

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

Joan Geiger, SFO
Regional Minister

Dear Friends,

Welcome Fall! This month we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis. Francis had a vivid sense of the sacramentality of creation. All things whether animate or inanimate spoke to him of the wonders of God's creation. I invite you to read Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures" or "The Canticle of Brother Sun" – his metaphor for his relationship with God and final testament and blessing to his Brothers.

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I also call and recommend your attention to the Secular Franciscan Order International Council website. It can be accessed at <http://www.ciofs.org.en.htm>. It is a fine source for ongoing formation. Since January, an Ongoing Formation Project – Monthly Dossier – has been published. Three topics are contained in each Monthly Dossier. *Section I* deals with *Profession in the SFO*. It is based on Fr. Felice Cangeli's Keynote Address to the 2008 SFO Chapter and is summarized by Ewald Kreuzer, SFO. *Section II* offers *Spiritual Insights* reflective of the liturgical and Franciscan calendar (e.g. January – The Baptism of the Lord. The SFO Profession builds upon our baptism. August – The Pardon of Assisi. Belonging to a reconciled and reconciling fraternity). This section and *Section III* – *The Social*

Doctrine of the Church – are both written by Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR. All three sections have questions for reflection and discussion in fraternity. In addition to English, the Monthly Dossier is also available in Spanish, French and Italian.

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The September Monthly Dossier speaks of belonging to the local Fraternity. I quote from its pages: The General Constitution in art. 30.2 states how belonging to the Fraternity should be lived: "*The sense of co-responsibility of the members requires personal presence, witness, prayer, and active collaboration in accordance with each one's situation and possible obligations for the animation of the fraternity.*" The following therefore,

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appear to be essential requirements of this co-responsibility:

1. *personal presence*, namely through regular participation (not optional!) at the meetings of the Fraternity;
2. *witness*, of Gospel life and of fraternal life – also as a means of promoting vocations and an assistance in the formation of new members;
3. *prayer*, as the soul of this "community of love;"
4. *active collaboration*, of each and everyone, for the good of the Fraternity;
5. *possible commitments to bring life to the Fraternity*; and
6. *economic contribution*, based on the ability of individual members.

But this is not enough. Co-responsibility requires that all members take care of the human and spiritual "well-being" of each of the brothers and sisters.

"On Saturday, November 6, 2010 our annual Fall Gathering will be held at St. Joseph's Parish..."

Two reminders: On Saturday, November 6, 2010 our annual Fall Gathering will be held at St. Joseph's Parish, Babylon. Registration begins at 9:30AM. Heather Metcalfe from Franciscans International will be our Keynote Speaker. The Peace and Family Awards will be presented. From October 26th – 31st I will be attending the Annual NAFRA Chapter in Scottsdale, AZ. Please keep me in your prayers.

Peace and all good,
Joan

FATHER'S MESSAGE

People Who Live in Glass Boxes...

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

We are all aware of the difficulty many people have of making a permanent commitment, whether it is in regards to making a marriage commitment, taking religious vows, or promising to help out in a soup kitchen. We have also noticed this

"We are all aware of the difficulty many people have of making a permanent commitment..."

in asking individuals to make a permanent commitment or profession in the Secular Franciscan Order. Some will make the permanent commitment but will renege on their promise after a short time. Part of the difficulty, like so many others in our life, is the fact of such rapid change taking place in our world and in our individual lives. We don't know the future; we don't know how our health will be in a few years; we don't know if we will have to move to another area; we don't know what our economic situation will be like; we don't know if we will always have the time; etc. As a result, many are afraid to make any sort of a permanent commitment.

"...Bernard of Quintavalle, was inspired by the words and life style of Francis, but wasn't sure if such a life was for him."

For the past 800 years, the story is told, that the first follower of St. Francis, Bernard of Quintavalle, was inspired by the words and life style of Francis, but wasn't sure if such a life was for him. He invited St. Francis to his home, and during the night observed Francis to see if he was authentic. He saw that Francis stayed up all night and prayed, repeating over and over again, the words, My God and My All, words that eventually became

the motto of the Franciscan Order, *Deus Meus et Omnia*, 'My God and My All.' Here again, we can find it difficult to pray or live such a motto, because of that word, 'All.' The completeness, the totality, the permanency of the word 'All' can be frightening. Jesus asks us to renounce all, and that God become our All. (Luke 14:33)

My sister recently sent me some pictures, over the internet, of the former Sears Tower in Chicago, the tallest building in America. On the 103rd floor they recently installed boxes, suspended out from the building, hanging off the building over a thousand feet in the air. You can go into the boxes. These boxes are made of glass and once in the box you can get an unobstructed view of the city of Chicago. Just looking at the pictures of the boxes on the internet, and then viewing the scene spread in front of you, can be dizzying. I know I could never go into such a box. It would take a great deal of faith and trust to be able to feel secure enough to enter the box. I would have to get over the idea that glass is a fragile material. The pictures on the internet show children lying on the floor of the boxes and looking down 103 floors. It is something like the rides and amusements children will actually pay money to ride, in order to be scared to death and spend a few minutes screaming in fright, say on a roller coaster, and then when the ride is finished, get back on the line to do it again.

"To make God the center of our lives...is ... becoming totally dependent on God. It can be scary."

To make God the center of our lives, to make God the 'All' in our lives, is like going into the glass box, and becoming totally dependent on God. It can be scary. On the other hand, suppose your child or a friend, or a spouse went into the box and became sick or even had a heart attack, or you accidentally dropped something precious and it rolled into

the box. Would you go in? And if, without thinking, or in a rush of excitement, you did enter the box, and after taking that first step, you find it isn't that scary, and you realize it isn't that bad; the box is actually quite safe and secure, would you remain in the box

"In making a commitment, in keeping a permanent commitment, ...we can come to the conclusion, 'Yes, I can...,' "

and enjoy what is set before you? In making a commitment, in keeping a permanent commitment, in renouncing those things we think we must have, those things we think we need for our sanity or our comfort, and then taking that first step, we can come to the conclusion, 'Yes, I can live without it, I don't need all this time for myself, I do have the energy and strength to live without it or to give it to another, it is not that bad, I am surviving without it.'

"...to commit ourselves to God, ...is a sign of our freedom and independence... to commit ourselves to total dependence on God...who calls us and gives us the grace to live the call."

We are speaking of a box, but to commit ourselves to God, to make a permanent commitment, is not putting ourselves in a box. Rather it is a sign of our freedom and independence: independence from material things, independence from pressures to conform to the world, independence from sin and the freedom to commit ourselves to total dependence on God. We might have to overcome the issue of our fragility, breakable like glass, but we depend, not on our own strength, but on the strength of God, our All, who calls us and gives us the grace to live the call.

AROUND THE REGION

*Bob Campbell, SFO
Regional Data Base Manager*

Rite of Admission

On June 18, in St James, Anne Panas was admitted into Blessed John XXIII. Jean D'Onofrio SFO, Minister, presided. Dcn Ernest Destefano, Formation Director, witnessed.

Rite of Profession

On April 17, in East Islip, Anne Marie Desmond and Susanna Sepulveda were professed into Il Poverello Fraternity. MaryLou Hughes SFO, Minister, presided. Rev. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap was Friar Witness.

On June 10, in The Bronx, Norma Cintron was professed into Immaculate Conception Fraternity. Fay Muir, SFO, Minister, presided. Rev. John LoSasso, OFM was the Friar Witness.

On June 13, in Merrick, Roxanne Francaviglia was professed into Cure of Ars Fraternity. Frank Tavella, SFO, Minister, presided. Rev. Francis was Witness.

On September 18, in Howard Beach, Agnes Cummings, Dorothy Esposito, Mary Ann Kellen, Joanne Trusherska and Thomas Naef were professed into St. Helen's Fraternity. Minister Lorraine Arcella presided and Rev. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap was the Friar Witness.

Deaths

Josephine Cinfo, St Barnabas, July 2

Denise Farrell, Blessed John XXIII, July 5

Alfonso Catone, Ave Maria, July 14
Teresa Coman, St Lawrence of Brindisi, July 23

Richard Archer, St Lawrence of Brindisi, September 1

Sophie Moles, St. Bonaventure, August 7.

Dominic Terrone, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, September 15

Anniversaries

60 years: Kathleen Morris (St Bonaventure)

50 years: Patricia Johnson (St Bonaventure)

45 years: Jeanne Barbato, Vincent Barbato, Edmond Luyckx & Clare Oakes (all St Bonaventure)

40 Years: Florence Keegan (Blessed John XXIII)

30 Years: Catherine Schiefer (Blessed John XXIII)

25 years: Jane Walsh (St Bonaventure) & Ernest Destefano (Blessed John XXIII)

20 Years: Lenny Battafarano (Blessed John XXIII) & Bob Campbell (Blessed Raymond Lull)

Activities

June 26: East Regional Picnic at Elwood Park, Northport sponsored by New Pentecost, O.L. Queen of Angels and St. Lawrence of Brindisi fraternities.

July 18: 25th anniversary of establishment of Our Lady of Guadalupe Fraternity in The Bronx. Fr. Michael McDonnell, OFM was the principle celebrant of the Spanish Mass, with Rev. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap. concelebrating.

July 31: "Getting to Know You" Picnic at Forest Park, Queens hosted by St. Helen Fraternity.

July 31: Portiuncula Celebration at St. Anthony's High School, Huntington sponsored by the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn and attended by several fraternities. Rev. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap. celebrated Mass. It was a nice example of collaboration between the 1st and 3rd Orders, Secular and Religious.

August 9-12: FLIC (Franciscans Living In Community) at St Alphonsus Retreat Center, Esopus NY. 38 Seculars and a Franciscan Friar (our own Fr Matthias) gathered for FLIC 2010. As you may know by now, FLIC stands for **F**ranciscans **L**iving **I**n **C**ommunity;

it is an annual gathering of Franciscans from the Northeast US. This year's theme was Franciscan Prayer and was led by Teresa Baker, SFO (former National Formation Co-Chair). Teresa's talks – and her enthusiasm for everything Franciscan – inspired us to go deeper into our Franciscan charism.

August 28: Day of Recollection at Shrine of Our Lady of the Island, Eastport; presenter Rev Matthias Wesnofske, OFM Cap.

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.

November 6: Fall Regional Gathering at St Joseph Parish Center, Babylon.

A Little Humor

from Jim O'Neill, SFO
Bl. Raymond Lull Frat

A little boy was waiting for his mother to come out of the grocery store. As he waited he was approached by a man who asked, "Son, can you tell where the Post Office is?" The little boy replied, "Sure just go straight down this street a couple of blocks and turn to your right."

The man thanked the boy kindly and said, "I'm the new pastor in town. I'd like for you to come to my church on Sunday. I'll show you how to get to heaven."

The little boy replied with a chuckle, "Awww, come on ...You don't even know the way to the post office."

FORMATION CORNER

*Ralph DiCicco, SFO
Regional Formation Director*

We all know that Article 4 of our Rule challenges us to devote ourselves to “careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.” But how do we go about “careful reading”?

“Article 4 of our Rule challenges us to devote ourselves to ‘careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to gospel.’”

One approach is the ancient method of Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading). After entering into our prayer space (exteriorly and interiorly), we might best begin by invoking the Holy Spirit to inspire our reading so that we might hear what God wants us to hear (and not what we think we already know). We slowly read two or three times a passage of the gospel and are attentive to what word or phrase stirs something inside us. We hold the word or

“One approach is the ancient method of Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading).”

phrase in our heart and allow it to grow... and we prayerfully reflect on what this stirring means... What message might God be trying to convey to me personally today? We enter into a dialog with God speaking from our heart and listening to God’s response. We end our prayer time simply sitting in God’s presence, resting in God’s embrace.

NAFRA has posted a simple one page

“NAFRA has posted a simple one page outline of the method (http://www.nafra-sfo.org/Formation%20materials/5.6-Lectio_Divina-Sacred_Reading.pdf) which may also be helpful to you.”

outline of the method (http://www.nafra-sfo.org/Formation%20materials/5.6-Lectio_Divina-Sacred_Reading.pdf) which may also be helpful to you. Remember this is different from Bible study. This is not an intellectual attempt to analyze or interpret the passage so that we might be knowledgeable, but simply one way of placing ourselves in the humble position of allowing the Creator to continue the work of creation in us (which we might better recognize as “ongoing conversion” or moving “from gospel to life and life to gospel”).

“I will...(be)... providing some materials for your reference as well as for purchase.”

On another topic, our regional fall gathering will soon be upon us! I will humbly try to walk in Bob’s footsteps by providing some materials for your reference as well as for purchase. Among the materials I will have available in limited quantities are these three books: the popular **SFO Companion** which had been out of print for some time, the newly-revised **Essential Documents**, and Lester Bach’s newly-published formation resource called **The Franciscan Journey: Embracing the Franciscan Vision**. This last work encompasses material for the entire initial formation process: orientation, inquiry, and candidacy and it brings together writings of and about Francis and Clare, the Rule, our Constitutions, Scripture, US Bishops and Papal documents, as well as suggestions for additional reading and dialogue. I think it is a book every fraternity would want to have at least as a resource if not the actual formation text.

“Drop me an email (or give me a call) ...”

Drop me an email (or give me a call) if you already know that you would like to purchase any of these – especially if you wish multiple copies-- so that I will have a sufficient supply available. Of course feel free to contact me for any other reason as well.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

*Peter D’Amato, SFO
OLQA Fraternity*

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps 133)

It seems to me that these words taken from the beginning of Psalm 133 describe the Summer of ‘10 so well for us Seculars. Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM tells us that *“(I)n community...we keep, alive our growth in God’s Presence”* and that, for Francis and Clare: *“fraternity (was) meant to be the sacrament of the Franciscan gospel life...”* So fraternity is unique to Franciscans—a source of grace and a channel of sanctity. For us, then, Psalm 133 contains an idea well worth that *lectio divina*.

This Summer our Region experienced an abundance of fraternal activity in our prayer, in our play and in our apostolates. Be it “a prayer” or “a picnic,” according to Fr. Benet, all are sources of grace and all exemplify these words in Psalm 133.

On the last page, we have included photos from a few of these activities. I invite you to view them in the spirit of the Psalm; in joy and thanksgiving for fraternity shared and graces received.

REGARDING the NEWSLETTER

Please send items of interest (elections, professions, anniversaries, events, recognition) to Regional Secretary Alicia D’Amato, PO Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764; email at: damato1@optonline.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.

A FRANCISCAN LIFE

Barbara Consorte, SFO
Bl. John XXIII Fraternity



Denise Farrell, SFO
58 Years

Blessed John XXIII Fraternity and the Tau Cross Region were deeply saddened by the death of our beloved sister, Denise Farrell, on 7/2/10. She would have been Professed 58 years on 8/22/10.

It is impossible to describe what a blessing Denise was to everyone she touched. She was prayerful, joyful, and life giving. Her radiant smile and beautiful voice could light up a room. She also had an aura of holiness about her that made each and every person she touched feel special, important, and welcome. When she said, "I'm so happy to see you," we all knew she meant it.

Denise had a phenomenal memory. If you asked her for prayers she never forgot the request. At times she asked for a picture to hang on her refrigerator and she always followed up by checking to see how you and/or the person she was praying for was doing. She also remembered important occasions by what saint's day it fell on. For example, she'd ask when your birthday was and then remember it by associating the occasion with whatever saint was honored on that day.

Denise studied Sacred Music on scholarship in Florence, Italy and

was Music Director at Good Shepherd parish in Brooklyn for many years. Many have received the benefit of her knowledge of Liturgy and music (including lay people and assorted priests). Denise was faith-filled, guileless, childlike (in the best sense), and a wonderful Secular Franciscan. She never spoke badly about, or harshly to, anyone. She bore up under tremendous trials, physical and otherwise, and yet always tried to be a comfort to the many who shared their burdens with her.

Denise was also the first Consecrated Virgin recognized by the Diocese of Rockville Centre. She was consecrated in 2005 at Sts. Philip and James Church, St. James, NY, by our current bishop, Most Reverend William Murphy, D.D., STD. A consecrated virgin is a woman who has dedicated herself to a life of virginity or perpetual chastity in the service of God and the Church in a form that is recognized by the Church and consistent with her state in life. She took her vows very seriously and was truly a role model and mentor who, by example, taught us how to live.

In saying goodbye to our beloved sister, we know she has been welcomed with loving arms by our Father. We are counting on the fact that she will continue to be an advocate for us in Heaven and we will remember forever what a good and faithful servant she was. May she have peace and Franciscan joy.

Ed Note: It seems to me that, in recent months, we have experienced more deaths within the Region than usual. Please also remember in your prayers the following Seculars. May they rest in God's peace and joy:

Josephine Cinfo, St Barnabas
Alfonso Catone, Ave Maria
Teresa Coman, St Lawrence of B.
Richard Archer, St Lawrence of B
Sophie Moles, St. Bonaventure
Dominic Terrone, St. Lawrence of B.

DIOCESAN MEDAL to SFO

Peter D'Amato, SFO
OLQA Fraternity



Josephine Sbani, SFO

On Friday, September 17, the St. Agnes Medal of Service was awarded to Josephine Sbani, SFO by Bishop Murphy during a prayer service held at St. Agnes.

A lifelong parishioner at St. Francis de Sales in Patchogue, Mrs Sbani more than filled this role by service to the parish and community in many ways. She is presently a Eucharistic Minister, works at the parish food pantry and occasionally also at the soup kitchen. In addition to these activities, she has been a long time volunteer at Hope House Ministries in Port Jefferson, Brookhaven Hospice in Patchogue and Right to Life at Our Lady of the Snows in Blue Point.

Josephine has been a parishioner at St. Francis since her youth, having been raised in Patchogue and having attended the parish school. A member of St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity, she also has been a Secular since 1983. Life has not always been easy for Josephine. She was widowed in 1976 at age 49 and has also lost four of her eight children. She attributes her ability to manage tragedy to her deep faith and trust in God.

We congratulate Josephine on her award, the fruit of her faith and devotion and wish her many more years of service. Pax et Bonum



Regional Picnic at Elwood Park, Northport



Cookout at St. Adalbert's, Elmhurst



Patricia Heile and Theresa Baker
FLIC in August



SFO's pass out needed supplies at Help Suffolk, Bellport, NY in August

St. Helen Fraternity's newly professed



John Bergius and Louise Sandberg
FLIC in August



"Newbies" at FLIC in August.
Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, NY



Helping the undomiciled in Manhattan-August
New Pentecost Fraternity



Fr. Matt at the Retreat Day
Our Lady of the Island Shrine in
Eastport, August



Cookout at St. Adalbert's-Part II



1st Annual "Getting to Know You Picnic"
Forest Park, Queens, NY



Elwood Park Picnic-Part II