



SFO National Peace and Justice Commission

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Newsletter

February 2005

A Consistent Ethic of Life

As Catholics and Franciscans we are called to have a consistent ethic of life. The late Cardinal Bernardin used the seamless garment as a symbol of the unity that should guide our peace and justice endeavors. The image of the seamless garment comes from the bible passage that describes the soldiers at the crucifixion. (John 19:23-24) After they had divided his clothes among themselves, they cast lots for the seamless garment of Jesus. In the days when cloth was hand woven and cutting and sewing instruments were primitive, a piece of cloth that was cut lost its monetary value. This way, one soldier had the valuable cloth as his prize. The same is true for our peace and justice work. If we cut it up, each take a piece, and go our own way, we have diminished its value.

In a lecture at Fordham University on December 6, 1983, Cardinal Bernardin called work for justice a seamless garment: "If one contends, as we do, that the right of every fetus to be born should be protected by civil law and supported by civil consensus, then our moral, political and economic responsibilities do not stop at the moment of birth. Those who defend the right to life of the weakest among us must be equally visible in support of the quality of life of the powerless among us: the old and the young, the hungry and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant and the unemployed worker."

Pope John Paul II and the US Catholic Bishops have called for a consistent ethic of life. No one who is familiar with their writings and speeches can question their commitment to the unborn and *also* to overcoming world poverty and to peace among nations. The life of every person has value and deserves respect from conception to natural death. Abortion kills children and so does grinding poverty. Lack of health care and unemployment reduce human dignity. Human dignity must be recognized all through life, not just at the beginning and the end. Innocent lives are lost in every war, whether the war is considered just or unjust. The State should not use the death penalty unless there is no other way to protect itself against further crimes by a perpetrator. A consistent ethic of life asks us to change systems and structures that keep people in poverty or deny them their human dignity in other ways.

If we truly live the Gospel as Secular Franciscans, the Beatitudes are our guide. (Matthew 5:1-7) We find Jesus among those society considers to be of little worth. Our Secular Franciscan Rule tells us to "follow the poor and crucified Christ, witness to him even in difficulties and persecutions." (Rule X). Let us continue to advocate for the unborn, the poor, the homeless, the migrant, and all persons deprived of the dignity of a living wage. As we come together, weaving our work into a seamless garment, we will know the full joy of our Franciscan vocation.

In this newsletter we offer to you our various understandings of our mission. No one of us claims to have the complete vision, but together we form some picture of what we are doing as we strive to live the Gospel life.

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WHO ARE WE?

By Ray Hardwick, s.f.o.

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We Secular Franciscans are a people who believe God became human in the person of Jesus to show us how to be human. Are we identified as people who reverence human life? Yes, we cherish life in the womb, but what of life outside the womb? Do we cherish life on the battlefield, on the streets of our cities, on death row, in nursing homes, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa, Mexico, etc.? Is American life more valuable than these are? Do we forget that Jesus tells us that Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Omar Kadafi are our brothers, and that the people of Iraq, the Sudan and Chiapas are our brothers and sisters?

We believe that Jesus taught us to love our enemies and do good to those who hurt us. He offered a foreigner as our neighbor. Is our attitude toward foreigners and so-called "enemies" one of love?

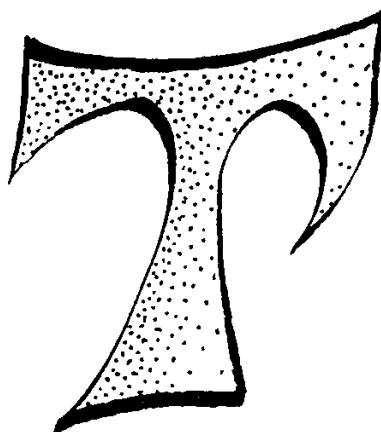
According to the US Bishops in *The Challenge of Peace: Gods Promise and Our Response*: "The vision of Christian nonviolence is not passive about injustice in the defense of the rights of others; it rather affirms and exemplifies what it means to resist injustice through nonviolent methods. In the 20th century, the nonviolent witness of such figures as Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King has had a profound impact upon the life of the Church in the United States."

In *The Harvest of Peace is Sown in Justice*, the US Bishops said: "National leaders bear a moral obligation to see that nonviolent alternatives are seriously considered for dealing with conflicts. New styles of preventative diplomacy and conflict resolution ought to be explored, tried, improved and supported. As a nation we should promote research, education and training in nonviolent means to resisting evil. Nonviolent strategies need greater attention in international affairs."

We believe that Jesus called us to give and accept forgiveness. Every day we say the Our Father asking to be forgiven as we forgive others. Are we Seculars recognizable as forgiving people?

We testify to the fact that God entered into history in the person of Jesus, and we affirm his presence and power of love in our lives. Is it evident in our fraternities and in our personal lives?

As I sit here writing this, the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount reverberate through my being, "You are the salt of the earth.....You are the light of the world!" I am called, you are called, and we are called to be the means by which the light of Christ shines in this darkened world.



Do This In Memory of Me - A Reflection on the Eucharist

By: Mary Good, SFO

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In our fraternity, we have started a new peace shawl ministry. The shawls are crocheted or knitted for those in need of prayer and support. They have been given to those dealing with illness, those going through divorce, those dying, just to name a few. Each time we pick up the shawl to work on it, we pray for the person who will eventually receive it. I have often picked up my crochet hook and yarn and thought of my Grandmother. She taught me how to crochet when I was very young. As she taught me to crochet, she also taught me patience. It takes time to make something special. She taught me about fortitude. I've ripped out my share of stitches and started over. I can't help but think how I honor her and her memory by making these shawls. A little of her goes into each one I make. How much more has Jesus taught me? How do I honor His memory?

Clearly, at the last supper Jesus said to the apostles, "Do this in memory of me." These are very powerful words. Notice he did not say, "Do this in memory of me, unless you're busy with other things", or like my daughter might say if she wants me to do something, please, Please, PLEASE! Simply, "Do this in memory of me." To me, these words are challenging. Each time we go to Mass we hear them, and I think, "Did I honor the memory of Jesus?"

As Franciscans, we are called to work for justice and peace, and in doing so we indeed honor Jesus. His life was a wake up call to all who had long forgotten the *anawim*, those who had no voice (the poor, the widows and orphans, the lepers). Jesus ministered to them, when no one else would. Jesus now calls us to carry on his mission, to minister to the *anawim* of our day.

Every time we minister to those in need, Jesus, our teacher, is there and we honor Him. Who are the *anawim* of our day? They are the unborn, the elderly, the homeless, runaways, teenage mothers, immigrants, the list could go on. Where do you start with such an extensive list? I think the first place is always in the family. Who are the *anawim* in your family? Is it a brother or sister that you've not spoken with after harsh words? Is it the aunt or uncle that you've been meaning to call, but you just keep waiting for the right time? What about in your fraternity? Is there a member that thinks differently about things, so you keep your distance? Do you visit the aging members who can no longer attend meetings? Often, when we think of the ministering to the voiceless, we start outside our closest circle, yet, this is the first place we should start. We must also be careful not to spread ourselves too thin. St. Francis on his deathbed said, "I have done what was mine to do, may Christ lead you to do what is yours". Not everything, just what is yours. It takes prayer and discernment to realize what is yours to do. Still unsure? What is your passion? Do you feel called to help the unborn? Then look not only into picketing abortion clinics, but joining (or beginning) an Elizabeth Ministry, which ministers to ALL mothers. Perhaps you cannot get out and around. Could your calling be a prayer ministry? Praying for the success of a particular ministry or outcome (like the reversal of Roe vs. Wade).

My sisters and brothers, the harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few. We need to step up and do what is ours to do. Beginning this week and each week thereafter, we need to stop and hear those words, "Do this in memory of me" and ask ourselves, How did I honor these words, how did I honor His memory?



WELCOMING A STRANGER--REENTRY

By

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As I opened the front door to my home and stepped over the threshold, I turned and invited the young man directly behind me to do the same. His was a far more significant step than mine. He was crossing the threshold into a new life.

My husband, who later became a Secular Franciscan, heard us enter and came to greet us. He had a small bottle of blessed oil in his hand. "Welcome to our home, James," he said as he outlined an oily cross on James' forehead. "I greet you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May the peace of Christ descend upon you and remain forever." Thus began a peaceful but very challenging year and a half for my family and the twenty-five year old ex convict who had been released from prison less than an hour before arriving at our home.

I came to understand first hand the complexities of a prisoner's reentry into society. James had no family. His mother was dead, his father and stepfather had long ago disappeared, and siblings from both relationships were scattered. He did not know where since he had been serving a stint in the armed forces. With so many questions unanswered, I wondered if I would be able--as St. Francis expects of us Franciscans--to see the face of Christ in this man? When the prison authorities told him that his home plan for release had been approved, a new set of problems immediately replaced his myriad of other worries. He had only \$25 which he had saved while working at the water treatment plant in the prison, but that was not enough to provide clothing for his reentry. His meager possessions had been ruined while stored in a friend's yard barn.

He gave me \$17 to purchase a pair of jeans. A prison retreat team member bought him a pair of tennis shoes. My husband I topped it off with a shirt, jacket and socks--only the beginning of a necessary wardrobe for attending church and searching for a job. Of course, he had no means of transportation. He was very nervous for the first couple of days but immediately began looking for employment. During his year and a half with us, he worked as a cook in a fast

food restaurant, seasonal retail, and as a construction worker.

The parole officer made regular visits to our home and recommended James' release at the end of a year--a year of many challenges, some frustration, but one of peace. James attended Mass regularly with us, and in response to my urging, inquired at the admissions office of the local branch of a state university about grants and loans. I asked him to stay on for six months or so to try a semester at the university. I thought that he was bright and would learn quickly. He did. At this point, James got a small apartment but continued his education full time. I was extremely proud of him as, four years later, his new wife and I sat in the audience and watched him receive his diploma--A Bachelor Degree in psychology with a minor in business.

Last Fall, I again sat with a congregation of people to be present for him--this time with his wife and their young daughter. James was ordained a permanent deacon. Surely my deceased husband rejoiced at the fruit of our prayers and labor. As I watched the Bishop praying over James, my tears flowed non-stop. After ordination, he walked toward me, so happy in his beautiful new vestments, and said, "How do I look, Mother?" As I hugged him, all I could think of was "Thank You, Jesus, Thank You Thank You."

Much investigating went into the decision to open our home to James. It was not done lightly. I talked to his assigned parole officer prior to placement about the dangers of housing an ex-convict. I visited the town where he lived prior to his incarceration and talked to a family who knew him. I needed to know both sides of his story. While James was in prison, he was befriended by a Franciscan priest who was serving time for blocking an entrance to an abortion facility. He instructed James well in the Catholic faith. Another priest who visited him regularly urged me to consider the home plan. He believed James was genuinely remorseful and experienced a true metanoia. Drugs were not a factor, but alcohol was. Attending AA meetings was part of the release plan.

We are told in scripture: If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in Him? ...let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. 1 John 17-18. To this I say, " Amen, brothers and sisters, AMEN!"

Blood Brothers

By

Elias Chacour with David Hazard

Published by Chosen Books a division of Baker Book House Company

Reviewed by Teri Egan S.F.O.

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Elias Chacour is a Melkite Catholic priest who has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2001, Chacour was proclaimed Man of the Year in Israel. His story, from his childhood innocence with village life centered on the church, erupts, as does his family's life, with all the changes the establishment of the state of Israel brought.

The turmoil, hardship, and often death, brought upon the Palestinians coincide with the Inner turmoil of a young Elias. The Beatitudes that his mother often recited to him were the key to his strength and direction, especially, "Blessed are the Peacemakers. . ."

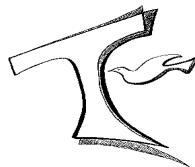
Circumstances brought about by the loss of home, land and family found him in a Christian orphanage where he was well educated his spirituality intensified. From there, he went to a minor seminary in Nazareth. As the Palestinian world became smaller, he struggled with how he could deliver a message of heavenly peace to people . . . Jew or Palestinian . . . when they lived daily with war. When it was time to enter the seminary in Jerusalem, Elias, as a Palestinian, was not allowed to cross the border. However, the bishop was not deterred, and instead enrolled him in St. Sulpice in Paris.

In Paris, it was made clear that classmates and others held little regard for the Palestinians, branding them as terrorists. This, along with the sharp differences in the "Western" church in its approach to God, left Elias in deep conflict. It was on a train trip to West Germany, while crossing the border that he, in his mind, became a Jew in 1937. His passport was Israeli, and when he handed it over, he was struck with the ache of compassion. He hurt for the Jewish people.

That experience was the catalyst that set him on an active course to pursue peace. It began in the small village that was his first assignment as a priest. The peace-making was among the Christian villagers who had grudges against each other. Then came the acts of love to the Muslims.

The interaction with his Jewish brothers began when he was the first Palestinian priest to be accepted to Hebrew University in Jerusalem. There he was warmly welcomed by the professors. His long journey toward peace led him to establish educational institutions for students of the three Abrahamic faiths. Their unity was manifested when they donated blood to those Israeli victims injured during terrorist attacks.

Elian Chacour, in his quest for peace, is truly living the words of the Beatitudes his mother recited so often. This book is well-written, with a strong spiritual foundation. It will leave the reader feeling better for having read it.



Blessed are you Elders

By

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I was reading the newspaper a while back and an article I came across shocked me with the statement, "Saving the life of someone 70 or older may be worth only 63% as much as saving the life of someone younger, according to Administration pollution regulators..."

...The 63 percent life-valuation measure is based on the principle that it is fairer to count the years of life saved by a government regulation than the number of lives, said John D. Graham, the regulatory chief at the Office of Management and Budget." (Press-Enterprise)

The idea is that if a regulation would cut pollution enough to extend an older person's life, how much would that be worth in dollars, compared with how much it would cost the polluter to comply. The Environmental Protection Agency was told to apply that discounted value when it was trying to assess whether new anti-pollution regulations would be worth the costs they would impose on the polluting industries.

I don't know about you, but that hit me pretty hard. They are talking about me and a lot of my friends as well as my brothers and sisters in St. Francis. It seems age is a disease in this country. No where else is aging resisted like we Americans do. And no where else are the elderly looked upon so disparagingly as here at home. We are the only nation on earth that makes a person's age a necessary part of their identity. In newspapers and magazine stories we read, "Bill Smith, age 35, was quoted today...or Mae Bell, age 85, was being sought..." And in the numbers far too often, lies the value of the person in our society.

I saw a young man on "Larry King Live" who has a terminal illness, but he doesn't let his illness define who he is. His name is Matty Stepanak and he has written some beautiful poems entitled "Heart Songs." He has published four books of his poems and he illustrates them all. He was asked about his philosophy of life. His answer was astounding for the wisdom it contains. He said, "Remember and cherish the past, but don't live there. Look to the future, but don't count on it. Live in the present moment and really savor it, cause that's where life is."

When age is used as some kind of negative assessment, rather than as a gauge of gains, the present moment shrivels into insignificance. We begin to hide its meaning in face-lifts, tummy tucks, liposuction, toupees, heavy makeup and exercises that become a way to deny who we are instead of being a way to be healthy. It isn't that our losses don't bring us pain. It's that the pain simply makes us remember what a blessing it was to have had what ever we lost.

All of life is a series of gains and losses. Every stage of life brings with it a task of its own. Because what we don't do today—learn how to deal with people, make career choices, get to know our children, contribute to the betterment of the world, take responsibility for our lives—will come to haunt every other period of our life. Refusing to move on only denies us that new pleasure.

Brothers and Sisters, getting old is life's last adventure. It's that time of life when we have everything we'll ever get. And that means that for the first time in our life, we are free to enjoy every bit of it. So no matter what our society says about us, every night before you go to sleep, ask yourself to name three good things that happened to you that day. Do it every single night and getting up the next morning will be a gift, whatever its burdens. Then at the end of our life we can say with Hugh Noonan, OFM, "I'm glad I was here."



The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

By

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The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Tracing Its Origins and Identifying Its Central Components By Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M. The Franciscan Heritage Series Volume One. The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University St. Bonaventure, New York 2003. 72 pages

A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World by Ilia Delio, O.S.F. The Franciscan Heritage Series Volume Two. The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University St. Bonaventure, New York 2003. 47 pages

The Franciscan Heritage Series will consist of a series of pamphlets authored by or sponsored by scholars on the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition of the English-Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor. Only the two listed above have been published. They are for those members of the general public, including Secular Franciscans, who are interested in an understanding of Franciscan theology. The Commission began with theology because its members thought that theology would provide the clearest orientation to the Franciscan mission in contemporary society. Later pamphlets in the series will deal with the Franciscan view of the social order. The first two provide the necessary background for that understanding.

That theology does not need to be difficult is demonstrated in these pamphlets. They are simply and clearly written. Anyone who wants to understand the Franciscan view of the social order can start with these books.

It is important to remember from the beginning of our study that theology is not dogma. Theology is a *reflection* on faith. Different theological traditions exist within the Catholic Church. The Dominican, the Augustinian, and the Franciscan traditions all have the approval of the Church. If the Franciscan theological reflections are not what you learned in grade school or high school, it is because your teacher was speaking from a different theological tradition. One is not right and the other wrong.

As you know, Francis and Clare were not theologians in the scholarly sense of the

university professors of their day. They did reflect on their faith based on scripture and Church teaching and tradition, and they did impart their reflections to others. They are called “vernacular” theologians because their reflections were in the language of the people rather than in that of medieval scholars. How did their vernacular theology become part of academic theology? That is what you will find out when you read these books.

Francis spoke often of the *humility* of the Incarnation. In Francis’s vision, God could have chosen to come to earth as a great lord or king. Instead he chose to come to a poor family. No political or religious leaders were present at his birth. Shepherds were a class of persons looked down upon by religious Jews. The three kings were gentiles, not Jews. From the point of view of the wealthy and powerful in his nation, the arrival on earth of Jesus in Bethlehem was an insignificant event. Understanding the humility of the Incarnation, Francis understood the humble presence of God in all of creation. All created things are brothers and sisters because all have the presence of the Holy God in a humble way.

When Francis considered the *passion* of Our Lord, it was *love* that he saw as the driving force. Jesus endured the passion because he loved us. In John’s Gospel Francis read about Jesus as the Word become flesh: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this light was the light of the human race, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:1-5) Francis understood this to mean that Jesus was present in the Trinity from the beginning and is incarnate in all created things.

Bonaventure, who was born in Italy, lived from 1217 or 1221 to 1274. He was a leading professor at the University of Paris, as well as the seventh Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor. He developed a theology that was true to the insights of Francis. At the time Bonaventure lived, the universe was thought of as a closed system with our earth at its center. This closed universe was orderly and had a beginning, middle, and would have an end. It was created by God, in time, out of nothing. The world was created by a Trinitarian God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the theology of Bonaventure, God created the world and all creatures to be in relationship with God and with one another.

Christ was present at the creation. The Incarnation of Jesus as true God and true man was planned from the beginning. Christ was not an afterthought sent to earth to atone for human sins.

John Duns Scotus was born in Scotland and lived from 1266 to 1308. For Scotus the reason for *all* divine activity is *love*. God did not have to create anything. He created the world and all things in it because of love. Love is at the center of God's nature. Like Bonaventure, Scotus said that God became human out of love, rather than because of human sin. The divine desire to become incarnate was present from the beginning of creation. All creation was made in order that Christ could become incarnate. We were created because there had to be beings capable of understanding and responding to the Incarnation. This is Scotus's doctrine of the primacy of Christ.

There is much more to it than has been briefly sketched here. The direction a Franciscan view of the social order will take is apparent from the theological explanations in the pamphlets. It will emphasize the relationship between God and

all created things, and the relationship of created things to one another. For Franciscans, the earth and every created thing in it vibrates with God's presence and love.

This understanding of the Incarnation is part of our Secular Franciscan Rule. "Christ the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life he has come to give abundantly." (SFO Rule Article 4)

According to Father Lester Bach, O.F.M. Cap, "Jesus is the human expression of God's love. He makes visible a God who always loves us. A God who came among us because of an inner Trinitarian love for all of creation. Francis understood love as God's driving force, as Jesus' driving force, as the work of the Holy Spirit. We Franciscans believe that love brought Jesus to earth. Our sins (negative power) did not bring Jesus to earth. God's love (positive power) did bring Jesus to earth as the sign of God's love walking our earth in human form." (Bach, Lester, *Pick More Daisies: Ongoing Formation for Secular Franciscans*. pages 40-41)

**Regional and Fraternity Roundup: What is Going On in the Regions and Fraternities
Since we Posted Our Actions After the ACC**

**Holy Trinity Region
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Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Peace and Justice Program:

The Holy Trinity Region Fraternity's Peace and Justice Commission, with several Secular Franciscans of local fraternities, participated in the January 17, 2005 Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition's 30th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Commemorative Program, in Cincinnati, Ohio; including the Fountain Square Peace and Justice Prayer Rally, Memorial Walk, and Interfaith Peace and Justice Service at the Cincinnati Music Hall, in Cincinnati, Ohio, honoring the peace and justice dream of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The theme of the celebration was "The Dream Continues. Four Decades: Civil Rights/Voting Rights."

Nonmilitary Children's Christmas Toy Drive:

The Holy Trinity Region Fraternity's Peace and Justice Commission, in working with the local fraternities, sponsored a Nonmilitary Christmas Toy Drive, and accepted nonmilitary safe children's toys; that were delivered to the disabled children at Saint Joseph Orphanage and Saint Aloysius Orphanage, of Cincinnati, Ohio, for the disabled children's Christmas holiday celebrations. Also, **St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity**, of Cincinnati, Ohio, during its annual local fraternity Christmas party, brought many nonmilitary Christmas toys for the disabled children at the orphanages, instead of its usual Christmas gift exchange with the fraternity members.

Thanksgiving Day Food Drive:

Last November, the Holy Trinity Region Fraternity's Peace and Justice Commission, in working with the region's fraternities, sponsored a Thanksgiving Day Food Drive, accepting canned and dry goods donations for areas' food pantries. The dry canned food donations was delivered to the Interfaith Food Pantry, and to the Free Store/Food Bank, in Cincinnati, Ohio, for the distribution of Thanksgiving Day Dinner Food Baskets to the areas' hungry and needy families' Thanksgiving Day celebrations. Also, **Little Portion Fraternity**, of Fort Thomas, Kentucky, had their own generous Thanksgiving Food Drive, that donated the food to a good charitable organization feeding the hungry.

Mount Alverno Fraternity
Redwood City, California
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This is a sample of the work regularly performed by our fraternity, Mount Alverno Fraternity in Redwood City, CA, and our commitment to our brothers and sisters in need regarding peace and justice. Since we are a diverse group covering many communities, this will give you an idea of the scope and span of our commitment to our world.

In service to the Church we have members covering all the liturgical ministries, as well as making connections outside of Sunday Mass. Members are involved with feeding the homeless in a monthly program called "Sandwiches on Sunday" (SOS). We have Home Ministers, Detentions Ministers, members of St. Vincent de Paul, Catechists and volunteers in parish offices.

Outside of the parishes our members are engaged with programs at the Francis Center (packing food and clothing for distribution to the poor); corresponding with death row inmates; in anti-war rallies; helping with the missions of India and Africa; working for rights for the developmentally delayed; and working to end the death penalty. Also, we have members who travel to different countries at times and help with mission programs.

We may not all be working on the same projects together, however, we all feel the Holy Spirit working through us to bring comfort and peace to others through our individual sense of justice.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our work and interests with our Franciscan Family. Looking forward to hearing from other fraternities and to listen for new ideas.

God's Peace and All Good to you!

Public Christians - How Do They Do That?
Mother Cabrini Region
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This is the theme of the Mother Cabrini Region's next Apostolic Action Workshop. Every year, in March, we present inspiring speakers to keep us excited about the commissions and help us to get new ideas. The cost of \$10.00 includes a catered lunch.

Speakers will share how they felt God calling them to act. Our first speaker will be Jill Stanek. A nurse, she found a baby born alive after an abortion, left to die in a hospital's dirty linen closet. She has a powerful story to tell and it's sure to get you involved in pro-life. Jill was instrumental in getting the Born Alive Bill passed.

Next, Colette Wisniewski will share her experience at Ft. Benning, Georgia, in a dramatic presentation. Colette took part in the annual demonstration to close the School of the Americas (now known as WHICS). Every American should know about this school and its record of shame. Do you know?

Susan Tassone was miraculously healed at Medjugorje. Now she will teach us how and why to pray for the Poor Souls in Purgatory before the Blessed Sacrament. What a fitting devotion in the Year of the Eucharist!

Diana Faust of Franciscan Outreach, and Dave Krug of Port Ministries, will share how the Lord has called them. They will also tell what's new and needed at our two Chicago-area Franciscan ministries.

We'll also talk about how a fraternity can find a ministry. Do you need some encouragement to get started working in the commissions? We will have a break-out session to discuss the various commissions to see where you would like to work.

We have a monthly newsletter called Apostolic Action Newsletter. In it we pass along news releases from the P&J Commission and other commissions, also relevant information on issues. The current month has information about our upcoming workshop, why we don't need research on embryonic stem cells, how to find the registered sex offenders in your neighborhood, a prison program, and the H2O project for Youth and Young Adult groups.

Our web site, www.ilsfo.org, currently has two years worth of issues available.

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Many of the members of Mother of God Fraternity feel that some television programs have become "much too raunchy and irreverent," according to Maureen Brosman, Regional Peace and Justice Commission Chair. They sent a letter signed by seven fraternity members and agreed to by five more members to Yoshio Iniaba, President and CEO of Toyota Motor Company, the sponsors an offensive television program. The letter read in part:

". . . A flood of offensive material destroys family values and seriously harms American's children and grandchildren. And, corporations like yours are paying for it with their advertising dollars.

In particular, TV was poisoned by the August 31, 2004 premiere episode of 'Father of the Pride,' aired on NBC-TV and solely and entirely sponsored by your company. The program was put on after weeks of

incessant promotion of the show as 'from the makers of Shrek,' --thus guaranteeing viewing by young children.

Federal law holds networks responsible for what they broadcast, and we as consumers also feel you should be responsible for the content of what you sponsor. We hope and pray you will give this matter some thought and reflection. We do not want to be ashamed of owning our Toyotas."

In the reply written by Sharon H. (no last name) of Toyota National Consumer Relations, Toyota said its sponsorship of programs is based on "the level of interest generated by the American public." They claim to have no control over the material of Father of the Pride, nor do they know the content in advance. "Further, we hope that you will understand that advertising is based on the high viewership Father of the Pride receives from the majority of the American Public, not on the controversial stance taken."

The Parents Television Council is a group from which we glean information, as many of us feel that some television programs have gotten much too raunchy and irreverent. This is just one of the topics about which we are concerned; and, I hope these will be of help to you. However, in any case, God Bless the Peace and Justice movement, and the work to which you are dedicated.

Pater Noster Fraternity
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Queen of Peace Region
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Pater Noster, Omaha, Nebraska decided to make monthly contributions to the Franciscan Mission Union for the rest of this year for tsunami relief. One of our members suggested this because the need will last for a very long time.

St. Maximillian Kolbe Fraternity
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Five Franciscan Martyrs Region
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The St. Maximillian Kolbe Fraternity of Deltona, Florida, decided to celebrate the International Day of Peace on September 21st. We created a banner with a picture of a cross on a stained glass window fronted by a white dove. The Banner hung in the vestibule Of St. Clare Catholic Community, the parish where our fraternity meets each month.

A notice was also placed in the parish bulletin making everyone aware of this important date, and asking them to spend one day doing their part to bring peace to the world.



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Our faith calls us to be prophetic voices that challenge systems, structures, and ideologies that rob people of their human dignity and worth. A consistent life ethic demands that we hear the cry of the poor, the homeless, the outcasts, and marginalized.

It is in prayer that we come face to face with the living God. When we allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit, such an encounter can bring about transformation and ever-deepening conversion in our lives. As we encounter God through our daily lives and our prayerful listening to Scripture and the teachings of the church, let us pray that we become a seamless garment that witnesses to the dignity and sacredness of human life at all its moments and in all its forms. Jesus' seamless garment is an image that constantly calls us to unity and consistency in our respect for life.

Father James Scullion, O.F.M. *The Call to a Consistent Ethic of Life.*
<http://www.wau.org/about/authors/scullion1.html>



The moral teaching of the Church has both pastoral and public significance. Pastorally, a consistent ethic of life is a contribution to the witness of the Church's defense of the human person. Publicly, a consistent ethic fills a void in our public policy debate today. Pastorally, I submit that a Church standing forth on the entire range of issues which the logic of our moral vision bids us to confront will be a Church in the style of both Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* and in the style of Pope John Paul II's consistent witness to life. The pastoral life of the Church should not be guided by a simplistic criterion of relevance. But the capacity of faith to shed light on the concrete questions of personal and public life today is one way in which the value of the Gospel is assessed

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin *The William Wade Lecture Series* St. Louis University March 11, 1984
<http://www.priestsforlife.org/magisterium/bernardinwade.html>

Within the Catholic Community, there was a general recognition that all the campaign issues are moral issues. The sharp division here is between those who give unquestionable priority to abortion over all other moral issues and those that see it as one of many important life issues that must be weighed. The majority of the authorities in the church, including the Vatican and the U.S. Bishops' Conference, have taken the latter position, but that has not settled the often bitter conflict. Resolving this moral difference is one of the critical challenges facing Catholics.

Father Jim Hug, S.J. *Social Justice 2005: Responding to the U.S. Election.* Center Focus from the Center of Concern Issue No. 165 / January 2005