

# INFORMATION, FORMATION, TRANSFORMATION

Beloved Brothers and Sisters of Penance,

May the Lord give us Peace!

Permit me to continue the discussion started two *TAU-USA* articles ago in the four marks of a Franciscan Gathering: "Prayer, Formation, Fraternal Sharing and Necessary Business, and in this order!" *TAU-USA Winter 2010 Issue 69*,

[www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/winter10/minister\\_winter10.pdf](http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/winter10/minister_winter10.pdf) and continued in "The Primary Focus and the Four Marks of a Vibrant Secular Franciscan Fraternity" *TAU-USA Spring 2011 Issue 70*,

[www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/spring11/minister\\_spring11.pdf](http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/spring11/minister_spring11.pdf).



Both articles stress the importance of formation, the focus of this article, as well as this entire issue of *TAU-USA*.

As I've written before, our fraternities need to pray for, work and focus on true Secular Franciscan formation for every member. We need to be attracting new people, forming them, and forming ourselves closer to Jesus Christ in the footsteps of Sts. Francis and Clare always and all ways.

This formation is a threefold process of information to effect formation in a process of continual transformation. We take pertinent information from the Gospels, from Holy Mother Church, from the lives of Sts. Francis and Clare and all the Franciscan saints, and from our own SFO Rule and General Constitutions, to structure and effect formation.

With the grace of God, this formation, if effective, achieves transformation, "that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls 'conversion.' Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily" (*SFO Rule, Article 7*).

A great step along this process of information, formation and transformation has been accomplished by the completion of our Foundational Formation Manual (2011) in response to the International Formation Manual (2008). I cannot imagine this comprehensive, foundational 460-page Formation Manual with an unbelievably rich accompanying CD of Reference Material being supplanted in my lifetime.

To introduce and help implement this Foundational Formation Manual, as many of you know, this past May we celebrated a National Formation Workshop at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois, with all our excellent National Formation Commission: **Robert L. Fitzsimmons (Fitz)**, SFO, Chair and Minister of Troubadours of Peace Regional Fraternity; **Friar Richard Trezza**, OFM; **Jan Parker**, SFO, (our National Secretary); **Kathleen White**, SFO; and **Rena Xuerub**, SFO, plus **Mary Bittner**, SFO, (our National Councilor); and three of our four National Spiritual Assistants: **Friar Lester Bach**, OFM Cap; **Friar Bob Brady**, OFM; and **Friar Stephen Gross**, OFM Conv.

I want to especially thank the 18 Regional Ministers who contributed their valuable time and resources to this workshop:

(Continued on page 3)

**THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE** is also available in the languages of Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and Polish.

These translations may be found online at our NAFRA website:

[http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/tau\\_newarticles.html#lbf](http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/tau_newarticles.html#lbf)



**Joanne Angeletti** - Minister of  
St. Maximilian Kolbe Region  
**Ken Beattie** - Minister of La Verna Region  
**Mary Frances Charsky** - Minister of  
Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region  
**Alice Crews** - Minister of Juan de Padilla Region  
**Joan Geiger** - Minister of Tau Cross Region  
**Sally Haddad** - Minister of Fr. Solanus Casey Region  
**Sheri Hafeli** - Minister of Divine Mercy Region  
**Vickie Klick** - Minister of Mother Cabrini Region  
**Mary Anne Lenzi** - Minister of  
Santa Maria de las Montañas Region  
**Sylvia Paoli** - Minister of St. Francis Region  
**Jerry Rousseau** - Minister of  
Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
**Susan Simeone** - Minister of St. Thomas More Region  
**Sherry Stevenson** - Minister of St. Clare Region  
**Frank Vargo** - Minister of Our Lady of Indiana Region  
**Mattie Ward** - Minister of St. Katharine Drexel Region  
**Cindy Wesley** - Minister of Bl. Junipero Serra Region  
**Steve White** - Minister of Holy Trinity Region

Thanks as well to the 23 Regional Formation Ministers and other SFOs who attended from Regions all across the United States, 128 SFOs in all, the largest SFO Gathering in the United States since the "Q" in 2007! Wow! What a blessing!

I loved being with family, family known and family I had never met before! We prayed, formed, studied, shared, sang and attended Mass together; and every attendee received a print copy of the 460-page Formation Manual, plus the CD. In addition, every Region who attended received an electronic Adobe copy of the Formation Manual.

With and only with the help of the Holy Spirit, the work now is to get this Formation Manual into the hands, spirits, hearts and minds of every SFO in the United States. As National Minister, as a writer of one of the introductions and one of the chapters in this Foundational Formation Manual, and as an attendee at the National Workshop, I am heavily invested in this process.

I beg for your prayers and assistance in this effort. In addition, as Chair of the Duns Scotus Fund Board of Trustees, I am also strongly encouraging any fraternity, Regional or Local, that would like to help us in this effort, but may lack sufficient funds, to apply directly for financial assistance to our beloved Secretary of the Duns Scotus Board, Anne Mulqueen. [anne\\_mulqueen@mac.com](mailto:anne_mulqueen@mac.com)



Our Risen Savior Jesus Christ is the Gate (John 10:9), but Bob Fitzsimmons (Fitz) and the National Formation Commission (NFC) are the gatekeepers for further distribution of these fundamental, foundational Formation materials. The National Executive Council has asked that all these materials be distributed at cost. These materials have been translated into Spanish and are currently being translated into Korean. The NFC can be reached at [www.nafraformation.org](http://www.nafraformation.org); and about these materials, Fitz can be reached at [nfcnafra@frontier.com](mailto:nfcnafra@frontier.com).



A National Formation Manual Blog has already been set up by our beloved Webpage Master Vickie Klick at <http://foruptonow.blogspot.com/?psininvite=ALRopfWJ2XjOmSAACLqHP9WR8CCR5YBTiDf9Q0qFLwCC8dpsXLRTOwSxL6c-CDtZXog3YdMYua8aMRMPONiXe85G9RkweoGD2A>.



Some Regions have already held and are currently planning Regional Workshops on these Formation materials, and our upcoming National Gathering in California from October 25 to 30, 2011, will further address continued implementation of these materials.

My beloved Sisters and Brothers of Penance, help us build up our Secular Franciscan Order, our entire Franciscan Family, our Church and our world by forming those God brings to our Order exactly as God wants us to form them, and, in the process, allow God to form us anew. "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

With prayers for Christ's Peace  
and Love to all of you,

*Tom*