



NATIONAL FRANCISCAN YOUTH
YOUNG/ADULT COUNCIL
www.franciscanyouthusa.com
franciscanyouthusa@hotmail.com

2009 LENTEN H2O PROJECT

By Kathy Taormina, SFO
FYFA Fraternal Animator

In this ever changing world, how do we as Christian (more over) Franciscans, choose apostolates to participate in, which can mirror our hearts, minds and souls? Everyone seems needy, every cause seems just, and every apostolate seems to have merit. So how do we choose?

Do we choose apostolates with much press coverage; those with big name stars and even bigger budgets? Or do we look for the needs among the fringes; in places so dark, so poor, or so despairing that few people, much less the media, will ever tread? Do we choose far away lands, where much has been written about, where we may never travel? Or do we look, as Mother Teresa once said “in our own back yards,” for those who need us; for those places and people where we might actually be physically present to them in their time of need?

In 1999, I came across the **H2O Project** at the National Catholic Youth Ministers Conference in Pittsburgh, PA. The FYFA was a charter member of NACYML – the National Association of Catholic Youth Ministry Leaders. The project spoke to a Franciscan heart, especially the idea of being in *solidarity with the poor*, to “strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.” (SFO Rule, Article 13) We were not just to donate or “write out a check,” we were to fast and then use the money saved towards almsgiving to the less fortunate. What a concept! One that Francis and Clare had mastered in their lifetimes.

The H2O Project calls us to solidarity with the poor. To roll up our sleeves, to physically get involved, to (at times) get our hands dirty and to get our hearts yearning for a more equitable and just life for all!

This year’s recipient, The Canticle Café, in Detroit, Michigan, calls our awareness to the poor “in our own back yards.” It reminds us that right here in the USA, we have high unemployment, poverty, homelessness and an inaccessibility to clean drinking water. Since we are donating locally, the FYFA will travel to Detroit to participate in a Franciscan immersion experience this July!

“Before ABC, NBC, CBS, or MSNBC news decided it was important enough to come here. Before Rosy O'Donnell started speaking out on national TV. Before Jay Leno promised to arrive to do a show, the FYFA responded for the poor in Detroit.”
a Michigan-raised SFO

On June 1, 2009, the funds donated to the H2O Project will be delivered to the Canticle Café. It will provide cold water, at no cost, to those who thirst during the hot summer months, where no public water fountains exist. Donations after August 1, 2009 will be held until the 2010 project. You can now donate year-round to the H2O Project!

The H2O Project is the means by which we gather these donations. It is the action and the method that is as important as the donations gathered. We cannot understand those who “need,” unless, at one time, we essentially “did without!”

You can still just write out a check, and believe me, the FYFA will take and use your donation...or you can actually participate with your whole person, heart and mind. You can fast, and use that money (which at other times you would have enjoyed for yourself) on another person, a person made in the image of God just like us!

It’s your choice. It’s your money. It’s your calling to solidarity! Join with the FYFA! Live our Franciscan vision!