

Up to Now

Newsletter of the St. Margaret of Cortona Region of the Secular Franciscan Order

Covering the District of Columbia, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia,
and portions of West Virginia and Pennsylvania



Fr. Philippus Philippus, OFM Cap

Volume 15, Issue 4

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

August 2011

Reflection on the Chapter of Mats

By Gil Donahue, SFO

Every few years, the St. Margaret of Cortona Region of the Secular Franciscans holds a Chapter of Mats, a meeting open to all Franciscans following a custom started by St. Francis. The theme this year was “What would Jesus do? What would Francis do? What will I do?” This relates to Catholic Social Teaching and the connection between charity and justice. The weekend retreat was led by Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM, who spent many years as a missionary in Bolivia and Peru.

He was assisted by Capuchin Brother Kip Ledger, Regional Spiritual Assistant. The Sunday presentation was given by Kim Smolik, Executive Director of the Franciscan Mission Service. The presentations were thought provoking and hard hitting, revealing to us what more needs to be done, and inviting us to make a greater effort.

Fr. Joe took as his text Micah 6:8, indicating we are called to “walk humbly before God.” This requires us to come to know God, to recognize him, and to give of ourselves to him. Fr. Joe reviewed Jesus’ ministry, his tenderness to-

ward people, especially those needing healing. God invites us to share in his own life, which is what we do in Baptism and the Eucharist. Fr. Joe referred to the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, which summarizes Catholic Social Teaching: specifically, the connection between peace (charity) and justice. Fr. Joe quoted St. John that if we love God, we must love others, our brothers and sisters in need. We must love tenderly and act justly.

Thus, the theme of the weekend was joined: It is not enough to do good works of charity. We must actively work for justice. There are many instances in which our society – at the local, national and international levels – is committing corporate sin. The structures of society, social systems, economic forms, lifestyles, and in some cases cherished beliefs are often contrary to the will of God.

(Continued on page 3)



Speakers Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM and Br. Kip Ledger, OFM Cap.

In This Issue...

Minister’s Message	2
Mark Your Calendar	2
Catholic Social Teaching and the SFO Rule	4
Franciscan Mission Service and the SFO	4
Catholic Social Teaching and the SFO Rule Table	5
Regional Formation Director’s Message	6
The National Formation Workshop	7
Around the Region	9
Franciscan Life in the 21st Century	10
Mary, Protectress and Advocate of the SFO	12
Franciscan Vocation Petitions	13
Two-edged Sword	14
Friday Abstinence	15
What Are We Reading?	16
Odds and Ends	16
Franciscan Saints and Blesseds	17

Minister's Message



Prayers and blessings to all my brothers and sisters of St. Margaret of Cortona Region!

"Love tenderly, act justly and walk humbly with God." These words from Micah began Fr. Joe Nangle's presentation at our Chapter of Mats.

"Love tenderly." Those who do not think the way we do, love tenderly the

people whose political views are not ours, love tenderly the grouchy neighbor or co-worker, love tenderly the child who does not meet our expectations, love tenderly each other and love tenderly ourselves as we struggle to be the person God calls us to be. What would Jesus do? Love tenderly.

"Act justly," which really follows if we love tenderly. Learn and understand the true issues of justice and peace. The immigrant, the poor, the abused and abandoned children, the unemployed, the old and forgotten are real people in our world who need our help. Further down in this newsletter you will see how our Franciscan rule and the words written by our Holy Fathers on peace and justice coincide perfectly. We share with you the messages from JPIC, The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission, which provide many opportunities for responding to the issues of our world. As a national Franciscan family, we work closely with the Catholic Relief Services as many of our fraternities do. Many of you know the issues of your community and are responding. We

Mark Your Calendar



October 3 — Transitus of Our Seraphic Father Francis. Celebration at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land. Seculars are asked to bring finger food for reception following. Notification of local celebrations will be sent as they become known.

December 3 — Annual Meeting. Location TBA.

March 21 or 28, 2012 — Regional Election. Final date and

encourage you to also see ways to be involved in the Franciscan Mission Services. Kim Smolik, director, is eager to work with us. Training for missionaries requires funds. Kim will help you invite a missionary to speak to your fraternities to learn more about what they do. You will be amazed. Of course prayer is vital and the foundation for all our works and efforts. What would Francis do? Act justly.

"Walk humbly with God." God has gifted each of us. Endless love, graces at every turn of the road and the blessings to be His people in today's world are just a few. No one but the Holy Spirit can direct and complete our efforts. God provides the paths, the roads and the journeys He needs us to walk. Prayer and reflection make His will ever clearer as to where and how to travel though this life. Be open and attentive to His word. What will I do? Walk humbly with God.

Dear Ministers, this wonderful newsletter of our region comes to you personally, but it is your responsibility and privilege to share it with all the brothers and sisters in your fraternity. Please take this responsibly seriously. This newsletter comes to you four times a year. **Do your best to get the word to all.**

Lastly, we missed many of you at the Chapter. Talk with those who were there; they will tell you what a great time it was to pray, learn, enjoy delicious food and meet and greet each other face to face.

Have a blessed rest of summer and see you at the annual meeting in December (date and location TBD)!

It is my joy to serve as your regional minister.

Mary Thuman, sfo
Regional Minister

location TBA.

April 21, 2012 — Third Annual Day of Reflection for Candidates and Newly Professed. Ellicott City, Md.

July 3-8, 2012 — National Quinquennial. Chicago, Ill. (See *TAU*, the newsletter of the national fraternity for more details.)



(From page 1)

Fr. Joe said that recent popes have stressed the church is hereto bring about the reign of God. We are not true to that calling unless we work for social justice.

Fr. Joe asked the pointed question: Is love enough? His response: No, unless accompanied by justice. It is the lack of justice that causes the pain that many suffer. In providing charity, we address the symptoms but not the cause of pain. That requires “surgery,” including a hard look at the systems and social structures at fault.

Since Pope Leo XIII about 120 years ago, the Catholic Church has called for social justice. This is a new grace in the church. Fr. Joe called Catholic Social Teaching our best-kept secret. Brother Kip said that as Franciscans, we are called to a life of penance. This involves humility and meeting people in need in their environment and context — that is, solidarity with the poor.

Both Fr. Joe and Brother Kip cautioned that in moving forward on social justice issues, we will run into adversity, sometimes even within the church. Not acting is a threat to holiness. Fr. Joe pointed out parallels between the SFO rule and Catholic Social Teaching. Both teach the holiness of humanity, and stress that people are more important than things.

Brother Kip noted that Franciscan spirituality is incarnational, and the key to it is relationship. Without relationship there is no love. Relationship involves the poor with whom we work in charity. However, it also includes our relationship with the rest of society through our government — as citizens, it is our right, responsibility, and obligation to work toward laws, systems and practices in line with our faith understanding. We should hold ourselves and our leaders responsible for life issues. This is not just about abortion, but the entire range of issues from birth to death: education, economics/workplace, lifestyle/health, international involvement, care for the elderly and eugenics/death penalty. The Church itself also needs to come under the spotlight of justice. We need to read scripture with a social optic. Our task: Get Lazarus to the table.

We were indeed stirred up to engage in action, and the opportunity came to hear about the Franciscan Mission Service, which involves living the Franciscan charism with emphasis on justice and peace. Kim Smolik said the future of the Church — and the Franciscan Order — is the laity. We are challenged to look at ourselves in a deep way and take action. Kim described the experience of lay missionaries working outside the United States, and she sug-



Miguel Aguilon of Del Camino Fraternity, Washington, D.C., with Gil Donahue, Tau Fraternity, Herndon, Va.

gested that fraternities might organize short trips, 10 days to two weeks, to visit some of the mission sites, combining action with a spiritual retreat.

As Franciscans, we are called to be bridge-builders. Engaging in missions is one way to do that. It is a “ministry of presence.” There is a transforming power in crossing borders. Kim challenged each fraternity to pledge \$1 a day for the cause of Franciscan missions. Just from our group, that level of support would underwrite three additional missionaries overseas.

My takeaway from the weekend was a new understanding that works of charity, by themselves, are not enough. The major social justice issues need to be addressed. While they seem larger and more complex than we can deal with as individuals, we can partner with others — inside and outside the Church — to work for justice as we understand Christ calls us to do.

—from *Tau Signature*, newsletter of
Tau Fraternity, Herndon, Va.



Companions of Francis and Clare Fraternity in Salem, Va., won the prize for distance traveled. St. Francis Fraternity in Washington, D.C., had the most members (11!) attending.

Catholic Social Teaching and the Secular Franciscan Order Rule: Notes from the Saturday Afternoon Chapter of Mats Session

The summary of the Chapter of Mats indicates how our broad Franciscan charism relates to Catholic Social Teaching.

But how does the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order specifically relate to Catholic Social Teaching? Some thoughts

from the sessions presented by Br. Kip Ledger, OFM Cap. and Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM, follow, as transcribed by Kimberley Heatherington, SFO, Tau Fraternity, Herndon, Va.

What does it mean to live a life of penance? The answer: To show mercy. That’s what our life is about as Franciscans. Forgiveness; compassion; humility. It’s what we’re called to do. It’s not easy — but that’s how we live the SFO Rule. That’s St. Francis’ understanding of penance.

Does the Prayer of St. Francis say “Lord, be an instrument of peace...” or does it say, “Lord make me an instrument of

peace”? The Lord works through us; God wants us to be His instruments of peace for other people. Where is the Lord in the midst of suffering? God says, “I sent you.” We are to help those suffering. God wants to work through us, for each other.

Catholic Social Teaching needs to be taught in our churches. Its message may or may not be welcome, but it is what the Church teaches. If Catholic Social Teaching is the “best-kept secret of the Church, then the Gospels are the best-kept secret of Christianity!

Our heart is what makes us Franciscans, and we — like Francis — are called to help the Church rebuild. St. Francis’ message is still pertinent today!

[Please see table of the comparison of the SFO Rule and Catholic Social Teaching on page 5.]



Franciscan Mission Service and the SFO

By Kim Smolik, FMS Executive Director

St. Margaret of Cortona, meet FMS. FMS, meet St. Margaret of Cortona.

Two and a half years ago I packed up all my belongings, filled my then \$1.90/gallon gas tank, and headed east from Minnesota to Washington, D.C. At the time, I was only marginally familiar with the Franciscans. I did know, having done extensive research before I accepted the job as executive director of Franciscan Mission Service, that the Franciscan charism and FMS’ mission and values complemented my own. I was, without a doubt, embarking on a challenging and life-giving journey.

Upon my arrival, I quickly learned that if I wanted to do my job well, my education on the Franciscan world would also have to include understanding the structure of the Franciscan Family. And that is no small task!

As a patient friar shared with me about the three orders and their various components, I immediately wanted to know more about the Third Order Seculars. I had been exposed to many religious orders with associate programs for the laity. But I was taken with the idea of vowed lay people responsive to the demands of everyday life and family and also deeply committed to faithfulness to the Gospel. Indeed, Francis’

original vision was to carry out his ministry in the world, in a lay brotherhood within the church.

I lost no time investigating the history of correspondence between the SFOs and FMS. What I found surprised me: Many SFOs know nothing about FMS. I wondered how this could be, since we are fellow lay Christians with a strong bond: We are all formed in the Franciscan charism, which inspires our service, witness and solidarity.

Nearly a year ago I had the privilege of giving a presentation on FMS at the National Meeting of the SFOs in Phoenix, Arizona. There was palpable energy and excitement in the room about what we do. After this initial presentation, Mary Thuman invited me to share more at your Chapter of Mats. There, it seemed many of us held the same sentiment: Why haven’t we met sooner?

Your leaders have graciously invited FMS to submit an article for each edition of Up to Now. We commit to passing on inspiring stories of lay people serving in mission in the Franciscan tradition — stories of individuals who, like St. Margaret of Cortona and St. Francis, have given up nearly all their worldly belonging to live simple lives walking alongside the poor.

Thank you for welcoming us. We look forward to walking more closely with you on our shared Franciscan journey.

[Ed. Note: For more information, go to <http://franciscanmissionservice.org>.]

THE SFO RULE...	...AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
<p>Ch. 2, No. 13: "As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son...so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ..."</p>	<p>Catholic Social Teaching speaks about the dignity of each human person. Human life is sacred; it is the foundation of our society. But it is also threatened by that same society, through the death penalty; abortion; etc.</p>
<p>Ch. 2, No. 13: "A sense of community will make them...ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ."</p>	<p>Catholic Social Teaching refers to the option for the poor and vulnerable; i.e., the "preferential option for the poor". The basic test of a moral society is how its most vulnerable members fare.</p>
<p>Ch. 2, No. 14: "...Mindful that anyone 'who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself,' let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service."</p>	<p>Catholic Social Teaching says we are our brother's and sister's keeper. The virtue of solidarity has global dimensions in an interdependent world. We are at the service of others, in solidarity with the human family.</p>
<p>Ch. 2, No. 15: "Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives..."</p>	<p>Catholic Social Teaching acknowledges rights and responsibilities. A healthy world is achieved only by meeting the needs of human dignity.</p>
<p>Ch. 2, No. 16: "Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community."</p>	<p>Catholic Social Teaching recognizes the dignity of workers. The rights of workers must be respected. The economy must serve humanity, not vice-versa. Work participates in God's creation.</p>
<p>Ch. 2, No. 17: "In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make it a sign of a world already renewed by Christ..."</p>	<p>Catholic Social Teaching holds that the individual is not only sacred, but social. The family is the central social institution. How we organize our society directly impacts human dignity.</p>
<p>Ch. 2, No. 18: "Moreover, they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High,' and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship."</p>	<p>Catholic Social Teaching says we must show respect for creation through our stewardship of it. We are called to protect people and the planet, and our ecological actions have both moral and ethical dimensions.</p>

To learn more about Catholic Social Teaching, visit:
www.osjspm.org/catholic_social_teaching.aspx

From The Tau Signature, newsletter
of Tau Fraternity, Herndon, Va.

Regional Formation Director’s Message

Hello again, my Franciscan Sisters and Brothers! Our summer is almost over. Gone is the heat and humidity (Yes!) But gone also is our free time, vacations, and time outdoors (No!) I say this as I go back to my school and greet, once again, my students and ponder not only my lesson plans, but also the busy times these have been this past spring and summer. Altogether, I have four events to talk to you about, many of which you already have been hearing about, and some of which are elaborated upon elsewhere in this issue of Up-To-Now. We have been so busy that I was not able to visit any fraternities in the last few months. I really didn’t have to: I’ve been seeing many of you at all these other events since March! But then, this is just great and what we are all about as Franciscans: Always operating together in community, grabbing every opportunity to see each other once again.

The first event I want to talk about is the National Formation Commission’s National Formation Workshop held last May at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois. You can read about it in my article on this event following this article.

The second event is the annual Summer Seminar at St. Francis University in Loretto, Penn., June 23-26. I had the opportunity to attend this event for the first time along with three other members of my fraternity. The main topic of the seminar was “Aspects Of Fraternity Life” and was facilitated by Mary Bittner, SFO, and Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap. Experiencing it for the first time, I must say that the campus of St. Francis University is very well kept and landscaped beautifully: a small university community deep in the rolling countryside of Pennsylvania. This setting enhanced the seminar even further than it already was by the inspiring and sometimes humorous talks of Fr. Lester and Mary Bittner. The topics presented included a Franciscan understanding of a community of love; the “tools” of a health fraternity; our responsibilities as fraternity members; our role in ongoing formation; the important aspects of a fraternity gathering; and the role of the spiritual assistant in fraternity life.

Of course, as at all Franciscan functions, the food was plentiful and delicious. All the meals were served in the college cafeteria. The sleeping arrangements were terrific: in an air-conditioned and comfortable dorm. Due to the quinquennial being held next year from July 3 to 8, the next summer seminar will not be until 2013. I encourage all of you to take advantage of these annual seminars and

make them a very important enhancement to your ongoing formation. I gained quite a few insights into the responsibilities of being a truly vibrant SFO fraternity member.

The third event was the Region’s Chapter Of Mats at the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, Va., July 15–17. This triennial regional conference was truly awe inspiring and was a big boost and rally of our Rule’s part and response to Catholic social justice of today. Mary Thuman, will have more to say on this event as part of her message in this issue. There is also a very inspiring article on the Chapter of Mats reprinted from the summer 2011 issue of Tau Fraternity’s newsletter.

Finally, the regional formation team met again on July 30 at the home of Ann Corro. As mentioned earlier in this article, a good portion of the meeting was devoted to the planning of our follow-up regional formation workshops. Each team member was given a copy of the FUN Manual (be sure to read my article on the National workshop for details on this manual and the workshop format). They were then asked to choose a general presentation topic and develop a presentation on it for the workshop.

The locations and dates of the workshop were also discussed. To cut down on the time and distance formation directors and team members of the fraternities will have to travel to get to the workshop, the team is planning to do the workshop twice — once in the western and once in the eastern parts of the region. We hope this will maximize the number of trained formators of the fraternities of the region who will use the FUN Manual as the resource for their fraternity formation programs.

The team hopes to offer a fall workshop in October or November 2011 and a spring workshop in 2012. We may have to schedule them for spring and fall in 2012, depending on the availability of meeting locations. Fraternities will be asked to send their formation directors and a formation team member to one of the workshops. As soon as a date and place for the first workshop is determined, the regional formation team and the regional council will notify all of the fraternities of details.

Also at our team meeting, the subcommittee for the planning of the long talked about region-wide Franciscan youth formation program was organized. Jeanie McLees was asked to head up the subcommittee, as she has had lots of experience here and a passion for this area of Franciscan formation. Harry Ford, an inquirer from St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity of Ellicott City, had his debut

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

with the team at this meeting; he had volunteered to be on this subcommittee earlier this year. Harry also has years of experience working with youth on the parish level with the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Team members Miguel Tirada, Sue Burke and I will also be working on the subcommittee. Other SFOs have been contacted and recommended and will be invited to this subcommittee as well. The subcommittee will not become official until it is formally voted upon by the regional council at its next meeting on September 24. Subcommittee members were given materials to begin developing ideas for the youth formation program, much of which Jeanie got from the National Fraternity and National Youth Commission. At the conclusion of the team meeting, Ann once again served us all a delicious lunch! Thank you! Thank



The National Formation Workshop

The National Formation Commission’s (NFC) National Formation Workshop, “Forming The Formators,” was held last May at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Ill. It was, to say the least, a very eventful as well as adventurous trip for both Mary Lou Coffman and me, starting with our plane trips to the event. My flight came in just fine, but Mary Lou’s was delayed about 45 minutes. We flew in on separate flights to St. Louis International Airport, but my arrival was scheduled to be three hours before hers. I opted to wait for her arrival at the airport so we would be together when we took the train ride to the rendezvous point for the NFC members, just outside the grounds of the Shrine. While I waited at the tornado-ravaged airport terminal (many of the plate-glassed windows were boarded up after they were blown out, and much of the food service and some of the lobby areas were partitioned off due to heavy damage from the tornado that hit the terminal about two weeks earlier), and about a half hour before Mary Lou’s arrival, the airport terminal was evacuated — for what I have no idea (but I suspect that the authorities kept it quiet for a good reason). Fortunately, however, it did not last and I was able to get back and greet Mary Lou as she entered the waiting area.

We rode the commuter train and met members of the NFC workshop staff, who drove us to the Shrine. What a beautiful facility! The hotel we stayed in was luxurious, with a self-serve breakfast layout in the balcony of the lobby area, which we used each morning of our stay. The other meals were by buffet and they were both ample and delicious.

you! Thank you, Ann!

Whew! We’re busy, guys and gals! On behalf of the team, the subcommittee, and myself, keep us all among the foremost in your prayers as we embark upon these challenges to make all the stages of our Franciscan formation perhaps the most viable that we have seen in years. We also, as we always have, welcome additional hands to work with us on these endeavors. We’ll still continue to visit your fraternities and talk to all of you more about any of these programs. As always, contact either me or any of my team members. We all, now more than ever, must serve each other to assure success in modeling the gospel life for all!

Mike Huether
Regional Formation Director

The shrine’s lobby, souvenir shop and ballrooms were extensive and, of course, the workshop itself was stupendous and overwhelming.

The much talked about national formation resource manual, affectionately known as the “FUN manual” (For Up to Now), was distributed to all 130 or so participants (formators). The NFC also created and made lesson plan formats available on CDs to accompany the FUN manual. The formators are to bring this material to their individual fraternity formation directors and team members for use in their formation programs.

The workshop presenters were the members of the NFC under the National Formation Directorship of Bob Fitzsimons, SFO, or “Fitz.” They gave talks on the main topic

(Continued on Page 7)



Church of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Ill.

(Continued from page 6)

areas of the FUN manual, which included: Introduction and Front Materials (of the FUN manual); an overview of the formation process and "What Is Formation?" and "Pathway to Formation"; Ecclesiology; Vocation Mission Charism; Profession (two sessions); and Franciscan Theology (two sessions). Of course, the workshop also included daily roundtable discussions and devotional times (morning and evening prayer and Liturgy of the Hours). The Saturday evening Mass at the Shrine's chapel, as we expected, was especially Spirit-moving.

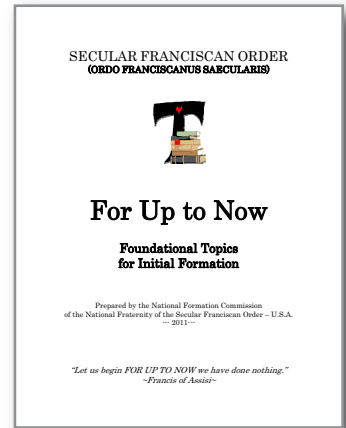
During the course of the workshop, the NFC stressed a few important aspects of the FUN manual. For one, it is a general resource manual by content, providing background and supportive information for all SFO formation programs. It is not an instructor's or facilitator's formation manual formatted and specific to any particular initial or on-going formation program. In terms of content, the manual is aligned closely with Fr. Lester Bach's "The Franciscan Journey – Embracing The Franciscan Vision," but it is not set up to be a facilitator's manual for this program or any other, as such. It is meant to be used as a resource for further topic and background information that may be and can be used to fortify or support the topics usually discussed in any of the SFO formation programs currently in use, as well as those to come in the future. Regional and individual fraternity formation directors and team members will need to "tailor-make" their own lesson plans and formats for any instructional sessions they hold for their own orienters, inquirers, candidates and professed members. Lesson plan examples dealing with various topics were made available on CD and distributed by the NFC at the workshop, mentioned earlier in this article. In addition to this, Acrobat version of the 460-page FUN manual was also provided to each of the regions that attended the workshop.

But now it is the region's turn. The NFC told all the workshop formators that the FUN Manual is not to be given out to the fraternities of the regions until each region holds its own formation workshops. They can model their workshops after that of the national workshop. Just as the NFC did at this workshop, the regions are to distribute the FUN manual to the participating fraternities at their workshops. They can do this distribution by providing hard copies of the manual or perhaps on thumb drive, so individual fraternities can print them off for their formation uses. The CDs of the lesson plan formats can also be reproduced.

Our region is currently planning two workshops, one for the eastern part of the region and one for the western part. We hope to have one scheduled as soon as this fall (possibly late October); the exact date and place will be determined and announced by the regional council and formation team. Our regional formation team and I will be the presenters, and we began planning the workshop at our July 30 meeting. The regions and their individual fraternities will most likely need to provide the funds for the printing of the manual and reproduction of the other materials: this, of course, can be done through various resources the regions and fraternities may have. The NFC's plan for the printing of the FUN manual is the best bargain at \$13.00 per copy. We can provide ordering information.

The regional formation team and regional council cannot over emphasize the importance of all fraternity formation directors and team members attending the regional formation workshop. It can only mean that they will be equipped with the latest material and training more than ever in providing a quality formation program to all of their fraternity members in any stage of their formation. I welcome all of you to either call upon or email either Mary Lou or me if you have any questions on this major and enhancing formation endeavor of all of our SFO communities.

*Mike Huether, SFO
Regional Formation Director*



Day of Prayer and Reflection on St. Padre Pio

Saturday Sept. 10

8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

St. Benedict's Church

2612 Wilkins Ave.

Baltimore, Md 21223

410-947-4988

Fr. Roman Kozaheson, OFM Cap. , Guest Speaker

Continental breakfast and lunch included

Cost \$25.00

Please respond by Sept.1

Around the Region

RECEIVED AS CANDIDATES

- Kate (Catherine) Ahn, St. Bonaventure Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.
- Suk Beon (Albert) Bae, St. Bonaventure Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.
- Mong Sook (Susan) Jung, Bonaventure Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.

NEWLY PROFESSED

- Maria Rosa Barajas, sfo, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Harrisburg, Pa.
- John Carlson, sfo, St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Triangle, Va.
- Lynn Colgan Cohen, sfo, St. Joseph Fraternity, York, Pa.
- Beatriz Frometa, sfo, St. Thomas More Fraternity, Harrisburg, Pa.
- Rob Goraieb, sfo, St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Triangle, Va.
- Sung Hwa (Epiphania) Kim, sfo, St. Bonaventure Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.
- Don Schwab, sfo, Sacred Heart Fraternity, Virginia Beach, Va.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY ELECTED

St. Conrad's Fraternity, Hanover, Pa.

- Minister: Sharlynn Holland, sfo
- Vice Minister: Ruth Ratti, sfo
- Secretary: Mary Barrick, sfo
- Treasurer: Pat Blilz, sfo
- Formation Director: Judy Topper, sfo

NEW SPIRITUAL ASSISTANTS

St. John the Beloved Apostle Fraternity, Alexandria, Va.

- Br. Tony LoGalbo, OFM
- Holy Name College, Silver Spring, Md.

St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity, Triangle, Va.

- Fr. Charley Miller, OFM
- St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Triangle, Va.

LOSSES IN THE FAMILY

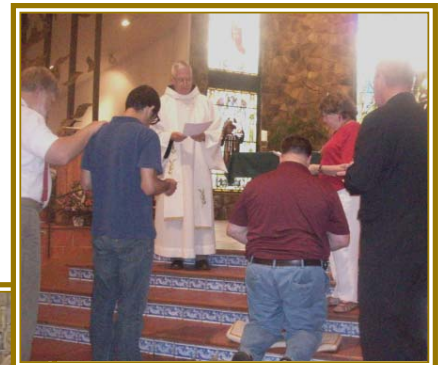
Sarah Hurd, sfo, Mount St. Sepulchre Fraternity, Washington, D.C., age 103. Sarah was professed in 1962, 49 years ago and was an active member of the fraternity until the last few years when her health failed.

Betty Taylor, sfo, May 21, 2011, St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity, Ellicott City, Md. Betty was professed on Oct. 17, 1993.

Please keep our sisters in your prayers.



Beatriz Frometa, sfo, Father Leon Leitem, Maria Rosa Barajas, sfo, of St. Thomas More Fraternity, Harrisburg, Pa., Professions



(From left) Steve Zawisa, sfo, sponsor; Rob Goraieb, sfo, professed; Fr. Charley Millier, ofm; John Carlson, sfo, professed; Mark Ingraham, sfo, sponsor



(From left) BoKang, Dong Hun (John), sfo, Minister; Bae, Suk Beom (Albert), Candidate Year I; Kim, Kwan Dong (Stefan), Temporary Profession; Rev. Kim Joseph, OFM; Kim, Sung Hwa (Epiphania), sfo, Profession; Kim, Kang Mi (Agnes), Temporary Profession; Park, Sang Tae (John), sfo, Vice Minister, St. Bonaventure Fraternity, Fairfax, Va.



CNSA

NEWS & VIEWS

Franciscan life in the 21st Century

"... to dream the impossible dream!"

Lester Bach OFM Cap

** CONSIDER **

Orientation and inquiry, among other things, is the time to get to know newcomers who come to the SFO fraternity. Lots of good information is needed. We need to know their reasons for coming. We explore their situation in the Church. We look at their marital situation. We want to understand their religious training and the kind of theology that functions in their lives. We need to ascertain that they do not belong to another *public association of the faithful*. It is important that they are catholic! We need to be assured that they are not involved in abusive behavior, sexual or otherwise, or trapped in addictions. We need to find out about their ability to change. We need to be certain of their vocation to our Franciscan way of life. Newcomers need to understand that profession in the SFO is a permanent commitment - for the rest of their lives!

Some formators may think this is too much. We ought to simply accept anyone who comes. Just recognize that they are "nice" people and not be too concerned about formation. That's it!

Sadly, we've done that for years and discovered that many "nice" people did not wish to change anything in their lives. People were professed who had no concept of daily conversion. People were accepted into the SFO for whom it was just another organization. They often miss regular gatherings. Other folks refuse to bother with the SFO Rule since it was just another structure they could easily ignore.

If we asked local councils what they spend a lot of time on, these "nice" folks might come to mind. They do not understand what SFO profession really means. SFO gatherings take second, third, or fourth place in their lives. Nothing changes in their attitudes. They disagree with or ignore foundational ideas of Franciscans, e.g. justice; acceptance of people; dialogue; forgiveness; contemplation; being consistent peace-makers; responding to the call to serve in fraternity life; accepting the Franciscan-gospel perception of life; accepting the value of regular gatherings; recognizing the need for *ongoing formation* in the life of every Franciscan; etc. etc.

These practices may be neglected because of a lack

of formation or simply a refusal to accept the consequences of good formation and profession. People who reject or ignore our Franciscan values are not the kind of people who will help develop a vibrant fraternity life.

Councils are responsible for the formation of each member of the fraternity - newcomers or Franciscans as they mature in the Franciscan life. Local councils collaborate with formators who guide the actual *initial formation* sessions. Especially in *orientation and inquiry*, discernment is required. Each newcomer needs the individual attention that allows the council (together with the formator(s) to recognize the presence or absence of a vocation to the SFO.

Discernment is a gift to both the council and the newcomer. It helps everyone involved to discover whether or not this is the way God is calling someone to live. Good formation books help with this process. To skip this ministry to one another is to renege on the serious responsibility of councils and formators. The future of the SFO is dependent on focused discernment with newcomers in the formation process.

When *initial formation* brings people to profession, it is the beginning of *ongoing formation*. Councils are required to give special attention to the newly professed as they develop into mature Franciscans (cf. SFO Constitutions - Article 44.2). Both their individual lives and fraternity life keeps changing and growing.

Fraternity gatherings offer time and space to deal with new issues in our world and the Church. It is not a time to simply multiply devotions. It is a time to focus on life in society and a Franciscan way of dealing with issues there. It recognizes the need to dialogue about social and ecclesial issues that touch the lives of Franciscans. Life in the world and the Church keeps changing. We need constant dialogue to find ways to deal with change. Together we discover a Franciscan response and help each other in achieving Franciscan solutions.



** DEVOTIONS **

A healthy devotional life will open our eyes to social

Continued on page 9

(Continued from page 8)

needs and Church issues and how we can respond to them. Devotions can isolate us from society or they can teach us to take time to show concern for the "neighbor." As Benedict XVI puts it:



"... I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or will become his own." (Deus Caritas Est Paragraph 14). The relationship of the eucharistic mystery and social commitment must be made explicit.

*Sacrament of Charity - (Sacramentum Caritatis)
Benedict XVI - Paragraph 89.*

In another text Benedict XVI says quite clearly: *A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.* (God is Love Deus Caritas Est - Paragraph 14). What is true of the Eucharist is also true for devotions. The Pope is clear about this. His words about the Eucharist also apply to devotions:

Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist compels all who believe in him to become "bread that is broken" for others and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world.

cf. Sacrament of Charity - Paragraph 88

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has given direction to the role of devotions in the Church:

"To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren." (CCC - #1397). In the same way, all other Christian worship and prayer, including popular devotions, in bringing us closer to God, should inspire us to share ever more fully in God's special love for the poor.

*Popular Devotional Practices - Basic questions & answers
USCCB - Page 17*

Perhaps that is why Article #9 of the SFO Rule does not give us any particular devotions to practice in honor of Mary. Instead, it quite simply says:

Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her (Mary) by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently.

This gives us a sense of the role of devotions in our life. Honoring Francis, Clare, other saints and feasts is part of a christian life. Observing these feasts is meant to enrich our commitment to Christ and to the poor. To isolate devotions as purely personal prayer time, without practicing love of neighbor, would miss the point of a devotional life. A feast like "Mercy Sunday" has little meaning if it doesn't lead us to show mercy in our everyday life. Isolating devotions from the needs of others is a dis-service to our Franciscan life. Franciscans show the consequences of a healthy

devotional life. Franciscans develop concern and compassion for the "neighbor" and find ways to practice love in their everyday lives.

We each find ways to love our neighbor that reflects our abilities, our opportunities, perhaps even our age or our gender. **But to do nothing is not an option!**



No matter what our situation may be, we find ways to support others and develop creative ways and means to show our love for the "neighbor." Whether confined to bed or in the forefront in seeking justice, we will find ways to show the love we receive from the Trinity. What we have freely received, we will freely give.

**** SERVANT-LEADERSHIP ****

Franciscans profess to live in fraternity-community and to follow the SFO Rule until they are called home by Sister Death. Profession commits them to serve the fraternity-community. There are many ways to do this. But if they are competent and able to serve in an elected or appointed position, they are expected to serve. (Please read: SFO Rule - Article #21)

Obviously they are not expected to be councilors for the rest of their lives. Neither are they expected to refuse when they are called upon to serve in a way that fits their competencies and skills. Throughout their lives they are ready to serve. How they serve may change as they grow older or suffer physical limitations, psychological problems, or family needs that require their service. The manner of service differs as time passes, but the spirit of service continues to be a normal part of Franciscan life.

It is rarely healthy to elect a secular Franciscan to a council office a month after their profession. It is much better to let people grow accustomed to fraternity life for a few years before expecting them to serve on the council. If they are called to be a spiritual assistant, that requires that they be professed for at least five years. While being an expert is not required, they must possess the skills and qualities that each office requires.

Nominating someone simply because they are popular is a poor way to vote in elections. There are lots of popular people who can't balance a check book. Don't elect them as treasurer. Popular people who cannot use a computer or are clumsy about taking notes would not serve well as a secretary. Be wise at elections. Choose wisely!

"Stop - Pray - Reflect - Evaluate - Vote!"



from Tau-USA: Publication of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, Spring 2011, Issue 70

Mary, Protectress and Advocate of the Secular Franciscan Order

Mary provides the example of the perfect Christ-bearer who we are called to emulate. The Rule of the SFO states: The Virgin Mary, humble servant of the Lord, was open to his every word and call. She was embraced by Francis with indescribable love and declared the protectress and advocate of his family. The Secular Franciscans should express their ardent love for her by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently. SFO Rule 9.

In *Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ*, by Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM, it says that a Franciscan Marian devotion has certain characteristics particular to the Franciscan tradition and history.

The devotion is based on knowledge of Mary from the Scriptures.

It is a devotion based on imitation of Mary.

It is communication with her through praise and thanksgiving.

It is encountering her in prayer as a direct open door to Jesus.¹

According to Capuchin friar Gervais Aeby, if we are to imitate Francis, we must learn never to separate, either in our hearts or in our prayers, Mary and Jesus.²

Francis tells us some ways to live out our Franciscan Marian devotion in his Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance.³ Francis says that we “are spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ,” which, of course, he has taken from scripture.⁴ With more specific regard to being mothers, he says: “We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through love and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to Him through holy activity, which should shine before others as an example.”

Another way to express this is to say we are called to be pregnant with Christ so we can bring Him into the world. As members of the Church, this is our mission: to bring Christ to others, or, in a single word—evangelize.⁵ Perhaps part of Francis’ attraction to Mary was that he saw in her the perfect model of following God’s will and, therefore, he saw in her, among other things, the perfect evangelist. She was for Francis, and should be for us, the example of faithful gospel living.⁶ She carries the word-made-flesh to the world and leads all people to her Son through her never-ending intercession. She is always open to God’s will and proclaims His glory.

Bonaventure says of Mary: “It was on account of her humility that the Blessed Virgin Mary found grace with God.... That is hardly to be wondered at because humility prepares a dwelling place for love and clears the mind of vanity.”⁷ As Secular Franciscans, we are called to love and it is through humility and living as fully as possible the other virtues that we can spread this love most effectively.

In his Salutation of the Virtues, which some suggest were, for Francis, Mary’s virtues, Francis honors her wisdom, simplicity, poverty, humility, charity, and obedience. These are virtues we must strive for as Secular Franciscans, and we must do so prayerfully. Sr. Ilia Delio says in her book *Franciscan Prayer*: “For Francis and Clare, prayer is to lead to a renewal of the ‘Incarnation.’ God is to take flesh anew in [our lives] through the action of the Holy Spirit. ...

[T]he birth of God in [our lives] should shine before others, as a light to the world.”⁸ Here she clearly echoes Francis.

Besides praying for the graces we need to reflect Christ to others, we can build up virtue by fasting from the things which tear us down and divide us, and feast on the things that will make us more like Mary and Jesus. When Judith and I were at the Conventual Friary in Ellicott City one day this Lent, she found a list about fasting and feasting. The list had no title, nor did it list an author, so I have decided to call it *An Exhortation on Fasting and Feasting* by Anonymous of Ellicott City.⁹

Fast from judging others, feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from fear of illness, feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute, feast on speech that purifies.

Fast from discontent, feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger, feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism, feast on optimism.

Fast from negatives, feast on affirmations.

Fast from bitterness, feast on forgiveness.

Fast from suspicion, feast on trust

Fast from gossip, feast on silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm, feast on prayer that sustains.

Fast from worry, feast on faith.

We would do well to use this list to examine our consciences and strive to become more like Jesus and Mary and to become perfect as our Father is perfect. In summary, Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap., says:

Someone who really is dedicated to Mary shall become, like her, a person of faith. Not only shall prayers be offered to this Mother, but life shall express the fact



Madonna dei Tramonti, a 1330 fresco by the Italian artist Pietro Lorenzetti located in the Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi in Assisi, Italy.

that we understand her call to be like Jesus, her son.... [O]ur lives shall reflect hers as we faithfully listen to the message of Jesus.... [Our] lives shall reflect her example of faith and love, of dedication and commitment, even when it leads to a cross. Mary shall lead us to prayer and to reflectively ponder the will of the Father. Mary will lead us to the service of our brothers and sisters. Like Mary, we too shall walk in the valley of darkness and the cross. But like her, we shall be present to know of the resurrection and prayerfully thank the Lord for both cross and resurrection.¹⁰

Mary carries the Word-made-flesh to the world; let us do the same.

Pat Tyrrell, sfo, St. Conrad Fraternity Maryland

Endnotes:

¹ Benet Fonck, *Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ*, 3d Ed., p. 17-5.

² Gervais, et al., *Call to Commitment*, p. 160, quoted in Fonck, p. 17-10.

³ The *Later Admonition* is also known as the *Second Version of the Letter to All the Faithful*.

⁴ See, e.g., Matthew 12:46-50.

⁵ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, ¶ 1, 14.

⁶ Fonck, *op. cit.*, p. 17-3.

⁷ Bonaventure, *Holiness of Life*, Ch. II.

⁸ Ilia Delio, *Franciscan Prayer*, p. 69.

⁹ I later learned that Fr. Joe Dorniak, OFM Conv. had provided the list, but did not know its derivation. A web search revealed two possible sources: Rev. Arthur Lichtenberger (former presiding bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church and a delegate-observer to the second Vatican Council) or that it was adapted from the *Anglican Digest*.

¹⁰ Lester Bach, *Take Time for Sunsets*, pp. 173-175, quoted in Fonck, p. 17-6.

Cut on dotted line to create a page that will fit in your *Liturgy of the Hours*

Franciscan Vocation Petitions for Liturgy of the Hours

Sunday Morning Prayer:

O God, you revealed the mystery of your being Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier
—help the Franciscan family to witness to the diversity of community life.

Sunday Evening Prayer:

O God, you have called Franciscans to be a people united in your love,
—may our witness help bring about justice and peace for all.

Monday Morning Prayer:

O God, you have given us the mission of sharing the Good News of Your Kingdom with all people,
—continue to raise up in the Franciscan family more of our brothers and sisters to spread the Gospel.

Monday Evening Prayer:

O God, you sent your disciples to all the world to announce the Kingdom,
—may all Secular Franciscans be faithful witnesses of your love and peace.

Tuesday Morning Prayer:

O God, you have called us to conform our lives to the Gospel,
—teach all Franciscans to embrace a life of joyful penance and keep us single minded in your service.

Tuesday Evening Prayer:

O God, you have called us to be people of prayer after the example of Francis and Clare,
—may our Lives of prayer be our source of strength in serving the People of God.

Wednesday Morning Prayer:

O God, the Apostles answered Jesus’ call to “come and see,”
—grant us the favor of inviting others to our Franciscan way of life.

Wednesday Evening Prayer:

O God, Francis and Clare were poor and humble,
—may our living of these virtues encourage others to follow the Franciscan

Thursday Morning Prayer:

O God, Francis and Clare had great awe and reverence for the Eucharist,
—may our devotion to Jesus’ Body and Blood be an example to those who aspire to the Franciscan life.

Thursday Evening Prayer:

O God, Francis saw your love for us in Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and all creation,
—may his joyful contemplation of your handiwork lead us to a deeper knowledge of you.

Friday Morning Prayer:

O God, Francis’ imitation of Christ led him to the gift of the Stigmata,
—may our daily crosses lift us up to a greater love of you and your people.

Friday Evening Prayer:

O God, Jesus taught us by his life to place our lives in your hands,
—give all Franciscans the courage and love to accept a share in the Pascal Mystery.

Saturday Morning Prayer:

O God, the Virgin Mary accepted the call to be the Mother of Jesus,
—may the love of our own Franciscan vocation bring forth a new birth of justice and holiness in the world.

Saturday Evening Prayer:

O God, help us to listen to your will by walking in the footsteps of your Son,
—so that guided by the Spirit, our Franciscan lives may call others to holiness and service.

Two-edged Sword

When they say “the word of God is a two edge sword,” they are not kidding. I was in the Seton sacristy waiting for the priest to come so that I might brief him before Mass. My gaze wandered over to a Bible lying on a distant table. So I decided to do the Franciscan tradition, when you pray to the Holy Spirit and open up the scripture three times to see what the Lord has to say. I thought I was so holy and Franciscan, making such excellent spiritual use of my time as my holy father Francis had done in the past. I began to pray ever so fervently and proceeded to open the book and my eyes fell upon the book of Jonah.

I was so surprised the Lord had directed my conversation with him through Jonah. However, who am I to doubt after I asked him to speak to me through Scripture? So I decided to trust Him and began to read the book of Jonah. This is not a very long book to read and I indulged my curiosity.

Jonah is a story about a prophet who refuses to do God’s will. God wants him to go to the city of Nineveh and cry out against the people because of their wickedness. However, Jonah decides to run away from God. He travels down to Joppa and boards a ship going to Tarshish to flee the presence of God. When the ship is at sea en route to Tarshish, God hurls down a mighty wind that threatens to break the vessel apart.

The captain and his men grow fearful as the turbulent ocean threatens to take their lives. The men pray to their gods in vain, for nothing will stop the violent angry seas. Jonah proceeds to tell the captain and his men he is fleeing the presence of God. He explains to them it is his fault for the storm and tells them to throw him overboard. This is not something the men want to do. However, things get progressively worse and they have no choice but to adhere to Jonah’s request to save their lives.

After Jonah is thrown overboard he is swallowed by a great fish. He remains in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. There within the dark deep depths of the silent body cave he realizes his foolishness and confesses his weaknesses to God and vows to do his will.

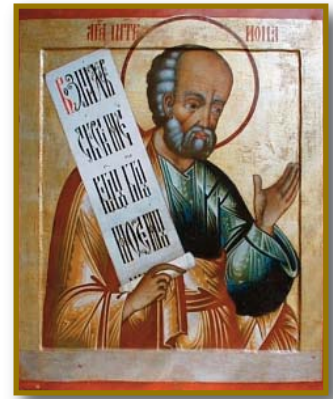
So the Lord asks him a second time to warn the people of Nineveh and proclaim his message to the people. Jonah makes the Lord’s message known, that he will destroy Nineveh in 40 days. The people heed the word of God and repent. The Lord repents of the evil he was going to shower upon them because they had repented from their evil ways.

I began to think after I read that part of the story. It provoked me to look at my own life and to realize how many times and in how many ways I have been running from God. Several times I have chosen myself over the good I was called to do for God. When we chose to flee the Lord we put others at risk and don’t meet the needs of others that God is calling us to minister to. The words of Peter resound in my being, “Lord to whom we should run? You have the words of everlasting life.” And again the words, “Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life. You are the way and the truth and the light. Let them bring me to your holy mountain, the place where you dwell. I shall go to the altar of God, the God of my Joy.” I began to reflect on how St. Francis’s life resonates with these very Gospel passages with utter and complete joy.

The book of Jonah doesn’t end here. Jonah’s understanding of God’s will is blinded by his selfishness and anger. Jonah’s admonishment is just beginning. He is angry at God for saving Nineveh. Jonah is so infuriated he would rather die than experience God’s mercy upon the city.

I admire Jonah’s honesty with God. It is through his truthfulness and conversation with God that he will open up his stubborn and angry heart. The Lord not only teaches Jonah through prayer but also through his life experiences. Jonah proceeds to sit down where he could view the city of Nineveh. God creates a plant to come up over Jonah to shade him from the sweltering sun. Jonah takes great delight in the plant. He relishes the protection from the beating sun. However, the Lord sends a worm at dawn to destroy the plant. God also sends an oppressive wind and unbearable heat upon Jonah while he sits in his obdurate position. He asks God to take his life. He would die rather than live to see the people of Nineveh, whom he despised, spared from the wrath of God.

But God says to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And Jonah says, “I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” And the Lord says, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And



Russian Orthodox icon of Jonah, 16th century (Iconostasis of Kizhi Monastery, Karelia, Russia).

(Continued on page 15.)

(Continued from page 14.)

should not I pity Nineveh, the great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" (Jonah 4:9-11) Jonah's persistence and honesty with God brings him to an understanding beyond himself of the great mercy of his creator. He is Lord and Creator of all. He is ruler over Heaven and earth.

When I reflected on this last passage, I realized the areas in my life where bitterness replaced mercy. I find myself in a stubborn stupor like Jonah with some individuals. How strange it is that this story is an ongoing one playing out over and over throughout our lives. The only things that ever change are the nouns in our lives.

The book of Jonah speaks of God's unfailing love, mercy and eternal patience with all of us. He is forever trying to

chisel away at our obstinate, hardened and selfish hearts. One of the most incredible gifts He has given us is prayer. It is through this ongoing honest dialogue with our Lord that we come to love Him and one another. It is through this conversion with our beloved Lord that we will come to a greater comprehension of the "will of God" in our lives and the grace and strength to implement it in our lives.

It never ceases to amaze me when I read scripture and see how many times that person is me. We will all be each one of the characters in the Bible at one time or another in our lives. So the next time the Holy Spirit inspires me to open the word of God, I will heed His voice because the "Word of God is a two edged sword. Your words oh Lord are spirit and life"

by Diane Bigos, sfo, reprinted from Troubador, newsletter of Holy Family Family, Manassas, Va.



Friday Abstinence

From the Catholic Code of Canon Law, 1983
Days of Penance

Can. 1249 The divine law binds all the Christian faithful to do penance each in his or her own way. In order for all to be united among themselves by some common observance of penance, however, penitential days are prescribed on which the Christian faithful devote themselves in a special way to prayer, perform works of piety and charity, and deny themselves by fulfilling their own obligations more faithfully and especially by observing fast and abstinence, according to the norm of the following canons.

Can. 1250 The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent.

Can. 1251 Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Can. 1252 The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. The law of fasting binds those who have attained their majority, until the beginning of their sixtieth year. Pastors of souls and parents are to ensure that even those who by reason of their age are not bound by the law of fasting and abstinence, are taught the true meaning of penance.

Can. 1253 The conference of bishops can determine more precisely the observance of fast and abstinence as well as substitute other forms of penance, especially works of

charity and exercises of piety, in whole or in part, for abstinence and fast.

From <http://www.catholic-pages.com/life/fridaymeat.asp>

Most Catholics think that Vatican II did away with the requirement of not eating meat on any Friday of the year. Most think it is now just Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent that we cannot eat meat.

Canon Law (Can. 1251) still requires that Catholics not eat meat on Fridays!

Of course, most Episcopal Conferences have determined that, instead of abstaining from meat, Catholics may perform an act of penance of their choosing. But, do you ever remember to abstain from a particular food or do some other penance on Fridays? And, at any rate, the main rule is still to abstain from meat on Fridays; the performance of another penance instead is an optional alternative.

It's very interesting to note that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (the United States' Episcopal Conference) is currently debating whether to rescind the determination and require all Catholics to abstain from meat on all Fridays of the year. The Bishops are considering that a return to meatless Fridays for all Catholics would be of benefit because:

It is an expression of one's Catholicity; and in reparation for the grave sin of abortion.

[Secular Franciscans, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, should find this idea particularly interesting and helpful.]

What Are We Reading?

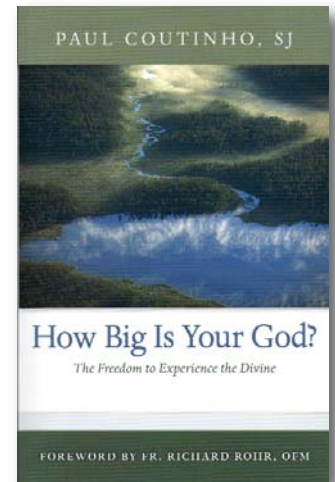
How Big Is Your God?: The Freedom to Experience the Divine, Paul Coutinho, SJ, with a Foreword by Richard Rohr, OFM. Loyola Press, Chicago, ISBN978-0-8294-3204-7, 160 pp.

Paul Coutinho has given his readers a great gift, that of introducing us to a God that we don't often allow ourselves to experience, a God of limitless compassion and unconditional love. How refreshing it is as a Catholic to be invited to forgive myself and "not sweat the small stuff" because God's love for me knows no bounds. He doesn't suggest that we throw caution to the wind and live as we please with no regard for others. On the contrary, he challenges us to move through our acts of charity to become compassionate people, living lives rich in experiences of divine wonder and "infinite possibilities" that are only possible for people whose God is "big". Rather than just knowing about God and remaining with our own limited ideas of God, Coutinho encourages us to deepen our relationship with God by living each day experiencing God in all of God's wonderful disguises. He introduces us to Eastern mystics and teachers, fathers of psychology, and everyday people who have done just that, and he does it in such a

way that makes us wonder why we hadn't thought of it before.

The format for the book is ideal — a collection of short one- to two-page stories and thought-provokers that beautifully demonstrate his ideas. He has a delightful sense of humor that is evident throughout the book; no doubt you'll want to read it straight through at least once. (It's hard to put down!) But the real beauty of it is that you can open to any chapter at any time and be challenged to rethink your ideas of faith and of God. You may not be able to determine answers for yourself, but as Coutinho would suggest, it is not in the answers but in the questioning that your relationship with God will grow.

—review from Amazon.com website



But maybe not...

I received an email from CES Publications about a new book by Michael J. Fuggiero, SFO, M.A. The book's title is *St. Francis of Assisi: His Spiritual Gift and Steps to Holiness*, and the book is billed as a book specially geared to SFOs who have been professed for some time and wish to advance their spiritual development.

I'm always on the lookout for Franciscan, and especially SFO-oriented books on spirituality, so I was intrigued. I went online, and was a little taken aback at the price, which is \$29.50. But I decided, what the heck!

I was quite disappointed by the book. It is extremely short (about 70 actual pages of text, padded out by the story on perfect joy, the Rule of 1221, etc., etc., to bring it to 120 pages). It's further padded by large type and wide spacing. That would be fine if there were anything new in the book, but there isn't. It's basically a rehash of all the things we've heard over the years.

It would be a great book to give to inquirers at the beginning of their discernment process, but not at the \$29.50 price.

Websites of Interest

The Vatican now has an online news service: <http://www.news.va/>.

You can access a web cam link hookup at the tomb of St. Francis. It's an actual live feed from Assisi. Keep in mind that there is a six hour time difference (ahead) in Assisi. So, in the evening you may not see any one at the tomb; the earlier in the day the better chance of seeing pilgrims at the tomb. The tomb is open until 8:00 p.m. Assisi time.

http://www.sanfrancescopatronoditalia.it/webcam_tomb_saint_francis.php

Franciscan Saints, Blesseds and Feasts

(click on the name to go to a Web link)

AUGUST

- 17 [St. Roch](#), III Ord.
- 18 [Bls. John-Louis Loir, Protase Bourdon and Sebast-ian François](#), priests, martyrs of Rochefort, I Ord.
On this day the Conventuals celebrate Bls. Louis-Armand Adam and Nicholas Savouret, priests, martyrs of Rochefort, I Ord.
- 19 [St. Louis of Toulouse](#), bishop, I Ord.
- 21 [St. Pius X](#), pope, III Ord.
- 23 [Bl. Bernard of Offida](#), religious, I Ord.
- 25 [St. Louis IX](#), king, Patron of the Third Order
- 27 [The Seven Joys of Our Lady](#)
(OFM Conv. on 8/26)



St. Louis IX,
King of France

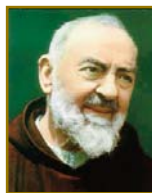
SEPTEMBER

- 1 [St. Beatrice of Silva](#), virgin, II Ord., founder
- 2 [Bls. Apollinaris of Posat, John Francis Burté, Severin Girault](#), priests, and companions, martyrs, I and III Ord.
- 3 [Bl. Claudio Granzotto](#), religious, I Ord.
- 4 [St. Rose of Viterbo](#), virgin, III Ord.
- 17 [Stigmata of our Holy Father Francis](#)
- 18 [St. Joseph of Cupertino](#), priest, I Ord.
- 19 [St. Francis Mary of Camporossa](#), religious, I Ord.



St. Francis Receives
the Stigmat

- 22 [St. Ignatius of Santhia](#), priest, I Ord.
- 23 [St. Pio of Pietrelcina](#), priest, I Ord.
- 24 [St. Pacifico of San Severino](#), priest, I Ord.
- 25 [Finding of the Body of St. Clare](#)
- 26 [Bl. Aurelio of Vinalesa](#), priest, and companions, martyrs of Valencia [Ambrose of Benaguacil, Pedro of Benisa, Joachim of Albocácer, Modesto of Albocácer, Germaine of Cargagente, Bonaventure of Puzol, Santiago of Rafelbunol, Henry of Almazora, Fidel of Puzol, Berard Lugar Nuevo de Fenollet, Pacifico of Valencia], I Ord.
- [St. Elzear of Sabran](#) and [Bl. Delphina of Glandenes](#), husband & wife, III Ord.
- 28 [Bl. Innocent of Berzo](#), priest, I Ord.



St. Pio of Pietrelcina

OCTOBER

- 3 [St. John of Dukla](#), priest, I Ord.
- 4 [Our Holy Father Francis](#), deacon, Founder of the Three Orders
- 6 [St. Mary Frances of the Five Wounds](#), virgin, III Ord.
- 10 [St. Daniel, priest, and companions](#), martyrs [Angelus, Samuel, Donulus, Leo, Hugolinus and Nicholas], I Ord.
- [Bl. Mother Mary Angela Truszkowska](#), III Ord.
- 11 [Bl. John XXIII](#), pope, SFO
- 12 [St. Seraphin of Montegrano](#), religious, I Ord.
- 13 [Bl. Honorat Kozminski](#), priest, I Ord., founder
- 20 [Bl. James of Strepar](#), bishop, I Ord.
- [Bl. Contardo Ferrini](#), III Ord.
- 21 [Bl. Josephine Leroux](#), virgin, martyr, II Ord.
- 22 [St. Peter of Alcantara](#), priest, I Ord.
Outside of the U.S., he is celebrated on October 19
- 23 [St. John of Capestrano](#), priest, I Ord.
- 25 [Saint Antonio de Santa Ana](#) (Frei Galvao)
- 26 Bl. Maria Jesus Ferragut, virgin, and companions, martyrs of Valencia [Maria Veronica Masiá, Maria Felicity Masiá Ferragut, Isabel Claduch Rovira, Milagros Ortells Gimeno], II Ord.
- [Bl. Bonaventure of Potenza](#), priest, I Ord.
- 31 [Bl. Angelo of Acri](#), priest, I Ord.



Our Holy
Father Francis

NOVEMBER

- 3 [Bl. Teresa Manganiello](#) (SFO), Italy (precise date of feastday not declared)
- 4 [St. Charles Borromeo](#), bishop, III Ord.
- 6 [Bl. Alfonso Lopez](#), priest, and companions, martyrs [Pedro Rivera, Modesto Vegas, Dionisio Vicente, priests; Francisco Remon, Miguel Remon], religious, I Ord.
- 7 [St. Didacus of Alcala](#), religious, I Ord.
[Blessed Helen of Arcella](#), virgin, II Ord.
- 8 [Bl. John Duns Scotus](#), priest, I Ord.
- 13 [St. Frances Xavier Cabrini](#), virgin, III Ord., founder
- 14 [St. Nicholas Tavelic](#), priest, and companions, martyrs, I Ord.
- 17 [St. Elizabeth of Hungary](#), widow, Patron of the Third Order



Bl. John
Duns Scotus