

*THE NATIONAL FRATERNITY*  
*of*  
*THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER*



*Newsletter*

*Spring, 1992*

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**A TIME TO REFLECT**

**Richard Morton, SFO  
National Minister**

As Secular Franciscans, our vocation needs constant nourishment in the form of reflection, meditation, and discussion. I hope each of you has an opportunity to set aside some quality time for such activities, especially in view of our new Constitutions.

The new Constitutions is a document that should be studied by all Seculars for it is a fertile source of ongoing formation topics. This is particularly true of Chapter II entitled Form of Life and Apostolic Activity. Art. 9, Par. 1, is a good example: "The spirituality of the Secular Franciscan is a plan of life centered on the person and on the following of Christ, rather than a detailed program to be put into practice."

These words are telling us that the plan of life, or model, for Secular Franciscan living is not to be a profusion of rules and regulations as it may have seemed to some not so many years ago. The goal of our Franciscan spirituality is to build an intimate relationship with Jesus as modeled by St. Francis: "The rule and life of the Secular Franciscan

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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." (Rule, Chapt. II, Art. 4). Jesus said: "'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." (Mt. 23:37-40.)

The Constitutions, freeing us from a program developed by someone else, now challenges us to develop a relationship with Christ in a manner we can personalize to our own needs and circumstances. This should not be too difficult because the freedom to love our Lord and our neighbor does not require a detailed "how to" list. Loving relationships are not built on written contracts, but on mutual trust and being sensitive to the others' presence in our lives.

Perhaps a good resolution for 1992 would be that, through more prayer and meditation, we can each center our life more on Jesus and his love for us. Why not give it a try?

## CIOFS PRESIDENCY MEETING

From the report of Marianne Powell, SFO  
Member, SFO Presidency for the English language

The Presidency met for its second work session in Assisi, October 14-20, 1991.

The Juridical Commission has worked out a draft of the new International Statutes. One area of discussion is the principle of representation in CIOFS.

In the present Statutes, representation is roughly that of one representative from each country, but for historical and other reasons some countries have 2, 3, or 4 representatives, which has been felt by many to be unjust. Two principles were considered:

1. representation in the CIOFS should depend on the number of members in a country.

2. representation is to depend solely on the existence in the country of a national SFO structure; each country that has this structure is to be allowed only one representative.

The second principle was the suggestion of some of the small nations. It corresponds to the understanding of justice and democracy on which the United Nations is built. To its adherents, principle 1 appears a kind of domination of the majority, or, in Franciscan language, an appropriation.

It was decided to leave both principles in the draft that will be sent to the National Councils for observations.

As soon as possible, National Councils will also receive:

Guide for revision of National Statutes,  
Formation outline,

Reports on the following Commissions:

Youth,

Evangelization,

Justice, Peace, & Ecology.

## HOLY ATTACHMENTS AND LOVING DETACHMENT

Rev. Lawrence Landini, OFM  
Conf. National Spiritual Assistants

Attachments are the most natural things in the world. We are attached by the umbilical cord to our mothers and remain emotionally attached for the rest of our lives. We attach to or bond with fathers, brothers and sisters, spouses, relatives, and friends from our earliest days. As we develop into mature persons, we form new bonds of loving attachments to fellow parishioners, countrymen, workers, and many others and, hopefully, to God.

Life is also full of separations from attachments. Our parents, relatives, and friends may die, or become separated from us. Sometimes there is an emotional break in our attachments; friends become enemies, marriage partners separate and/or divorce. We grieve over separations and ruptures in relationships.

But separation also brings the occasion for new attachments. Separation breaks down into two Latin words: *se* which means self and *preparare* which means to prepare. Thus, in every separation, we are preparing or being prepared for new relationships and friends. This is true even in the painful separation of death. We leave our friends on earth to be in a new and wonderful way with God and all the saints and angels.

When life brings with it the pain of separation, God asks us to accept a loving detachment from the past and to begin anew to forge holy bonds with others. In the case of the death of a parent or spouse, it may take two to three years to grieve through the pain of separation and detachment. Throughout the grieving process, God invites us to prepare ourselves for new friends and relationships.

If attachments are part of God's plan for us, why then do the saints practice and counsel detachment? The reason is, unfortunately, that our attachments can get out of hand.

What is good and natural to enjoy can become what we "have to have" and must possess. In clinging to and grasping after things and people, a distortion of reality results. Boundaries are set up, demands are made, turf is claimed, and violence is often used to protect, defend, and wrest more of what was originally given as gift. Jesus says we can lose our very selves in this destructive process.

Lent is a grace filled season of letting go of unholy attachments and for practicing a loving detachment in all of our relationships. As Secular Franciscans, we might not have to overcome sinful attachments to money, power, and sexual misconduct. But sometimes we might catch ourselves "having to have" our children come back to Church, our spouses stop drinking, our good health return, and even a deeper relationship with God. All of these good desires can become unholy attachments when they become charged through with a "driven-ness", a compulsiveness and a time table for God to follow. We want things, others, and even God on our own terms.

St. Francis gives us an example of how to practice a loving detachment and holy attachment. He revered people and all created reality as gifts from God. He would not appropriate, that is, take ownership of these gifts. In this way, he practiced a loving detachment and was able to live a life of gratitude in the enjoyment of all God's good gifts. But through this kind of loving detachment, he became attached in a holy way to all of creation - he became bonded to everyone and everything as the universal brother.

Loving detachment frees us to desire God; holy attachments free us to love all things in God. May this Lenten reflection aid Secular Franciscans in their efforts to "set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters." (Rule, Chapter II, no. 12.)

## JDL CHARITABLE FUND

Dear Sisters and Brothers,  
May the Lord give you peace.

At the Annual Meeting of the Directive Board of the National Fraternity held last October, I received the many Mass cards, Spiritual Bouquets, Spiritual Enrollments, notes, and letters from the Secular Franciscan Provinces, local fraternities, and individuals. Added to that were the green lei from Hawaii, our first Region, the large scroll from the Secular Franciscan Province of Saint Conrad, and the beautiful and delicious sheet cake from the Seculars in Louisville. Wait! There is more! I was informed of the many, many contributions to the "J.D.L. Charitable Fund".

Needless to say, I was overwhelmed by your goodness and thoughtfulness. It is my intention to acknowledge each and every gift. Until you hear from me, please let this letter express my heartfelt thanks.

These past nine years have been full of many special graces and blessings. During the many, many visits to the Provinces for visitations and elections, and to local fraternities to give talks, it was my privilege to meet many of you. You never failed to encourage and, more importantly, to edify me. I will always be grateful to you for your inspiration and love, both given so freely.

Somehow, somehow, we will meet again. Until then, I will meet you each day in prayer. Daily, during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, I will write your names in prayerful hues and colors on the Eucharistic Canvas of Holy Communion.

Stay well. Be happy.

Fraternally, gratefully, lovingly,

/S/ Jim

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Chester, Pennsylvania, located on the Delaware River south of Philadelphia, is considered an impoverished area. Complicating the economy is the fact that, according to the pastor of a local parish, Resurrection, the fastest growing group in the area is HIV positive.

The horror of the situation is that many of the infected women are innocent victims. Even worse - all of the infants are.

Resurrection Parish had an empty convent. The Missionaries of Charity became interested in establishing a hospice for mothers and children infected with the AIDS virus.

Gift of Mary Home was dedicated January 6th. Mother Teresa couldn't attend as she was hospitalized in La Jolla, California, recovering from pneumonia and coronary problems. However, she had previously thanked Cardinal Bevilacqua and Governor Casey for their support. The Governor said, "Just to have Mother Teresa's presence here through her Order is a great thing for Pennsylvania."

Jim Lynch spent the past few months searching for the charity or charities to receive the fund. His criteria were: that the fund be kept in this country, that the recipient organization be such that very little would be lost to administrative costs, and that it have a strong Franciscan philosophy even if it were not part of the Franciscan Family.

Certainly no one would question the Francis-like charism of Mother Teresa and her Order. And, thanks to Secular generosity, some hungry, hurting, dying victims will be made more comfortable. The check, in the amount of \$7,000, was sent by the National Minister in early February.

## FRANCISCANS AT THE U.N.

James A. Costello, SFO

Did you know the Franciscans have a voice at the U.N.?

What began several years ago as the independent dream of a Franciscan sister in Iowa and a friar on the island of Malta has now taken root at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. We are working to achieve official recognition in 1993 of our Franciscan Family as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the opportunity for direct participation on U.N. committees and collaboration with other NGOs.

So far, we have the right to share information on committee projects and interact with U.N. members in a somewhat circumscribed way. Our expectation is that all procedural barriers will be removed by next year when we can function with full accreditation. Meanwhile, several of our members attend and monitor committee meetings, including those of the General Assembly and International Conferences. These Franciscans regularly meet with people at nearly every level of the U.N. hierarchy and share our Franciscan perspective on issues of genuine concern to all Franciscans.

Our mission is to exert our influence in the areas of:

1. Care of Creation,
2. Peacemaking, and
3. Concern for the Poor.

We believe that all creation from the simplest organism to the human being is interdependent. This interdependence is nurtured by harmony, care, and peace; it is violated by exploitation and domination. It has been said that most of the poverty we see in the world is the direct result of the destruction of traditional cultures and of the uprooting of

people in the name of progress. This evidences a profound disrespect for the harmony of creation and can only be rectified when we understand the planet as most "primitive" peoples do, as the protector of our human race.

Your representatives at the United Nations are dedicated to carry our Franciscan charism to all peoples through contacts and initiatives. Our song of love will have a strong chord of persuasiveness, witness the growth and presence of the worldwide Franciscan Family which today stands at some 1.2 million members. This is a mighty song grown from the voice of that little poor man, that fool for Christ, whose army even now mobilizes to engage the United Nations in a dialogue of peace and love and good.

It is almost eight centuries since Francis lay naked on the ground in a sacred moment of union between Creator and created, lover and beloved. Francis left us with the vision he espoused at death...God is in creation and creation is good. Our United Nations initiatives provide us a new alternative to accomplish our mission to evangelize the world according to the precepts of the Franciscan Rule(s). Each of us can think locally and act locally on a day to day basis, knowing that s/he has representatives working to insure that precepts of universal kinship illuminate all United Nations activities.

Our goals and focus are similar to those of the Secular Franciscan Order which has established Commissions on Work, Ecology, Peace & Justice, and the Family. There is a nearly identical vision being pursued on the national level through these Commissions as we pursue at the United Nations on an international level.

To familiarize you with some of the dates in 1992 that have special significance at the

U.N., we are appending a brief calendar. We've also interspersed several excerpts from the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order that seem to have been formulated especially to validate the work we now undertake.

We humbly, but most expectantly ask you to remember us in your prayers. Pray that God gives us the grace to maintain our Franciscan witnesses and instruments of the Church's mission to proclaim Christ to all peoples. Pray that we may accomplish what God had in mind at Creation which is universal harmony and an unceasing chorus of praise to our Creator. If you wish to know more about our efforts on your behalf, or to offer advice, or other assistance, or to suggest initiatives, or simply to say hello, please write in care of:

Brother Kevin Smith, OSF  
135 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

(Please place the calendar insert in a prominent place in your home as a reminder to pray for the intentions.)

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## PLEASE REMEMBER

Fr. Brendan Mitchell, OFM, who died November 10. Father was the first Vice Commissary of the Secular Franciscan Province of St. Barbara; he then served as Commissary for 35 years and, later, as Provincial Spiritual Assistant.

An eloquent speaker and writer, he was at one time editor of *Way of St. Francis*. He was a man of vision who long ago decided that it was time for him to step aside and turn over leadership to the Seculars.

His last years were full of illnesses which forced his retirement. He was a Franciscan for 65 years and a priest for 59.

## FRATERNAL VISITATIONS, PLUS OR MINUS?

Jerry Rome, SFO  
National Vice Minister

In keeping with our Rule and the emphasis on taking responsibility for our Order, several years ago, I conducted the first fraternal visitations by a provincial minister in St. John the Baptist Province.

The real inspiration for my visitation was prayerful reflection on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, *I long to see you and share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you - rather what I wish is that we may be mutually encouraged by our common faith.* (Rom. 1: 11-12.)

With this discernment to guide me, I began concrete plans to visit my brothers and sisters from Michigan to the bayous of Louisiana and from the Kansas wheatfields to the industrial midwest, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

As the idea of visiting our entire province began to take shape in my mind, I began to feel overwhelmed by my decision and was filled with anxiety about the awesome distances that separated our fraternities. As I planned and examined the situation more closely, praying for strength and courage, I began to see and believe that was, indeed, what I was being called to do as the servant leader of our province.

Once convinced of the "rightness" of the fraternal visitation and the importance of reaching out in love and support to my Franciscan family, there was no turning back.

I determined that since it would not be possible at that time to visit all fraternities, my plan was to visit our six geographically structured areas which had representation from each fraternity in the area. In addition to visiting the areas, I also visited two isolated fraternities in the upper peninsula of Michigan and some others that were having some particular difficulty.

As I reflect on the experience, I am pleased to remember that the visitations were a time of personal renewal and conversion for me and I believe for the province overall. Together we committed ourselves to reclaim the grace, the enthusiasm, the dream which first attracted us to the Franciscan Way of Life. The Provincial Minister was no longer someone "out there", a name, but a real, live human being who was caring, loving, and touchable. I was energized and enlivened by the warm, positive response.

There was, of course, some uncertainty in the hearts of some about why I was coming to visit. The apprehension on the part of those members concerned my purpose and their expectations, but that did not prove to be a stumbling block. The valuable time together seemed to strengthen not only the individual members, but the overall fraternity as well.

What I found is that, if we simply reach out to one another, we can build fraternal communities that promote fidelity to the Franciscan charism. We can offer them encouragement in observing the Rule and provide support, however it may be needed.

Visitation helps to foster interaction within and among the fraternities. Ones that choose to be self-contained, isolated units would be the exception.

As a result of visitation, there is expanded communication through personal contact and fraternal gatherings, and our fraternities experience community beyond their individual fraternity. Their concept of being part of the larger spiritual family of St. Francis is enhanced, and our fraternities grow stronger in sharing a common vision.

To other Provincial Ministers I say, "If y'all haven't yet gone to visit your Franciscan family in their fraternities, try it; I know y'all will like it."

## ARE WE LIVING THE RULE?

Laurence M. Herbert, SFO, Newsletter Staff

On June 24th of this year the Secular Franciscan Order will have had the Rule for 14 years. That is more than enough time for us to have read it and implemented what it contains. Many of us were professed under that Rule and should have studied it in our formation program. Ongoing formation in our fraternities for professed members should also be Rule based. On the day we made our initial commitment to the Secular Franciscan Order we said:

"I promise to live all the days of my life the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order by observing its rule of life."<sup>1</sup>

Every one of us should possess a copy of the Rule. The National Fraternity has published a pocket sized booklet of it convenient enough to carry with us. How many of us have a copy? How many of us have read the Rule? When was the last time? If we have promised to live by a standard why are we reluctant to become informed as to what the standard is. If we took five minutes a day to read a part of the rule we could read the entire rule every week!

In the excerpts from: "Letter of the Four Ministers General of the Franciscan Family", that is printed in the same booklet of our Rule, the Ministers General challenge us to renewal.

The hope of renewal hinges upon returning to the origins and to the spiritual experience of St. Francis of Assisi and of the brothers and sisters of penance who received from him their inspiration and guidance. This renewal also depends upon openness to the Spirit in the signs of the times.

I have not seen this renewal in the Secular Franciscan Order. There are many, many fraternities that are active and living the

Rule. If the entire Order were open to the action of the Spirit there would be no limit to the work that could be accomplished by our actions. If we are to be leaven to the world we must first become leaven to our brothers and sisters in our fraternity. Our leaven is in the Rule. Learn the Rule! Love the Rule! Live the Rule!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fonck, OFM, Benet A., Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, OH, 1985, p 24.

<sup>2</sup> From an admonition of Pope John Paul II to Secular Franciscans.

### THE RULE

Presentation copies of the Rule mentioned above are available from:

Miss Marie Costigan, SFO  
109 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Send check payable to:  
NAFRA

for \$1.50 per copy; minimum order  
- 5 books.

## SYMPATHY FOR THE U.S. PRESIDENT

P.B.S. News Report

Following President Bush's intestinal flu incident in Japan, a Pennsylvania fifth grade class wrote letters of sympathy to him. One said, "I threw up on my brand new skirt on Easter Sunday in church and I don't even belong to that Church."

## THE FRANCISCAN PYRAMID, I

To know where we are, to know where we are going, we must first know where we have been. The Rule, Chapter II, 7, refers to us as "brothers and sisters of penance" and to the necessity of daily "conversion".

The name Brothers and Sisters of Penance and the concept of conversion did not originate with Francis. To find our origins, we must travel back many centuries.

Father Raffaele Pazzelli, TOR, wrote that the Greek word *metanoia*, found in the Septuagint, and the Latin words *paenitentia* or *conversio*, found in the Vulgate, may be used interchangeably. "...the term *metanoia* even outside the sphere of religion, indicates a change of persuasion, attitude, or interior plan, either for good or evil. Secondly, it indicates displeasure or regret for previous behavior."<sup>1</sup>

Pope Paul VI's statement, February 17, 1966, evidences the antiquity of *metanoia*:

"The Church...has noted with joy that almost everywhere and at all times penitence has held a place of great importance, since it is closely linked with the intimate sense of religion which pervades the life of most ancient peoples as well as with the more advanced expressions of the great religions connected with the progress of culture.

"In the Old Testament the religious sense of penitence is revealed with even greater richness. Even though man generally has recourse to it in the aftermath of sin to placate the wrath of God, or on the occasion of grave calamities, or when special dangers are imminent, or in any case to obtain benefits from the Lord, we can nevertheless establish that external penitential practices are accom-

panied by an inner attitude of 'conversion', that is to say of condemnation of and detachment from sin and of striving toward God."<sup>2</sup>

Following the fall of our first parents, it would seem only logical that every human must admit his weakness, must have sincere sorrow and the wish to amend his ways, and should feel the need to make restitution. Even pagans do. That is *metanoia*, conversion, penitence. Displeasure with one's previous life should certainly lead to the desire to make compensation. But as we shall see, the emphasis on restitution gradually changed the concept of conversion in its entirety to an accentuation on the performing of penitential acts.

Of the many Old Testament references to *metanoia* one of the best known and most frequently used and abused is Isaiah 58: 6-7.

*This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.*<sup>3</sup>

Some of the socio-economically comfortable people of that day had changed acts of personal penance into game-like competitions; conversion was not part of their lives.

To translate their behavior into our times: their sackcloth bore Fifth Avenue labels, their ashes were ground from Patmos incense crystals, and, during periods of fast, they never ate paté de fois gras or chateaubriand in public. They were so involved in their "penitential" contests that they completely ignored the hungry, the oppressed, and the captives.

God did not say he did not want personal penance; he said he did not want it the way they were doing it. Yet, have not we used that passage to exempt ourselves from personal penances - Friday abstinence, fasting, and various forms of self-denial?

In the New Testament, Christ taught *metanoia* by his words and actions. Before his public life, he spent forty days in the desert in prayer and fast. (Remember that the Jewish fast was just that - total abstinence from food and drink.) In so far as prayer is communication with the Father, that part is understandable. But did the Son of God need to fast? In addition to its being an example to us, perhaps the answer lies in Paul's magnificent statement: *Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at.* (Philippians 2:6.)

Later, he submitted to a baptism that he certainly didn't need. Ceremonial cleanliness was important to the Jews. To be physically clean permitted a man to approach God, if his motives were pure.<sup>4</sup> By publicly accepting baptism, he reinforced the teaching of the Baptist, thus changing ceremonial washing to a spiritual symbol, and he set the stage for God's acknowledgment of him. He further followed the law by feeding the hungry, curing the sick, and releasing the spiritually bound.

At Pentecost, Peter called for conversion. Then he and the other Apostles began to preach and administer.

At this time, most of us SFOs are still products of the Baltimore Catechism where everything was so tidy. But, in the primitive Church, very little was tidy let alone well-defined. Here, we must take a couple of side excursions to understand more fully the development of sacraments and of our origin.

We know that the early Christians practiced certain rituals that became sacraments such as baptism, the eucharistic meal, the imposition of hands, and the anointing of the sick. But the pagans had sacramental procedures too, and Psychology 101 was known long before the twentieth century.

If people are to be indoctrinated into a new life, philosophy, or religion, the most successful method is by analogy to, not eradication of the old. When a pagan was indoctrinated into some phase of activity, even the army, there was a ritual of initiation. Initiation into the Christian belief was by the ritual of baptism. Pagans had special days of honoring their gods. Many Christian feast days were established on or near the dates of pagan feasts. Although Judaism is not considered a sacramental religion,<sup>5</sup> the Jews did have rituals that were easily adaptable.

So, rituals, especially those of initiation, were vital in helping the pagan and the Jew convert to Christianity.

Ironically, the rapid growth of Christianity caused complications. As the new religion spread, there was need for the written word. The Lord had not left the Apostles a neat, precise list of rituals or sacraments, nor had the New Testament been written the day after Pentecost, and, when it finally was, its duplication was a major problem.

Too, Aramaic was still a very primitive language at the time of our Lord. Getting its real meaning into another language caused more than one problem, a problem which has continued into this age. Consider one brief example. Christ, who lived and taught love, said that we must hate people, but love God. Obviously, the meaning was that we should love God *more* than we love people, but there

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were no comparatives in Aramaic. The ancient Jews understood the meaning. It gave many of us problems until the scriptural translations post Vatican II.

There were further problems caused by distance, which, in those days, could amount to virtual isolation. As bishops, or other educated men attempted theological definitions, occasionally there resulted heresy, the repercussions of which might last for centuries.

Finally, there was civil interference and persecutions which also caused theological questions. To be continued.

<sup>1</sup> Pazzelli, Raffaele, St. Francis and the Third Order, 1982, Franciscan Herald Press.

<sup>2</sup> Flannery, O.P., Austin, Editor, Vatican II More Postconciliar Documents, Volume II, "Apostolic Constitution on Penance" Paul VI, Paenitemini, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> The New American Bible, 1970, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C.

<sup>4</sup> Wijngaards, M.H.M., John, Handbook To The Gospels, 1979, Servant Books, Ann Arbor, MI, p. 131.

<sup>5</sup> Martos, Joseph, Doors To The Sacred, 1982, Image Books, Garden City, NY.

A partial list of Old Testament references to metanoia:

Exodus 24:18  
Leviticus 16:31; 23:29  
Deuteronomy 9:9, 18  
1 Samuel 7; 14:24; 31:13  
2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35; 12:16  
1 Kings 21:20-21, 27.  
Tobit 12:8-9  
Judith 4:8; 8:16-17; 20:25-26  
Esther 3:15; 4:1,16  
Psalms 34:13; 2  
Isaiah 53:4-11; 58:6-7  
Jeremiah 3:3,7,9  
Baruch 1:2,5,17-18  
Daniel 1:12; 9:3; 10:3,12  
Zechariah 7:5; 8:9, 21

## THE BELOVED

Patricia Brandwein-Ball, SFO

### Part I

Tears filled my eyes,  
retching pain consumed my life;  
A sense of abandonment, aloneness  
opened to a dark abyss.  
And in its presence  
there was room for nothing else.

I felt forsaken  
by the whole world  
and writhed in such torment  
I could barely form the words  
to ask for your embrace,  
the touch that would surround me  
so much so  
that for a while  
I would not exist -  
that whatever shreds of self  
might be left  
would be given over to your love.

At the moment of fully entering  
the dark abyss,  
you intervened -  
and the darkness became a muted light,  
and the substance of your body  
withheld the abyss.  
No longer did I exist  
outside the fold of your arms  
nor beyond the limits of your heart.

Spirit fused into spirit.

You lead me to  
Him whose Life you have become.  
And in the faded light of day  
you released me  
into His searching eyes.  
(How did you know with such certainty  
it was not you I truly sought?)

He called me by name,  
Himself once forsaken.  
He entered my abandonment  
and stretched out His hand.

His fingers moved with gentleness  
upon the cords of my heart;  
the lines of mending  
quicken  
and burned more deeply  
each time He traced  
His Holy cross...  
Forever, there would be a scar.

## *Part II*

As promised the Cross remains  
branded into my heart -  
reminding me of  
Him whose Life you have become,  
beckoning me  
to search the eyes of everyone I meet;  
compelling me  
to caress the heart of everyone I meet;  
Still, I long for a return of His  
gentle touch  
but can only come near His hand  
when I embrace the burning pain  
in another's heart.

Searching  
till I am no more  
till all that remains of me  
is the burning Cross  
seared into my heart.  
I implore Him,  
"Hold not your hand from me.  
Draw not away -  
lest the dark abyss  
open up before me -  
for you are the muted light  
(muted that my eyes may yet see)  
and you are the shield  
withholding the abyss  
(that I may not be lost  
beyond the beyond)."

My heart  
recognizable no longer  
as a human heart  
seeks only the Beloved  
who took my life  
and made of it a journey without rest,  
a pilgrimage of love.  
Driven only by this one desire

repeating everywhere at every turn  
"Hold not your hand from me  
Draw not away."  
There is nothing left of me  
that does not feel the pain -  
(How is it you have found with such  
apparent ease,  
Him whose Life you have become?)

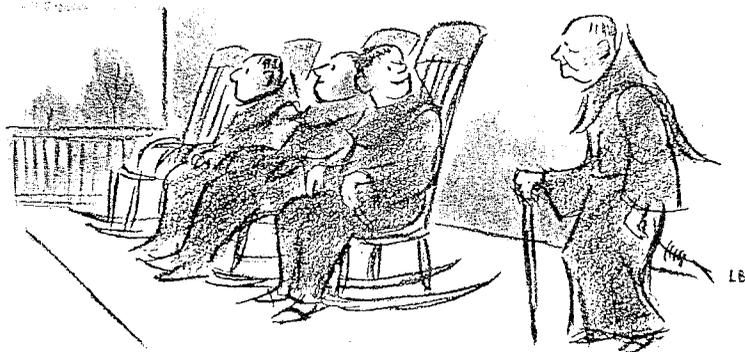
## *Part III*

In agony I am gathered  
into His shadow -  
and I linger.  
"Draw not away from me,"  
my being whispers.  
"Hold not your hand from me  
Draw not away -  
lest my misshapen heart  
wither and die -  
misshapen and bruised  
by the longing  
for your gentle fingers  
upon its flesh -  
drawn tight,  
bound,  
inseparable from the burning cross."  
In bittersweet love  
He held my heart  
and in the bond of this covenant  
let me rest,  
in the fragrance of love  
consoled me.  
He called me by name.  
My eyes fell upon His heart.  
It bore a Cross  
and was encircled by a crown of thorns.

He gave me this crown and said,  
"Love wounds the heart  
(Oh joyful wounds)  
and love doth heal.  
Take my Cross and Crown  
as an everlasting sign of my love.  
Wear these with fidelity and courage.  
I am with you always;  
I am He whose Life you have become..."

(Pat is a member of St. Casimir Province.)

# STRICTLY CLOISTERED



## Care to join our rock group?

### FRATERNITY RECORDS

Dr. Marguerite B. Stein, SFO, Canonist

The Summer, 1991, issue carried a short article by Newsletter Staff member, Laurence Herbert, SFO, on the importance of keeping records. Now, Marge Stein carries it further, and every bit is needed. Please read and be aware that the ability to keep records is not just a trait of certain people; it is an obligation for officers.

Suppose the office of minister or secretary suddenly becomes vacant. Do the other officers know what the documents of the fraternity are; where they are kept? Or where provincial/regional archives are located; what documents should be going to them?

It is the responsibility of the minister, the secretary, and the council to pass on all fraternity documents and records to the next group of officers as they are elected. The records should be **labeled** and kept together in a safe place. The person who maintains them should **tell someone in his family** what they are and where they are kept.

It is the responsibility of the outgoing minister and officers to meet with the incoming minister and officers to provide for the turn-over of all records. It is helpful to create an inventory sheet to be passed on and which should include locations for:

1. The document of canonical establishment.
2. Up-to-date Register of Members which includes:
  - a. Date of admission;
  - b. Date of profession;
  - c. Date of death;
  - d. Date of transfer, including fraternity of origin or destination;  
(This Register must be checked by fraternal visitors.)
3. Ritual;  
NB: This **must** be used for fraternity rites including council and fraternity meetings, receptions, professions, visitations;
4. 1978 Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order;
5. The new General Constitutions (and each Council member should have one).
6. NAFRA Statutes and one for each council member;
7. Governance guidelines of the province/region;  
(new statutes should not be written until new NAFRA Statutes are available.)

8. A file containing the provincial/regional guide lines for:
  - a. Elections, local and provincial/regional;
  - b. Duties of officers;
  - c. Necessary reports to the province/region;
  - d. Procedures for dealing with dispensed and delinquent members;
  - e. Outline of procedures for provincial/regional visitations.
9. A **history of the fraternity.**
10. **UP-TO-DATE INVENTORY** of all equipment which belongs to the fraternity, such as: typewriters, computers, office furniture and miscellaneous supplies.

**HARDBACK BINDERS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR:**

1. Minutes of council meetings and, where notable action was taken at general meetings;
2. A ledger showing income, expense, and balance; treasurer's reports;
3. Attendance records, whether by sign in sheets or secretary's monthly report;
4. Bulletins from all levels of fraternity filed by category and date.
5. Formation materials

It is also considered essential to keep these files:

1. A **sturdy file for correspondence**, kept in date order and separated by topic if volume warrants;
2. Formation Material:
  - a. "Guidelines for Initial Formation in the SFO", published by the National Formation Commission;
  - b. Up-to-date record of formation procedures, including texts used, outside reading required, apostolic experience given, etc.
3. A roster of all provincial/regional officers and of local ministers.
4. File for papal encyclicals, etc. dealing with the laity, mission, and apostolic work.

At first glance, that list is staggering. We know. We are willing to bet that **right now** your fraternity would be hard put to assemble all this documentation, which is probably (no insult intended - we are all very busy) in

various private homes on upper shelves of closets, tossed into large boxes helter-skelter. But if you will only bring it all together, how very much easier your service will become!

Many of these things, such as the Register, are mandated to be kept by the secretary as you will discover, if you read the Constitutions, but in many fraternities a practice has grown up to have every thing kept by the minister, already under heavy responsibility.

The first key is to separate the incoming material and put it in its binder or get it to its agreed-upon custodian.

The second key is the obligation and willingness on the part of the trusted custodians to make the material available to all.

Think of it. Truly organized Franciscans! Brother Elias would be proud!

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**DIRECTIVE BOARD UPDATE**

Page 2, 'Ohana O Ke Anuenue Region,  
Minister:  
Mrs. Carol Amaral, SFO  
2715 Pamoia Road  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
(808)988-4432

Page 2, Most Holy Name  
Minister:  
Phone number (401)738-8297

Page 7  
Conference of National Spiritual Assistants:  
Add:  
Rev. Stephen R. Gross, OFM Conv.  
St. Joseph of Cupertino Friary, P.O. Box 820  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
(805)489-1012

Page 8  
Formation, remove William Braswell, SFO

## A FRANCISCAN FAMILY

Gloria N. Shriver, SFO  
Chair, Family Commission

Would you believe we have a Secular Franciscan couple in New Jersey who can boast of having six Secular Franciscans in their immediate family? Of course, it sounds more reasonable when you hear that Ed and Nancy Foran have fourteen children: twelve biological and two adopted. The eldest, Nancy Marie, a systems engineer, is vice-minister of her fraternity.

"When people ask me if we don't have enough," says Ed, smiling his infectious grin, "I ask them, 'Enough what?' Enough getting up at night? Keeping enough food on the table? Enough of paying the doctor bills? Or are you asking if we have enough of the joy of sharing their achievements, enough of receiving their love, of the thrill of having them run out to greet me when I get home in the evening?"

"Nancy and I feel there's never enough. Twenty-six years ago we decided we would surrender to the will of God in the sacrament of marriage. We promised we would accept any children God sent us, children born to us or any other child who came through the door. We've never gone back on that promise, and God has never gone back on His promise to be with us always. He has helped us many times through other people. How else could we have managed to feed and clothe and take care of the spiritual needs of our fourteen, plus the myriads who came needing help and have stayed for a short or long time over the years? And I only make about \$40,000 a year! Of course, the older ones have jobs now."

Children just seem drawn to the Forans, especially the ones from dysfunctional families, the abused, or the handicapped. It is as if the strong family values that radiate from this household like a magnet attract people who need love. They come for advice, for a pajama party, to escape abuse at home, just

because it's fun to be there, or just because they need a quiet time of prayer. Even the non-Catholics join in the daily family rosary.

The Forans believe that every home needs a head and a heart, and that the father is the head and the mother the heart. Ed is quick to explain that the head is not the big boss. By head he means that the father is responsible for supporting the family and making sure they have good spiritual development. He is responsible for its religious education. (That does not mean he has to teach religion classes himself, but he must see that they know what the Church teaches.)

You may be wondering how they manage a family of this size in the world of high prices when most people can't tell the difference between needs and wants. But manage it they do, with the help of two stoves, two freezers, a three-door refrigerator, 25 gallons of milk a week, along with a couple dozen loaves of bread, and a lot of Franciscan prayers and trust in God.

They have solved problems that you and I never dream about - such as having to buy a dumpster when the hauler refused to take out so many bags of trash a week. At one time they rode in a second-hand, eight-door airport limousine, but now that the older children have cars of their own, it's no longer needed.

When asked how they have the courage to take on so many problems, Ed says, "We know God will never send us a problem we can't handle and that He will give us the strength to raise these children to achieve heaven and learn how to handle the many problems that life unfolds."

They must have had strong faith in that theology when they decided to take five of the younger children out of school and have Nancy teach them at home. She admits that she was terrified at first even though she holds a degree in music education. However, since they weren't completely happy with the local school program, she put her faith in God

and a Home-School program from Our Lady of the Rosary in Kentucky. She is teaching four in grade school and one in high school. Now, she is quick to tell you, "I wish I had home-schooled them all." When the oldest of her pupils went over to the high school, she found that she was ahead of the school's classes and had even completed books that higher grades were using in their most advanced sections.

Nancy and Ed have a simple philosophy about helping children: build up their self-esteem. It's as simple and as complicated as that! How do they do it? They'll tell you by making a 180 degree turn away from the rest of the world. That doesn't mean they isolate the children, but they emphasize "Catholic home and family values". They make each child feel wanted and loved.

Ed says, "I don't want the kids to learn the world's values. I want them to learn OUR values," and Nancy adds, "We try to be like the typical family of the fifties, like the ones Ed and I grew up in."

With all the necessary shopping, cooking, cleaning, and washing tons of clothes each week, plus the time that must be spent with the children, do they have time to do anything in their Church? Of course! Every Secular knows that if you want something done, ask a busy person. This family is the church choir. Nancy is in charge of the music. They sing for the Masses, funerals, and weddings. Ed and Nancy say they can't donate money to the church, but they figure that 20% of their time is spent on church activities. That's a large donation to any church, especially when there are fourteen in the family. In addition to all of this, Ed serves as the Family Commission Chairman of his Fraternity.

For years, this family thought they were a typical American family, but now they are beginning to wonder if they aren't an anachronism. Maybe they are, but wouldn't it be nice if many more were like them.

## THE QUINQUENNIAL

Registration forms, general information, and programs for the August 2-7 Quinquennial Congress were mailed during January to local fraternity ministers. If you did not receive them or need more, contact:

Miss Catherine Miltz, SFO, Coordinator  
1615 Vine Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45210  
(513)241-9862

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## PORTIUNCULA CELEBRATION, 1993

The Franciscan Heritage Office has announced the Portiuncula Celebration in honor of the eight centennial of the birth of St. Clare, July 30 - August 1, 1993. The program, which will take place at Steubenville, Ohio, has been designed to incorporate the whole Franciscan family.

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## A FEW THOUGHTS

From the Editor

### CIOFS Representatives

The concern being paid by the International Presidency over just representation is certainly needed and to be commended. However, there is another very important aspect that should be addressed.

Election to minister on any level of fraternity automatically places that minister on the general council or directive board of the next higher fraternity, except CIOFS. National ministers are not, *ipso facto*, CIOFS councilors.

The reason given is that CIOFS functions on six year terms, while national ministers are elected for three years. That the Presidency should be elected for six years is understandable and reasonable. But there is no reason to apply the same term to the entire council. There is every reason not to do so.

cont. next page.

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### The Television Project

We're still running behind, but monitors are working. There have been two objections to the project: censorship and duplication of the efforts of other organizations.

Concerning censorship, why not? The airways belong to us, not to writers, producers, actors, and sponsors who seem dedicated to contaminate. Specific sex (whether licit or not) crude, offensive language, and violence are bad enough. There also appears to be a continuing, if not a growing trend to mock religions, and the Roman Catholic Church is one of the prime targets.

As to duplication, the more, the better. One SFO, who is involved in various aspects of communication, said that each letter of protest is felt to represent seven others unwritten. A few thousand letters could have some impact.

The failure may be that the pleas (that we have read) of other organizations usually ask their readers to write a letter of protest. But it is so easy to forget or to say, "What impact can I have?" Plenty, if we are organized.

Sample letters, which may be duplicated, will be sent to you. The dates for mailing will be given. Local Ministers, please bring

this to the attention of your fraternity immediately so that everyone will be prepared. We may not win the battle, but, at least, we will have tried. Our new constitutions indicate that, using acceptable methods, we must try to improve the world. Refusal to do so is tantamount to tacit approval of present conditions.

### Private subscriptions

Keep them coming and thanks so much for the many very nice comments. A substantial number of subscribers and local ministers have mentioned using articles as the basis of ongoing formation. That is one of our aims.

In this issue there are several referrals to the new constitutions. Unlike most legal documents, ours is not fifty pages of thou shall or shall not. There is tremendous spirituality involved. Remember, the document is an expansion of the Rule. So, even if you are not one who enjoys reading Canon Law, give the constitutions a try; parts of it may surprise you.

### Private subscription costs

U.S. - \$2 per year  
Canadian - \$3 per year  
Foreign - \$4 per year

There are four issues per year.

## FRANCISCAN U.N. CALENDAR

*Secular Franciscans should go forth as witnesses and instruments of the Church's mission among all people, proclaiming Christ.*

Rule 6

### **1992 Ongoing**

Decade Against Drug Abuse  
Decade of International Law  
Decade To Combat Racial Discrimination  
World Decade For Cultural Development

### **Concludes**

Decade of Disabled Persons

*They shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people especially the lowly redeemed by Christ.* Rule 13

7 April	World Health Day
1-12 June	Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro
5-7 June	Environmental Sabbath
15 Sept	International Day of Peace
1 Oct	International Day For The Elderly
16 Oct	World Food Day
24 Oct	United Nations Day. Begins Disarmament Week
8-14 Nov	International Week Of Science And Peace
10 Dec	Human Rights Day

*They are called to build a more fraternal evangelical world.* Rule 14  
*Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice.* Rule 15

**1993** World Conference on Human Rights  
**1994** International Year of the Family  
**1995** World Conference On Women

*They should move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.* Rule 18