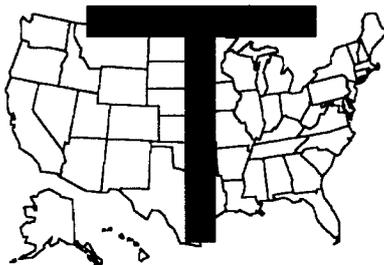


# **THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY**

*of*

## **THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER**



*Newsletter*

*Spring, 1993*



### **MATTIOLI FUNERAL IN FLORENCE**

Dr. Anneta Duveen, SFO

Manuela had asked me to make appointments with her New York oncologist the last week in October. She expected, following the those appointments, to go to Rome for the November meeting of the Papal Commission on Justice and Peace. Although her voice was seriously altered, she sounded as determined as ever.

When I called Caracas October 31, to confirm the plans, her brother Fernando advised that she was re-entering the clinic there November 1. By Monday evening she appeared to have improved, but the final crisis occurred Tuesday morning, November 3; she was called by our Lord at 8:15 A.M. after a two year battle against gastric cancer.

From the voluminous and moving press clippings, all of Caracas mourned Manuela with that special intensity of our Latino family.

Richard Morton, SFO gave me the honor of representing the United States Secular Franciscans at the funeral. I traveled to Rome with her mother, brother, and sister-in-law.

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It was the 17th of November, her 53rd birthday, when I saw her. She was wearing the brown habit and looked like a sleeping angel, so beautiful and peaceful.

The Liturgy of the Resurrection was held in the small Capuchin Church of SS Francis and Clare, on the hillside of the outskirts of Florence, the city where she was born. The Most Rev. Flavio Roberto Carraro, Capuchin Minister General, was the main celebrant; the Assistants General concelebrated. Our present Minister General Emanuela de Nunzio, OFS, present and past members of CIOFS, other Seculars and many priests came from Rome. The mood was one of total shock.

The internment was the following day. Fr. Maximiliano Rosito, OFM Conv. gave the final blessing and a moving talk on her extraordinary and historical gifts to the Church, the Franciscan Family, and the world.

Manuela brought unity to our once fragmented Order. She brought it about with inspired and dedicated maternal care. Her service was unprecedented and unsurpassed in the history of our Order.

I signed the book in the name of Richard Morton and the Secular Franciscans of the United States. The Mattioli Family expressed its gratitude to each of us.



**ELIZABETH M. RYDER, S.F.O.  
1924-1993**



James D. Lynch, S.F.O.  
International Councillor

March 8, 1993

Dear Elizabeth,

Today's mail brought a letter from Dick (Richard Morton, S.F.O., National Minister), with the request that I write a short article for this issue of the National Newsletter commemorating your passing into eternal life. He said, "I hope you will say yes because you probably knew her better than anyone else." He is correct!

Since this letter will be read by

Provincial Ministers and Spiritual Assistants, National Officers, Local Fraternity Ministers, and our growing number of subscribers, I should give some background information.

Elizabeth Mary Ryder was born March 11, 1924. She was a Navy veteran and a jeweler by occupation. An anniversary she liked to recall each year was her profession into the Secular Franciscan Order on October 18, 1954. Her service to the order included: founder of one fraternity and one community, work in formation, Provincial Minister of St. Mary Secular Franciscan Province, Provincial Councillor, National Secretary, and, at the time of her passing, a member of the Regionalization Committee and Editor of the National Newsletter. She served the local Church as Lector, member of the Liturgy Committee, and Eucharistic Minister. Each week, as a Eucharistic Minister, she brought our Eucharistic Lord to 30 to 36 shut-ins including visits on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday.

The source of all Light called you into His Presence on February 21, 1993. Since that day, memory has cast its spotlight on the day of our first meeting and the years that followed.

It was Thursday, October 20, 1982, after lunch, at Mount Augustine, Richfield, Ohio, I was setting up for the Annual Meeting of the National Directive Board, which was to start at 2:00 P.M. You walked into the meeting room and offered to help. That was the beginning of our friendship, which we both agreed was a gift from God. The next day I was elected National Minister. After the election, you were the first to say, "if I can help in any way, give a call." Two years later, you were elected National Secretary. During your two terms as National Secretary, you were a valued co-worker, but more importantly you served the sisters and brothers throughout our country. You never missed a

meeting of the Executive Council and Directive Board. You became our computer expert. During your second term of office, I asked you to become Editor of the re-born National Newsletter. The Newsletter became your 'baby', and has that baby grown thanks to your talents and efforts. Secular Franciscans nationwide are grateful for all that you have done.

You accomplished so much during your earthly pilgrimage because of your love of our Blessed Lord, His Mother Mary, and His Church.

We ended every 'phone conversation with my saying "I love you Elizabeth," and your saying, "I Love you too, sweetie." For all Seculars, throughout our country, let me say, "We love you Elizabeth." I know you are saying, and will continue to say, "I love you too."

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#### **A NOTE FROM THE NATIONAL MINISTER**

Richard Morton, SFO

The first two articles in this issue of the National Fraternity Newsletter are tributes to two of our sisters, Manuela Mattioli and Elizabeth Ryder. Manuela as the past Minister of the International Fraternity and Elizabeth Ryder as the most recent Editor of this newsletter. Both were good people, both are missed, and we pray that both are now at rest in the Lord. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Elizabeth loved the National Newsletter. As James Lynch observed; "...this was her 'baby.'" All the articles in this issue, except for three, were edited by Elizabeth. She would not be pleased that it has taken so long to get it published and distributed, given the

good start she gave us.

Publishing this newsletter is a task that requires talent and involves a great deal of work. Elizabeth did the entire job herself. She not only edited the newsletter, but she kept the database of the subscribers (some 1700 in number), handled the subscriptions, and until last year, ran the copies, collated the pages, stapled them together, applied the mailing labels, sorted them by zip code, and carried them in several large mail bags to the post office for mailing. This was too much work for any one individual to do. Last year, Elizabeth reluctantly agreed to hire the printing, collating, and stapling. She was always concerned about keeping the costs to a minimum without sacrificing quality.

The near term status of this publication is in doubt. I cannot say when the next issue will be published. Those of you who have subscriptions, I ask you to be patient. You will receive the number of copies you are entitled to but they will quite likely be a little later than normal. That all depends on when a new Editor (Editors?) and other help can be identified.

Let me explain what I think we need to do, starting with the editing.

The Editor should be responsible only to edit the publication. The other tasks should be divided between at least three others. The Editor should prepare the master copy suitable for publication and send it to a person responsible for printing and distribution. The printing and distribution would be the responsibility of one person but the actual work would likely be subcontracted. A third person should handle the subscriptions. This includes receiving the mail, depositing the checks, and recording the names, addresses, etc. A fourth person should maintain the National Fraternity

database and supply the address data to whoever prints and distributes the newsletter.

### **HELP WANTED!**

**National Newsletter Editor.** If more than one Editor is identified, then perhaps the responsibility for the issues could be divided between them.

**Database Keeper.** Someone with database skills to maintain the National Fraternity database.

**Subscription Manager.** Someone to handle the subscriptions.

**Publishing and Distribution.** This person would be responsible for the publication and distribution of the newsletter.

There is not enough room in this issue to include a job description for each of the positions. However, if you are interested in being considered for any of them, or if you know of someone who you think would be interested and capable and would like more information, please contact:

Mrs. Mary Mazotti, SFO  
First Vice Minister  
National Fraternity  
P.O. Box 2571  
Arnold, CA 95223

209-795-3809

**It is imperative that the publication of the National Newsletter be resumed as soon as possible.** Please cooperate in our efforts to identify suitable individuals to help us in our desire to serve you, the membership of the National Fraternity.

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## **PEOPLE OF PENANCE**

Richard Morton, SFO,  
National Minister

Even though we are not in the season of Lent, it is still a good time to return to our roots and remind ourselves that we are fundamentally "...brothers and sisters of penance." (Rule, Prologue). In the Prologue to the Rule, we are instructed about "... those who do penance..." and those "... who do not do penance." We must ask ourselves, "Into which category do I belong?"

Rule, Article 7:

*United by their vocation as "brothers and sisters of penance," and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls "conversion." Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily.*

*On this road to renewal the sacrament of reconciliation is the privileged sign of the Father's mercy and the source of grace.*

Constitutions, Article 13:

*1. Secular Franciscans, called in earlier times "the brothers and sisters of penance", propose to live in the spirit of continual conversion. Some means to cultivate this characteristic of the Franciscan vocation, individually and in fraternity, are: listening to and celebrating the Word of God; review of life; spiritual retreats; the help of a spiritual adviser, and penitential celebrations. They should approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently*

*and participate in the communal celebration of it, whether in the fraternity, or with the whole people of God.*

*2. In this spirit of conversion, they should live out their love for the renewal of the Church, which should be accompanied by personal and communal renewal. The fruits of conversion, which is a response to the love of God, are the works of charity in the interactions with the brothers and sisters.*

*3. Traditional among Franciscan penitents, penitential practices such as fasting and abstinence should be known, appreciated, and lived out according to the general guidelines of the Church.*

During Lent when I was young, it was traditional to give up things like movies, candy, chewing gum, etc. As I grew older, these "sacrifices" quickly lost their relevance and fell by the wayside. What took their place? A good question!

As adult Christians, we have abandoned many of our childhood practices as inappropriate to our present state in life; unfortunately, at the same time, many have failed to find satisfactory replacements.

In this vein, let me offer the following suggestion. In times past, we nearly always gave up a "something", but the "something" was nearly always tangible, a thing; something that could be held in the hand, tasted, or enjoyed. My suggestion is to continue to give up something. But now this something is not a thing but what may be called a destructive behavior.

An example of a destructive behavior is when we are careless with our comments about another person's character, or utter comments which create unnecessary division, discord, disharmony, whether in our family, the Order, at work, or wherever.

An examination of conscience and reconciliation go along with the concept of penance. Ask yourself, "where have I been destructive in my behavior?" When the situations are identified, why not seek reconciliation and ask forgiveness from those you have hurt. As we pray for peace and unity, we must make sure that our behavior matches our prayers. In the future, try to modify your behavior, so you will be a person who unites instead of divides, sews seeds of harmony in place of discord. Why not be "an instrument of peace?"

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## **YOU, A LIVING LETTER**

Rev. Stephen Sabbagh, OFM  
Provincial Assistant, Holy Land Prov.

In every one of His children, Jesus sends a letter to the world. If you are Christ's follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the city, the street where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. It may be that through you, they will be led to understand something of His goodness and be won to love and serve Him.

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## **FRANCISCAN COURTESY IN THE REAL WORLD**

Dr. Marguerite B. Stein, SFO, Canonist

You are in the middle of a council meeting. Six other people are there for the very good reason that they have been elected by the fraternity and, thus, (we all believe) have been chosen in the Holy Spirit.

Several of these people you find difficult; their agendas seem to be very diverse from yours, and, as the discussions proceed on this particular afternoon, you wonder about the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and whether anything

will ever be decided and the meeting concluded.

One member in particular drives you up the wall: a master nit-picker, she is proud of her ability to pursue the most trivial detail until she understands all of the most far-out possible ramifications. This is her way, you decide, of exercising control over the deliberations: when she is finished with a subject, no one cares any longer, and the enthusiasm for the project often seems lost.

She asks one more series of (your opinion) asinine questions. You snap your answers, yes, no, yes, right. Then you hear your own voice heavy with irony, irritation, exasperation, "All you have to do, Petunia, is read what's in front of you."

Now an alarm sounds in your brain:

*AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A FRANCISCAN!*

**Francis said:**

Many people blame the devil or their neighbor when they fall into sin or are offended. But that is not right. Everyone has his own enemy in his power and this enemy is his lower nature which leads him into sin. Blessed the [Franciscan] who keeps this enemy a prisoner under his control and protects himself against it.

A [Franciscan] lives a good life and avoids sin when he is never angry or disturbed at anything.

We can never tell how patient or humble a person is when everything is going well with him. But when those who should cooperate with him do the exact opposite, then we can tell. A man has as much patience and humility as he has then, and no more.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.* (Mt. 5:9) They are truly peacemakers who are able to preserve their peace of mind and heart for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, despite all that they suffer in this world.

Blessed the man who is patient with his neighbor's shortcomings as he would like him to be if he were in a similar position himself. Blessed that friar who loves and respects his brother as much when he is absent as when he is present and who would not say anything behind his back that he could not say charitable to his face<sup>1</sup>.

**Our Rule says:**

Secular Franciscans...should seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters...<sup>2</sup>

...They should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.<sup>3</sup>

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the first-born of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people...<sup>4</sup>

Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.

Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.<sup>5</sup>

## The Bible says:

When you stand up to pray, say "Our Father who art in heaven."<sup>6</sup>

All of you are brothers. And call no one on earth you father; for one is your Father who is in heaven.<sup>7</sup>

For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them.<sup>8</sup>

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul...and thy neighbor as thyself.<sup>9</sup>

Christ is "the oldest of many brothers."<sup>10</sup>

By our profession as Seculars, we promise to become seekers after perfection. We promise, in effect, to love all of creation made by God from the most minute blade of grass to the farthest reaches of the cosmos. On that wonderful day of profession we are so sure we will be able, like Francis, to love all living creatures also.

How easy to forget that *this includes people!* It does not include only those who think the way we do, nor all holy people, nor all scrubbed-and-barbered people. It includes those people who for us are lepers. It includes homosexuals, bag ladies, prostitutes, people who sicken and repel us. It includes - nit-pickers.

You will say, why feel so bad because you "lost it" momentarily? It's only a stumble along your road to perfection. Pick yourself up and go on. But this, like every action,<sup>11</sup> has caused ripples:

I dealt hurt to a sister and made her road to perfection harder. I failed to exercise courtesy, which Chesterton says is the heart and soul of the Franciscan *raison d'être*. I showed little respect for someone else's most useful gift,

presented with modest pride in an attempt to be of help. I dispensed humiliation to someone who did not deserve it. I presented a perfectly lousy example to people who would thus be led to act in the same thoughtless way. Around me in a heap lay the pieces of my lifetime goals - charity, prudence, acceptance of suffering, patience.

There are months ahead of meetings with this same group of people. The feelings of irritation remain and will, I know, raise their head again and again. What can I do to swallow them back and act with charity (against all my natural instincts)?

First, there are self-help books around. I'll hit the library and look for titles. I remember seeing, *How to Deal with Difficult People*. I remember another, *Mean People in the Office*. And a third, *How to Argue Effectively*.

Second, I will teach myself a mantra to recite to myself when things get hot, "God, give me patience," "This too will pass," "Courtesy keeps love alive," "What is this in the light of eternity?"

Third, I will prepare with strategies. Let the other folks answer the questions occasionally; why do I need to jump in? Before answering any queries, ask if anyone else has a problem with this particular detail. If not, ask to discuss it later in private. If the inquiry looks as if it will be too time-consuming and will slow this meeting, refer the matter to a committee; ask her to send her question in writing to the committee, and request a report at the next meeting.

Fourth, I will pray. I will bring this thing to God and ask him to sear the pride out of me and replace it with understanding. In scripture, John asks us a question like this: "Anyone who says 'I love God,' and hates his brother, is a liar, since a man who does not love the broth-

er that he can see cannot love God, whom he has never seen." (1 John 4: 20.)

Fifth, I will reread and take to heart Francis' *Praises of God*, especially:

You are love,  
You are wisdom,  
You are humility,  
You are endurance,...  
You are justice and moderation...  
You are gentleness,  
You are our protector,  
You are our guardian and defender,  
You are courage,  
You are our haven and our hope.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies* [Omnibus], ed. Marion A. Habig, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, IL, 1973: *The Admonitions*, Nos. 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 21, p. 77-87.

<sup>2</sup> *Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order*, Chapter Two, §5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter Two, §11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter Two, §13.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter Two, §19.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew, 6:9.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew, 23:8.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 18:20.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 22:37-39.

<sup>10</sup> Romans 8:27-29.

<sup>11</sup> High school physics class: Every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

<sup>12</sup> *Praises of God*, Omnibus, p. 125. The original sheet of paper with these Praises is preserved today in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. On one side of the paper is the text, in the handwriting of St. Francis, virtually illegible from much handling. On the reverse side is the blessing St. Francis dictated to Brother Leo and, underneath that, personal words of blessing in Francis' hand, signed with the T.

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## THE DIGNITY OF WORK

Allen Jordan, SFO  
Chair, Work Commission

In Genesis we read of God's using His omnipotent talents to create a beautiful world with man and woman, His treasures, in His own image and likeness. This bible text gives us a lesson in which man can follow his Creator, in which man can emulate God's perfect example to use his daily activities to devise and foster a goodness which we can share with our brothers and sisters.

Inspired and motivated by the example of God the Father to do our best, we gain fulfillment from our efforts. Using our God-given talents and the right to pursue new vistas of individual expression allows us to develop new methods, tangible products to improve our routine lifestyles, and countless other services.

As we work, we grow and discover untapped reservoirs of knowledge and skills given to us by God for just this time. Our awe creates an awareness of our place in God's plan and our spiritual growth. Our endeavors to support others by our life's work is a beacon and example for others who follow us as we have followed the Creator.

If we have followed God's plan for us, our life's path will be strewn with signposts, e.g. encouragement, honesty and compassion, love and understanding, knowledge and empowerment, sharing and support, teaching and patience.

The Dignity of Work which we emulate, we seek, and we require is a gift from God to be shared with others and a God-given right of each one of us. God's plan is the interlocking of our talents, so that we contribute to society and share in the joy of our Work's creation.

Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community. (Ref: Rule II, 16.)

Let us ask ourselves:

How many signposts have I left?

Do I freely share my talents and knowledge?

Have I been competitive or collaborative with my fellow workers?

Have I given others due credit for their efforts or have I taken credit for their work?

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## THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Mary C. Lahiff, SFO  
Evangelization 2000

In their wisdom, and as a result of personal experience with the curtailment of freedom of religious worship and expression of beliefs, our Founding Fathers sought to ensure religious freedom for themselves and their posterity by enshrining it in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States with the words:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Our Founding Fathers understood the word "establishment" in the sense that it existed in England - an established national church. No particular church was to be declared the National or Established Church of the United States. All churches were to be given liberty and freedom to worship, teach, preach, etc. The free exercise of religion included not only worship, but freedom of holding religious assemblies, evangelizing, missionary work, publication and promoting religious books, papers, and conducting religious schools,

hospitals, and social efforts to help people in need.

What the Founders had in mind was that Religion was about God and about religious values such as the inherent dignity and worth of individuals who were "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights". Yes, freedom of and for religion and the free exercise thereof is very much a part of our heritage. One has only to look at the inscriptions carved in our national monuments and to read some of the writings and speeches of our forefathers to realize how deep was their reliance on God and how intertwined was their faith in their shaping of our nation. John Adams declared that "our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people." In his Farewell Address George Washington stated that "reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." We can deduce from that that our public decisions need to be guided by religious principles.

But what have we come to today? How have we allowed this precious freedom to be eroded, misinterpreted? The constitutional separation of church and state was never intended to rule out religiously-based values as a basis for a public policy consideration. The problem stems in part from some subsequent Supreme Court decisions. One such decision defined Ethical Culture and Secular Humanism as religions. This was in stark contrast to the fact that religion in the Constitution meant a theistic or God-related religion. This gave credence and support to the militant secular "separation of Church and State" view on constitutional questions that blatantly declare religious-based values cannot be considered or advanced in public business or affairs.

We now have Supreme Court rulings prohibiting non-sectarian prayer in public schools and at graduations - it is unconstitutional. Non-

sectarian prayer to God has long been a tradition at many public gatherings. Americans do pray and acknowledge God as a Supreme Being. Our Supreme Court seems to be imposing an absence of religion, or at least the free exercise of it, in some areas of public life. We have a right "not to believe", but we have no right to force absence of God on others who do believe.

There is a distinct necessity for prayer and for like-minded people who believe that religious-based values must guide our decisions to make their voices heard to bring about a public policy that returns to the intent of our Founding Fathers as expressed in the First Amendment. Our Founding Fathers never intended that we should leave God out in making public policy decisions for our Country. God is not unconstitutional!

### - URGENT UPDATE - EVANGELIZATION 2000

The "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA) is the priority of some members of the new Congress; they will push for its passage within the first six months of 1993.

This law mandates abortion on demand during an entire pregnancy, nullifies all present state laws restricting abortion and requires that states allow abortion for any reason, even as a method of birth control or sex selection. It invalidates "conscience laws" enacted by states to protect hospitals from lawsuits when they refuse to perform abortions. Invalidates "informed consent", all waiting periods, "parental consent" by allowing the minor to consult some "other responsible adult" of the minor's choosing, prevents restrictions on use of public funding of abortion. This is H.B.25, S.25.

If you disagree with the mandates of the Freedom of Choice Act, H.R.25, S.25, write your senators and representative, stating your own

personal views. Write as a private citizen, a constituent of your elected officials. It is imperative that this be done early in this term, because the push is on in Congress to pass this bill quickly.

As lay members of the Church our role and path to holiness lies in endeavoring to bring about the Kingdom of God in the world about us. As Secular Franciscans we are committed to bring Gospel values into our present day society, constantly going "from Gospel to life and life to Gospel". We must keep a watchful eye to see that nothing is enacted into law which is contrary to the values expressed in the Gospel.

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## FRATERNITY

Dita Schwartz, SFO

What does it mean? To me, a word the dictionary defines as brotherhood. Being an only child, I never experienced either fraternal love or sibling rivalry. Consequently, *fraternity* as such was just a word for me, evoking no personal feelings.

Years ago, when I joined our beloved Order, I found myself received by a *fraternity*, which means about a dozen strangers with whom I met once a month and whose names I didn't remember from one meeting to the next.

What *fraternity* means to me now is no longer just a word, but, thanks to the guidance of the Spirit, rather a concept that slowly developed throughout the years of my Franciscan journey and spiritual growth.

I had to learn that **fraternity means kinship**, a **bond** that unites us to each other and to God. To learn it, I had to focus on what we all have in **common**, disregarding the differences of individual personalities, backgrounds, and the like. During this learning process, I came

to realize that all of us heard the call that summoned us to embrace a special way of life. All of us follow the same role model, Francis. All of us are struggling in our own fashion to reach the same goals. And all of us know that we can't get there alone!

Surely, we need all the help we can get. So, we rely on God's grace, of course, and the Spirit to lead us through the maze of obstacles we find along the way. In time we come to recognize that, although our individual struggles may be different, our quest is truly a common one. All this creates a bond which makes us brothers and sisters of one family. Eventually, we learn to acknowledge that, indeed, we are not alone, that we need each other to support each other and to love each other.

Not so long ago, I came to experience the solace and renewed strength I found in the knowledge that I was not alone at a time when my heart was heavy, that I do have a family of sisters and brothers who prayed for my needs when I got weary of praying and who continue to do so. I am filled with deepest gratitude to God who, in His generosity, gave me such a family.

This late in my life, I no longer consider myself an only child.

The meaning of *fraternity* has taken on an altogether different shape. The fraternal bond has transcended the local levels, in fact, the Secular Franciscan Order itself. For me, that bond has now become universal, and includes our entire Franciscan Family, for we all have the same Seraphic Father.

Beyond that, I am more and more recognizing the bond of kinship with all mankind, the world over, the good and the bad, all children of the same God, and, therefore, all my brothers and sisters. Amen!

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## Want an SFO Pen Pal?

For more information send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

M. Marko, SFO  
300 North State Street, #3426  
Chicago, IL 60611-4806

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## REGIONALIZATION: WHAT IS IT?

Laurence Herbert, SFO, Newsletter Staff  
Cont. from Fall, 1992 issue.

(From the Fall '92 issue: Next we come to three criteria upon which the region should be based: geographical considerations, common problems, and pastoral realities. These criteria were not dreamed up by a cartographer, a social anthropologist, and a friar. They are necessary to define the boundaries of the region as determined by the individuals in the proposed region.

Geographical considerations may include such items as a mountain range that may separate fraternities that on a map may appear to be nearby. Other objects that may form borders of regions are rivers that are not bridged, interstate highways and state borders. Each of these poses a physical or psychological boundary for the individuals on both sides. Only the local individuals have the common knowledge of the area involved and that is precisely why much input from the local fraternities should be sought.)

The term common problems is a nebulous concept which may lead to misinterpretation. In the United States we have been blessed with a variety of immigrants who have come here with their own identity. Frequently they have settled in areas that reminded them of their homelands and have attracted other individuals from their homeland to settle there also. Therefore, there are many locations with ethnic flavors which are not completely integrated into American culture. However, according to the President of the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants, small areas of cultural concentration are not considered valid cause for language regions.

The last of the criteria is pastoral realities. The Secular Franciscan Order has always been a ministry of the friars. They have led us and assisted us in our growth as Catholics and as Franciscans. It would be unrealistic for us to want to establish a region with only 4, 5 or 6 fraternities in several small areas. To expect the friar provinces to assign a regional Spiritual Assistant to each of these regions would be unreasonable. The friars have limited personnel as well as a variety of ministries with which they have to deal.

The last part can be the most difficult to deal with and at the same time has the potential to be the most rewarding when accomplished, that is representation from the local and provincial levels of fraternity. When you are contacting the local fraternities, allow enough time for their response, and use follow up letters to fraternities who have not responded. As Secular Franciscans we have the opportunity to draw from the experience of all of our members. Undoubtedly there is someone in the area who has experience in dealing with mass mailings, follow up correspondence, and data collection. Identify such individuals and use them in regionalization, or at least ask for their assistance. A good place to start would be the provincial ministers, they should know their people.

You have to ask the right question to get the information that you need. Use open-ended questions to draw out the information efficiently. This type of questioning allows you to gain a perspective on how individuals or fraternities perceive regionalization at the beginning of the process. Open-ended questions encourage the respondent to explain, expand, describe, explore or elaborate on the subject at hand. An example of an open-ended question would be: *The National Fraternity in the United States has made regionalization a priority; how do you think regionalization will affect you, your local fraternity and the other*

*fraternities in your province?* As the name 'open-ended' implies, these questions are phrased in such a way that they elicit free flowing responses that will provide you with a wide range of information. This will enable you to get the big picture regarding regionalization in this area. Responses will give you a great deal of information, perhaps too much.

When you need to obtain specific, detailed information closed-ended questions will bring out what you need. They narrow the discussion and are useful when you need to fill in incomplete questions and to clarify a point. Closed-ended questions fine tune the information gathered in open-ended questions. An example of a closed-ended question would be: *Due to time and financial expenditures should annual visitations to remote fraternities be discontinued?*

You should have representatives from both the local level of fraternity and official representatives from the provincial ministers on the committee for regionalization. The local level is necessary because it is from the grass roots that you need to receive your support and the information you need to define the region. There does not have to be a representative from each fraternity, but a means of representation should be established so that each individual in every fraternity will have the opportunity to have input to the process. This will also enable you to identify capable individuals who could be asked to serve in specific areas.

Right from the beginning ask the provincial ministers to appoint official representatives from each province. Their primary responsibility will be to keep the province informed as to what is happening and to bring provincial concerns to the committee. Of course, they may also serve in other capacities on the committee.

From what has been said, you have a good idea as to what regionalization is. However, there is a great deal that has not been said that may be of concern to you. What I would like to explore for a few minutes is what regionalization is not. There may be fears that regionalization will cause the local fraternity to lose their Spiritual Assistant. Before the national fraternity establishes an emerging region, the friar provincials of the provinces are contacted to ask for their support for the proposed region and their willingness to accept or to delegate the responsibility to provide spiritual assistance to the fraternities in the region. The friars are not going to abandon the Secular Franciscan Order just because of regionalization. The friar provinces should be an active part of the process of regionalization. The friars are here to assist us in living our rule and part of that rule, as we have seen, is the establishment of regions.

Another thing regionalization will not do is sever the relationship of the local fraternity to the friar province. Each fraternity has been established canonically by a province and that bond will not be broken by regionalization. The local fraternity will continue to have their Spiritual Assistant assigned by the friar province so long as the friars are present in the area. As I just mentioned the friars are not going to leave us flat because of regionalization.

Regionalization is designed not to be imposed from above; rather, it is developed from the local fraternities gathering together and looking at their common talents and problems and designing a means of utilizing those talents and addressing the problems on the local level. Perhaps at some time when the country is regionalized, the National Fraternity may have to assign certain fraternities that fall between established regions to one region or another. However, if most of the local fraternities work together to establish a region, the possibility of

a fraternity falling between the cracks will be greatly reduced.

Finally, regionalization is not exclusive. The process should not exclude fraternities, but should be as inclusive as possible taking into consideration the criteria that we have already discussed. Don't exclude a fraternity because their Spiritual Assistant may be a T.O.R. and, therefore, the Secular Franciscans are T.O.R. Secular Franciscans. There is no such thing.

Let me conclude with some tips that I have learned in going through the process of regionalization. In real estate, individuals talk about three things to look for; they are: location, location, and location. In regionalization the three things to have are: education, education, and education. Education means letting the individuals in the local fraternities know what regionalization is and how it will affect them and their fraternity. Education means communicating with the provinces to let them know what is going on and to seek their advice and to let them voice their concerns. Lastly education means being open to our sisters and brothers to be able to learn from them. Even a fool can learn from his own mistakes, but the wise person is able to learn from the mistakes of others.

Let yourselves be open to the action of the Holy Spirit in your lives and in your collaboration with others involved with regionalization. No one of us has all the answers, but together you can reach a wisdom that will astound you, if you are willing to work together for the good of all and not for personal ends.

Basically, regionalization is a process of grouping local fraternities on a geographical basis rather than on friar provinces. A region would take the place of the provincial level of fraternity, it is NOT an additional level of fraternity, c. article 20, S.F.O. Rule.

The process of regionalization in the United States is a relatively unexplored aspect of fraternal life for the local fraternities, the regional fraternity, the provincial fraternities and the national fraternity. Yet it is an essential aspect that all of us as Secular Franciscans must go through. Regionalization has been mandated for us by our Rule (1978) and by our new Constitutions.

Any process of change is a cause of stress, because of the unknown result of the change. This is a normal and healthy human reaction. However, in order to grow we must change because no living thing can remain static; either we grow or we wither. Our faith, our Franciscan commitment, are living parts of our everyday life. As Secular Franciscans we are called on to go from the Gospels to life and from our lives to the Gospels. That is change. That is growth! If we are not growing as Franciscans then we are withering. We would be similar to the unproductive branch that the vine master will prune off and cast away.

There are times when our growth is gradual and hardly perceptible which causes little stress precisely because of the moderate rate of change. Then there are times when we seem to be in the middle of constant pandemonium. No matter where we turn there is commotion, which causes a great deal of stress in our lives and we long for the quietness and serenity of past times when things seemed more orderly. We all have experienced both types of growth in our personal lives as well as in our spiritual lives and we have come through the experience changed in some way. This is what you will experience in the process of regionalization. The process will not be easy for anyone because of the unknown that awaits you in the future. It makes no difference whether you support or oppose the process of regionalization, the experience of change is a fact in all our lives. It is a paradox that the only constant we can expect in life is change.

A case could be argued that now is not the time for regionalization, that you should wait for more information on the process. That is a valid argument. My answer is that if our Order is to grow to meet the challenges of the next century, the next millennium, then we have to have a solid, close knit and local fraternal foundation from which to work. Regionalization is the foundation upon which we will have to work for the coming of God's Kingdom. That foundation cannot be built by only a few fraternities, nor by the regional council, but requires the efforts of every Secular Franciscan in the region. I implore you not to wait for some time in the future for the National Fraternity to say 'You fraternities over there, you have to form a region'. That would be stress!

As followers of St. Francis we cannot hide from the world or from changes in our Order. Just as St. Francis took time apart to pray about changes that were taking place in his order in the 1220s, we too should pray about the changes we are experiencing in the 1990s. However, do not remain away from the reality of the changes, but go out to meet them and deal with them. And in that process of struggle and growth you will be changed, changed for the better.

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## PILGRIM

Bonnie Mayer, SFO

I am a Secular Franciscan, a wife, mother, and grandmother living in rural Wisconsin. This summer a new dimension was added to my life: I was called to become a pilgrim. I would like to share with you some of my feelings as I journeyed with six other Franciscans to El Salvador and Guatemala.

Unable to speak the language, I relied on others. The lack of a common language, I believe, should never deter us from experi-

encing another's world. I wanted to hear and understand, woman to woman, mother to mother, the language of the heart. I was privileged to meet courageous women of faith and so many others who shared their lives and gave their witness. The experience was overwhelming. To see the poverty and desperate conditions was unnerving - families struggling against hunger and disease, living in a fragile environment filled with uncertainty and violence. They asked us not to forget them, not to forget what we heard, what we saw; not to forget that our paths came together so we could share for a time in their struggle.

A few years ago, I saw the movie *Romero*, the story of Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was martyred in 1980 in El Salvador. The realities of a persecuted Church, a suffering people struck a chord deep inside me. My consciousness had been raised, and I could no longer look the other way. The seed was planted. That seed sprouted last July as I met the people and walked upon the land of El Salvador. It was a life-changing experience to stand where Archbishop Romero's voice still speaks for the voiceless through his life's witness and ultimate sacrifice, as well as through the voices of so many others who courageously speak out against injustice. We journeyed to where the Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her daughter were murdered in 1989. To El Mozote, a hillside where mass executions of men, women, and children took place in December 1981. To areas where people in both countries are tortured and killed and who still disappear because of their beliefs, who they are, or whom they know. This reality hit me hard. I am a woman full of expression. Here in North America I am free to express my beliefs; in their world that is a dangerous gift.

I struggle with the process of being vulnerable, and last summer God took me on a journey, allowing me to experience the vulnerability of

being a pilgrim, a stranger in a foreign land. I felt for a short time what others who have left their homeland experience: the vulnerability of not knowing language or customs, of being totally dependent on others to translate or explain a way of life foreign to me.

*I went looking for the face of God and I found God everywhere, most especially in the eyes of one particular woman. She told her story as a wife and mother beset with many hardships. Her voice spoke gently of a life where she has faced death and hardships with courage and faith, a life built on trust. But it was her eyes that spoke the loudest, lovely dark brown eyes, gentle eyes that wrinkled with tenderness at the corners. All the while she shared her witness a voice within me kept saying, "This is the face of God." I recalled a verse from the song, "Be Not Afraid", written by Bob Dufford, S.J.: *You shall cross the barren desert, but you shall not die of thirst. You shall wander far in safety though you do not know the way. You shall speak your words in foreign lands, and all will understand. You shall see the face of God and live.**

I have not shared with you facts and statistics; there are many articles written about the realities of Central America. I wanted to share with you that this ordinary woman from Wisconsin experienced a life-changing journey. I wanted to encourage you not to be afraid, if you feel God calling you in such a way.

The lack of a common language should not stop us from hearing the language of the heart. The hardships of the journey should not prevent us from going the distance. Conditions different from our own should not give us an excuse to say no. If we hear the voice of God pulling at the cords deep inside to go, we must let ourselves become vulnerable. We must let our hearts touch other hearts and share for a while their path. We must join others called to become pilgrims to where God calls us. And

we should not be afraid, because we "shall see the face of God and live."

There are many organizations that can provide the experience of pilgrim. The pilgrimage that I experienced for Franciscans to Central America is:

FRAN-CAP  
1648 S. 37th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53215  
(414)383-9277

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## HAWAII FRANCISCAN EXPERIENCE-1994

**"YEAR OF THE FAMILY"  
FEBRUARY 10 - 15, 1994**

Ken & Carole Amaral, SFO

To be held at KMC Recreational Center - Hawaii Volcano National Park on the Island of Hawaii.

Arrival at Hilo International Airport, via Hawaiian or Aloha Airlines and airport pickup at 11:00 A.M., 1:30 P.M., 3:45 P.M., or 6:30 P.M., on Thursday, February 10, 1994.

**NOTE: Busses from KMC will pick you up and return you to the airport. You will be taken directly to KMC where we will be waiting to check you in and to share a snack and/or coffee.**

The rooms are in a "Dorm", that sleeps two(2) or four(4) to a room. (Editor's note: These accommodations are not "hotel" accommodations.) We can accommodate 50 Franciscans in these quarters. If more than 50 register, we can accommodate another 30 in the Open Bays, which are bunk beds in two separate rooms.

**On Friday, February 11, we will have morning prayer, breakfast, free time, and work-**

shops (Subjects to be announced as soon as commitments are in place). Lunch and dinner will be served, more free time and an evening get together, then night prayer.

**On Saturday, February 12, the day will be yours to go on tours furnished by KMC, go to Hilo to shop and see what a great little community we have, or just spend time at KMC, bowling, golfing, bicycling, playing ping-pong, or just hanging around and "talking story." There are scheduled tours during the day, and if the volcano is still erupting, there is a "Special Lava Flow Tour" in the evening. You will never again, in your life-time, see such an awesome sight. There is a lot of walking on these tours, so be sure you're in tip-top shape.**

**Sunday is when the real treat comes. We will leave KMC after breakfast, at about 7:00 A.M., and travel to Honaunau (Ho-now-now) and St. Benedict's Painted Church to celebrate a Hawaiian Mass. Then we will go on to St. Benedict's beach lot for a day of fun in the sun, learn many Hawaiian Crafts, and lull on the beach. The day will be topped off with an "Hawaiian Luau."**

Our Secular Franciscans of the Tau Kona Fraternity are hosting this lovely and creative day. This is for every one of the Franciscan Family that will be coming to our Experience. The busses will again be furnishing the transportation, and this event is included in the package price. **NOW, IS THAT A WONDERFUL DAY FOR OUR FAMILY, OR WHAT?**

**Monday, February 14, (St. Valentines Day)** we will sleep in until about 9:00 a.m. The Sunday trip will leave us all needing an extra hour of rest; then breakfast will be served (could be the Valentine bunny will visit us then). Prayer, workshops, and personal time will be the order of the day. For the last

*evening*, we will have a wonderful dinner together, have some singing and fellowship, and prepare to leave our fantastic Franciscan Experience for 1994. Oh yes! Pictures will be taken.

**Tuesday, February 15**, is our day of Aloha's. Breakfast will be served, we will pray, and tears will be shed. Our host fraternity says they think we should have a Hawaii Franciscan Experience every year, so let us hear your views on this, and we can go from there. Maybe those who couldn't come this year can come in future years.

Now we will get down to the part that is so important when an Experience such as this is held. The cost of your wonderful time in Hawaii:

The total cost will be **\$275.00 per person**. This price includes airport pickup and return, housing accommodations, food served at KMC, travel used on the island for Franciscan functions and the "Luau." A non-refundable registration fee of \$35.00, this will guarantee you a place to sleep, food to eat, and travel to Honaunau and Airport pick-up/return. We must have all registration fees by **October 15, 1993**. The remainder of \$240.00 must be paid by **December 1, 1993**.

So, there it is. There may be a change or two in the program, but these will probably be in the area of workshops.



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**COME!**  
**JOIN THE FRANCISCANS FROM**  
**HAWAII**  
**THE HAWAII FRANCISCAN**  
**EXPERIENCE - 1994**

Send your registration fee(s) to:

Kenneth & Carole Amaral, SFO  
72 A Akala Road  
Hilo, HI 96720

(808) 935-3387.

**PAX ET BONUM**

Aloha nui loa from,

(s) Ken and Carole Amaral, SFO

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RECYCLED PAPER

SOYA INK

## CIOFS' PRESIDENCY MEETING

Emanuela De Nunzio, SFO

The latest CIOFS' Presidency meeting took place in Rome, from 22 to 28 January 1993.

The many topics on the agenda addressed problems of general interest for the whole Order and questions regarding its needs in particular countries. The Presidency however devoted most of its time and attention to the preparation of General Chapter.

As you already know, the Chapter will meet in Mexico City, from Sunday, Eighth 10 to Sunday 17 October 1993. It will be centered on the topic of "secularity" and on the approval of the new Statutes of the International Fraternity.

One might think that there have been already so many meetings and debates at all levels devoted to secularity, starting with the publication of the new Rule and even more so after the approval of the General Constitutions.

Why therefore now a general Chapter on this topic? The Presidency Council felt the need to take up the topic of secularity once more, not only to deepen our understanding, but also to compare the different positions which start to take shape in different countries and cultures.

The Ministers General in their letter on "*Vocation and mission of franciscan lay faithful in the Church and in the World*" have written: "The growing understanding and clarification of the specific role of the laity, is a real grace for the Secular Franciscan Order" (n. 32) and further on: "nowadays with some exceptions, the preparation of franciscan laity is a real challenge. This preparation is often insufficient, making it difficult for the brothers and sisters to live fully their mission, at least in some of the fields which are specifically meant for the laity" (n. 36.a).

We want to reach the following goals by proposing a debate on secularity at the international level:

- to verify concretely the level of consciousness reached by secular franciscans all over the world in giving witness of a radical gospel life and service;
- to identify the most significant situations where secular franciscans live their secular condition and their specific charism;
- to define formative itineraries destined to make all members of the Fraternity convinced and capable of realizing their own mission among people;
- to promote communal - rather than personal - initiatives, connecting the ideal professed with every-day reality;
- to collect elements for a better evaluation of the nature of the YOFRA (Franciscan Youth) - a vocational itinerary within the SFO - needed to prepare a guide for animators of the YOFRA.

The Chapter should be prepared through the work of research and in-depth studies on part of the international councilors and the national councils, guided by some special "working papers". The papers will be sent together with the letter of convocation and the definitive concept of the Statutes of the International Fraternity.

Among the other topics discussed by the Presidency, special mention should be made of initiatives to be proposed or stimulated for the celebrations of the Eighth Centenary of the birth of St. Clare. All agreed that the celebrations should be promoted primarily at

local and regional levels in collaboration with the whole franciscan Family, focusing on making the Clarisses better known and intensifying the relations between SFO fraternities and Monasteries in their neighborhood.

In the course of the Centenary, priority should be given to a better understanding of:

- the contemplative dimension of the life of secular franciscans, called to make prayer and contemplation become "the spirit of their very being and acting" (Rule 8);
- the challenging call to poverty, against the temptations of consumerism and well-being, so strongly evident in the industrialized world;
- the courageous challenge of the value, not only of virginity but of living chastely, opposed to permissiveness, pornography, and widespread corruption.

May the spirit of Francis and Clare help and guide us in this new year of working in the service of the brothers and sisters of the whole world.

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## A WALK WITH CLARE

Jerry Schroeder, ofm Cap.

Ah! to walk with Clare  
up a morning mountain road,  
arm in arm  
I to I,  
her to me,  
two in one  
under a blue, eagle screeching sky.

To rest there,  
by a mountain water mirror  
asking  
who's the fairest of them all  
and wait to watch the answer,  
from some other shore,  
ripple beauty back  
through the other's easy peeking eyes.  
(From Clarefest '93)

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## HELP WANTED!!!

Richard Morton, SFO

Are there any Secular Franciscans who are knowledgeable in field of marketing and who would like an opportunity to work with the National Fraternity. I am looking for a person(s) to facilitate publicity, such as news releases, etc. and to work with the promotion the Order on a national scale. If you know someone or are interested yourself, please contact:

Mrs. Mary Mazotti  
First Vice Minister  
National Fraternity  
P.O. Box 2571  
Arnold, CA 95223

209-795-3809.

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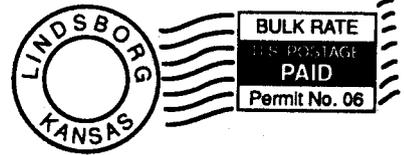
## FROM THE EDITOR

Elizabeth M. Ryder, SFO

This column is usually on the last page, if there is any room left. Now, however, we move to priority space, because there are a few things that must be said.

Did you, local ministers, notice the difference in the mailing label? The *Newsletter* is addressed to your fraternity. Hopefully, it might impress on many of you that the publication *is* for the members. This is the fourteenth con-

THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY  
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER  
3191 71ST STREET EAST  
INVER GROVE HTS, MN 55076



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secutive, quarterly issue, and there are still members who do not know of its existence. Worse, there are new local ministers who do not know of the *Newsletter*.

The retired minister is keeping it, and, of course, no one is notifying the publication of the change in administration. Along the same line, the Summer, 1992 issue carried an insert requesting information to update the National Directory of Local Fraternities. No cut-off date was given, but your immediate attention was asked. Updates should have been returned by mid-August at the latest. By mid-September, only 30% had been returned - at least 850 were sent.

To that 70% who does not cooperate, I beg you, especially during this season of Lent, to realize that some day you will stand before the awesome judgment seat and be held accountable for the discharge of duties.

There are not only the admittedly dull record keeping chores for which you are responsible, there are also educational chores - keeping your fraternity abreast of regionalization, for example, and certainly of evangelization.

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Larry Herbert's continued article, "Regionalization: What Is It?", addresses many questions and answers many. At numerous meetings, including the Quinquennial Congress, some members had never heard of regionalization.

And you are asked, please, to pay special attention to "Urgent Update, Evangelization 2000". Many parishes have joined the nationwide postal card campaign against the "Freedom of Choice Act". If your parish hasn't, do get on this right away in the fraternity.

If we speak out against civil immorality, and it becomes law anyway, we at least have done what we could. If we do not speak out, we are as guilty as though we had supported the proposals.

To those of you who have been most prompt and cooperative and to those of you who are about to become so, my profound thanks.

(Thanks Elizabeth, and may you rest in peace. R.M.)