

QUINQUENNIAL REFLECTIONS

From **Sandal Prints**, the newsletter of the St. Clare Fraternity Portland, Ore.

“First, it is so amazing gathering with at least 600 other Secular Franciscans! We celebrated Mass together every day in St. Mary’s Basilica, a block down the street from the hotel. The church was completely filled with Franciscans, and when we sang the first hymn, I was bowled over by the beauty of the voices of my sisters and brothers absolutely filling the church! The organist/cantor was wonderfully talented—and it turns out (if I got this right), he is a member of YouFRA (people up to age 30 or so can belong).”

Clare Reidy, OFS

The Q was like looking through a telescope and seeing a galaxy of Secular Franciscans. Some were older and limited physically, some were middle aged with an energetic acute interest, and all seemed driven by a love for the principles of St. Francis. Each one was trying to bring into focus their mission in these challenging times. The love for Jesus Christ was conveyed through discussions on social justice, care for creation, reaching and showing dignity to the marginalized and the poor in spirit.

Cheri Lorenzo, OFS

The first people I talked to (at the Q) were from Franciscan Missionary Service. Rhonda told me about her experience with people crossing the border and needing to be rescued.

“That night, I left for my campsite in Apache Junction. I arrived around 10 pm and set up my tent. It was 99 degrees with

thunderstorms on the horizon. I lay there in a pool of sweat wondering if people were crossing the desert that night. The next day, I went back to the mission table and asked if people actually crossed the desert in August. I was told yes, “that is the most affordable time because the coyotes charge a lot less”. I am forever changed by my experience and grateful that God would allow me that small suffering. I have a picture in my living room now from the Q that reminds me of the people who die in the desert in search of a better life for their family.”

Ralph Anderson, OFS

This was the second Quinquennial I have attended, and again, it did not disappoint! I am hard pressed to choose a favorite moment. I urge everyone to watch the keynote addresses on the NAFRA website—they are rich and filled with encouragement for all of us to live our fraternal lives wholeheartedly and then to go out into the world and transform it.

Barbara Allen, OFS

Additional Reflections

After the days we spent in Phoenix, we can only say what an awesome time we spent with our family from the OFS USA. Having come together to the talk sessions, hearing, learning and hopefully applying this to our way of life. I can truly say that you will not forget this grand reunion. If this was your first Q Congress, it will stay in your heart and in your mind.

Sofia Villeareal, Regional Minister, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas

Our first speaker (Fr. David Courturier) was excellent. He covered an area I thought I was an expert in, and that was economics. He explained it in a way that was so Franciscan and made so much sense that I believe we would have a better world if we would adopt what he told us to do.

Bill Parras, OFS, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas

What we heard was necessary. We are all thinking about it, and nobody is talking about it. We need to be treating each other as brother and sister everywhere we go. How would you treat a brother or sister? Not with violence. Not with anger. We need to show the world how to live as brothers and sisters. It’s a huge issue, and we can each start living it in our corner of the world—in our homes and in our fraternities.

Esperanza Nugent, OFS, Blessed Solanus Casey

I am again reminded that we are a much larger organization. Sometimes, we forget that we are international, and the little fraternities were a gift because we could talk openly and honestly about what we thought. The dialogue was very good. I must look at Pope Francis’s call to be a fraternity to the world. I knew he said that in his writings, but I need to look more closely at how I can make that happen at my local and regional levels. It is amazing that he is talking to us in each writing, but we don’t seem to be engaging in putting some of it into practice. I want to try harder to do that.

Rosemarie LeClerq, OFS, Tempe, AZ, St. Thomas More