

"Up To Now"



NEWSLETTER FOR ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA REGION, SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

COVERING THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, MARYLAND, DELAWARE, VIRGINIA, AND PORTIONS OF WEST VIRGINIA AND PENNSYLVANIA

Volume 12, Issue 1

"let us begin again, for up to now we have done nothing."

August 2008

Let Your Light Shine!

Lux tua luceat! Let your light shine! Throughout my high school years, that thought...that idea was before me daily...an excerpt from St. Matthew 5:16: "So let your light shine before all that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." The sisters who taught me in grade school at St. Anthony of Padua and at The Catholic High School of Baltimore were Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia (Glen Riddle Franciscans, as we called them then!) and it was their mission to share their Franciscan charism with their students. So it's not surprising that I find myself reflecting often on something that one of them said or did that was truly Franciscan!

That scripture verse was emblazoned on everything at Catholic High so I guess that's why it comes to mind so often these days, and as I meditate on it, I see it as something that can serve us well in our lives as Secular Franciscans today. Within our fraternities, there are numerous opportunities to "let our light shine" by serving on a local, regional or national level. And by using our God-given talents in service to our fraternity, we give honor and glory to our Father in heaven.

For us, as Secular Franciscans, "serving" is not an option...it's an obligation. In Article 21 of our Rule, we are challenged to offer our "service" for a period of time and we are reminded that our service must be "marked with a ready and willing spirit and is a duty of responsibility to each member and to the community" and we cannot take that responsibility lightly.

So frequently we hear of local fraternities that have difficulty getting a few people willing to serve on the council at election time. It is easy for us to hide behind those convenient phrases: "I'm too busy" or "I've taken my turn already" or "I'm involved in so many other things."

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Dear Lord, why am I so impatient all the time? I start each day with the best of intentions...I pray for patience and promise you that I will work harder to be more Christ-like in my dealings with others. But then the phone rings while I'm in the middle of something, or I'm interrupted by the children when I'm trying to concentrate, or the driver in front of me is going so slowly that I'll be late for my appointment, or my husband asks me for the hundredth time where the lightbulbs are...and then I lose it! Help me, Lord, to see these interruptions as an opportunity to be Christ to others. Help me to answer my loved ones with kindness and compassion instead of with shortness and impatience. Help me, Lord, to realize that others aren't to blame for my poor time management. And most of all, Lord, forgive me for offending You through others. *T*

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By denying our obligation, however, we are not living up to our responsibility as Secular Franciscans...we are not following our Rule. Is it right for us to burden a few by expecting them to carry the load for so many? Are we honestly living a Gospel life when we put other activities and commitments before our SFO obligations?

In the next few months, we will be asked to consider serving in a position on the regional council? Sometime in the next three years, your own fraternity will be asking for people to assume the leadership roles as council members? It might be a good idea to begin now to pray for guidance, and ask the Holy Spirit to bestow on you the courage and the wisdom you need to "let your light shine" by using the gifts that He gave you to serve your Franciscan brothers and sisters.

Sharon Hare
Newsletter Editor 



Looking for a Retreat Center?

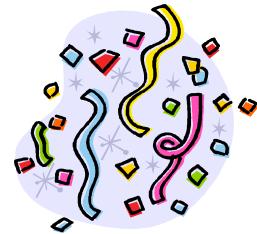
Our Lady of Peace Retreat Center in **Fairfield, Pennsylvania**, is just 15 minutes from Emmitsburg, Maryland, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania! **Sue Tichy, SFO**, owns and operates this intimate 10-acre retreat space that can accommodate about 30 people for day retreats and 8 to 10 people for overnight retreats. In addition to **personal retreats and small group retreats**, Sue has also started conducting **Confirmation retreats** as well as other **day and overnight retreats for youth**. Visit her website, <http://olop.ihsweb.net>, for pricing information and photos. Sue can also be reached at 717-642-9353. 

IMPORTANT DATES MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



- | | |
|------------|--|
| Aug. 11 | Feast of St. Clare |
| Aug. 23 | 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. MD/PA/DEL Area Leaders Meeting @ Charlestown Retirement Comm. Ctr. |
| Oct. 10-12 | Annual Retreat at Priestfield |
| Nov. 8 | Annual Regional Fraternity Meeting |
| Nov. 15 | Next issue of Up To Now |

COME & CELEBRATE



5TH ANNIVERSARY OUR LADY OF PEACE RETREAT CENTER FAIRFIELD, PA

Saturday, August 23rd
1 – 4 p.m.

I would like it to be a real party to celebrate God's goodness. I'm grateful that He allows me to be here! All you need to bring is lawn chairs for yourself and family. There will be food, games, karaoke, and fun for all!

RSVP BY AUGUST 17

Call 717-642-9353. Please let me know how many will be coming with you so I can be sure to have enough food for everyone!!! I hope you can come!

Sue Tichy, SFO

CONGRATULATIONS

Holy Family Fraternity

Manassas, VA



Holy Family Fraternity was established on the feast of Saint Joseph, protector of the Holy Family, March 19, 1998, with eight professed members and has blossomed into the strong group it is today. On Saturday, August 2, 2008, with the feast of Our Lady of the Angels of Portiuncula serving as a beautiful backdrop, 22 professed members and two candidates welcomed a myriad of guests to All Saints Church in Manassas, Virginia, to celebrate Mass and commemorate the long-awaited Canonical establishment of the fraternity. Father Matthew Palkowski, OFM, Cap., Regional Spiritual Assistant, was the principal celebrant of the Mass, which was concelebrated by Father Mark Mealey, OSFS, Vicar General of the Diocese of Arlington, and by Father Bob Cilinski, Pastor of All Saints Church where the fraternity meets.

While the feast day readings were meaningful and inspiring, Deacon Richard O'Connell, SFO, (Holy Family's Spiritual Animator), delivered an uplifting and motivational homily as well as assisted at the Mass. The entire Mass was punctuated by the incredible voice talent of the fraternity's Formation Director, Margaret Gregory, SFO.

During the Rite of Canonical Establishment, Father Matthew signed the Document of Establishment as Provincial Spiritual Assistant. It was witnessed by Ann Corro, SFO, Secretary of St. Margaret of Cortona Regional Fraternity and by Diane Bigos, SFO, Minister of Holy Family Fraternity. About 100 guests were present for the Mass and for the bountiful reception that followed in All Saints' Father Kelley Hall.

Teri Baker & Adelaida Lucena de Lower

**News from around
the region...**



♦ **Bud Rowzie, SFO** and **Dolores Sher, SFO**, were professed May 10th as members of **Sacred Heart of Jesus Fraternity** in Warrenton, VA. **Manuel Hernandez, SFO**, **Maria Jesus Ullon, SFO**, **Rosaura Valle, SFO**, and **Ruth Fuentes, SFO** were professed on May 24th as a member of **Del Camino Fraternity** in DC, and **Sherlynn Holland, SFO**, was professed on June 29th as a member of **St. Conrad Fraternity** in Hanover, PA. Congratulations to all of these new Franciscan brothers and sisters. *T*

♦ We continue to congratulate all the Secular Franciscans who are celebrating anniversaries of their profession, but for those who have been faithfully following our Rule for more than **30** years, some special recognition is due. Please join in congratulating each of these long-time members who celebrate their profession anniversaries:

From **St. John the Beloved Fraternity** in Alexandria, VA, **Stephen Piscitelli, SFO**, celebrated his **31st** anniversary of profession on June 23rd.

From **St. Clare Fraternity** in Delaware, **Mary Lou Zell, SFO**, celebrated the **56th** anniversary of her profession on June 3rd, **Ellen Oneto, SFO**, celebrated the **48th** anniversary of her profession on June 5th and **Joe O'Neill, SFO**, celebrated the **47th** anniversary of his profession on June 18th.

From **Sacred Heart of Jesus Fraternity** in Warrenton, VA, **Anna Sublett, SFO**, celebrated her **55th** anniversary on August 8. *T*

♦ Elections were held in just one fraternity in our region recently. Please join in congratulating these council members:

St. Conrad in Hanover, PA: **Jeffrey Topper**, Minister; **John Rebert**, Vice Minister; **Patricia Bilz**, Treasurer; **Judy Topper**, Secretary; **Ruth Ratti**, Formation Director. *T*

♦ Lilly Pastran, SFO, professed six years ago as a member of Del Camino Fraternity, has dedicated herself to propagating and establishing Padre Pio Cenacles all over the Washington DC area, and is now spreading to other parts of the United States and the world. She has been invited to Peru, and in the Spirit of St. Francis, the fraternity has given her a letter authenticating her mission. *T*

"Praise be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living man can escape."

Please join me in praying for the repose of the souls of two of our sisters who have experienced their Transitus. From **Mary Our Queen Fraternity** in Baltimore, **Debbie Weatherby, SFO**, died on October 31; from **Mount St. Sepulchre Fraternity**, **Anna Anezin, SFO**, died on May 17. In addition, please remember the sister of Tom Bello, our former regional minister. St. Margaret of Cortona Region remembered Susan Bello with a \$100 donation to Dr. Tony Lazzara and his work with poor children in Peru. *T*



are in order for **Marie Dennis, SFO**, a member of **St. Anthony of Nagasaki Fraternity** in DC, who has been awarded the **2008 Peace Award**. The Peace Award began in 1950 by the North American Federation of the Third Order of St. Francis, now known as the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order (NAFRA). In her nomination statement, Teri Egan, SFO, quoted Maryknoll magazine's recent article, "She has lived more vocations (and more than one at a time) than anyone we know...Dennis is a mother with six children, a Maryknoll employee who lives in a Franciscan community in the inner city of Washington, DC, and directs the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. She also finds time to serve as co-president of Pax Christi in the cause of world peace, and to write books.

Her life hasn't always been easy, but she makes it look easy and encourages us not to be afraid when our hearts point to places our brain can't conceive. Dennis has learned that there are many ways to be true to ourselves and to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ."

Congratulations to this wonderful example of living the Gospel life in our times. *T*



A **formation booklet** is available which contains articles and sample letters of the following:

An Open House Flyer

Secular Franciscan Order Creed

Letter of Response to Inquiries about the Order

Application to the Secular Franciscan Order

Stages of the Formation Program

Candidate Request for Reference letter

Transfer Policy Procedure

The booklet can be obtained by emailing Victoria Spalding, SFO, at vspalding@verizon.net. The booklet will be sent to you through an attachment which can be printed out and modified for use by your fraternity. Pax et bonum! T



Little Flower Fraternity members enjoyed a recent bus trip to DC to visit the Franciscan Monastery, Cap College, and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. T

ST. FRANCIS LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

Imagine a setting with buildings named after famous Franciscans or Franciscan places on a rolling mountainside, and Franciscans from as far away as California coming together for instruction and fellowship, and you have a recipe for an unforgettable Franciscan experience.

Seventy-three SFOs gathered at St. Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania from June 26-29 to explore with Father Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR and Anne Mulqueen, SFO, the topic of leadership. There were 17 regions represented and ten SFOs from St. Margaret of Cortona participated. (*See photo to the left.*)

Topics included discernment of gifts, basic choices, servant leadership, listening with compassion and empathy, leadership styles, decision making, crisis and conflict, and leadership development/training. These lectures were presented with story telling, power point presentation, and personal sharing. Morning and evening prayers and liturgies provided a rich spiritual dimension.

There was much food for thought. A few highlights are offered:

Our call to discipleship and mission leads to leadership.

We bring our baggage of personal potential and frailty with us but through discerning our gifts and those in our fraternity we promote the reign of God.

The Spirit gives in abundance and God's graces are continuously pouring out toward us in conversion and faith.

Servant leadership is a Franciscan response to our leadership style as SFOs.

Communicating holistically and collaboratively are hallmarks of true interpersonal communication.

This gathering was the first of what is envisioned as annual events. The next seminar will be on Franciscan Spirituality at St. Francis University from June 25-28, 2009. Special thanks to Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, National Spiritual Assistant, for promoting these seminars.

Ann Corro, SFO
St. John the Beloved Fraternity T



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Fraternity in Emmitsburg, Maryland, held a baby shower in May to benefit the Pregnancy Center in Emmitsburg. Minister Gail Bunyan said "it was so much fun and everyone enjoyed buying little baby things again. For some of us, it's been many years! We had second-hand strollers, baby carriers, baby tubs, etc., as well as packages of diapers, baby clothes, blankets, bottles, etc. The Pregnancy Center is so grateful for anything you have to offer." Fraternity members brought snacks and drinks and shared a dessert during their social time...a sheet cake decorated for a baby shower. The afternoon continued with their regular meeting.

DOING GOD'S WILL



Up until several months ago, I had been in charge of the St. Rita parish food closet, organizing, bagging and distributing food to anyone who came to the rectory door. Our numbers grew from the few to the many, as there is a "network" on the streets and friend told friend. I wasn't fully aware at the time, but the work was becoming a part-time job, not the most prudent by-product of our original intent. My good priests noticed however, and stepped in to relieve me of this extra work. After determining what was best for everyone, it was agreed that St. Rita Parish would no longer operate a parish food closet. Our parish outreach program is quite excellent, however, and our many 'clients' were given multi-purpose referral cards.

I learned a great deal from this three-year experience. This was a truly Franciscan opportunity and, with few exceptions, I put my best (sandaled!) foot forward. Although the work was exhausting, I would have continued had Father wanted it so. Leaving it behind may have been good for my back and legs, yet it was my heart that took a bit longer to heal.

It was a painful awakening (after much prayer and many tears), to realize I had made this work too much my own. I had become attached to how good I felt when things went well, and I could fill perhaps a dozen orders a day! I felt good when people smiled and wanted to know my name and thanked me and said they loved me (men and women). I felt good that I could "manage" this work, as well as everything on my desk. — And so what have I learned? I've learned that God's Will is all that matters. I've learned that this was His work all along; it never was mine. I've learned that the poor are His, as I am, and He can take care for *all* of us quite nicely! And I've come to understand what Scripture means by 'obedience being a sacrifice truly pleasing to God.'

Joanne M. Robertson, SFO
St. John the Beloved Fraternity T



The Editor's Farewell Thoughts....

We're hearing a good bit about "change" these days. Change is being promised by both of our presidential candidates, and almost every political message tells you how much you need the change they're offering!

It's been just about two years since I worked on my first issue of "UP TO NOW" and I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed getting to know so many of you through your emails, your newsletters and your creative writing! And I've been blessed to meet many of you at the various regional activities...been able to put a face to the name that I see so often. Being editor of the newsletter has been a tremendous gift to me, and I feel a bond with each of you who work so diligently each month to publish a monthly newsletter for your fraternities.

This summer, however, I have taken on some additional personal responsibilities and am caring for my 84-year-old mother who has Alzheimer's. Because of her situation, I find it necessary to cut back on many of my activities so that I can provide the best possible care for her. So it's time for a change here as well.

The good news for all of us is that **Mary Lou Coffman, sfo**, has agreed to once again assume responsibility for the regional newsletter. I ask that you begin sending your newsletters, meditations, poems, reflections, announcements, photos, etc. to Mary Lou effective immediately so that she will have all your news for the next issue. Her contact information is provided below.

I want to thank Mary Lou for taking on this responsibility. I feel confident that the Up To Now will be better than ever in her hands!

May God be with you all...please keep in touch with me!

Peace and all good,
Sharon T
sharesfo@verizon.net

Mary Lou Coffman, sfo
Up To Now Editor
2862 Beechtree Lane
Woodbridge, VA 22191
703-221-1846

marylousfo@verizon.net



"We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions.

We may pass them by, preoccupied with our more important tasks, as the priest passed by the man who had fallen among thieves.

When we do that we pass by the visible sign of the Cross raised athwart our path to show us that, not our way, but God's way must be done."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
"Life Together," p.99 T

Proclaim the Message!

SFO Ribbon Magnets are now available for \$5.00 each, plus postage, and **SFO St.**

Margaret of Cortona Mugs are available for \$8.00 each, plus postage. Mary also has information on obtaining **Maryland SFO License Tags** through the Maryland Department of Transportation. If you are interested in any of these items, please email Mary Simmons, SFO, at marysfo_1@msn.com and indicate your interest in the subject line or call her at 410-557-7586. T



Regional Retreat Registration Information

Where : Priestfield Pastoral Center, 4030 Middleway Pike, Kearneysville, WV 25430-3742

When : October 10-12 2008

Who : All Secular Franciscans. Including candidates and inquirers and spiritual assistants

Registration Form Instructions:

1. Submit no later than August 22, 2008
2. Please Type or print all information clearly.
- 3 Only one participant per registration form.
4. Deposit (NON-REFUNDABLE) Payment (\$50.00) must accompany this form
5. Make your check to St. Margaret of Cortona Region and Mail this form with payment to:
Angela Gill (Regional Vice Minister)
4401 Aldie Road Catharpin, VA 20143 email agill3@verizon.net

First Name Last Name

Address City State Zip

Home Phone Work Phone

Fraternity E-Mail Address

Please check your preferred room

Single occupancy room: \$169.00 (N/A) Double occupancy room: \$148.00 (N/A)

Single occupancy cabin: \$202.00 (N/A) Double occupancy cabin: \$158.00 (N/A)

Dormitory: \$126.00 ()

Enclosed amount with this Form \$_____

Preferred Roommate Name_____