

TAU CROSS REGION

The Newsletter of the Secular Franciscan Order for the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties of New York

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

*Barbara O'Neill, SFO
Regional Minister*

One of the questions I'm often asked when visiting fraternities has to do with money: what should the fraternity's common fund be used for, how much should the fraternity have.. This is not something that we like to talk about, but it does need to be addressed. We've had a number of elections recently, with new councils, so I thought this would be a good time to do so. Article 25 of our Rule directs all brothers and sisters to offer a contribution according to their means for the expenses necessary for the life of the fraternity. We call this our Common Fund. Article 25 also directs the local fraternities to contribute to the expenses of the higher fraternity councils. This is the Fair Share obligation to the region.

“Good stewardship of the common fund requires that the expenses of the fraternity be taken care of before making donations to charity.”

Good stewardship of the common fund requires that the expenses of the fraternity be taken care of before making donations to charity. Fraternity expenses would include printing, postage, paper goods, stipend to parish for the use of room, stipend for the Spiritual Assistant, transportation expenses for minister to attend regional meetings, the Fair Share contribution, and stipends for pastoral and fraternal visitors for visitations and elections that covers their travel expenses. It may also be used to cover the cost of a member attending Franciscan workshops and conferences. At the yearly fraternity chapter meeting, the treasurer presents the list of expenses for the previ-

ous year, along with a budget of the expenses for the coming year and the income needed for the year. This allows the members to realize the actual cost of maintaining the fraternity and helps them to determine what their contribution to the fraternity should be. The Fair Share contribution is a fraternity expense, not an individual assessment, and should be included in the budget. Franciscan poverty does not mean that a fraternity cannot have bank accounts, but rather that money is used wisely, with savings for unexpected expenses. It is recommended that the fraternity have at least one year's expenses in savings. I am also often asked how much a member should give to the common fund. This of course is a very individual decision, depending on circumstances in your life, but a general rule is that from your charitable giving, the fraternity contribution should come after your parish donation, and before giving to any other charities. Knowing the expenses of the fraternity, you can figure out how much is needed on a monthly basis and give accordingly. As Franciscans we also know that those who have more have the obligation to give more for those who have less.

In October, I will attend the annual NAFRA meeting, this year in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is an election chapter for the national fraternity, so a new national minister will be elected. International Councilor Doug Clorey from Canada will preside. Our own election chapter will be in April 2010, you will be asked for nominations for the regional offices soon. Please start considering the brothers and sisters you would like to have as regional officers, and pray please for the elections.

I have recently appointed Constance Watz from St Adalbert's, and Evelyn Delaney from Mother of God Fraternity to the Regional Council to fill the Councilor office. The appointment lasts until the election in April. We welcome them to the Council.

FLIC

*Rev. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM, Cap.
Regional Spiritual Assistant*

There might be other articles in this issue of the Newsletter on F.L.I.C. but I wanted to make some comments myself. As usual, everyone seemed to enjoy F.L.I.C. I, too, enjoyed the experience. And as usual, many said it was the best yet! However, this time I enjoyed it for different reasons. In the past I was satisfied if it just ran smoothly. As a member of the committee, I felt somehow responsible if things did not go smoothly or there were controversies or disagreements. F.L.I.C., or SELF, as it was called in the past, was sort of a job. This year I was not just relaxed when it was over, but I felt the entire experience very relaxing. I felt comfortable and I also felt it was a contemplative experience. It was spiritually uplifting for me.

It was satisfying to know, for instance, that at Esopus, the retreat house provided an organist for the celebration of the Mass. It was extra comforting to know that the organist was also an EMT. But living in Manhattan, it was especially the mountains and hills, the greenness of the trees and grass, the blue of the clean sky, the deer and the Hudson River, the quietness and the openness, the huge building, the contemplative Redemptoristines on the same property, the beautiful mosaics and stained glass windows of the chapel, all of which added to the feeling that we were away, that we were in a different place, not just physically, but also spiritually. It was a restful time to be with God. The morning and evening prayers, the daily Holy Masses, the Holy Hour directed by Brother Salvatore, made for not only a learning experience but also a prayerful one.

I also think the contemplative atmosphere was enhanced, and very much created, by

the main speaker for the week, Teresa Baker. Her presentations were very spiritual. They did not concern controversies or disputed elements in the Order or in the Church.

There weren't discussions on minute points of the Rule and Constitutions. She relied on the wisdom of Sacred Scripture, St. Francis and St. Bonaventure. She spoke of the difference between belonging to a fraternity and being a fraternity. She spoke of the overwhelming grace of God and what we do with that grace; whether we keep it to ourselves or are willing to share it.

Michael Guertin's presentation one evening added to an awareness of the work of grace as he explained how, in an attempt to keep his CCD students occupied, he had them make rosaries for part of the class time. This

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making of rosaries developed into what to do with all the rosaries, contacting and sending the rosaries to the Poor Clares in Africa and being invited to Africa, where he introduced the Secular Franciscan Order, and this year, to visiting Africa a second time, to meet with the new Seculars, not only in Namibia but also in Malawi. Michael permitted God's grace to work in him.

During the week we also had a short visit from Otto Schaefer who showed us how grace worked in his life as the group of "Friends of St. Francis" has grown from one prison in Sullivan County to another in Fishkill, N.Y. and how others are becoming interested in working with him.

As Teresa Baker mentioned how grace is pouring over us much like Niagara Falls is pouring down over its precipice so we were able to experience that same grace pouring over us in a new and exciting way. It was a grace-filled experience.



AROUND THE REGION

*Bob Campbell, SFO
Regional Data Manager*

Rite of Admission

On July 10, in Hewlett, John Bergius was admitted into Blessed Raymond Lull Fraternity. Augusta VanDuzen SFO, Minister, presided. Rev Matthias Wesnofske OFM Cap was Friar Witness.

Rite of Profession

On June 6, in Stony Brook NY, Anna and Leonard Filiano were professed into St Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity. Adam Leskovicz presided. Bro Thomas McNamara OFM Cap was Friar Witness.

Anniversaries

25 Years: Madeleine Swarckof, Blessed Raymond Lull

20 Years: Marie Cooley, Jennie Iannotti, Vi Pultorak and Paul Reamer, Blessed Raymond Lull

Deaths

Grace LoBelia, St Bonaventure, June 12
Patricia Rooney, St Michael, July 25
Merle Gomes, Blessed John XXIII, July 31
Loretta McGovern, Cure of Ars, August 11

Elections

June 1: Blessed Josephine Leroux, Anita Jackson, Minister

June 7: St Lawrence of Brindisi, Robert Metz, Minister

June 9: Our Lady of the Atonement, Margaret Buckley, Minister

July 11: Queen of the Seraphic Order, Madeline Sacco, Minister

July 19: Cure of Ars, Frank Tavella, Minister

July 19: St Mary Queen of Angels, Margaret Fleming, Minister

August 9: St Maximilian Kolbe, Mary Fountaine, Minister

Activities

June 26-28, Fraternity Retreat, sponsored by St Adalbert Fraternity, at Mount Alvernia, Wappingers Falls, attended by 50 brothers and sisters, including SFO members from St Helen, Canticle of the Sun, and St Clare (in CT). The theme was *The Beatitudes*; presenters were the friars team of Fr Roch, Fr Michael, and Fr Tom OFM.

August 17-21: FLIC at Mount St Alphon-

sus, Esopus NY; attended by 28 Seculars from 5 Regions and SA Fr Matthias Wesnofske OFM Cap. The theme was *Gospel Living*; the Principal Presenter was Teresa Baker SFO.

August 22, Tau Cross Regional Picnic, at Elwood Park, Huntington

August 29: Day of Recollection at Our Lady of the Island Shrine, Eastport; presenter Father Matthias Wesnofske OFM Cap; sponsored by St Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Brunch: third Tuesday of each month at 11:45 am at the Premier Diner, Commack Road. Seculars from several fraternities gather to promote a fraternal bond between our SFO fraternities on Long Island. We talk about Franciscan subjects with brothers and sisters - we're not afraid to speak about spiritual things in public; a grand time is had by all. Contact Frank Harnos (631) 499-0074 for directions.

"Christ in the City", Retreats at Church of St John the Baptist, 210 West 31st Street, NYC: Saturdays 4-10 pm: Topics: Jesus The Word Become Flesh, Francis of Assisi, Perfect Joy, Finding God in Stillness and Solitude; contact Brother Salvatore Patricola OFM Cap, (212) 564-9070 ext 247

October 31: Fall Regional Gathering at St Joseph Parish Center, Babylon.

December 5: Day of Recollection at the new Franciscan Chapel, St Anthony High School, Melville; presenter Brother Richard Contino OSF; sponsored by New Pentecost Fraternity.

April 13-15, 2010: Regional Retreat at Cormaria, Sag Harbor. Contact Bob Campbell (516-599-4256) for reservations.

April 24, 2010: Chapter of Elections, St Adalbert's, Elmhurst. All Fraternity Ministers are required to attend (or send an authorized representative).

FORMATION CORNER

Bob Campbell, SFO
Regional Formation Director

Gerry Crean's excellent articles in the past 3 issues of this Newsletter on the topic of poverty, chastity and obedience, really got me thinking more deeply about my own profession. Gerry used the word "promise" which I took to heart.

Trying to remember my promise at profession, I went to the **Rite of Profession** in the *SFO Ritual* (pg 24) and recalled saying: "I **promise** to live all the days of my life the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Secular Franciscan Order by observing its rule of life." Recollecting this promise to live the SFO Rule led me to Rule #2, which states in part: "By their profession they (the brothers and sisters) **pledge** themselves to live the Gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this Rule approved by the Church." I continued to meditate on the two words underlined above: **promise** and **pledge**. Then, at FLIC 2009 [see article below] our principal speaker, Teresa Baker (former National Co-Chair for Formation) reminded us of our PLEDGE. Teresa explained that a pledge is a **solemn** promise, which is a binding commitment to walk forward in faith. I really related to that!

"As we know, St Francis didn't intend to leave us a lot of rules - he simply wanted to point us in the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As we know, St Francis didn't intend to leave us a lot of rules - he simply wanted to point us in the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the one thing he asked of his followers was to live the Gospel life - that is, to follow Jesus. Perhaps it would be easier if we had more specific rules, but that's not the way of Jesus or Francis! We need to learn for ourselves - a little at a time - which is the reason why we can't say at our profession that we are truly "prepared" or "ready" or any such word - any more than those who are married, ordained or professed to Religious Life can say that they're "ready" when they pronounce their vows.. At our profession we pledged to follow the Gospel and the SFO

Rule, to walk forward in faith, willing to take that next step, and then another one, and so on. This means that we are always in the process of being formed - we never arrive. Thus **ongoing** Franciscan Formation is a never-ending process.

There's an excellent article about Franciscan Formation in *Tau-USA*, Autumn 2009 issue, on page 34. I urge you to read the entire article, but here are some significant points: [*italics are mine*]

- The first requirement [in formation] is for the community to identify itself as a *group of learners*.
- Franciscan formation is based on a *personal encounter* with the Lord.
- Franciscan formation is the *continuous process* of growth and conversion involving the whole of a person's life.
- Profession commits Franciscans not only to live the Gospel but to find ways to encourage others to follow the Gospel *in their own situations*.
- Profession calls Franciscans to *life-giving* ways to live and love.

A final thought about our Profession Pledge (solemn promise): at our fraternity's annual Chapter last month, we recited together the **SFO Pledge**. Fr Matthias brought this Pledge to our attention - it is used by several fraternities. [*If you would like a copy, send an email to ar-cyc@aol.com and I'll forward it to you.*]

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RETREAT:

A Personal Reflection

Jean D'Onofrio, SFO
Minister, Bl. John XXIII Frat.

"God's Extravagant Love": Reclaiming the Franciscan Theological Tradition"

With a title like that, how could I not consider going on this retreat! It had been too long since I made more than a few hours at a time for my relationship with God, and I had been too sick over the winter not to realize that I really needed this week away to renew and replenish myself in the Lord. So off I went via train to Aston, Pennsylvania to the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. The Franciscan Spiritual Center (610 558-6152 www.fscaston.org) is on the beautiful grounds of Neumann University. The Sisters have a joyful spirit, are most gracious in hospitality and the setting has numerous places for one to experience God's love and beauty in creation.

The retreat work itself explores our Franciscan heritage through the writings of Francis, Clare, Angela of Foligno, Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus. The presentations were designed to reach the heart rather than the head, and in so doing, left me with wonder and awe at the goodness and grand design of the Creator. How good is the earth where we dwell! How interconnected we all are to each other and to Sister Water and Brother Insect! How incredible that our God wanted to come to be with us and experience this life! The Incarnation and Creation are inseparable! Imagine Bonaventure's image of God's love as an overflowing fountain of love, never running dry, self-emptying and becoming man!

This material is usually presented as a workshop, and is presented nationwide and internationally. Perhaps you will be gifted with being able to attend. The need for the message of our Franciscan heritage is great and urgent for Sister Earth. If not us, who? If not now, when?

— Jean

FLIC....

.....Additional Thoughts

I had a wonderful experience at my first FLIC! The love and acceptance, the warmth and hospitality, the prayers and teachings enabled me to feel whole after this experience of Franciscans Living In Community. The socials were fun, the prayers in the beautiful chapel were meaningful, and it was a joy to share with so many others of like mind. I learned a great deal more about our Rule, humility, discernment, fraternity, and love from Teresa Baker, and I was moved to hear about the Seculars in Africa from Michael Guertin. Father Matthias' homilies were very pertinent to our lives. I now have a great deal to share with my fraternity. *-Joan Ryan, Poor Clare Fraternity*

"Teresa Baker made each day an adventure in faith."

Teresa Baker made each day an adventure in faith. I especially liked the activity, "Putting the Beatitudes into Practice". Each of us was given one of the seven Beatitudes, and we reflected about what it meant to us on a personal level. I was given "Poor in Spirit" and realized how much more the Spirit could grow in me. FLIC was a truly Franciscan experience!

*Evelyn Delaney,
Mother of God Fraternity*

This year's FLIC was a community-building experience. Teresa Baker's focus on our SFO Rule set the tone, as we bonded with people from 5 regions, sharing prayer, meals, sickness and health, on the bank of the beautiful Hudson River. Teresa challenged us to be like the Sea of Galilee, life giving, allowing the waters to flow in and out, not like the Dead Sea, which retains everything that flows in. Life flowed from Father Matthias who reminded us that there is one requirement when we are invited to the wedding feast: to wear the wedding garment of repentance and compassionate deeds. Toni Faga summed it all up: "Nothing was going to prevent me from living in community with my brothers and sisters this week." And the community continues: Emails, phone calls, sharing the experience with my fraternity and family - life from

FLIC keeps flowing! *-Louise Sandberg, Blessed Raymond Lull Fraternity*

The theme of FLIC 2009 was "Gospel Living." Teresa Baker spoke on the humility of God as witnessed in the SFO Rule. Teresa referenced St Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis In Deum*, the journey of the human person into God. Bonaventure defined humility as being "totally turned to the other." God's humility is shown in the reciprocal love between the Father and the Son, overflowing to the Holy Spirit. Humility is not thinking less of oneself, but of thinking of oneself less. Father Matthias reflected on the saints whose feasts we commemorated - Clare, Francis, Bernard, and Pius X, centering on aspects of fraternity (Franciscans Living In Community). Brother Salvatore Patricola conducted a Holy Hour, during which we reflected on the "Bread of Life" passages from St John's Gospel. Mike Guertin spoke passionately of his visit to

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Malawi, Africa, and his work with the fledgling Secular Franciscan fraternities there. FLIC provides Seculars from neighboring regions an opportunity to deepen their commitment, grow in Franciscan spirituality, be nourished through reflective liturgies and prayer services, and enjoy gracious hospitality. Most of all, however, FLIC is being with other Secular Franciscans who are on the same journey into God. *-Joan Geiger Regional Vice Minister*



**Fr. Matthias is honored at F.L.I.C. on the occasion of his 50th Anniversary
CONGRATULATIONS!**

REGIONAL PICNIC

Jean D'Onofrio, SFO, Minister
Bl. John XXIII Frat.

After many years of thinking about a regional picnic, the dream became a reality on Aug. 22nd. Despite a gloomy and dire forecast, the day started with a huge rainbow, and we knew that God was smiling upon us. In fact more than 56 Franciscans gathered on the Feast of the Queenship of Mary and celebrated the day with nary a drop of rain. The organizers, Frank Harnos, Gene Durney and Peter D'Amato, started it off with coffee and Dunkin' Donuts. Master Griller Jack Hack took over the brick barbecue and grilled the hot dogs and hamburgers to perfection. All the fixin's were there as well as music, soda and salads.

Some of us joined in for a round of bocce. The children enjoyed the playground. We also thank Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap., our Regional Spiritual Assistant, and Fr. John Murphy for joining us.

Everyone enjoyed the company as we shared our stories under the covered pavilion. How could we not? When Franciscans come together for fellowship, it is guaranteed to be a good time! Eight fraternities (New Pentecost, Poor Clares, Bl. Raymond Lull, St. Michael's, Holy Child of Jesus, Bl. John XXIII, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, and Our Lady Queen of Angels) were represented.

REGARDING the NEWSLETTER

Please send items of interest (elections, professions, anniversaries, events, recognition) to Regional Secretary Raymond Clarke, 899 Crestview Avenue, North Woodmere NY 11581; email at: Raymond.Clarkel@verizon.net

The TAU is published quarterly in January, April, July and October. Articles by fraternity members are welcome. If accepted, they may be edited. Please submit copies by the 10th of the month prior to publication. Please address correspondence to editor Peter D'Amato, PO Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764-0447. TEL: (631) 331-7680 or email at: damato1@optonline.net.

**FRANCIS'
PRAYER BEFORE THE
CRUCIFIX**

A Reflection

Pete D'Amato, SFO
Regional Treasurer

The prayer before the crucifix is a perfect reflection of the person of Francis himself and the process of his conversion. It is a beautiful prayer; one to which any person experiencing the pains of discernment and the search for God in his/her life can easily relate. Yet it is very much in the spirit of his personality and consciousness of the Almighty.

"Most High, glorious God,"

In spite of his devotion to the suffering Christ, Francis saw God as the "Great King," glorious and triumphant in himself and in all of His creation. He was not a dead, lifeless image but a loving, approachable, infinitely producing, incarnational cosmic event. Even the cross, for him, was God creating and redeeming all of life.

"Enlighten the darkness of my heart."

Francis was no dry intellectual. He was an emotional being who was ruled by feeling. He did not live by the definition of love but by Love, itself. He would not ask for enlightenment of his intellect but of his heart because it is the heart which propels us to act. Ask anyone who has experienced true love and they will agree. The intellect is there to justify our heart; not the reverse. Perhaps Francis wrote this in a period of pain or dryness. No matter. He did not ask God to enlighten his mind but to respond to the depth of his desire. The mind would surely follow if his heart was full.

**"And give me true faith,
certain hope and perfect charity,"**

Francis did not simply ask for faith, hope and charity. He wanted to be sure. He asked for "TRUE" faith, "CERTAIN" hope and "PERFECT" charity. These are

the three theological virtues upon which we should base our lives on earth and we cannot be too sure of ourselves when we practice them. That's why we require ongoing formation. One begets the other. Francis wanted perfect conformity to Christ in the Gospels. He wanted to go 'all the way.' This single line, in itself, is a full meditation for us all!

**"Sense and knowledge,
Lord."
(Of Your Will)**

Here the mind enters. If we have faith, hope and charity, "sense and knowledge" of God and what He wants of us will follow naturally. Francis was aware of that but knew that he still had to petition. His humility prompted him. "Ask and you shall receive."

**"That I may carry out
Your holy and true command."**

The natural conclusion to a perfect prayer of adoration and petition.

This prayer summarizes Francis' life and conversion perfectly. I can see where it moved him from contemplation to action totally in behalf of his "Great King." I do not know when he prayed it or how often; maybe early in his conversion. That would seem likely. Francis went from contemplation to action over and over during his lifetime. And each time, the contemplation of the "Most High, glorious God" raised him to newer and higher levels faith, hope and charity. But, I suspect that contemplation eventually and inevitably became all consuming; until, finally, there was no difference between contemplation and action. For a mystic, such as Francis, there can be nothing more fulfilling than the awareness of God's unending Presence in and around him and in ALL of Creation. And, in the end, for Francis, there was only 'his God and his All!'

**HAPPY FEAST
DAY!**

**Final Day of Recollection
for 2009
First Day of Recollection for
the Liturgical Year 2010.**

**Saturday, December 5
9:30-3:00**

**at
the Franciscan Chapel
St. Anthony High School
275 Wolf Hill Rd
Melville, NY
631-271-2020**

**Subject:
*The Trinity in Franciscan
Spirituality*
given by
Bro. Richard Contino, OSF**

**Fee: \$15.00 per person
Brown Bag Lunch
Beverages and Pastries will be
served at Breakfast**

**For reservations call:
John Hack, SFO 631-499-5641
Cell: 631-220-0032**

Pete D'Amato: 631-331-7680

**December 5 is the first Saturday of Advent.
and
The chapel at St. Anthony's is
beautiful and Franciscan.**

**What better time
and
what better place
for a Franciscan
to begin the
New Year
and prepare to
celebrate Christmas!**

Pax et Bonum!

A PHOTO TRIP AROUND THE REGION

SMILE 😊



Your Basic FLICers!



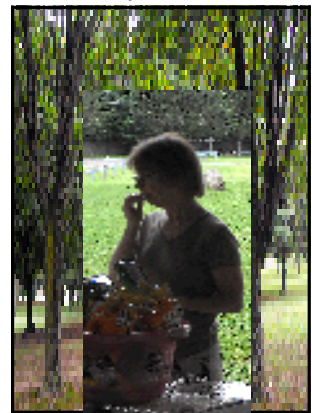
Any for me?



'Nuf Said



Picnic: Don't accept the ball...He's a Ringer!



**A solitary munch
Bet it's cookies!**



The Children "Harni!"



Election: The new Cure Council



The last picture...The Consortes



The "HarnOS," himself !



**Tuesday SFO "Philosophy" Club
Lunch, anyone?**



Day of Recollection at Tabor House



The Brothers give a party