

# Sharing The Vision

News from the National Executive Council (NEC)

by National Secretary, Jan Parker, OFS

## **Regional Visitations and Elections**

*(Or “How the Brothers and Sisters of the NEC Spent Their Summer Vocation”)*

It is always a blessing to be present with Regional Fraternities for Visitations and Elections. This year NEC members have traveled to 16 Regions *and Guam* to conduct 9 Visitations and 8 Elections – that’s at least 40 days of one-on-one sharing with our brothers and sisters across the country! We are very grateful for our Spiritual Assistants, who equally devote time journeying with us in “life-giving union.”

## **Donations**

Thanks to the generosity of the National Fraternity, \$1,600 was donated to our National Fraternity (NAFRA) Donor Fund in response to an appeal made in the Spring 2014 issue of the *TAU-USA*. Money from the Donor Fund is used for charitable giving both inside and outside the OFS and to support OFS activities that fall outside of budgeted funds. Our National Family also responded with a donation of \$1,080 to a special appeal from the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS) this past spring.

## **New National Commission Chairs**

Our National Fraternity (NAFRA) has three National Commissions: (1) Formation (NFC); (2) Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC); and (3) Franciscan Youth and Young Adults (FYYA). Two of our three commissions have newly appointed chairpersons. Mary Anne Lenzi was appointed incoming Formation Commission Chair in July, as former Chair Bob Fitzsimmons will conclude five years of service in October 2014. Mary Anne’s term begins officially at our 2014 NAFRA Chapter. In September, the NEC appointed Sue and Christy Nelson Co-Chairs of the Franciscan Youth and Young Adult Commission. We believe this is the first mother-daughter team to serve our National Family. Former FYYA Chair Rob Breen resigned in August 2014, due to new employment and increased demands on his time. JPIC Chair Carolyn Townes, appointed in October 2013, is completing her first year of service. We greatly appreciate the dedicated work of all who have served on our National Commissions and welcome with joy the “yes” of our newly-appointed Commission Chairs!

## **Secular Franciscan Books – Old and New**

The NEC oversees the printing of books copyrighted by the National Fraternity. We make decisions on what to print, how many to print and what not to reprint. This is not an easy task. We welcome new formation books with updated material, but this often means retiring older titles. Cost is always a factor. Book sales cover the cost of printing, but if books are printed and not sold, we lose money. Most of our NAFRA copyrighted books are published by Smoky Valley Printing located in Lindsborg, Kansas, and these are listed on the inside back cover of each issue of the *TAU-USA*. At our July 2014 meeting, the NEC made a decision to discontinue printing some books that still have current information but that are older titles and have far less demand than when they were first printed. The NEC also agreed to set up a new budget category for printing translated editions of our books so we might better evaluate costs.

## **Fraternity Registers**

We are happy to report the sale of more than 100 Fraternity Registers. This is encouraging, as proper record keeping of our membership is a serious obligation. Registers can be purchased via TAU Publishing's website at [taupublishing.org](http://taupublishing.org).

## **CIOFS Elective Chapter – November 2014**

At its July 2014 meeting the NEC nominated Tom Bello, Anne Mulqueen and Doug Clorey for the International Council (CIOFS). CIOFS meets in Elective Chapter Nov. 1-8 in Assisi, Italy.

## **Support for OFS Disaster Relief Team**

In response to a request from Jim Flickinger the NEC voted to give \$4,000 from the special "Charitable Projects by Individual OFS Members Fund" as seed money for the "OFS Disaster Relief Project." In response to a generous bequest, the NEC established this special fund, which supports charitable outreach by individual Seculars. Any individual OFS member is welcome to submit a request to the NEC for such funding.

## **More on St. Louis IX**

There were more than 20 requests for our Minister General's letter on the celebration of the 8th Centenary of St. Louis IX. (See the article "How St. Louis became my patron... and not just the city where I live" in the Summer 2014 issue of *TAU-USA*). One of our favorite responses was from Mary Ann Julian of St Michael Fraternity, Fr. Solanus Casey Region, who wrote, "What a great article on the transition from St. Louis, Mo., to St. Louis IX! You have piqued my interest and my heart. You have taken St Louis down off the shelf, dusted off his story, and shown us how wonderful, admirable, and imitable this brother saint of ours is! Please send me a copy of Encarnación del Pozo's letter, and I will also check out the monthly lessons on the CIOFS site." Thanks, Mary Ann and all who take such interest in what they read in the TAU-USA!

## **A note about communication ...and relationships**

The *TAU-USA* is a wonderful way for us to communicate on a national level. It is our hope that each individual member of our Order feels connected to our national family as they read each issue. Another wonderful way for us to communicate nationally is by email. However, with no national email list, we rely on one another to "get the word out." Ideally, a national email sent to our 30 Regional Ministers is passed along to our 637 Local Fraternity Ministers, who share it with our 12,739 individual OFS members — *and*, all along the way, the "senders" also need to reach out to those with no email access. Thinking of it in these terms, achieving good communication seems next to impossible, given the challenges.

An email that doesn't seem important to one member could be very important to another brother or sister. What can we do to improve the chances of an email message being received by each individual brother and sister? There may never be a perfect solution when it comes to email, but one thing we do know — communication is vital to any relationship. In our efforts to build fraternity and build the Order, let's share our ideas on how to communicate more effectively. Let's care enough to make sure "everyone knows".

*Praise God for the dedication and work of each and every individual OFS member who loves our Order and shows it by serving their fraternity in goodness, generosity, perseverance and prayer. Thank you for knowing the importance of your call, your role in fraternity life, your joy, your faith and your love!*