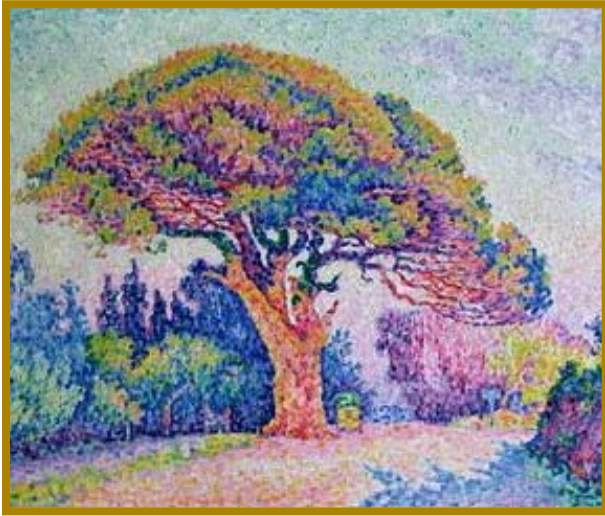


Minister's Insights



By Paul Signa

Pearls of Wisdom in an Emerald Setting...

By Patrick Mendés, SFO
National Minister

Nestled high in the Alleghenies, amid towering trees of a resplendent emerald green, lies St. Francis University and here in this idyllic setting, history was being made. From June 26th to the 29th, more than 75 Secular Franciscans from across the United States, representing 17 of our 30 Regions, gathered for the First Annual Summer Seminar for the SFO, to learn about servant leadership.

The pearls of wisdom shared by our presenters, Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR and Anne Mulqueen, SFO, offered us new insights in to the vision of Franciscan servant leadership. They challenged us to stretch ourselves as we looked at such issues as the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church; Conversion and Faith; Discipleship and Mission; Prayer – Foundation and Connection; Growth and Christian Maturity – Virtue.

As we moved through these questions, addressed in a variety of ways by our speakers, we looked at the difference between role functionality and leadership. We were challenged to “see as God sees...act as God acts...”

I came away from those four days refreshed, affirmed and inspired. I am sure that all the other participants

have similar feelings. We shared much during our classes and during our social hours in the evenings. We built fraternity as we grew our skills and expanded our vision and our horizons.

A lasting thought I hold from one of our sessions: “*Each life situation will ask me to discern what kind of action I must take to do the most loving thing – and my action will not be without personal cost.*” (Quote taken from Fr. Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR, from his forthcoming book, *Development of Lay Leadership in the Secular Franciscan Order*).

The Summer Seminar for the SFO is a gift to us from St. Francis University. It was born of the dream of Fr. Gabriel Zeis, TOR, President of St. Francis University, to offer something special to the SFO. The dream became a reality in the hands of National Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, who was tireless in putting the Seminar together and taking care of the myriad tasks necessary for a successful seminar. If any of you have ever been responsible for putting together a seminar or workshop, you know the amount of work necessary.

I can speak for my fellow participants and myself, I believe, when I say thank you from the bottom of our hearts to Fr. Gabriel for the vision and dream and to Fr. Kevin for turning it into a reality. As one of our sisters remarked to me “It was like a miniature Q with all of the brothers and sisters from across the country, coming to study and share together.” Indeed it was! And I know we are all looking forward to the 2009 Summer Seminar for the SFO at St. Francis University.

“Each life situation will ask me to discern what kind of action I must take to do the most loving thing – and my action will not be without personal cost.”

Fr. Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR

Fr. Bernie, in one of our classes, observed that “the Holy Spirit is primary in the ongoing life of the Church. We need to begin to see the Spirit as alive and motivating.” And didn’t we see that in our Seminar and time together?

I pray with a grateful heart for Fr. Gabriel, Fr. Kevin, Fr. Bernie, and you...May the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround you with His love and fill your lives with His abundant blessings.