

“BRINGING THE GIFT OF GOSPEL LIVING TO LIFE”

Dear National Family,

Please permit me to invite your prayers for our Annual NAFRA Gathering at the Franciscan Renewal Center, “Casa de Paz y Bien” in Scottsdale, Arizona, October 26-31, 2010. I wish all of you could join the Regional Ministers from all over the United States and the National Executive Council (NEC), with our Executive Council Appointees and our honored Guests, but the Renewal Center does not have room for all 14,000+ of us!

Allow me instead to offer you a mini-preview, a virtual tour, of our Annual Gathering as I hope it will actually play out when we come together, with God’s great grace, for Renewal within ourselves and throughout our beloved Order.

The theme of our 2010 Annual NAFRA Gathering is the title that you see above: “Bringing the Gift of Gospel Living to Life.”

This title is a summary of your NEC’s vision, gleaned from our last two meetings, first in frozen St. Louis in February, then in steamy Washington, DC in July.

These brief words center on our essential Franciscan call:

“The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people” (SFO Rule, Art 4). Let us pray for one another that by making Fraternity, Formation, Communication and Youth our priorities, the gift of our Franciscan call will extend to all life, bringing the Gospel light of Christ to all who live in darkness.

Remembering that the four elements of every fraternity meeting are: Prayer, Formation, Social and Business, AND in that order of importance, we will open our meeting on **Tuesday evening, October 26**, with Evening Prayer, then will proceed to our Mass with the newly elected and first Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Phoenix, Bishop Eduardo Nevares. We will finish this first evening with Brother David Buer, OFM receiving the 2010 NAFRA Peace Award for his outstanding work with the homeless and with Peace and Justice issues for many years.

We trust that both Bishop Nevares and Brother David will offer Spirit-filled words of formation and transformation. A social will follow.

Wednesday, October 27, will be a full day of sharing between the National Minister and the National Executive Council with all the Regional Ministers. The Regional Ministers will have ample time to gather in their Geographic Groups to share “best practices” and challenges from their various Regions. The day will finish with a panel discussion on immigration, perhaps most appropriate since we are bearing witness to Christ’s love in the great state of Arizona.

By contrast, **Thursday, October 28**, will start with a full morning of Formation as we get a “sneak preview” of the new and eagerly awaited National Formation Manual.

In the afternoon, we will meet our new Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), Diversity and Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Chairpersons.

Brief 5 minute introductions of their valued work will follow from 11 different presenters, including our honored guests, in no particular order:

- Fr. Mike Lasky, OFM Conv., Franciscans International
- Fr. Larry Janezic, OFM, Franciscan Action Network
- Dr. Kim Smolik, from Franciscan Mission Service
- Alan Ouimet, SFO, Franciscan Family Apostolate
- Bill Wicks, SFO, our Historian
- Sharon Deveaux, SFO, our Archivist
- Mary and Bob Stronach, both SFO’s, with Public Relations
- Vickie Klick, SFO, *and*
- Dan Mulholland, SFO, Technology
- Ed Shirley, SFO, Ecumenical
- Anna Geraci, SFO, TAU-USA
- Bob Fitzsimmons, SFO, Formation

Each of these wonderful people will enjoy a two-hour opportunity in the evening at the entertaining and informative “Francesco’s Café,” where they can meet and share with as many people as they wish. It should be a lively day and evening!

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Friday, October 29, will be our famous Day-Away, when we will tour the best of the local sites, concluding with a Mass at the Cathedral in Phoenix.

Saturday, October 30, will be our last full day of sharing, including our special Rite of Remembrance for our beloved in all our local fraternities and regions who have returned home to the Lord in the past year. It's a sad, but joyful service that always brings a spirit of thanksgiving for the lives that we have shared with our departed until we may meet again in glory. We will break bread together at the Lord's Table with the living and the dead. We will have our final social.

Our travel day, **Sunday, October 31**, Halloween, will conclude with a Roundtable Discussion on what the week has brought and where and how and with whom our Franciscan Family is journeying in the future.

I hope you have enjoyed this mini-tour! In exchange, I beg for your prayers for all of us trying to bring this gift of Gospel Living to Life. As St. Francis said, "Let us begin again ..."

Peace and love,
the greatest good,
Tom and your
National Executive Council