unhappy life; psychologically, she was ripe for major rebellion. At that time, a handsome young cavalier persuaded her to leave home and live with him. And she flaunted her immoral life for at least nine years. During that time, she bore a son who became a friar.

One day, the cavalier failed to return home, but his little dog did and made it quite clear that he wanted Margaret to follow him. He led her to a wooded area where, in a shallow grave, lay the mutilated body of her brutally murdered lover.

At that point a strange thing happened. Instead of being devastated by her loss, she had just one thought - *where is his soul now?* She returned their property to his family, cut her hair short, put a rope around her neck, and

went back to her home town to live the life of a public penitent.

But stepmother was still at work, and her father refused to have Margaret and her small son in his home. So, she and the child went to Cortona where she contacted a friar.

After her confession, she requested admission to the Third Order, which the friar wisely refused. He had to be certain that her conversion was genuine and permanent. Three years later, he admitted her.

Although she performed many corporal works of mercy, she is best remembered for the spiritual. People from great distances sought her for her prayers and spiritual guidance. She had the facility for looking at a stranger and suggesting that he had neglected to confess a certain sin. She affected healing and, in one case, returned a young boy to life.

She was given the gift of vision; she was shown when she had atoned for her sins. She was shown souls released from purgatory by her penitential prayers. She was shown the time of her death.

When she died, her body was interred in the Franciscan Basilica of Cortona. She was canonized in 1728 by Benedict XIII; her feast day is May 13. Today, nearly seven hundred years later, the body is still incorrupt.

From Margaret we learn perseverance, always a good sign of a vocation. We learn the need of genuine penitence, another good sign. As to our need of the Order, the Lord had something to say about it. In a conversation with him, Margaret asked why he wanted her to join. He replied, "I have placed you in the Garden of my Love, for no where on earth have so many people loved me so much."

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HOW LONG, O LORD?

A few pages ago, you read "The New Psalmody". You did read it, didn't you? Obviously, it is not meant to be humor; it is dreadfully serious and true. It is affecting our children, grandchildren, our friends, and us. It affects the objectives of our National Apostolic Commissions.

So, the question is, how long, O Lord, will your (Franciscan) people sit back and do nothing?

We complain about it, but are the complaints as loud as they used to be? Are we becoming the victims of insidious psychological warfare. If we received a moderate electrical shock frequently, constantly, we would soon fail to react. Every day, TV treats us to moral shocks with such regularity that many of us are failing to notice them.

Living together out of wedlock is a very normal thing. "Alternate life styles" are the prerogative of those who wish them. The so called "Catholics" for free choice (abortion) receive sympathetic news coverage. The rough language that used to be reserved between men is now common. Soft drinks are

positively provocative. And, yes, indeed, I am worth it! How long, O Lord?

Approximately six years ago, in anticipation of the Marian Year, the Seculars organized. We decided that at least one person would pray each hour of the day for that entire year. Not all provinces joined; a few provinces did double duty. But we did it.

With some preparation and organization, we can do what is needed to clean up the airways which belong to us. If sponsors don't sell their goods, they can't pay for commercials. Threatened boycott is the plan of attack; it's peaceful, but emphatic. It works.

Gloria Shriver, SFO, Chair of the Family Commission will be contacting some of you to assist in the foundation work. The results of that work, including sample letters, will be passed on to the local fraternities. The initial work will take several months at least, but the outcome should be worth it.

Spiritual ecology can be done in peace and justice; the family and the work place will be better. How long, O Lord? Sometime this fall.