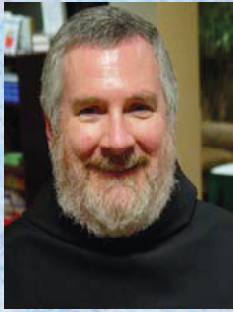


~Impressions~



By Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR
CNSA President-In-Turn
Photo by R. Stronach, SFO

Lord, Make Us Instruments...

No matter which candidate you supported in the national elections this year, it is probably very clear to most of us that our Nation is deeply divided. Here is not the place to discuss particular issues, but rather I want to focus on the general climate in our Nation. This division is often reflected in our Church and in our Order. We find ourselves disagreeing among ourselves as Franciscans, and there are reports of instances where things have gotten very tense in local fraternities. If we are to be sisters and brothers, following

Christ in the way of Francis, we must find ways to be reconcilers, peacemakers. Must we be so hard-headed and closed minded about our own points of view that we cannot try to find reason or right or truth in the other person's opinion? This, my brothers and sisters, is not Franciscan. Perhaps we are motivated by the purest and most admirable intentions. Perhaps our point of view makes all the sense in the world! Still, it is possible to for reasonable people to disagree! When we become so divided as to not find reconciliation and respect among ourselves, something is very wrong!

A better way is possible and we can find it in our Franciscan way of living the gospel. It takes much work and openness to the Spirit. Even in the Rule, we find ourselves called "brothers and sisters of penance." (SFO Rule, Article 7) In the same article, we are called to "conversion." We all want to "bring the gospel to life," in the sense of making it a living document in all we say and do. In living out our profession, we are meant to reach beyond ourselves. If we are so divided, how can we offer reconciliation to the divided world at large? My own novice director, oh so many years ago, was fond of saying, "*Nemo dat quod non habet.*" (A translation from the Latin would be, "No one can give what he [or she] does not have.") If we are deeply divided among ourselves and not willing to recognize and accept the differences as

a sign of a healthy community or fraternity, how can we hope to bring peace and reconciliation to the world?

Maybe our fraternities could look at ways of conflict resolution. It might do us good to talk openly and respectfully about our differences, making sure that there is a family atmosphere of acceptance and support and love as we listen to each speaker. Even the Rule calls us to that respect "...because each bears the imprint of the Most High." (SFO Rule, Article 18) Can we do this in our own fraternities? It is a challenge for us to model within our own Order what we say we are praying for and working for: peace, justice, family, work and ecology. By the way, the names of three of the four apostolic commissions are "hidden" in the text! (And I don't mean in the final summary line.)

Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, New National Spiritual Assistant

Fr. Kevin born in born in Yonkers, New York. He lives in Loretto, PA and is Campus Minister there at Saint Francis University. Father was ordained a priest in 1977, at Saint Francis University. He is the Regional Spiritual Assistant for the Lady Poverty Region, which has fraternities in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Maryland. His special interest is Peace & Justice. He has been involved in this for many years, for the friars on the Provincial, National and Inter-national level. From 1995 to 2001, he was on the IFCJP (Inter-Franciscan Justice and Peace Commission) in Rome. This commission includes representatives from the OFMs, OFM Caps, OFM Conventuals, SFO, the International Franciscan Conference TOR (which is the organization of all those following the TOR rule) in addition to the TORs.

When asked about long term goals as National Spiritual Assistant, his answer was, "I am approaching the office of president-in-turn, as one of service to NAFRA and to the Spiritual Assistants. My predecessor wrote "the book" (called Catch Me a Rainbow!), so I follow someone who is well-liked and well-respected. If I can participate in NAFRA meetings, as any Spiritual Assistant participates in a fraternity meeting, I will feel I have begun to fulfill my role of service." His first plan of action was to go to the NAFRA meeting and learn what is happening in the National Fraternity.