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God's Grace is Out There

William Wicks, SFO, National Minister

Some of you who watch X-Files might recall the rallying cry of Fox Moulder, "The truth is out there." Of course, the program has nothing to do with finding the spiritual truth. It is concerned with aliens from outer space and government conspiracies. But Moulder and his red haired partner Scully spend episodes tenaciously searching for the truth that is out there.

I hope you have been inspired, as I have been, with Richard Morton's articles in recent TAU-USA newsletters which encourage us to find God within. God is within each of us and it behooves us to find that presence, embrace it, and release it to the world. That being the case, we must recognize that God is present in others, regardless of their spiritual disposition. Then why, if that is true, is it so difficult to recognize the presence of God in many others? Perhaps we don't know how to look.

I have always been fascinated with a statement made by Mother Teresa, "I find Christ in the wound of a dying Hindu."

Or perhaps we are predisposed to see God's absence. I have always been fascinated with a statement made by Mother Teresa, "I find Christ in the

wound of a dying Hindu." Certainly that is the last place I would look for Christ. But then Mother Teresa had the saintly way of not judging: "If you judge, you have no time to love."

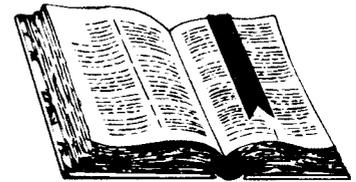
Our truth that is out there is vividly expressed by Elizabeth Dreyer in her book, Earth Crammed with Heaven, where she writes:

The truth to keep before us as ministers [we are all ministers of God's word] is that God is already present in the world in more ways and more intimately than we can imagine. Granted, we also abuse, reject and are blinded to this presence, but this failure cannot obliterate the primary task of ministry which is to "uncover," "evoke," or "re-present" the presence of God. There is a profound sense in which talk of "bringing God to the world" smacks of an arrogance too bold to contemplate. From this vantage point, then, an important task of the minister is to see - not only the needs of people, but the ways in which Grace is present in our world. The ability to recognize, name, affirm and celebrate goodness is an

unparalleled gift of ministry - a gift that can be used to build up the people and give glory to God.

Saint Francis discovered this Grace when he embraced the leper. Grace was there waiting to be uncovered. Francis took the chance and found the sweetness of Grace. Recall how the leper was despised during Francis' day. With us today are spiritual, as well as physical, lepers. We tend to place ourselves at a safe distance from them. We tend to disassociate ourselves from, or subconsciously fail even to notice, these spiritual lepers. They are the ones who are headed to hell. We are faithful members of Church. They are out there sinning - they don't accept Christ, so they are lost. They are caught up in the pleasures of the world - wait till Judgment Day, we tend to think.

In her book, Elizabeth Dreyer states, "Because we have not always taken proper care to distinguish between 'the world' and 'sin', we have often found ourselves, as Christians, with a 'we-they' mentality, ..." It is human to take sides. It is human to rally around the Christian flag over and against the world. But Christ did not do this. Among Christ's friends were the tax collector, the prostitute, and even the rich. The Gospel of Luke, Chapter 19, tells the story of Zacchaeus the



tax collector, where Jesus invited Himself to Zacchaeus' house for dinner. There were murmurs, "He has gone to a sinner's house." Our secularity calls us into the world with all of the risks. And there are risks. I feel compelled to point out the importance of a strong relationship with God through prayer and the Sacraments, and the strong awareness of the God within. This almost goes without saying. We must be spiritually sound when we venture into the domain of the world.

Life is simple. We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent, and God is shining through it all the time. This is not just a fable or a nice story. It is true. If we abandon ourselves to God and forget ourselves... God shows Himself everywhere, in everything - in people and in things, and in nature, and in events. It becomes very obvious that God is everywhere and everything, and we cannot be without Him. It's simply impossible.

Thomas Merton

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Life in Fraternity: Secular Franciscans Are Not "Lone Rangers"!

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And again we wish you: Happy Anniversary! The Ongoing Formation section of this issue of TAU-USA concludes the Commissions' series of reflections on the 1978 Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. It does not, however, conclude the National Fraternity's celebration of this wonderful gift of the Church to us. The upcoming **All Commissions' Conference** at Saint Bonaventure University, June 24-27, 1999, will also be a special part of the festivities!

Chapter Three of our Rule is entitled "Life in Fraternity". Consistent with the Second Vatican Council's view of the Church as "the People of God", the articles which comprise this final chapter of the Rule remind us that our Franciscan response to the challenge of the Gospel necessarily has an essentially *communal* dimension to it. While it is true that the development of a personal relationship with the Lord is also important, being a Secular Franciscan (or any Franciscan, for that matter!) is much more about a communal presence in the Church and the world than about personal piety and devotionism. We are Franciscans primarily for the sake of the Church and the world which need the witness of our commitment to the Gospel life; our own personal sanctification and salvation come about in the context of our communal response of "going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel". The Rule makes it absolutely clear that the norm of our way of life is "life in fraternity". There may be lots of Rangers, but there are no "Lone Rangers" in the Secular Franciscan Order!

It is true that there are "isolated" Secular Franciscans in our country. These are brothers and sisters who were formed in the womb of a local fraternity, who contributed to its life and mission, and who now find themselves unable to participate on a regular basis in their fraternity due to distance, inability to get out of the house, etc. Yet these sisters and brothers continue to remain members of their fraternity. Individual Secular Franciscans in this position and their fraternities have a serious responsibility to go the proverbial "extra mile" in their efforts to stay in touch with each other.

Our reflection on Chapter Three of the Rule reminds us that we – each and every one of us – are part of a graced reality that is larger and more encompassing than ourselves, the experience of fraternity as it is realized on the local, regional, national, and international levels (cf. Article #20). Do we ever stop to think of ourselves as existing in relationship with the

[W]e - each and every one of us - are part of a graced reality that is larger and more encompassing than ourselves,

entire Order worldwide, or are we perhaps too bound up in our own little myopic view of the world?

The importance of our servant leadership is stressed in Article #21, a function of service exercised in a particular way by our Ministers and Councils at each level of fraternity life. What are our own attitudes toward servant leadership in the Order? Are we supportive of our leaders or antagonistic toward them? How generous are we toward making ourselves available to serve our fraternities? Or do we have the stance, "Better them than me!" If we are serving in positions of leadership, how willing are we to leave those positions when our term of service is completed? Are we tempted to cling to authority?

The local fraternity is "the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members" (Article #22). What is our attitude toward our local fraternity? Is the monthly gathering/meeting more of a joy to look forward to or a burden to be dreaded? What is our own personal contribution to either of these views we have of our fraternities?

Article #23 stresses the importance of formation, profession, and dialogue conducted in truth and charity. What are our attitudes toward our own initial and ongoing formation? Do we see formation as something vital to our continuing conversion as Christians and Franciscans or as something we don't really need? How willing are we to make our needs and concerns known to other members of the fraternity, and how willing are we to listen, really listen, to others as they express their needs and concerns to us?

Article #25 exhorts our leadership to "organize regular and frequent meetings of the community as well as meeting with other Franciscan groups, especially youth groups." How broad is our definition of "other Franciscan groups"? What is our attitude toward other members of the Catholic Franciscan movement (friars, Poor Clares, Third Order religious)? How about toward our non-Catholic Franciscan brothers and sisters (Anglican/Episcopalian Franciscans, Lutheran Franciscans, the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans)? Do we truly accept all of us as members of the one Franciscan Family? If not, why not? What is our attitude toward the youth? Do we see them primarily as providing future new members to the SFO? How willing are we to share our charism with them even if they are not destined for our Order?

Finances are a part of everyone's life, including that of our Secular Franciscan fraternities. Article #25 requires us to think about our responsibility to share our financial resources with the Order "according to our means."



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Fraternity

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The dictionary defines fraternity as the state or quality of brotherhood and sisterhood. The Rule makes reference to a fraternity as a "community of love," an extension of home, or connection to place or space. In this regard, the "Canticle of The Sun" by Saint Francis may be the

most encompassing expression ever made about fraternity, extending his "community of love" to the far reaches of the sun and moon, including all in between. His heart was lifted by all he sensed and experienced in

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creation, realizing it was God reaching out in love, which was testimony and confirmation to his own depth of perception. His brother-sister relationship spoke of a divine connection to God in everything. It's why he preached to the birds to praise their Maker, and felt so confident in taming brother wolf of Gubbio. So perfect was his trust, that he could calmly watch his habit burn after leaning too close to the fire, while commanding his friars not to hurt his brother fire as they tried to douse the flames. It was an expression of total submission...perfect trust. If left scarred by the flame, in all likelihood he would have regarded it as a mark of God's love, without questioning God's purpose and intent so not to intrude on his faith and humility. Every handiwork of the Lord was a gift that poured out grace to Francis. Being his humble followers, and living according to his example, this same opportunity belongs to us.

Depending upon our perception of community, so becomes the extent of our fraternal relationships with all in God's creation, whether it be from a point of solitude or in a crowd, on a quiet wooded path or through bars of a prison. We have many brothers and sisters yet to discover. Otherwise, without even realizing, we create barriers of prejudice, resulting in a form of polarization.

*As our love grows,
so does love in the
world....*

There are those who love the tree, but not the insect that eats the leaf. Others will love the butterfly, but not the moth. The daisy is beautiful to most, though the

dandelion deserves extermination. As we continue citing examples of prejudice, our fraternity, or the entire family of God becomes smaller for each distinction we make. We can only love what we value. The possibilities of extending all that we value are endless.

It's beneficial to draw stock of ourselves and list all those

people, creatures, and places we dislike or fear, while considering all we have yet to meet. As the list grows, our "community of love" becomes smaller, thus depriving ourselves from experiencing the love of a far greater number of brothers and sisters. It is always beneficial to

extend the boundaries of heart. Otherwise injustice and exploitation grows, for what and where we do not experience love, care and witness are not likely to be expressed. It's with this understanding, in part, that the Apostolic Commissions were organized. The Commissions broaden the understanding and concept of fraternity in a broader and more fraternal context in reaching out to the entire community of God.

As our love grows, so does love in the world, for where we choose to go love will grow there, as well. Once Francis returned to the leper by the road and kissed him, he was touched and love grew in him and in the leper. To whom, what, or where should we return to touch and be touched in the same way?

Questions for reflection:

- 1.) What might keep us from being reminded of God's love more often?
- 2.) How might we benefit from expanding our fraternal relationships?
- 3.) Where do we feel the need for expanding the community of love may be greatest?



The following is a summary of Charlie Spencer's Report to the NAFRA gathering, October 16, 1998.

The Ecology Commission has received over one thousand pieces of correspondence this year, and responses have been made in a timely manner. A forty-two page ecology manual has been published, and it will be a working document which is constantly updated.

The "Guardian of Creation" is a networking newsletter which serves as a resource and information document for the regions. The Ecology Commission website has proven to be a great resource, which is widely used. Charlie is also looking into a historical restoration of the garden at San Damiano, and feels that it would be a good project for the International Order to pursue. This is the sixth year of the Wildflower Garden sale and it has been very successful as a means of raising funds as well as preserving native flowers.

The Environmental Health Conference at Graymoor was very ecumenical, with all faiths expressing their concern for creation, but Charlie expressed his disappointment that it hadn't been promoted better. In closing, Charlie warned us against becoming "spiritual couch potatoes" and urged Franciscans to action.

Life In Fraternity = Fraternity As Family

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"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Men do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket. They set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, your light must shine before men so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father." (Matt. 5:14-16)

As Franciscans we fulfill this vocation of shining our light according to the example given us by Francis. He considered all creatures and all inanimate objects in the world to be the expressions of the wisdom and love of our heavenly Father. He sensed that Jesus Christ, His Son, had sanctified all creation by becoming a human being. We, as Secular Franciscans, should emulate Francis' care and concern for all of God's creation.

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Francis also believed that Jesus Christ had made all men and women brothers and sisters. If we follow the example of Francis, we are to treat all people as members of our family. We are to welcome others and give them the love and care we began to learn about when we were born. Secular Franciscans are called to fulfill Christ's work of bringing salvation to all creation. We are called to act as instruments of peace in a world of strife. We are called to proclaim the Good News to all nations. According to Article 14 of the SFO Rule, "Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively." This is why we do not work only as individuals but we work in community. The ministries we perform as individuals are experiences we share when we come together; and we perform other ministries as a group to show our face as fraternity.

Should "Franciscan" also be our family name as followers of Francis?

Our Secular Franciscan Fraternities are not different than our own families. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We carry the family name, Franciscan. Should

"Franciscan" also be our family name as followers of Francis? When families talk about their family lives, they include stories of joy and sorrow, struggles as well as daily routines. Every family member participates in each of these concerns of life. Sharing joys, victories, dreams and hopes may be easier for some members than sharing the failures, losses, and disappointments in our lives, but we should try to share all that we have. It would be as unrealistic to share only the good in our lives as it would be to eat only ice cream and cake. By sharing our difficulties and faults as well as our joys and our successes, we share our total identity, we share our humanity in all its imperfections, so we may work

together to be better people and a stronger community. Our Secular Franciscan family can make the difference in helping us accept and/or mend the brokenness in our lives if we allow others to share in our lives.



Literally, from the very beginning, the Christian worshipping community identified itself as a **servant-church** and acknowledged its mission of being out there in the real world at the points of human **need** – material and spiritual – **both**. This is what it **means** to be part of a Christian community. Not only must we take time to listen to God, but we must also take time to listen to each other. There is no possibility of carrying out our ministry of **service**, no possibility of meeting people at the point of their **needs**, unless we are **listening**. That means trying to see and feel the problems and needs of others as **they** see them. This is what makes **effective** Christian witness.

Sunday Sermons: Voicings Publication, Vol. 24 No. 1, p. 53.

Our common life in fraternity supports the commitment we have made. We listen to the concerns of our brothers and sisters with an open heart and mind. When we take the time to share our hopes, dreams, pain and struggles, we become connected and bonded by life's journey. By doing these things we commit ourselves to our brothers and sisters. These experiences can only bring us closer to Christ, Saint Francis formed his family and listened to the concerns of his brothers. When we are called to community life through the fraternity, we belong to one another so that we may learn to live our Franciscan charism, to fulfill our vocation.

The Light will then shine from the heavens so we may all see His will and bring forth the Kingdom of God.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Discuss spiritual growth and community building.
2. How do we foster Gospel living?



"We are here to make all things whole. The heart of our vocation is to restore the society, the disintegrated, the fragmented. We, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, are to reconcile, to bring back together the families, the homes, and wherever we see brokenness, to offer solace. We are whole-makers. What we face is the fear of making commitments. That causes us to remain in our brokenness."

Emanuela De Nunzio, Minister General of the SFO

Fraternity – the Privileged Place

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Do you ever have times when everything seems to be pointing in the same direction, your path is clearly unfolding somewhere, but you don't quite see where it is going?

This happened to us this week. Our fraternity is revisiting the wonderful book, *Fully Mature With the Fullness of Christ* by Benet Fonck, OFM, for our ongoing formation. At our meeting this week we reflected on chapter 9, which is titled "By Being Sensitive and Loyal to the Church." The chapter opens with and devotes a lot of discussion to Article 22 of our Rule. We had a deep and lively discussion in the meeting in which everyone shared, and some very important things were said about obedience and identity as Church.

Then, two days later, we are sitting down to write an article on Chapter 3 of the Rule, and what do we encounter again but Article 22.

Article 22 states:

The local fraternity is to be established canonically. It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.

A visible sign of the Church, the community of love! And THE privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members! Wow! That's a pretty tall order for a group of human beings, with all the frailties you find in any endeavor that may be colored by personalities, personal agendas, and conflicts both realized and unspoken.

When thinking about our own fraternity and how it measures up, I realize that it is largely **because** of those personalities, differences, and, yes, conflicts that it is able to approach fulfilling the vision in Article 22.

Our fraternity is small, but we have men and women, married and single, people born in New Jersey and people born in other countries,

government workers, people who have left secure employment to follow where the Holy Spirit called them, people who struggle where they are and people who support struggles elsewhere. Some of us were born in the Church, some of us came from other traditions. We have had times in our fraternity when the fraternity itself nearly came apart because of disagreements among us. At other times we have shared great joy. And we have shared each other's pain.

*We couldn't have done it
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inspiration of St Francis.*

Throughout all of this, we have prayed together, we have shared stories of ministry and been inspiration to each other, we have challenged each other, and we have grown. We couldn't have done it without the guidance of our Rule and the inspiration of St. Francis.

When we follow his example, it becomes clear to us that God becomes revealed to us in relationships. The great gift of our fraternity is that we are all committed to following Jesus, to living the gospel with the example of Saint Francis. When it becomes difficult, when we do have differences, we know that there is a way to work through them. We didn't always know this. But by continual reflection and conversion, by turning to God, by asking for help, by letting ourselves be guided by St. Francis, we find ourselves moving in the right direction.

Francis points out to us that there will always be conflict, and he shows us ways to deal with it. He gives us examples of reconciliation, relationship, and love. In fraternity, because we love each other, we are willing and able to hear new things, to listen without judging, and to be open to the lead of the Holy Spirit. We learn to engage in true dialogue.

Murray Bodo, OFM writes "Human love is in fact the only way to God, because it requires constant dialogue, and dialogue is the very nature of the Trinity itself. To be in dialogue with another is to enter into the very nature of God." And he reminds us that "the early Franciscan brothers' and sisters' mutual love and affection was such a powerful sign of God's Kingdom present among us. It made religion credible because of God's Spirit made manifest in that love which is only possible where there is true dialogue, as God Himself is revealed and made tangible in that Blessed Trinity which is a Unity of Persons in dialogue with one another and with us." (*The Way of Saint Francis*, pp. 126-127).

It is not always easy, in fact it is usually not easy, but we thank God for the privilege of this "privileged place" and the bounteous gifts of God's grace that we receive from our fraternity. What an inspired structure we Secular Franciscans are blessed with!

Some questions for reflection & discussion –

1. Does my fraternity engage in true dialogue, or are the members too intent on making their own positions heard that we fail to really listen to each other?
2. How does our fraternity help develop a sense of Church? In what ways?



"Jesus' commandment to 'love your neighbor as yourself' is the heart of Franciscan Peace and Justice; and Francis understood that we are all children of the same [Father] God."

Dan Mulholland, October 16, 1998, NAFRA Gathering



The Work of Building Fraternity

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Chapter Three of our Rule is entitled **Life in Fraternity**. Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM, in his commentary on Article 20 of the Rule found in **From Gospel To Life**, stresses that **fraternity** is the characteristic of all Franciscan groupings, whether local, regional, provincial, national, or international. A new dimension given to Secular Franciscan life ...is an awareness of (and, hence, a mandate to achieve) a fraternity spirit



and style operation on levels beyond that of the local fraternity. Regional, provincial, national, or international groupings are not just a federation of independent, semi-autonomous fraternities or a forum for exchange, but actually a fully operating community with its own character, interactivity and authority...

Fr. Benet notes that while fraternities have to carry out their responsibilities they are much more than just bureaucratic units. Fraternities flourish through "loving and trusting relationships between members."

Yet a true sense of fraternity has been developed at this level through the introduction of a few simple but beautifully effective rituals.

How does a fraternity go about cultivating loving and trusting relationships among its members? Take the National Fraternity for example. Meetings are infrequent and there is always more work to be done than time in which to do it. Yet a true sense of fraternity has been developed at this level through the introduction of a

few simple but beautifully effective rituals.

The first night we come together, there is a "sharing of life." Everyone has an opportunity to speak briefly but openly of their joys and sorrows of their life. Sometimes we are moved to the point of tears. Always we come to appreciate one another's shared humanity and our bond as children of God and brothers and sisters following Christ in the footsteps of Francis. This simple sharing serves to put the work to follow in its proper perspective.

Then, near the conclusion of days and nights of meeting, there is a shared meal at a local restaurant away from the retreat center we have called home. This festive

occasion reinforces the bonds of fraternity and serves as a thanksgiving for all that has been accomplished.

At the level of local fraternity, our pre-fraternity meets six times every two months or so. This frequency certainly builds

a sense of fraternity. Moreover, there are gatherings when we feel free to set aside our planned agenda because of a pressing matter of personal concern for one of the members. Sometimes another fraternity member has some valuable insight or advice to offer. Even without the discovery of a solution to a personal problem, there is great value in just having a place where a member knows that it's safe to unburden oneself of a matter that's been weighing on their heart. Then we pray. And then we socialize!

Dialogue Starter

1. How does your fraternity develop loving and trusting relationships among its members?



Life in Fraternity: Secular Franciscans Are Not "Lone Rangers"!

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What is our attitude toward the common fund of our fraternities? Do we contribute grudgingly or lovingly? How do we help shape the priorities toward which the fraternity applies its money? Or are we content to sit back and complain while leaving this responsibility in someone else's lap?

Finally, Article #26 treats the topics of spiritual assistance and visitations. What is our attitude toward our Spiritual Assistants? Do we invite their participation in the life of our fraternity as our companions and guides, or have we sidelined them? Do we still look to them to be our "Directors" as they were under the previous Rule of the Franciscan Third Order Secular? How do we view the pastoral and fraternal visitations which are intended to "promote fidelity to the charism" and strengthen the life of the fraternity? Do we welcome our Visitors or merely tolerate them? Do we invite their guidance or do we see their visits as unnecessary intrusions into the life of our fraternity?

These are hard questions which Chapter Three of our Rule requires us to ask of ourselves as a fraternity and as individual members of the fraternity. But then no one ever said that living the Gospel would be easy. Our Rule of life gives us a graced pattern for incarnating the particularly Franciscan way of following in the footsteps of Jesus after the manner of our Seraphic Father. May the grace of our loving God, sentiments of profound gratitude and the support of our sisters and brothers in fraternity be our great joy and our daily strength.

God give you peace!



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Family Matters

by Carol Gentile, SFO
Chair, National Family Commission

*They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength,
They will soar as with eagles' wings; They will run and
not grow weary, walk and not grow faint. (Isaiah 40:31)*

Courage To Walk In Faith

On September 8-11, 1998, the first ever World Conference on Family Violence was held at Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Center in Singapore. More than 400 delegates from more than 40 countries representing the fields of medicine, law, social work, business, government, and non-governmental organizations attended this conference to share regional solutions to combat the global scourge of family violence.

The Family Commission Chair was asked to be a delegate representing Franciscans International and the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order - USA. All delegates were encouraged to submit an abstract for a presentation. On behalf of the Family Commission Chair, two abstract models were submitted. Over 300 abstracts were submitted and only 100 accepted. Early start program involving parents early in school education and Church Assistance Program were accepted and presented at this International Conference. The following is a draft of the Declaration of the World Conference on Family Violence.

Declaration of World Conference on Family Violence Singapore, September 1998

We, the delegates attending the first World Conference on Family Violence in Singapore, September 8-11, 1998 acknowledge that:

1. Family Violence is a global problem affecting families of all classes and cultures;
2. Isolation is a contributing factor to the entrapment of women in violent relationships;
3. Addressing the problem of family violence requires collaboration within and across disciplines, borders and cultures;
4. Family violence must be understood as an abuse of power and an infringement of one's human rights.

We further believe and affirm it is the right of every human being to live a life free from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To achieve this goal, we will strive to:

- increase public awareness;
- promote professional education and training;
- encourage research in the identification, treatment, and prevention of violence in all its forms;
- develop effective models for legal and judicial intervention; and
- develop integrated services for those who use violence and those who experience it..

We dedicate ourselves to work locally, regionally, nationally and internationally towards ending family violence in our societies.

Recommendations:

Workplace:

1. Promote the employer's responsibility to support the prevention and elimination of family violence in the workplace and at home.

Legal/Judicial:

1. Enact mandatory pro-arrest policies;
2. Train and monitor law enforcement agencies, including police and courts, to ensure safety of complainants and prosecution of perpetrators; and
3. Create a system of internationally recognized protection orders.

Public Policy:

1. Develop a clear and concise definition of family violence;
2. Focus prevention on gender equality;
3. Link local programs to international human rights instruments;
4. Evaluate national laws in light of international human rights instruments;
5. Reduce military expenditures to increase funding for health, education and social services;
6. Ensure economic independence of women;
7. Conduct a worldwide economic analysis of family violence; and
8. Continue to monitor policies of the international monetary fund and world bank to evaluate their impact on family violence.

Medical:

1. Create multidisciplinary coordinated approaches to family violence involving the community;
2. Educate and train health care providers regarding family violence;
3. Include family violence in the curricula of health care professionals;
4. Create laws and protocols requiring universal screening and education on family violence; and
5. Incorporate community based advocates for those who experience violence into the medical setting.

Psycho/Social:

1. Educate parents and those who work with children about the patterns of disclosure of sexual abuse; and
2. Educate every professional about family violence.

Cross Cultural:

1. Promote appropriate cultural and linguistic strategies, messages and access points for interventions in family violence; and
2. Recognize and promote the principle that neither culture nor religion justifies violence.

Religion:

1. Train clergy to understand and respond to family violence; and
2. Create language and education on family violence among the faiths.

Gender:

1. Provide opportunities and support for men who want to challenge stereotypes or views of masculinity and work to end family violence;
2. Challenge limiting gender roles; and
3. Increase awareness of heterosexism and understanding of sexual orientation.

Media:

1. Develop proactive strategies that use the media to raise public awareness of family violence.

International Projects:

1. Create international mechanisms to link the global community, including education, research and awareness;
2. Develop mechanism to translate and disseminate information about family violence;
3. Hold a conference on family violence with emphasis on elder abuse; and
4. Provide internships in family violence for young people.

Research and Evaluation:

1. Improve data collection on family violence;
2. Evaluate shelter programs;
3. Identify prevention strategies, which have been effective in preventing family violence;
4. Develop strategies for research which are global in scope; and
5. Design and implement strategies for early intervention in family violence.

Survivors, Elders and Children:

1. Recognize the specific needs and concerns of those who have experienced and witness violence including children, elders and those with disabilities.

If there is a right consciousness in the heart there will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character there will be harmony in the home.

If there is harmony in the home there will be order in the nation.

If there is order in the nation there will be peace in the world.

—Chinese poem

Remember the Saint Francis Peace Prayer:

Lord, make me an instrument of your **peace**,
Where there is hatred, let me sow **love**;
where there is injury, **pardon**;
where there is doubt, **faith**;
where there is despair, **hope**;
where there is darkness, **light**;
and where there is sadness, **joy**.....

How can we as Franciscans promote peace in these areas?



God's Grace is Out There continued from page one

As Moulder and Scully tenaciously search for the truth that is out there, we Secular Franciscans must tenaciously search for opportunities of God's Grace that is out there. There is such a need, and the world is so deserving. To quote Friar Kevin Schindler-McGraw, OFM Conv. "We are here to make all things whole. The heart of our vocation is to restore the society, the disintegrated, the fragmented. We, the brothers and sisters of Penance are to reconcile, to bring back together families, homes and wherever we see brokenness, to offer solace." We are not alone in this venture. Remember Who goes before us. God's Grace is out there. It remains for us to discover it, and unfold it. And, there in lies the beauty, and the sweetness.

Igniting the Fire!

by Marie Amore, SFO, National Vice Minister

One of my favorite stories is the one about the friar who came to his superior and said, "Good Father, I keep all the fasts, do all the works, pray all the prayers, what is left for me to do?" The superior looked at the friar and he raised his hands high over his head and his fingers appeared as ten burning tapers of fire and he said to the brother friar, "Then, why not become the fire?"

At the Quinquennial Congress last year, Seculars from all over the United States gathered and focused on regaining the passion that inspired Francis and the early Brothers and Sisters of Penance. Something happened at that gathering. We want to believe a fire was started; a fire of the kind that Jesus spoke of when He said: "I have come to light a fire on the earth, how I wish it were already ignited."

The words of Francis become mine as I ponder my call to be a Secular Franciscan. "This is what I want! This is what I am looking for! This is what I long for with all my heart!"

I believe in the SFO. I believe that it is a true vocation. I believe in its mission to build a more fraternal and evangelical world. I believe that Seculars are growing in the knowledge of their own role. I am convinced that the continued effort to refound, to concentrate on the mission will bring forth good fruit. I have confidence in the National leadership. I truly believe that the Spirit leads us and we are going places!

I have faith that most of the people who come to us today are *not* looking for a pious prayer society. They are ready for *conversion* to change their lives. They are looking for a community of people who can encourage, inspire, and support them as they embrace the vocation and the mission. I am inspired by the people who call me on the 1-800-FRANCIS line: they have varied backgrounds, and are sincere. Younger people are being attracted to Francis and his way of life. I believe that the SFO has a proven way of living to offer them.

My experience with professed Secular Franciscans shows that they are in for the long haul. Their dedication and commitment is for a lifetime, not just during a certain part of their lives. Most of my sisters and brothers, *no matter what their age, are engaged in all kinds of ministries* to build up the Church and the local communities where they live. Seventy and eighty years *young*, they volunteer for things like hospital work, parish councils, and community and neighborhood projects. In this age of the laity, we are aware of the social problems, and we can help with the solutions.

If we Franciscans are to love God with our all our hearts, souls and minds, *if we are called to evangelize, if we are called to rebuild the church, if as Gerald Arbuckle says, "A Congregation exists first and foremost, not for its own survival but for the mission of Christ and His Church"* then we can *energize and revitalize one another*. Then all Franciscans need to become the fire that can burn in **this** time to carry on **that** mission. I pray that we are consumed by that fire!

National Fraternity Meeting

Mr. and Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO
Editors, TAU-USA

Due to space limitations, the following article can only attempt to summarize the highlights, and capture the major themes, of a busy and event-filled gathering. For a detailed chronological report on the events of this meeting, please review the Press Room of the National Fraternity Web Site (<http://www.nafra-sfo.org>). – eds.

The National Fraternity Meeting for 1998 was held at Gilmary Diocesan Center near Pittsburgh, PA, from Wednesday October 14 to Sunday October 18. The meeting was well attended, lively, and rewarding. The meeting was hosted by Our Lady of Poverty Region, and the local Alverno Fraternity, who organized memorable evening entertainment, and kept the gathering running smoothly.

The theme for the meeting was *Ecumenism*, a concept which was discussed and examined in varied ways throughout the week. In recognition of this theme, our guest speakers included Anita Catron, TSSF, Minister for the American Province for the Anglican Third Order Franciscans, and Father Paul Ojibway, of the Friars of the Atonement, an Order of Franciscans dedicated to ecumenical activity. He is also the Executive Director of Interfaith Impact, a Washington DC group formed to represent the viewpoint of people of faith to the United States government.

In his well-received presentation, Father Paul encouraged the Secular Franciscans to provide public witness to the mercy and compassion of Christ. He spoke of our role as leaders and witnesses of the Gospel of Reconciliation, saying, "take up the Cross of division, and follow the path of unity".

He spoke about the goals and challenges of the ecumenical movement, saying we must "begin a dialog from within".

The National Fraternity has recently established an Ecumenical Committee. The direction and mission of this committee are still in the formative stages, and were the subject of lively debate.

Father Steven Gross, OFM Conv, a member of the committee, and also a member of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, reminded the assembly that the Franciscan Family is not *just* the Friars and the SFO, but it includes *all* Franciscan men and women all over the world, saying, "The more we embrace *all*, the more healthy and creative we become."

Bill Wicks, SFO, National Minister, recalled the theme of ecumenism in his opening address, quoting Jesus' prayer in John 17:21, "that they may be one".

Bill spoke of three major events which have influenced, and will continue to influence, the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States:

- The Quinquennial Congress of July 1997. Bill stated that it is our mission to bring what we learned at this gathering to the local fraternity level: "Good memories are not enough."

- The Convocation of the Spiritual Assistants held in Denver Colorado last month (*see elsewhere in this issue for a report on the Convocation – eds.*). Bill congratulated the Secular Franciscans for exceeding their commitment of \$20,000 to support this gathering. The theme was "Journeying Together in Communion and Co-responsibility: Painting the Picture of the SFO in the USA".
- The All-Commissions Conference, to be held in June 1999.

Bill said that all the good work and spiritual insights from these events could be lost if we do not bring them to the 18,000 members in the local fraternities.

Our guests also included Sister Eleanor Granger, OSF, Executive Director of the Franciscan Federation, a service organization to 84 member congregations of Third Order Regular Franciscan Sisters and Friars. Speaking of the TOR Federation's history, she explained that it has its beginnings in Pittsburgh, when, in 1965, 40 leaders of communities came together. In 1981, the TOR revised its Rule, and men joined the Federation; 1991 saw the advent of a grass roots movement to form regions. There are currently 14,000 sisters and brothers in membership at this time.

Remarking that the OFM, TOR, and SFO Rules are very similar, Sister asked "so where do we do collaboration?" She explained that the Federation is currently working closely with Franciscans International, the International Franciscan Conference, the English-speaking OFM conference, and the many groups who are working to close the School of the Americas.

The meeting also provided the opportunity for the National Fraternity to receive its regular fraternal and pastoral visits. Marianne Powell, OFS, Councilor to CIOFS for the English speaking countries, came from Denmark as our fraternal visitor. Our pastoral visitor was Father Nils Francis Thompson, OFM from the Conference of General Spiritual Assistants in Rome.

Marianne stated that the purpose of the Fraternal Visit is three-fold:

- to make fraternal corrections;
- to make suggestions; and
- to encourage self-evaluation.

She praised our Formation materials, and told us that she has recommended that CIOFS adopt our Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership.

She was impressed with our practice of dividing work into Commissions, saying that it is a very efficient approach; and she praised the "All Commissions Conference", which is planned for 1999. She was encouraged by the Denver Convocation Report.

Marianne was pleased to say that she found the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States to be highly organized, specialized, ordered, and well-run, and yet

still able to be spontaneous. She said that it is with great joy in her heart that she will submit her report to CIOFS.

In his report, Father Nils said that he misses the SFO in the USA because of our eagerness to work. He thinks that the Commissions approach should be promoted throughout the world: "These are excellent!" He is impressed with the quality and collaboration of the Spiritual Assistance in the US. He praised the SFO/US loyalty to the magisterium and the Continuing Formation at the NAFRA level.

Father then issued a challenge to "Be peacemakers within our Church." Recalling his own Lutheran up-bringing, Father pointed out, "There is holiness outside what we know as the Catholic Church." He urged us to stop polarizing and "Get on with the business of living the Gospel." He further challenged us not to seek only the company of those who agree with us, but to reconcile, asking Jesus to heal the divisions.

Friday was the day to hear reports from the National Commission chairs concerning their activities of the last year and their plans for the future. Each of them stressed the interconnectedness and interdependency of the six Commissions, and looked forward to the All Commissions' Conference next June. (See announcement in this newsletter. — eds.)

The gathering was not all business, but included time for prayer, sight-seeing, and fraternity. One of the highlights of the week, that will surely be long remembered, was the presentation of music and dance, performed by local Franciscan Youth, after the opening Mass on Wednesday. They performed a liturgical dance based on the "Canticle of the Creatures", and Amy Joe Kuba and Melissa Fink signed the song "Thank You for Giving to the Lord" by Ray Boltz.

All in attendance were treated nightly to food and drinks, including Polish, German, and Greek specialties, and local beers and wines. Who could forget "The Mad Bavarian", Bob Hamilton, SFO, from Alverno Fraternity, who played the accordion and an authentic alphorn?



Pictured above enjoying dinner on the "Day Away" cruise (left to right): Art Petit, Lota Piel, Ann Corro, John Sanborn, Father Matt Gaskin, and Gloria Petit.

On Friday afternoon, business was put on hold so that all could attend the Byzantine Divine Liturgy at Saint John the Baptist Cathedral. The principal celebrant was Bishop Basil Schott, OFM. Saturday included a trip into

Pittsburgh to Saint Anthony's Shrine, which is the resting place of thousands of relics. After Mass at the shrine, the "Day Away" festivities concluded with a dinner cruise.

After Morning Prayer and breakfast on Sunday, everyone assembled for the informal Circle Discussion, wherein the ministers discussed possible future projects and re-visited some of the issues discussed previously during the week. The meeting was brought to a close, and, after extended farewells, everyone departed for home.

"Get on with the business of living the Gospel."

"First Impressions are Lasting"

As new editors of TAU-USA, this was our first exposure to the National Fraternity, so we thought we'd add some personal impressions of our experience:

The integrity and commitment of the National Fraternity Council, as individuals and as a body, impressed us immediately. They truly see leadership, not as an opportunity for power, but rather as a call to dedicated service to their brothers and sisters.

We were edified by the united commitment of the Commission chairs, who not only realize the interdependence of the purpose of each commission, but also the interdependence of all levels of fraternity.

The regional fraternity ministers, while engaging in lively discussion, were respectful and loving to each other.

We witnessed fraternity at its finest!



Regional Roundup

Mother Cabrini Region

Mother Cabrini Region, in northeastern Illinois, has a number of councilors concentrating on various aspects of fraternal life. Eight councilors (Visitation; Vocations; Apostolates; Spiritual Life and Liturgy; Communications and Public Relations; Formation; Fraternal Life; and a Councilor at Large) enable the region to make concentrated efforts in each of these areas.

Divine Mercy Region

Divine Mercy Region, in lower Michigan, and Toledo, Ohio, were in the forefront of the battle to defeat "Proposal B" during the November 3 elections. This proposal sought to legalize assisted suicide within the state of Michigan.

It is our sincere hope that we can expand this column with more news from the regions. Please be sure to add us to the mailing list for your regional newsletter:

*Mr and Mrs Antony Outhwaite, SFO, Editors, TAU-USA
6 Light Street
Nuangola, PA 18637*

Secular Franciscan All Commissions' Conference

Forming the Body of Christ – Bringing Forth the Kingdom of God



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For the first time since their establishment, all six National Commissions will join together to present a four-day All Commissions' Conference, for the purpose of dialoguing, building awareness, and energizing all of us to go forth and make a difference!

Just as the Scriptures teach us that the interconnectedness of the members of the Body of Christ (the Church) is essential for building the Kingdom of God (Rom 12:4-8), so the Conference will express the importance of the interconnectedness of the National Commissions to build the same Kingdom.

Franciscan Institute, Saint Bonaventure University, Allegheny, NY
June 24 – 27, 1999

Each Region may send six Commission Chairs and Regional Minister at No Conference Cost. Transportation cost not included.

**For additional information contact Mary Mazotti, SFO
 Phone 209-795-3809; E-mail mkmaz@goldrush.com**

Accommodations are very limited. Preference will be given to Regional Commission Chairs. We cannot guarantee our ability to honor all registration requests.

✂-----REGISTRATION FORM-----✂

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-Mail _____ Region _____

Circle One: Regional Minister Commission Chair Observer

Which Commission are you representing? _____

Do you have any special needs? Please describe. _____

Do you have a special talent to offer? _____

In advance of the conference, you will receive a packet from us giving you more information, including a map to Saint Bonaventure, and a telephone number to use in case of emergency. At that time we will also ask you to let us know your specific travel plans to help us arrange airport pick-ups, etc.

**Thank you for sending this completed form promptly to:
 Dan and Sarah Mulholland, SFO, 855 North Jefferson Street, Arlington, VA 22205**

The Secular Franciscan Approach to Peace and Justice

Dan and Sarah Mulholland, SFO
Chairs, National Peace and Justice Commission
855 N Jefferson Street, Arlington VA 22205
703-524-6017; e-mail Dannymai@aol.com

The four apostolic commissions of the Secular Franciscan Order all have in common the same base from our Rule, which states:

"(4) The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people."

Our Gospel Base

In order to understand what Peace and Justice means for us as Seculars, clearly we must start with Christ, as Francis did. In the Gospel of Saint Matthew Jesus gives us the Great Commandment:

"When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they assembled in a body; and one of them, a lawyer, in an attempt to trip him up, asked him, 'Teacher, which commandment of the law is the greatest?' Jesus said to him: 'You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments the whole law is based, and the prophets as well.'"

We firmly believe that this commandment - to love God and one another as Christ loves us - is the basis from which our call to be peacemakers comes.

As the US Bishops stated in their Pastoral Letter "peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus."

We are called to love one another as Christ loves us. We are called to be in harmony with one another. Flowing from this, our Rule in Article 5 instructs us to "seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ" in all spheres of life. From Article 13, we learn that we are to "accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ." So we see, we all image Christ. We are all in relationship with God and with each other. This brings responsibility.

Saint Francis called all creatures brothers and sisters because he recognized their unity of origin. He saw God in all persons and in all creation. We encounter God in love of our neighbor and we have Saint Francis to show us the way.

Saint Francis announced peace because he truly had peace in his heart. Through conversion, turning to the Lord, he had peace in his heart. And because he was filled with peace, through conversion and love, Saint Francis became a peacemaker. His inner peace flowed

out in witness and service. As Franciscans, we are called to be peacemakers also.

Because he saw God in all people, Francis became a reconciler. He maintained respect for all his brothers and sisters, not making them "enemies" but trying to move them to nonviolent reconciliation through dialogue. Like Saint Francis, we are called to be reconcilers.

As followers of Christ, with Saint Francis as our guide, we are called to live the gospel, to seek inner conversion and peace, to bring the gospel message, as brothers and sisters with all people, as reconcilers of injustice, and in harmony with all of God's creation.



Yosemite Franciscan Experience

A Franciscan Family experience is being planned for Yosemite National Park, California, the second week of May 2000. Secular Franciscans and their families are invited. The beauty of God's creation is ever present in Yosemite Valley, particularly during the month of May. During May the waterfalls are at their fullest, the dogwood and wild iris are in full bloom, the evening Grosbeak are singing a beautiful song, the weather is usually just right, and the summer crowd is not present yet. The cost is estimated to be between \$400 and \$600 per person depending on accommodations and meal choices. Some units with bath accommodate up to five persons. Airfare expense is not included. It is hoped that we will have between 50 and 100 attend. As of now, 20 people have signed up. Reservations must be made early next year.

If you are interested (no commitment required at this time) please return your name, address, phone number and/or e-mail to: Frances Wicks SFO, 3307 Quail Meadows Drive, Santa Maria, CA 93455. She will follow up with a letter to you which will include more details. Please respond soon so that the planning can proceed.

In the Trenches

by Mary Zablocki, SFO
Co-chair, National Work Commission

In August, Ed and I presented a talk in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the TOR Federation's annual gathering. The primary thrust of our talk was the gift and grace of work. We found this to be a natural topic to work with in view of the wonderful privilege and honor it was to be invited to this event.

One of the things I did in preparation for this talk was look up the words gift and give. I wanted to explore the ways grace and gift are different and yet intertwined. I thought of gift as being a passive word, a thing, but give seemed to require some energy, some action.

The word "give", in ordinary usage, has eighteen definitions, and another six in slang usage.

It turned out I was right, but what I discovered about the word "give" was very interesting to me. The word "give", in ordinary usage, has eighteen definitions, and another six in slang usage.

Giving can be anything from making a present of, to passing on a disease; demanding payment to producing milk (if you're a cow). The range of definitions was very broad but a few of them really jumped off the page at me.

An example is to give--to devote, as in "She gives herself to her work"; or to yield, to sacrifice. To yield as a levee that gives way to floodwaters, or a leaf that bends in a breeze. To yield, to sacrifice. I would like to explore this a bit.

Saint Francis admonishes us,

"Therefore, hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, so that He who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally."

In essence Francis is asking us to yield to Christ so that Christ may receive us totally. Now, this doesn't seem that hard on the surface. Christ is wonderful. Jesus' love and acceptance of us is the cornerstone of our faith. So, let's do this. Let us yield to Christ, hold back nothing of ourselves for ourselves. Let us give as the dictionary says, as a levee gives to floodwaters. Yeah, let's start now!

Kind of gets you going doesn't it? But very soon the snags start to surface. They start out small, little sandbags here and there, fortifying our point, securing our position, shoring up our levee against the flood of criticism, the torrent of reasons why we are wrong, the deluge of opinions that so righteously pound away



at us threatening to break our resolve.

Sounds a little like a fraternity meeting doesn't it? Or maybe more like a regional council meeting. Welcome to giving. Rest assured, the snags that come along to divert us from giving ourselves totally to Christ are NOT the criticisms, the opinions, the obstacles found in our fellow Franciscans. The real obstacles that block us from holding back nothing for ourselves are the little sandbags we lay across our feet to keep us upright and unyielding. Every time we fortify ourselves to do battle with one of our fraternity members, whether it is over the use of sugar packets over cubes on the coffee tray at our meetings, or over some very important national issue, we hold back some of ourselves for ourselves and deny not only our friend the benefit of our open heart, but Christ himself.

We work very hard for our fraternities. When we fail to see great things happen, or great good come from our hard work we ask "Why?"

I suggest that it may be because we give our gift without grace. Francis speaks of the "grace of working", Clare refers to the "grace of serving". If we give our gifts grudgingly or resentfully, we hold back the grace for ourselves, and the gift of our work falls flat.

What are we really trying to accomplish? We all hear each other say we want fraternity "life".

What are we really trying to accomplish?

Well, let's talk a little bit about life. As a labor and delivery nurse I know that giving life is the supreme act of yielding. A mother can neither force a baby to be born nor can a child be born without the mother yielding her body to the process. If we are to be life giving rather than simply productive, holy rather than simply renowned, and gracious rather than simply powerful, then we must yield ourselves to our work. In our fraternities, this means we must yield to one another. Let us pray for the grace to really give ourselves to our work as we give our work to our fraternities. Let us pray for the wisdom to recognize what we have been given by Jesus to share with others and then pray for the courage to remove the sandbags that protect us from the dangers of giving, as a levee gives way to floodwaters. Let us pray for trust, that Christ who loves us beyond all reason, will never let us drown.



"Work constitutes a foundation for the formation of family life, which is a natural right, and something that man is called to. These two spheres of values must be properly united and must properly permeate each other."

Pope John Paul II,
Encyclical On Human Work (Laborem Exercens), 1981

Dignitas

Proclaiming the Dignity of Work
National Work Commission

Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO, Chairs,
360 Beard Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14214
716-838-4178; e-mail: zablocki@acsu.buffalo.edu
website: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~zablocki>

How I Discovered the Presence of God on My Job – Part 2

Sally Haddad, SFO is serving the Solanus Casey Region as chair of the Work Commission. Sally works for Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics which manufactures nuclear submarines for the Navy.

In 1983, I participated in a very long strike at Electric Boat. While I was out on strike, I lived in and worked at a Catholic Group Home for the Handicapped in Connecticut. I was all excited when I first moved in, because I was thinking to myself, "This is IT! Now, I am really following Jesus Christ! No more worldly, secular offices for me!" However, this job turned out to be one of the most difficult experiences of my life. I left there in 1985 with a great need for inner healing.

However, God is faithful to His promises, and He brought much good out of my negative experiences. After I left, I began to realize that working in an office did not make me an inferior Christian. In fact, if the office is where God wants someone to be, then it will be the office that will produce the greatest fruit of the Holy Spirit. I also realized that I was happier and doing more good when I was working at Electric Boat than when I was working at the Catholic Group Home. I had money to support ministries that were effective in spreading the Gospel, and I was closer to my family. When I finally returned to Electric Boat in 1986, I was grateful to be there.

Finally, in 1989, there was still one roadblock that God had to remove before I could fully discover the Presence of God on my job. In 1986, I started taking classes at the University of Hartford with the intention of getting a degree in computer science. I still had not lost my desire to be a computer programmer. In 1990, I took an educational leave of absence from Electric Boat in order to work as a student co-op at a software developing company in Manchester, Connecticut called CADKEY. (The inspiration to do all this came to me on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi in 1989.) I loved the job immensely, and I never wanted to leave.

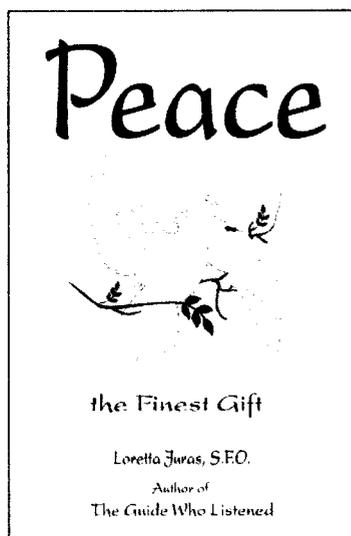
However, CADKEY was not able to offer me a permanent full-time position at the end of my leave, so I had to return to Electric Boat. After I returned to Electric Boat, I began to realize that God sent me to CADKEY in order to learn why He denied my wish to be a computer programmer. When I was working at CADKEY, it was extremely difficult to get a day off from work, and I was expected to work late and on weekends whenever I was asked on a moment's notice. It was very difficult to make plans with other people. Yes, I loved the work, and I did not mind making all those sacrifices for one year. I was able to see that I would have been very unhappy if that

had been a permanent job. Also, the job that I had at CADKEY would have put a serious crimp on the apostolic work that I do.

On the other hand, with Electric Boat, I can take a vacation at my convenience, I am not under any obligation to work overtime if I choose not to work overtime, and I can get a day off when I need it. In other words, I can make plans without being concerned that I would have to cancel them at the last minute because of my job. I am available for any meetings that I would have to attend for the Secular Franciscans on evenings and on weekends or for any other ministries that God might want me to be doing. Finally, Electric Boat is better for my marriage than CADKEY would have been. (I was single when I was working at CADKEY.) Praise God! I am finally content with my job here at Electric Boat, and I will stay here as long it is the will of God.



Book Review



Loretta Juras, SFO, Minister of Saint Patrick's Fraternity, Wilmington, DE, has published her memoirs. This book is a chronicle of her life-long battle with clinical depression. Beautifully written, and deeply personal, the book includes "first aid" for the clinically depressed, and reveals the author's search for and ultimate discovery of the correct medication to relieve her brain chemical imbalance.

Loretta's personal crusade to reach and support clinically depressed people has lead her to publish this book, and make it available for the printing cost alone (\$10.00, plus \$2.00 shipping). She is also accepting speaking engagements.

To contact Loretta, you may write to her at:

Loretta Juras, SFO
2401 Pennsylvania Avenue
Wilmington, DE 19806
or phone her at 302-571-8503.



*"The crucifix is an open book that all can read.
The crucifix is an infinite declaration of love."*

Saint Catherine of Siena

6th Annual Secular Franciscan Order Wildflower Sale & Restoration Initiative

Two Complete Franciscan Wildflower Gardens To Choose From!

The Woodland Garden

Bleeding Heart
Wild Columbine
Sweet Woodruff
Creeping Woodland Phlox
Dwarf Eared Coreopsis
Wild Blue Phlox
Foamflower
Purple Alumroot
Stonecrop
Lily of the Valley



The Meadow Garden

Turtlehead
Blackberry Lily
Black-eyed Susan
Purple Coneflower
Blazing Star
Smooth Aster
Showy Evening Primrose
Rose Coreopsis
Blue Star
White Wild Indigo

Order Now! Send name, delivery address (no P. O. Box numbers please), zip code, phone, and check payable to Fraternity below for **\$34.95 per garden** (\$66.95 for two), shipping and handling included. Please specify Woodland or Meadow.
Orders must be received by March 1, 1999.

Fraternity (please type) _____

Address _____

City and State _____

Zip _____

*"Cultivate every variety of fragrant herb and flowering plant so that all who see the
herbs and flowers will be moved to praise God."
Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology*

Each wildflower garden, Woodland or Meadow, consists of prime nursery stock. Species are hardy and tough perennials selected with the beginner wildflower gardener in mind. Plants are easy to grow, maintain, require little care, spread moderately, and are complimentary in size and color. Plants are wrapped in 3 1/2 inch pots, boxed together, and shipped directly to each customer in early spring, transplanting instructions included. The Woodland Garden requires shade, with plants spaced 18 inches apart. The Meadow Garden requires sun, with plants planted about 3 feet apart.

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

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National Formation Commission Seeks New Members

We are seeking qualified, enthusiastic and joyful Secular Franciscans interested in serving the National Fraternity. The National Formation Commission plans to add several new members in order to respond more effectively to the needs of the National Fraternity. As a member of the Commission you will be expected to:

- be a prayerful, active Secular Franciscan able to go from "Gospel to life and life to the Gospel";
- share the vision of Church expressed by the Second Vatican Council;
- understand that initial and ongoing formation is a PROCESS;
- work collaboratively with the other members of the Commission team;
- provide suggestions and feedback on diverse topics concerning formation;
- support formation-related initiatives as they develop;
- accept responsibility for particular projects that may arise from collaborative decision making;
- offer formation-related presentations, workshops and/or retreats when requested;
- be in regular contact with Regional Formation Directors in a designated geographic section of the country to solicit their input, needs, and concerns; and
- be willing and able to travel at least once a year to different parts of the United States for meetings of the Formation Commission.

The appointment to serve on the Formation Commission will be for a period of one year with the possibility of annual reappointment. If the prospect of being a servant leader on the National Formation Commission excites you and if you believe that you have the qualities and abilities to fulfil this role, please send your S.F.O. related resumé or vita, a copy of your Certificate of Profession, and one letter of reference (from a person serving on your local or Regional SFO Council) to: David & Thérèse Ream, SFO, Co-chairs of the National Formation Commission, UMBRIA, R.R. #3, Orrick Road, Kirksville, MO 63501. Application deadline is January 31, 1999.



Franciscan Materials for the Blind

Do you have a blind or vision impaired member or inquirer in your fraternity? Lota Piel, SFO is in the process of trying to make available Braille Franciscan materials. If you know of anyone who could make use of these, please send their name and address, along with your own, to Lota Piel, SFO, 522 Delmar Street, Sterling CO 80751, or call her at 970-522-2779. Also feel free to contact her with any suggestions.

Formation Topics

The Formation Commission has been asked to develop a list of topics that can be presented to Regional Fraternities. At the present time, the following people are willing to offer the following topics:

- History of the Order
- Stages of Formation
- Agents of Formation
- Praxis as a tool for living, thus for formation
- Meditation on the San Damiano Crucifix
- Spirituality of Francis / Stages of Faith (Fowler)
- Background to the Liturgy of the Hours
- Materials for Formation
- How to work in God's time (a section, not a full presentation)
- And I do not mind researching new topics.

Contact: Teresa Baker, SFO, 5 Mirra Avenue, Derry, NH 03038; telephone (603) 432-9135 or e-mail: tbakersfo@aol.com

- Retreats, workshops, lectures;
- Prayer, spirituality - from a Franciscan point of view;
- Catholic doctrine (esp. Trinity, Christology, Grace, God and Creation, Sacraments) all from a Franciscan perspective.
- Franciscanism for the New Millennium;
- Franciscan spirituality & Dialogue of World Religions (Nostra Aetate, Vatican II)

Contact: Ed Shirley, SFO, 3906 Balcones Woods Dr., Austin, TX 78759; telephone (512) 794-0546 or e-mail: eds@admin.stedwards.edu

- Workshop on structure, content, methodology of developing Regional Formation Clusters;
- Workshop on the *Guidelines for Initial Formation* (Orientation Phase, Inquiry Phase and Candidacy Phase);
- Workshop on the *Elements of Formation* (human, Christian, and Franciscan);
- Servant Leadership Workshop;
- Servant Leadership Retreat;
- We are willing to discuss other topics that will meet your Region's particular needs.

Contact: Dave & Thérèse Ream, SFO, UMBRIA, RR#3, Orrick Road, Kirksville, MO 63501; telephone toll free: 1-888-UMBRIA2 or e-mail: umbria2@earthlink.net



*"Let us pray to God for one another,
for by carrying each other's burden of
charity in this way, we will easily fulfil the
law of Christ."*

Saint Clare of Assisi, *The Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges*

Historic Gathering Faces Friar Assistance To Secular Franciscans

Conference of National Spiritual Assistants,
Secular Franciscan Order, USA



The first-time, historic national convocation on spiritual assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order heard the TOR Superior (Minister) General Bonaventure Midili challenge the Franciscan provincial superiors to "put the appointment of spiritual assistants on the same level of pastoral assignments."

This convocation, gathered in Denver, Colorado, on September 22-25, 1998, centered on the theme "Communion and Co-responsibility" to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order.

It studied the successful growth of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) and the difficulties and creative initiatives to provide it with pastoral care and spiritual guidance.

After an inaugural Eucharist with Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap., the 75 participants spent the first day looking at ways of "igniting a fire" on the part of the Franciscan Friars for the secular members of the Franciscan Family.

Secular Franciscan national leaders talked of their history, their advances in apostolic work and reorganization, their work in preparing new members, and their concern for "dark clouds" on the horizon.

The keynote dialogue featured addresses by National Minister Bill Wicks, SFO; National Vice Minister Marie Amore, SFO; Coordinator of National Apostolic Commissions Mary Mazotti, SFO; National Formation Director David Ream, SFO; and former National Minister Richard Morton, SFO.

In response, the Franciscan Friars pursued through workshops how to understand what spiritual assistance is meant to be, how to build an interest in the SFO among friars, how to prepare spiritual assistants and certify spiritual animators, and how to energize SFO communities through official visits.

To begin the second day, Most Reverend Bonaventure Midili, Minister General of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis, stated, "It is our special challenge to create a life-giving bond between salesman and priest, teenager and aged nun, bartender and hermit friar. It is no easy task."

Father Bonaventure remarked, "We need the SFO to complete the Franciscan charism. We need that

complementarity - like male and female - to be the basic source of communion and co-responsibility."

He continued, "For the foreseeable future to honor this duty [of spiritual assistance] will become increasingly difficult because of the reduced number of vocations and because most of our provinces are over committed in our apostolates.... We need to find creative ways to stimulate the friars to dedicate themselves to the pastoral care to our SFO fraternities."

He also called on the Secular Franciscans to exercise their co-responsibility by promoting vocations to the Franciscan religious life.

After an afternoon of lively exchange the group endorsed eleven practical actions to carry on the energy of this convocation.

They are:

1. A congress of local spiritual assistants and animators to be held in the summer of 1999;
2. A series of "road shows" or traveling workshops around the country in the summer of 2000;
3. A committee of provincial ministers to study a new way to express both *altius moderamen* and regional spiritual assistance;
4. A questionnaire for local pastoral visits;
5. A national registry of certified animators held by the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) Office;
6. A meeting of Franciscan religious in formation on the SFO;
7. A gathering of friar formation directors at an SFO function;
8. A translation of NAFRA documents into Spanish and other languages;
9. A re-prioritization of the friars' apostolates;
10. A systematic and creative way to collaborate with the Third Order religious; and
11. A search for a new way of having the Franciscan Federation at CNSA gatherings.

"It is our special challenge to create a life-giving bond between salesman and priest, teenager and aged nun, bartender and hermit friars. It is no easy task.... We need the SFO to complete the Franciscan charism. We need that complementarity - like male and female - to be the basic source of communion and co-responsibility."

Most Reverend Bonaventure Midili, Minister General of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis

Environmental Health Conference

by Betty Lou Pyka, SFO Commissions Coordinator,
La Verna SFO Region Milwaukee, Wisconsin

As the Regional Commissions Coordinator, I had the privilege of attending the "Environmental Health Conference" in New York sponsored by the National Ecology Commission. The conference was a very intense six days of two 2-1/2 hour talks per day on major concerns linking pollution, injustice, and the exploitation of human suffering and human dignity. The speakers were experts in their fields, known nationally for their contribution to freeing our environment of the deadly pollutants and the injustices associated with them. These environmental activists have used their own money and resources, sometimes at great personal risk, to make the truth known.

Activists today are generally not just a group of conscientious citizens fighting a local company or local politics that may be infringing on human rights. Today, the monster of injustice has grown. Today, it is fed and perpetuated by [multi-national mega-corporations].... Humankind has become expendable, a commodity, a means to an end...

Ten major issues were presented and discussed:

1. The breast cancer epidemic;
2. Psychosocial stress associated with hazardous wastes;
3. Mad cow disease, and the possibility of its spread to the United States;
4. Contamination, chemical alteration, and depletion of nutritious food;
5. Nuclear contamination of outer space, and the effect on the earth's environment;
6. Engineering and marketing of human parts;
7. Incinerators, toxic emissions, ash disposal, dioxins, and alternative environmentally sound recycling;
8. Climatic change, global warming, and their effect on vegetation, pests, etc.;
9. Why the environment and human health are in trouble, the effect on the human immune system, and socio-economic effects.
10. Personal perspective on confronting the power, politics, and injustices encountered with the WTI Ohio incinerator.



Franciscan Fest '98 Report

Kathy Taormina, SFO

As the sounds of Canadian geese lulled in the background and the moon and stars shone brightly in the sky, all of God's creation seemed to envelop us in its many wonders. The sweet sound of music and singing, the joyous strains of "...and peace be with you..." and the given commission of "...go and serve the Lord..." could be heard at the outdoor midnight Liturgy celebrated during the Franciscan Fest '98 Retreat. This year's theme of the Christ-centered retreat "*Filled With The Spirit Of Hope*" was evident as Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR, Lady Poverty Regional Spiritual Assistant, celebrated the Liturgy under the stars. The Spirit's movement was also felt throughout the weekend during the many activities that involved 35 youths and young adults ranging in ages from 14 to 24.

The midnight Liturgy was certainly one of the many highlights of the weekend, but the weekend was also filled with many new and different experiences for all who felt the call to be there.

The youth attending, and those facilitating, enjoyed talks by Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, Fr. David Kohut, OFM and various youth participants doing "witness talks" about their walks with the Lord. A campfire, of course with s'mores, making origami doves and lanterns, games for the soul, and free time were but some of the activities. Fr. John Joseph Gonchar, OFM, another Lady Poverty Regional Spiritual Assistant, was available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

A Franciscan scavenger hunt ensued, creative skits abounded and Liturgy of the Hours took on a whole new meaning being enjoyed in the outdoors, and somewhat primitive surroundings of Youthtown, in Clinton, Pennsylvania. The outdoor environment and sparse accommodations lent to the spirit of the mime skit of a "bag lady" performed by Sr. Althea Ann Spencer, OSF and opened the introduction of Nell Davidson from Operation Safety Net. OSN is a program led by doctors, nurses and the former homeless to reach the homeless in downtown Pittsburgh with medical and dental relief. Everyone attending brought a pair of socks to donate to OSN, which is in great need of them.

Another highlight of the Fest was the Saturday evening "Gratitude Meal", which is a meal where all serve one another while praying the grace throughout the meal to thank the Lord for His many blessings. It was followed, after sundown, by a performance of Tom Franzak in the presentation of "Saints", a one-man show of music, song and lighting. It was his first outdoor performance to date.

Sunday found the youths preparing their own closing prayer, which concluded with each revealing, in just one word, what the weekend had meant to them personally and spiritually. The conclusion was a spontaneous dance started by the adult facilitators out of the pure joy and love that was felt as the Spirit moved among them. Praised be the Lord for another successful Franciscan Fest! And praise to brother Saint Francis and sister Saint Clare for their lives as our examples!

Franciscan Mission Service An Overview

Father Joseph Nangle, OFM

Co-director, Franciscan Mission Service of North America

In this article, rather than pick a specific topic or issue related to this overseas lay mission program, we thought that an overview of our work since FMS began in 1990 may be of interest. For example, in these eight years we have sent 48 lay women and men to twenty-two developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Eastern Europe and Siberia. That's more than all of the OFM provinces in the U.S. have sent in the same period.

Presently we have fourteen lay missionaries serving in Bolivia, Bosnia, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Namibia, Philippines, and Zambia. They work in such diverse activities as nursing, community development, campus ministry, parish ministry, teaching, school administration and carpentry. In addition, we currently have two men (unfortunately, no women this round) in our 12-week Orientation Program, preparing for South Africa and Brazil.

Now after eight years we have a continual flow of personnel to and from mission. Almost as soon as our current candidates leave for Brazil and South Africa, three other FMS missionaries will return to the U.S. for their three-week Re-entry Program. They will have ample time to recount their experiences of these past three years, then make formal mission presentations in schools and parishes around the Washington, DC area, and get ready to take up their lives again in U.S. society, utilizing what they learned overseas.

Of course all of this activity has its costs. We estimate that each of our overseas missionaries represents something over \$ 10,000.00 per year in costs. That includes the three-month Orientation, airfare to and from the overseas mission site, living expenses while on mission, health and life insurance, a modest sum after completion of their three or six year contract and of course our administration costs in the national office. With roughly twenty missionaries getting ready to serve overseas, or already on mission, or returning home, financial worries remain with us constantly – probably a healthy state of affairs for Franciscans, but rough on the blood pressure.

Our support comes from three basic sources. The Franciscan Family, especially the OFM friars, provide about one third of our income. Our lay missionaries themselves, through their supporters back home, raise another third; and other donors, including funding organizations, make up the rest. Two Secular Franciscan Regions, Saint Margaret of Cortona and Troubadours of Peace help us with yearly donations.

Our last word in this overview of Franciscan Mission Service must relate to the excitement and energy which this work generates in us who serve here. Our Board of Directors and especially our staff feel justifiably proud of what we are doing, convinced that this is the cutting edge of mission as we enter a new century.

Commissioners Needed

The National Executive Council invites Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the positions of Chair, **National Ecology Commission** and Chair, **National Family Commission**. Applicants must:

- Have active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- Be familiar with the Mission Statement and goals of the applicable national commission;
- Be able to communicate, educate, and motivate regions and fraternities on Ecology or Family, respectively;
- Provide on-going Formation articles for TAU-USA;
- Provide a summary of personal experience on the corresponding fraternity or regional commission; and
- Be able to attend at least two four-day national meetings yearly.

Interested Seculars should mail resumés to: Mary Mazotti, SFO, Coordinator, National Apostolic Commissions, P.O. Box 2571, Arnold, CA 95223-2571. The deadline for resumés is January 31, 1999.



National Public Relations Director Needed

The National Executive Council invites qualified Secular Franciscans to submit resumés for the position of National SFO Public Relations Director. Recommended requirements are:

- Active Secular Franciscan status (must provide copy of Certificate of Profession);
- Knowledge of Secular Franciscan matters, including structure, and role in the Church;
- Experience with creating interesting and newsworthy press releases for Catholic newspapers, radio, television, and web-sites (sample releases required);
- Experience in interviewing and accurate reporting;
- Experience in video recording;
- Ability to communicate effectively with editors, and meet their requirements and deadlines;
- Basic clerical skills; and
- Experiences or education which would enable the applicant to effectively report on and promote the Secular Franciscan Order.

Interested Seculars should mail resumés and samples to: Bill Wicks, SFO, 3307 Quail Meadows Drive, Santa Maria, CA 93455. Deadline for resumés is January 31, 1999.

International Councilor Report To NAFRA

October 1998

Laura Haukaas, SFO, International Councilor

Presidency

The members have been very busy working on the *Proposals for the Revision of the Constitutions of the SFO* which was received by the National Council on October 5, 1998. Suggested changes approved by this National Council have been incorporated in the proposal along with those from other nations. Also included are the changes that would have to be made to the International Statutes. Careful study will be undertaken so that the International Councilor is informed and receives suitable advice as to the wishes of NAFRA-USA when attending the Chapter which will be held in Madrid, Spain October 23-31, 1999.

Seminars are continuing in Africa and the Ukraine. A National Council with 1,000 members in about 30 fraternities has been established in the Ukraine; the Rule and some texts have been translated.

Communication continues to improve with the press office established in Rome. All National Councils and Councilors are encouraged to use electronic mail. Although TAU-USA is being sent to English language councilors, we have received national newsletters only from Canada and Ireland.

Finance continues to be a major concern with only 29 of 66 National Fraternities contributing \$22,000.00 in 1997. Although the US paid per capita of \$3,419.00 in 1997 and \$3,542.00 in 1998, a donation of \$10,000.00 was made for the establishment of an SFO office (Secretariate) and office equipment. General Minister Emanuela De Nunzio is requesting an additional 50¢ from each Secular Franciscan in the world. Adequate funding is necessary for the International Fraternity to function.

End of Year Reports

End of year reports were received from 15 regions in 1997, and from 24 in 1998. Newsletters were received from 10 regions in 1997, and from 16 in 1998. Of the remaining 15 regions, 9 have newsletters which are not received. Of the six remaining, the information is not available, as an end of year report was not received. The newsletters are very interesting, and the regions are doing great works which need to be publicized in our national newsletter, TAU-USA. One of the reports was of serving chili dogs, cookies and soft drinks to several hundred every Tuesday for the past two years. This is done without scheduling and done by volunteers who just appear. Most regions have numerous apostolic activities, spiritual gatherings, formation and animator training, and many regions are working together to share these gatherings. The good news is that we are moving from heavy involvement in governance to spirituality and good works. Interest in establishing youth groups is also encouraging.

TAU-USA Housekeeping Details...

Next TAU-USA Deadline

The deadline to submit articles for the next issue of TAU-USA is January 15, 1999. Please submit articles to:

TAU-USA
c/o Mr. and Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO
6 Light Street
Nuangola, PA 18637

Subscription Information

For subscription information or change of address, please see back cover.

Permission to Re-print Articles

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Non-profit Status and Advertising

As the newsletter of a non-profit organization, TAU-USA has been advised to publish only promotions for endeavors directly associated with the National Fraternity. To promote materials, tours, conferences, etc., not exclusively Secular Franciscan might be construed as "advertising", thus jeopardizing our non-profit status.



The Grace of Prayer

[Saint Francis] was convinced that the grace of prayer was something [we] should long for above all else. No one, he declared, could make progress in God's service without it, and he used every means he could to make [his followers] concentrate on it. Whether he was walking or sitting, at home or abroad, whether he was working or resting, he was so fervently devoted to prayer that he seemed to have dedicated to it not only his heart and his soul, but all his efforts and all his time.

Saint Bonaventure, *Major Life*, 10:1

Assisi Restoration Update

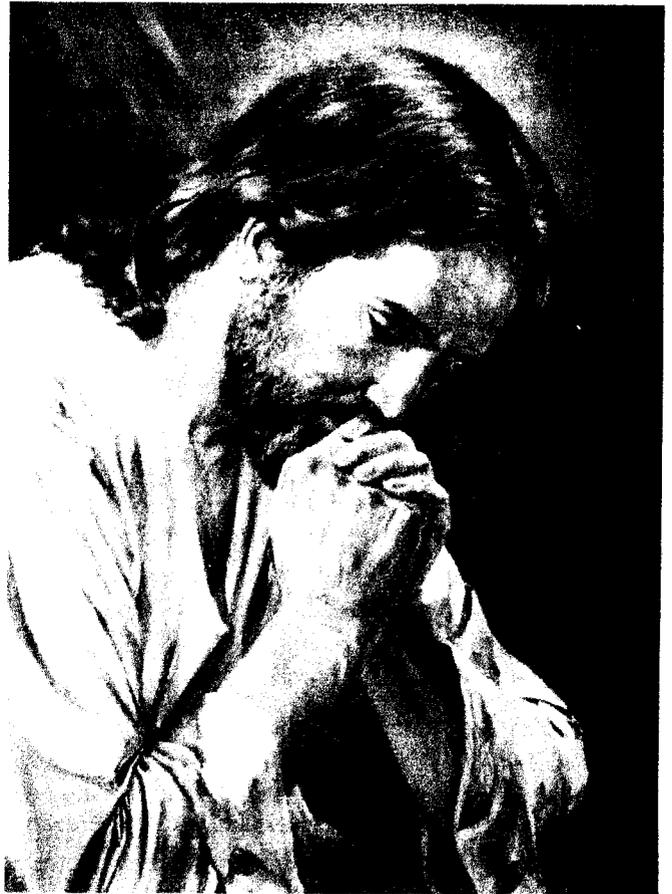
The following is excerpted from a letter written by Brother Giulio Mancini, OFM, Provincial Minister of the Seraphic Province (Assisi, Italy). It provides an update regarding the restoration efforts in Assisi. Brother Giulio begins his letter by expressing gratitude for the donations received from throughout the world, and the support of the Italian state in passing a special relief law to assist in the rebuilding.

At San Damiano work is fairly advanced, due to the generous offerings received, on the repair of the Novitiate. Work began in May and will be completed, we hope, during Advent. We'd love to have the novices back for Christmas! The New Year will see the beginning of work on the historic part of the friary. After that we'll concentrate on repairing the living quarters of the friars.

For the Chiesa Nuova in Assisi and San Bartolomeo in Foligno we will be in a position to use a first installment of the funds set aside in the earthquake law early in '99, in order to complete some initial work.

For the monastery and Basilica of Saint Clare (the nuns are presently staying with us in our friary of Monteripido in Perugia), a considerable sum will soon be available, with the hope of further funds from the law concerning the Great Jubilee for use in repairing the Basilica.

The same is true for the Poor Clare monasteries of San Quirico in Assisi and Santa Lucia in Foligno (both communities are our guests, one at Amelia and the other in Montefalco). Even if this first installment of state funding is partial, it should be sufficient to permit the sisters to return home before the start of the Jubilee of 2,000.



The Prayer of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order

O God, holy and eternal Trinity,
we pray for your church in the world.
Sanctify its life; renew its worship;
empower its witness; heal its divisions;
make visible its unity.

Lead us, with all our brothers and sisters,
towards communion
in faith, life and witness
so that, united in one body
by the one Spirit
we may together witness
to the perfect unity of your love.

Amen.



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The 1999 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be observed on January 18 – 25, 1999. This year's scriptural theme is "God will dwell with them... they will be God's peoples" (Rev. 21:1-7). The theme and text for each year's observance are chosen and prepared by representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and representatives of the World Council of Churches.



Notes from Franciscans Around the World

General Assistant of the SFO in Poland

Father Zvonimir Brusac, TOR, General Assistant of the SFO, was in Poland from 21-30 October. He participated in the 4th National Chapter of the SFO in Warsaw, presided over by Margaret Mertens, International Councilor from Germany. After the Chapter in Katowice he met with the regional council and the assistants from Salesia where there are 180 local fraternities and around four thousand members of the SFO. In the major seminaries of the Franciscans in Katowice, Kalwaria and Krakow he gave lectures on the history of the SFO and on assistance. Almost two hundred students participated. In the National Fraternity of the SFO in Poland there are 17 thousand members in 14 regional fraternities and 600 local fraternities.

Let us remember in our prayers our brothers and sisters throughout the world!

"Pokoj i dobro", Polish
("Pax et Bonum")

Introducing...

We are Mr. and Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO (Daria and Antony, to our brothers and sisters!). We are delighted to have the opportunity to serve you as editors of TAU-USA, and thought we should introduce ourselves.

We are members of Saint Joseph Fraternity (Wilkes-Barre, PA) in Blessed Katharine Drexel Region. Daria serves as local Formation Director, and Antony as local Vice Minister, and District Councilor. We also edit and produce our local and regional newsletters.

Antony works as a computer engineer with the US Postal Service, and Daria is a full-time, stay-at-home wife. In our "spare time", we construct web pages, and build things for our home. Our latest project was converting our guest bedroom into a small Franciscan prayer room. We trust that our overnight guests don't mind "sleeping with the angels", while still here on earth!

We are fortunate to belong to a Franciscan parish, (Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus). Besides serving as Lectors and as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, we edit the parish bulletin. Our parish celebrated its Centennial in 1998, and we were privileged to contribute by soliciting advertisements, and laying out pages for our parish history book.

Please put us on your regional newsletter mailing lists, and send contributions of articles, poetry, and drawings to us at the editorial office, which is now located in our home. The address is:

TAU-USA
c/o Mr. and Mrs. Antony Outhwaite, SFO
6 Light Street
Nuangola, PA 18637

If you need to contact us more quickly, call us at 570-868-7465, or e-mail tauusa@aol.com.

Due to the overwhelming number of submissions for the national newsletter, we cannot possibly include all submissions. Therefore, to increase the likelihood of your submission being printed, we offer the following guidelines:

- Please ensure that articles do not exceed 500 words;
- Please understand that articles may be edited for length and clarity;
- Submissions received after the deadline for a particular issue will be given consideration for the following issue.

For your convenience (and ours), and in the Franciscan

✂-----**READER SURVEY**-----✂

Name _____ Phone _____

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What do you consider to be the best feature of TAU-USA? _____

If you could change something about TAU-USA, what would it be? _____

What would you like to see more of? _____

Any other comments? _____

Please feel free to reply on another sheet of paper, if there is not enough room above.

interest in ecology, please try to send submissions in electronic format (e-mail or floppy disc), instead of on paper. We can read the following word processing formats:

- Microsoft Word for Windows (*.doc) – any version
- ASCII text (*.txt)
- HTML (*.html, *.htm)
- MS Works (*.wps) – version 3 or 4
- WordPerfect (*.wpd) – version 5
- Microsoft Word for Macintosh (*.mcw) – version 4 or 5

and the following graphics formats:

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In addition to our responsibilities as editors of TAU-USA, we would like to make ourselves available to provide direction or advice to local and regional fraternity newsletter editors, especially those who are just starting up. Please feel free to contact us.

We hope you will be pleased with your national newsletter. In order for us to serve you better, please complete and return the survey below to us. All surveys received by us by February 28, 1999 will be eligible for a special drawing for a lovely Franciscan prize: a 11" painted resin statue of Saint Francis with the Crucified Christ.

The winner's name will be announced in the next issue of TAU-USA.



Pax et Bonum,
Daria and Antony

Franciscan Formation Materials Made Available by the National Formation Commission

Coming in early 1999: Catch Me A Rainbow Too! A completely new edition of Capuchin Father Lester Bach's ever-popular Catch Me A Rainbow! Ideal for Initial and Ongoing Formation! Watch for it!

Gospel Living Every Day of Our Lives: A Formation Guide To The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Baker, Teresa V., SFO. (1994). 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 131 pages. \$10.00 per copy, plus \$4.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.50 for 2, \$7.00 for 3; 10 or more copies is \$8.00 per copy plus P&H.

Elements Of Formation: A Reflection on the Formation Process. (1995). 8 1/2" x 11", 38 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies \$4.00 per copy plus P&H.

Formation Resource List. (1997). 8 1/2"x 11", 3 hole drilled, 66 pages. \$7.50 per copy plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, \$6.50 for 3; 10 or more copies \$6.00 each plus P&H.

Guia Para la Formación Inicial en la Orden Franciscana Seglar de Los Estados Unidos. (1987). 8 1/2" x 11", 41 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies \$4.00 per copy plus P&H.

A Guide For Franciscan Youth / Young Adult Ministry. (1998). 8 1/2" x 11", 84 pages. 1-9 books \$8.50 each plus P&H; \$3.50 P&H for 1; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, \$6.50 for 3; 10 or more books \$6.80 each plus P&H.

Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. (1986). 8 1/2"x 11", 38 pages. \$5.00 per copy, plus \$3.50 P&H; P&H is \$5.00 for 2, and \$6.50 for 3; 25 or more copies \$4.00 per copy plus P&H.

Handbook For Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership. (1998). **(NOW AVAILABLE!)** 8 1/2" X 11", 3 hole drilled, 137 pages plus Formation Resource List as a 58 page appendix. \$22.50 per copy plus P&H; 10 or more copies, \$18.00 each plus P&H.

The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. (1997). 5" x 3" red presentation edition, 40 pages. 10 books for only \$18.40 (includes P&H).

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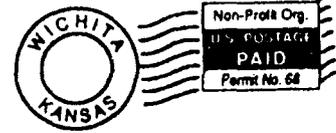
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