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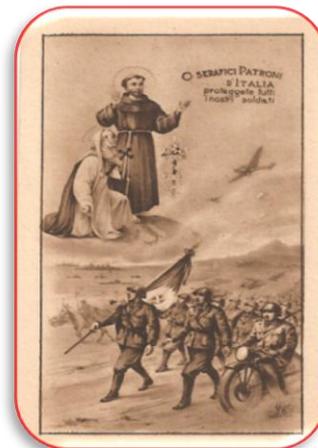
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TAKING NEW ORDERS

**CROSSROADS: HOW THE MILITARY MIND
 JOURNEYS TOWARD THE FRATERNAL HEART**



The appeal of military duty has long fostered a sense of commitment, accomplishment, and a rise in social status. Francis probably felt courageous and serious when he first went into battle between Assisi and Perugia. And King Louis IX of France, one of the patron saints of the Secular Franciscan Order, interpreted his royal duties by leading two crusades into the Holy Lands.

Secular Franciscans have passed through times of war en route to education, a good job, marriage and children. But some men and women from the LaVerna Region made life-shaping decisions, early in their lives, of the military. They set out from a youthful environment to an adult oath of duty, honor, and country. Before these men and women put on their Tau cross, they wore a military uniform. They experienced military ceremony before Franciscan celebrations; they sang military songs and hymns to God. They witness how war manifests human evil and that Pax et Bonum developed a way of life.



LTC Helene Brown, US Army takes a brief time out from her military duties and poses with a camel in the Saudi desert along Tap Line Road. Brown and members of her hospital unit were returning from administering anthrax vaccine to soldiers in the surrounding combat zone area. The Camel herder is in photo background.

During the Gulf War, Desert Storm 1990-1991, Helene Brown was assistant Chief Nurse with the 13th Evacuation Hospital, Wisconsin Army National Guard. While stationed in Saudi Arabia, she was assigned to a 500-bed tent hospital near Hafer Al Batin and off of Tap Line Road. Reflecting on her military desert site, Helene said that “the Magi on their way to Bethlehem could have crossed this very location; traveling at night to avoid the extreme heat of the day, and using the bright, beautiful stars to guide them. When the Holy Family crossed the desert on their flight to Egypt, there were no waysides to stop for water, rest, and the call of nature.”

“Nearly 20 years later, I’m participating in SFO formation at St. Paschal Baylon fraternity. Spiritual growth at this stage in my life focuses on Francis and living the gospel. Following Francis awakens in you that the gospel surrounds you. The examples are numerous. A bird’s song and flowers recalls Jesus’ telling of the Father’s care for us. A woman I met at the VA Hospital tells me about her husband’s thymus cancer and his

treatment. That visit recalls Jesus’ cure of the paralytic. Or an altar server having difficulty lighting the candles for Saturday evening Mass recalls the boy Jesus in the temple. Each day offers an awareness of the living gospel and Francis’ love of poverty and his joy.”

TAKING NEW ORDERS, continued on page 7

Formation Team Report, By Carol Bekkers, SFO Regional Formation Chairperson

During the June 2009 Chapter held at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Carol Bekkers presented an overall report on the La Verna Regional District Gatherings. All three gatherings were well attended with a total of 135–140 Secular Franciscans. In the evaluation process of the gatherings, most attendees said they have a better understanding of Formation. They learned new ways of presenting topics for formation and the importance of ongoing formation. People said they plan to use what they learned at the district gatherings.

FORMATION TEAM REPORT, continued on page 8

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The LaVerna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA consists of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. The area is divided into four districts: Southeast, Central, Fox Valley and Upper Michigan. *La Verna Vision* is a vehicle of communication with the LaVerna Region. It presents a forum for presenting information and insights that relate to the SFO Way of Life. Permission to copy materials printed in *LaVerna Vision* is freely given except where the copyright is specifically reserved to the author or artist. Please credit *LaVerna Vision* if you copy any of the articles.

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Ministers Thoughts--Ken Beattie, sfo

How do I look at peace in my community, in my country, and in the world? These questions surface after reading Pope Benedict XVI's address concerning peace; and they bring me to examine my conscience and my attitudes toward peace.

ARE WE INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE?

In 1986, Pope John Paul II invited leading world religious representatives to Assisi to pray for peace. The leaders believed our fundamental ideal was to work for world peace. And again in 2001, John Paul held another gathering with leaders to pray for an end to the perils of terrorism and hatred, which threatens humanity. Were these prayers in vain?

Pope Benedict's address has called the world faithful together to pray and deliver our efforts to work for peace and reconciliation. He said the '**Spirit of Assisi**' *opposes religion as a pretext for violence*; World religions should never petition God as a vehicle of hatred.

It is not only ongoing wars taking place throughout the world (predominately in foreign countries) but also the violence in our back yards. When people do not believe or act in the way I think they should, what are my feelings? Should I justify violence for any reason? How do I stand to my neighbors and their justification of the violence in my immediate surroundings?

Pope Benedict goes on to say that religions must offer valuable resources for the creation of a peaceful humanity. Resources that speak to our heart for peace. The Catholic Church intends to continue the path of dialogue to favor understanding among religious cultures, traditions, and wisdom. It is Pope Benedict's heartfelt hope that this spirit may become widespread, especially where tensions are strongest, where freedom and respect for others are denied, and where men and women suffer the consequences of intolerance and incomprehension.

As Franciscans we profess peace. Peace becomes us. It is our means of living out the Gospel Life. We often say we are peaceful people. We strive to bring about a nonviolent or even a non-triangulating solution to problems amongst ourselves and our neighbors. We try to give examples to those directly and indirectly connected with us that a peaceful existence is the gospel way to live. We sing about this peace in our church songs, and we bring this peace to our socializing. We would like to think that when we are observed by others they will say – "they are a peaceful people".

But, I stop and think. Are we really peaceful people? Do we live and breathe this peace? Are we examples of reconciliation amongst each other? How do we talk about this peace and reconciliation when the news media gives us stories of the violence in the world? Do we clearly speak out against any form of violence, or do we justify this violence for whatever reason? Do we stand for non-violence in all matters? Is this non-violent attitude given not only for our fellow man and women but for other living creatures as well as our earth?

When we ponder the words of St Francis in his Peace Prayer and the Canticle of Creatures, do we put these words into real action?

When we are called to be instruments of peace, are we responding?

Peace and All Good, ken, T

REFLECTIONS

Regional Spiritual
Assistant

Lester Bach OFM Cap

The Franciscan way of life is our primary

commitment. Outside of serious issues that may arise, nothing is more important than our

Franciscan life in

fraternity as well as in daily

life. This includes attendance at the regular fraternity gathering. Ordinarily non-Franciscan elements come second to sharing at the regular gathering and living our Franciscan.



At profession we commit ourselves to a consecrated dedication to our Franciscan way of life as pointed out in the Rule. We are expected to be faithful.

Devotions are meant to draw us closer to Jesus, who in turn, sends us forth to create a society that gives human dignity to all people following the path laid out in the SFO Rule and Constitutions.

The summit of Christian worship, the Eucharist, “commits us to the poor. To receive the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren.” In the same way, all other Christian worship and prayer, including popular devotion, in bringing us closer to God, should inspire us to share ever more fully in God’s special love for the poor.

Ibid – Page 17

These ideas are often learned through initial formation. But all formation programs are not created equal. Some may not have included these ideas. But the ideas are important so that we can bring to the Church and the world a Franciscan spirit that shows in our lives.

Connected to these ideas is the responsibility of the local and regional councils. It is one thing to say that all Franciscans, who are able, should be at the regular gatherings. It is quite another to have gatherings that are worth that are life-giving. Interaction is needed. Ongoing formation helps everyone absorb and practice the requirement of the SFO Rule and Constitutions. Boring gatherings, gatherings that have little or no ongoing formation, people pushing favorite ideas and devotions – are NO way to make gatherings attractive.

Friar Felice Cangelosi OFM Cap, in his address to the International SFO Chapter in Hungary in November 2008, put it this way:

The brothers and sisters of penance are asked to offer, constantly and in all the circumstances of their lives, the supreme proof of their fidelity to God, to give an account to the world of the hope that is in them, to witness in an unmistakable way their faithfulness to the covenant established with the Church and the fraternity from the moment of their profession.

Insertion into a local fraternity and participation in fraternity life is essential for belonging to the SFO.

SFO Constitutions – article 53.3

While personal devotions can be healthy for people, they do not take priority when they interfere with attendance at the regular gathering. Profession in the SFO brings with it this requirement that becomes part of life. The SFO Rule takes precedence over other situations. Only when there is serious need, e.g. important family/ work/ health situations, is one excused from fraternity gatherings.

Even devotions to our Lady, precious as they are, are not a reason for absence. Our love for Mary is pointed out in the SFO Rule.

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

SFO Rule – article 9

Mary in no way replaces Christ. Rather, her role is to bring us to Christ, as is illustrated in Mary’s admonition at the wedding feast of Cana. “Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn 2:5)

Popular Devotional Practices

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. – Page 12



Judy Stouffer, SFO

ENVIRONMENT OF MYTHS AND MOSQUITOES

Here's a question I've been asked more than once:

Q: *How can anyone justify the ban on DDT when millions of people are dying of malaria?*

A: It's a good question. Unfortunately, it's the wrong question. It's wrong because it's based on three premises:

1. DDT has been banned.
2. In areas where mosquitoes are endemic, millions are needlessly suffering and dying from malaria deaths that are preventable if spraying DDT is allowed
3. DDT is a panacea that strikes down mosquitoes without fail.

All three premises are wrong. First, DDT has not been banned in most areas where malarial illness is endemic. In fact, even in the United States, DDT may be used under a "special use" clause in cases where there is an outbreak of mosquito-borne disease such as malaria.

Second, in areas such as Africa, guess what? Spraying DDT is allowed. So, those millions that are dying from malaria (which is indeed happening and is indeed horrible) aren't dying because DDT is banned. So what's the deal there? The answer is that in poorer countries, like those in Africa, in order to use DDT (or any other chemical) for insect control correctly, you need the infrastructure in place to actually carry out your plans. That infrastructure simply doesn't exist in the war-torn and poverty-stricken African (and other) areas where malaria is endemic.

Third, the world's mosquito population has become resistant to DDT. That means that the mosquito of today isn't the mosquito of 1950. Just like germs that are now resistant to certain antibiotics, mosquitoes are resistant to DDT. So countries that have used DDT have found it's no longer particularly effective at killing mosquitoes.

So what does work?

1. Where possible, kill mosquitoes when they are still larvae. That is more effective than spraying to kill adult mosquitoes. Use the least toxic method to do so, such as vegetable-based oils added to standing water. The oil suffocates the larvae with minimal negative effect on fish, wildlife or humans, and it is cheap, biodegradable and widely available even in poor countries. And because it works based on a mechanical function (it suffocates the larvae), mosquitoes don't develop resistance to it.
2. Support organizations that are working to get bed netting to every individual at risk, and trying to especially help countries where poverty-ridden families can't afford to buy bed netting for themselves. Bed netting is one of the most effective and economical solutions possible for preventing malaria. It works.
3. Treat individuals who have malaria with drugs that kill the parasite, not the older drugs that control the symptoms. If you eliminate the parasite from humans, then a mosquito can't bite an infected person and then transmit the parasite it sucks in with the blood to another human. That requires drugs and the actual treatment using those drugs to get to the right places, a daunting task but one that countries like Brazil have successfully undertaken.

OF MYTHS AND MOSQUITOES: continued on page 8

Book Report By Eddie Multhauf, SFO –



“Basilica – The Splendor and the Scandal: Building St. Peter’s”

By R.A. Scotti, Published by the Penguin Group, 300 pages.

What an interesting, informative, and fun book. It contains enough good historical reading to make you want to take the next Air Italia flight to Rome and visit Vatican City. “*Basilica*” is history, biography, and political analysis spanning the reign of 30 popes. The author’s colorful prose of this glorious epoch begins with the outrage of the Christian world at the razing of Emperor Constantine’s basilica, and the clandestine intrigue of assassination attempts. Mix-in unbridled decadence, the vicious sack of Rome and the author leads the reader into the giant of Renaissance and Baroque periods: St. Peter’s Basilica.

R.A. Scotti highlights that Christianity which began as a unity symbol would later fracture the Church and ignite the Protestant Reformation. The author looks into the massive funding that resulted in the Church of Rome, becoming the first huge international enterprise. She points out well-known artists like Bramante, Raphael, da Vinci, and Michelangelo who works parallel the famous and infamous popes with profound impact. For example, when Nicholas V returned from Avignon to the swamps of Rome, the Basilica of St. John Lateran was uninhabitable, but that event help launch St. Peter’s Basilica. Pope Julius II laid the first stone of the new basilica over the grave of St. Peter.

R. A. Scotti’s *Basilica* chronicles the epic construction effort behind this architectural treasure. Propelled by artistic inspiration, social upheaval, and political intrigue, the story spans two centuries and includes larger-than-life characters.

CELEBRATING 800 YEARS OF FRANCISCAN LIFE

**By Joan Faltynski, SFO
St. Ann Fraternity, Green Bay**

Three Secular Franciscans from St. Ann Fraternity attended the 800 Years of Franciscan Life celebration at Cardinal Stritch University on April 18. Nancy Smits, Paul Umentum, and Joan Faltynski gathered with 200-plus Franciscan men and women, religious and lay, on the university campus.

The format included two speakers—Fr. Roch Niemier of the Assumption BVM Province of Franciscans and Dr. Peter Holbrook, professor at Cardinal Stritch. Fr. Roch’s presentation

traced the journey and the dream of Francis from his initial response to God’s call, and through his formal appeal to Rome for approval of his Rule of Life mirrored in the gospel.

Dr. Holbrook’s focus was on Franciscan leadership based on core Franciscan values—humble service to humanity and all creation. Leadership, from Dr. Holbrook’s perspective, has little to do with what is done in a formalized fashion by virtue of a position one holds. Instead, it has everything to do with the call of each of us to commit to the process of influencing change that is authentic, moral, and ethical in the very surroundings with which we find ourselves living and working.

Franciscan leadership is servant leadership in which we remove obstacles in order for others to succeed, Dr. Holbrook said.

In summary, the anniversary milestone was a special day filled with inspiration, invitation, and challenges to explore a renewed response to Gospel living, whether we bear the name Franciscan or espouse the spirit of the Little Poor Man of Assisi—whose life and charism has stood the test of time for 800 years.

Editor’s note: Joan Faltynski’s article *Celebrating 800 Years of Franciscan Life* may be read in its entirety in the May – June 2009 published edition of the *Seraph*, St. Ann Fraternity newsletter,

Military service always presents potential for personal turning points. Early Franciscan history had direct and indirect military occurrences. During the Battle of Collestrada between Assisi and Perugia, Francis' unit was defeated and he was taken prisoner. His dreams of knighthood were dashed, but the afflictions he suffered began his first stage of conversion.

St. Clare grew up in a military family. Her father, Favorino Scifi, was the oldest of three brothers, all of whom were warlike and devoted to military exploits.

In 1221 and 1228, a set of guidelines or a Rule known as the *Memoriale Propositi* came into existence. One rule was that secular members were forbidden to bear arms. However, the Rule of 1289 changed that tenet when Nicholas IV allowed members to take up arms in the name of the Church.

And in 1270, Secular Franciscan patron saint King Louis of France, while on his second crusade, was stricken with pestilence at the siege of Tunis, and after receiving the Last Sacraments, died at the age of 44.

A few SFO veterans' comments

As a forward observer for the artillery attached to the 101st Airborne, I was on maneuvers against the "aggressor forces." So-called 'rubber bullets' were issued with the warning that they could be lethal at less than 10 yards.

Assigned to guard the top of a small knoll in Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, I peered into the pitch darkness, alert for the aggressors. I grew tense to ward off sleep as the hours dragged on.

I was startled by the sudden 'pop' of a flare. There about 10 feet in front of me was an 'enemy.' Without hesitation, I raised my M1 and fired. At that distance, the slug hit him squarely in the chest and he pitched forward. Sarge came over, tapped me on the helmet and said, "Good job! Atta' boy!"

Then a medic appeared. The enemy was winded, knocked out, but okay. Once on his feet he was chastised for not crouching low enough and getting killed.

I was flooded with conflict and guilt as I dropped back into my position. It was then I knew that a peaceful, small town boy, if trained properly, could become a killer. This self-awareness serves me as I



Secular Franciscan veterans. Back row: 1 to r: (Army): Ed Boss, Bob Henning, and Don Derozier, Front row: 1 to r: Bill Witzak (Navy), Don Samsa, (WWII veteran), Joan Reiter (Air Force). Photo taken April 25, 2009 at the Fox Valley and Upper Peninsula District Gathering in Menasha, WI.

wrestle with justice and peace issues within the Secular Franciscan Order. Don Derozier, SFO, Sacred Heart Fraternity, OshKosh.



UP & Fox Valley Regional Councilor Bob Henning and his wife, Mary Jane are professed members of St. Anthony Fraternity, Marquette, MI. Bob entered the Army in 1966 and served in Viet Nam, Europe, and



United States. First Sergeant Henning earned the Legion of Merit award, Meritorious Service and Army Commendation Medals. "As a military senior NCO, I had to keep myself isolated from most of the junior people."

"After my retirement, it was difficult to adjust to civilian life.

Although we were very much involved with our parish, my spirituality didn't begin to grow until several years later, when I became open to the call of becoming a SFO."

"People are comfortable when they are with the group. It is like a safety zone. Members are expected to support the fraternity in the manner their formation outlined. It is like being a part of a family," Henning said. "As I learned more, I wanted to read more about Francis. And as I read more, I desired to live more like he did."

"It is truly an ongoing process."

Other comments on the evaluation sheets were: People said that the presenters were well prepared and did an excellent job. "We learned a lot. It was a very useful day, thank you." The attendees liked Fr. Lester's talk and it helped to summarize the presentation. Another comment was that they would like to see a more forced mixing of attendees so we could get to know members of other fraternities better. They would like more group activities.

The Formation Team realized that we needed to strongly stress that in this year's district gathering program, we were only talking about orientation and inquiry. When reading the answers to the Small Group Discussion questions, we realized that many people lumped the whole formation process together by the materials they used for orientation. We also need to stress the amount of time necessary for each phase to be effective.

Some of the topics the attendees would like to learn about at future District Gatherings include:

1. Ideas and things to make monthly gatherings more meaningful to the members. They want to hear more about Franciscan prayer and a typical gathering format.
2. They would like to hear people give testimony of their formation and how it affected their lives.
3. They would like more background and explanation of the Franciscan Rule.
4. Ideas on how to deal with very poor attendance and participation at monthly gatherings by some fraternity members.
5. They would also like more ideas on recruitment of new people.

Next year we are going to cover **Formation** at the District Gatherings, and in 2011, and we will explore **Transformation**.

Until research provides us with insecticides that aren't toxic to anything but what they're aimed at killing, use products that have the least collateral damage to non-target species. Translated: it doesn't help to kill mosquitoes if you kill the birds that eat the mosquitoes, and seriously harm (or kill) the other wildlife and humans that you're trying to protect.

Underlying all of this, btw, is a fourth false premise: DDT is pretty safe. Everyone knows that Rachel Carson was a wingnut, and the granola-crunching-tree-huggers can't trot out a single bit of evidence that proves DDT is a problem.

Wrong again.

I could list quite a few studies and authorities, but I think I'll let the United States Fish and Wildlife Service sum it up: *"The Service continued to conduct studies on, and to voice its concern over, the effects of DDT on fish and wildlife for more than 25 years. It was not until 1972, and then because of the potential harm to human health, that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned the use of DDT in the United States barring a public health or economic emergency."* [source: <http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/Info/DDT.html>]

And that decision was made before scientists even began to scratch the surface on how DDT is a strong endocrine disruptor, with the potential to cause reproductive, behavioral, immune system and neurological problems.

So, about that ban on DDT which is causing the loss of millions of innocent human lives?

It's a myth.

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PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL

We value our life as Secular Franciscans and wish to have our way of living the Gospels continued through generations. If you as an individual feel strongly about this, we ask you to remember the La Verna Regional Secular Franciscans in your will. Please advise your attorney to have the request read: "I give and bequeath the sum of \$_____ unto the La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order for the purpose of furthering the ideals of the Secular Franciscan Order." Correspondence can be mailed to:

La Verna Regional Council
c/o Ken Beattie, SFO Regional Minister
512 Pioneer Road
Sheboygan, WI 53081-8705

Your generosity will be remembered for years to come by those following the Franciscan way of life. Feel free to call Ken at (414) 380-3850/or email beatiesfo@aol.com



St. Francis Fraternity birthday celebration photo.

Left to right: Marie Theoret, Vice Minister, Dorothy Ratkovich, Secretary, Lawrence Chouinard, Fr. Eric Olson, appointee Spiritual Assistant, Clarice Messier, Darlene Vandermissen, Treasurer, Jan Tolfa, Formation Director, and Jeanne Thill, Minister.

St Francis Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in Escanaba, MI recently celebrated the birthdays of two long-time members.

Clarice Messier turned 99 in March and has been with the Order for more than 40 years; and Lawrence Chouinard, who turned 96 also in March, has also been with order for more than 40 years. Clarice and Lawrence celebrated with present members with a special cake at their regular March fraternity meeting.

Fr. Eric Olsen, appointed fraternity spiritual advisor, bestowed a special blessing on the Clarice and Lawrence. The couple shared their memories and experiences of their profession years and what fraternity means to them today.

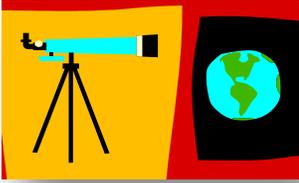
Currently, St Francis Fraternity has 27 active members that make up a total of 41 Secular Franciscans and two

Candidates in formation. The fraternity has been at St. Joseph's (and St. Patrick's) Church since June 1923. Today St. Francis fraternity remains involved in many local area charitable activities, and continues to participate in the SFO Regional, National and International duties as well.

NAFRA / JPIC (Justice Peace Integrity of Creation)

Goals:

- A) To foster an atmosphere in fraternity, the privileged place, where with openness and trust, we may share with each other, the manner in which our personal conversions are shaping our Franciscan lives.
- B) To reinforce the appreciation of the dignity of the human person in the choices made in our professed lives by responding in charity and patience to all we meet and to respond as Franciscans to anything which would denigrate the dignity of the human person, beginning with our own personal communications with one another;
- C) To assist in the living out of obedience to the common good as intended by God so that the professed Secular Franciscan builds up all that is good for all of Creation and does nothing which would damage the fabric of communal interdependence;
- D) To strengthen the professed Secular Franciscans' commitment to solidarity with all of Creation enabling them to make those choices in life which would bring about a more fraternal and evangelical world.
(build up the world fraternity)



From My Corner of the World

By Anne Mulqueen, SFO
International Councilor, USA

My dear brothers and sisters,

During April 15 – 18, members of all three branches of the family met in Assisi to celebrate 800 years of Franciscan presence in the world. After the conclusion of the Chapter, the attendees made a pilgrimage to Rome to meet with the Holy Father, Benedict XVI at Castel Gandolfo. This audience is reminiscent of the 1209 pilgrimage made by St. Francis and his brothers to gain approval from Pope Innocent III for a new Form of Life with roots as old as the gospel.

The participants gathered in a large tent in front of the Portiuncula, and listen to OFM Friar Jose Rodriguez Carballo's exhortation, *Just as from the Portiuncula, Francis sent the first friars into the world two by two, so we also ideally want to leave again from here to bring the gospel message of peace and reconciliation to every depressed and suffering heart.*

On the first day, the participants spent time enjoying *fraternity* on the Portiuncula Square. Capuchin Friar Ranier Cantalamessa gave an inspiring talk entitled, *Let Us Observe the Rule We Have Promised*. (Please read the Fr. Ranier's full presentation on the internet. The website reference address is on page 11)

The second day was devoted to the various aspects of bearing witness; for example, interreligious dialogue, teaching, communication, and the Secular Franciscan Order. The presenters were past and present leaders of the Franciscan family, including our Minister General Encarnacion del Pozo.

On the third day, the participants were invited to fast and do penance. In the afternoon, TOR Friar Michael Higgins led a penitential pilgrimage from the Portiuncula to the tomb of St. Francis. On day four, all departed for Castel Gandolfo and met with the Pope, who delivered a speech entitled, *The Gospel as a Rule of Life—Following in the footsteps of St. Francis*. All the participants knelt before the Holy Father and renewed their profession.

First meeting of the newly elected CIOFS Presidency—Rome April 18 – 25, 2009

After the the Chapter, the newly elected Presidency Council met in Rome, and they had lots of work to do. You may recall there were five priorities presented to the Presidency by the International Fraternity as the focus for the next five years. I'll give you a brief update on each of them.

Formation remains the top priority for the entire Order. The formation project is underway in the USA. Our National Formation Director, Bob "Fitz" Fitzsimmons, has begun the process of compiling a manual to be used by formators. The challenge will be to produce a manual that contains both information and concrete, practical application.

Communication Quoting the Presidency: *It is essential that the International Councilors enter fully into their roles with respect to their national fraternities and the Presidency, and that they communicate regularly in both directions.* That quote is intended for me, but in a broader sense it applies to all leaders—you are obligated by your office to pass on information received; supply information requested that others depend on, and fulfill their obligations.

Franciscan Youth (YouFra) A vast amount of information is generated by CIOFS concerning youth. One point I would like to emphasize is that Secular Franciscans have a responsibility to youth. We should invite youth to significant events of the SFO, and where possible, share common apostolate such as the H2O Project.

Presence in the World CIOFS stressed the fact that we are **secular**, and we are **immersed in the world**.

What we are and what we do affects the world. With the natural world as our milieu, we must be actively involved in political debates and socio-economic issues.

Quoting CIOFS we are ... *to be present in the world with [our] being and [our] doing—in the political debate and in the courageous forming of just laws, in the promotion of the rights to life at all its stages, from conception to natural death.*

MY CORNER OF THE WORLD, continued on page 11

Emerging National Fraternities This is a serious concern for the International Fraternity. There are many emerging national fraternities that do not have an established national fraternity to accompany them.

The USA is accompanying the newly forming group on the island of Antigua. The Sponsoring region is Brothers and Sister of St. Francis. Audrey Binet is the contact person for the formation process. CIOFS Vice Minister Doug Clorey and I oversee the process—Doug for CIOFS and Anne for NAFRA.

Why do I write these articles? I write to keep you connected to your brothers and sisters all over the world. A last quote from the Presidency: *It is fundamental that the International Councilor, in gaining awareness of their essential role, realize that their responsibility goes beyond their own National Fraternities and toward the Presidency to include the whole Order in its entirety.*

With fraternal affection and in peace,
Your sister Anne

Internet references: for reflection: [www://zenith.org/english/](http://www.zenith.org/english/) (date: April 20, 2009) read text of Fr. Cantalamessa's presentation: *Let Us Observe the Rule We Have Promised*

Also, please read Pope Benedict's speech: *The Gospel as a Rule of Life—Following in the footsteps of St. Francis*. Go to http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2009/april/documents

Franciscan Action Network news

Transforming the world in the spirit of St. Francis & St. Clare

Franciscan Campaign for Life

“The Gospel of God's love for us, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel.”

So wrote Pope John Paul II in 1995's encyclical, *Evangelium Nuntiandi*.

The encyclical suggests why the Church has begun to emphasize the universal applicability of the Gospel. “Whoever attacks human life, in some way attacks God himself,” the Pope wrote, expressing a deepening understanding of the consistent ethic of life that does not, and can not, make exceptions.

For eight hundred years Francis of Assisi's love of all creation has edified our understanding of its indivisibility. But it was Francis's genius to always journey to the periphery to deepen value.

The following in this tradition the Franciscan Action Network introduces a process aimed at cultivating a deeper awareness of the sanctity of life.

What is this Franciscan Campaign for Life Program?

1. **A Franciscan Vision of Life Issues through the Lens of Poverty** (abortion, death penalty, eco-destruction, neglect of elderly, euthanasia, privation of medical care and starvation, torture, social violence)

2. **Choosing to Cultivate a Capacity for Compassion**—intentional journeying to the “periphery” of social value to first cultivate our own consciousness. Choosing the Good as distinct from deciding among lesser evils.
3. **Abortion: Distortion & Proportion—Social Analysis:** How the American political impasse squanders vital sanctity of life energies and perpetuates social violence of blame.
4. **Death Penalty—Social Analysis:** Penalty for whom? Denial, self-inflicted violence and structures of social sin.
5. **Franciscan Poverty RETREAT:** How/why a restorative justice/common good starting point for theological reflection elevates the Franciscan tradition while growing the conversation outside of Franciscan, Christian and Theist communities.

For more information on the Franciscan campaign for life, please go to www.franciscanaction.org

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You may also contact: Peter Sloan
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Calendar of Events: Summer/ Fall 2009

August 2	Portiuncula chapel celebration, St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity, Burlington, WI
August 12	FAN conference via phone or internet: held 2nd Wednesday each month
August 15	LaVerna Regional Executive Council Mtg., Green Bay, WI
September 9-10	FAN Emigration and Immigration Conference, Chicago
October 13	Elections: St. James Fraternity, Wausau, WI
October 18	Elections: St. Joseph Fraternity. Appleton, WI
October 20	Elections: St. Ann Fraternity, Green Bay, WI
October 20 – 25	NAFRA Chapter of Elections, Albuquerque, NM
October 16 -18	Franciscan Living Retreat “ <i>Francis and Clare: Shared Vision That Transforms</i> ” at St. Anthony Retreat Center, Marathon, WI (715) 443-2236
October 30 –Nov. 1	LaVerna Regional Executive Council Mtg., Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center, Arbor Vitae, WI
November 11	FAN conference via phone/ internet: held 2nd Wednesday each month
November 15	Elections: St. Peter Fraternity, Stevens Point, WI

Calendar of Events: 2010

June 13	100 th anniversary of St. Josaphat Fraternity, Milwaukee. Mass and spaghetti dinner. All are welcome! (more details will follow in upcoming <i>Vision</i> newsletters)
June 25-27	LaVerna Regional Chapter and pastoral/fraternal visitation at St. Anthony Retreat Center, Marathon, WI