

Dear National Family,

Please join me in congratulating
BROTHER DAVID BUER, OFM,
 recipient of the
 2010 NAFRA Peace Award!

Congratulations as well to the Saint Thomas More Region and nine of the Region's established Fraternities as well as an emerging Korean Fraternity for their nomination of Brother David.

Of course the nominations speak for themselves, but permit to say what a blessing it was for me to speak by phone with Brother David. He was working at the homeless shelter written about in his nominations when I called.

He shared with me how much the NAFRA Peace Award meant to me. He said he was (or had been) good friends with the Friar who had presented the Peace Award to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960's. He noted that he himself was a Secular before he was a Friar, becoming a Secular in 1979, I believe, and a Friar in 1991. *(Our cell-phone reception was in and out, so don't hold me to his exact words or these dates!)*

He humbly, but joyfully accepted our Peace Award, and plans to attend our Annual NAFRA Gathering at the Franciscan Renewal Center "Casa de Paz y Bien" in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Tuesday, October 26 to receive this award. Please plan to introduce yourself to him if you are joining us in Arizona this October!

Again, I congratulate Brother David and thank him for accepting and planning to be with us at our NAFRA gathering. I congratulate and thank all of you who nominated, and all those nominated, for the 2010 NAFRA Peace Award. They are all an inspiring group who challenge us to carry on all the good work for Peace.

May the Lord give us Peace!

Tom Bello, SFO
 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINISTER



MEET OUR 2010 NAFRA
 PEACE AWARD RECIPIENT:

BROTHER DAVID BUER, OFM

The Saint Thomas More Regional Executive Council, and their local fraternities, nominated Brother David. They provided a wonderful history of his unwavering service to our marginalized and too often forgotten brothers and sisters. Due to space limitations, TAU-USA offers you an edited version featuring but a few highlights of his many attributes which could fill volumes. —Editor

Brother David Buer, OFM, from the Santa Barbara Province of Franciscan Friars, California, has made a life time of seeking out our the poor; society's forgotten men and women, and serving them with dignity, kindness, and love. He clearly understands that by serving others will we find peace. He is a role model for not only Franciscans or Catholics, but for all people. He evangelizes through the way he lives his life- using words when necessary.

Brother David came to the Las Vegas, Nevada area in the late 1990's. He quickly recognized that even though Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army provided overnight shelter and beds for the homeless in Las Vegas, there was a tremendous need for a daytime home for homeless men. In 1997, through challenging work and the awesome task of raising the funds, Brother David opened *Poverello House* in Las Vegas, near what is known as the *Homeless Corridor*, where many of the homeless live.

It is a welcoming place where homeless men can receive two nutritious meals during their day's stay. The homeless men are also given clothing, blankets, and personal hygiene items, when needed. Showers and laundry facilities are available and are regularly put to good use. The men also can take naps on the beds or watch television or play games for recreation. They can also sit and rest in the large enclosed yard. *Poverello House* was established to provide a place where homeless men could find a safe haven to rest and refresh themselves before they began searching for a bed for the night. It is open five days a week. In 2002, Brother David started a second *Poverello House* in nearby Henderson, Nevada. It also welcomes homeless women one day a week.

Brother David makes sure that the homeless are treated with respect. His humble approach to life is demonstrated by giving and serving our poor and marginalized brothers and sisters. Such as Saint Francis said, "Preach the Gospel, use words if necessary," Brother David preaches the Gospel by his actions. He uses words when necessary, especially when it involves housing, services, or laws that affect the homeless. He's become known to the Las Vegas Mayor and the city council, where he will speak on behalf of the homeless, whenever necessary. His Franciscan spirituality, respect and caring for the homeless (our present day lepers) and preaching the Gospel by living it, has changed and inspired many lives. Brother David is a man of peace. He simply serves others with dignity and grace. He asks nothing for himself.

2010 NAFRA PEACE AWARD RECIPIENT

He has taken fraternity members on walks through the Homeless Corridor in Las Vegas to meet personally the homeless, to put faces and humanity on the homeless.

Those type of experiences opened our eyes to see what the homeless have to go through in their everyday lives. Walking the railroad tracks and seeing the tent cities gave everyone a greater appreciation of the blessings that the Lord has given us, and how much we need to give to our fellow brothers and sisters. Brother David has slept on the streets, and spent vigil time for days while fasting only on water. On one of the vigils, he was interviewed by a local television station. A woman watching the newscast saw her brother in the background. She had not seen him in years. This is the Holy Spirit at work.

Always in motion, and always seeking to help others, he never says “no” to anyone who needs help. He models Franciscan spirituality and how a Franciscan can lead a life of helping and serving others. He has served as Spiritual Director of the SFO Saint Margaret of Cortona Fraternity who learned a great deal from him by the way he leads a life of peace and joy in all he approaches. The lessons he taught about being Franciscan continue to be valuable and poignant in a city with so much neglect of their homeless populations.

In July 2006, Brother David opened the doors at Saint Francis Cooling Center for the homeless. It was in the basement of an old building on Santa Cruz's property. With the help of volunteers, homeless men were able to spend some time inside a cool building during blistering summers.

In Winter 2007, he rented a van and with the supportive help of generous contributors, started the “Soup Patrol.” A winter outreach ministry to the homeless, where he went out each evening providing hot soup, hot chocolate, bread, cookies and blankets to the homeless. From 6:00 to 9:00 pm, he and a helper would drive around, seeking out known areas where the homeless camped.

He considers it a blessing to have worked almost thirty years with the homeless — the Open Door community in Atlanta, St. Francis Center in Denver, the Franciscan House of Mary and Joseph in Chicago, the Catholic Workers in Las Vegas, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

He is still amazed at how blessed the work is when the poor and homeless are treated with respect and dignity as we work to get their basic needs met. Saint Paul's challenging words remind us that without love, it is nothing.

Brother David recently opened a Poverello Hospitality House here in Tucson similar to the one in Las Vegas. The homeless can come by appointment to spend a day in a home where they can take a shower, wash their clothes, get needed clothes and have a cooked meal.



He is very involved in the “No More Deaths” movement which works with humanitarian help to help the migrants coming across the border. He regularly goes on patrol in the southern Arizona desert near the Mexican border in order to provide water and shelter from the sizzling sun, food and basic clothing items such as hats, socks and shoes.

Poverty has no boundaries and he courageously stands up for the immigrants who seek a better life.

Brother David served Saint Thomas More Region as a “de facto” Regional Spiritual Assistant for many months before being officially installed as Regional Spiritual Assistant at the Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation of the Region in July of 2008.

We are blessed to know Brother David as our Region's Spiritual Assistant. He provides compassion and concern to all he meets. He offers ideas on how we as Secular Franciscans can reach out to other Franciscans and has planned activities to do so. At our Regional Council meetings, Executive Council meetings, workshops, days of retreat, and pilgrimages, Brother David peacefully speaks and walks the talk.