
Tau Cross Region

Secular Franciscan Order for The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk

Fr. Matthias' Message

Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap.
Regional Spiritual Assistant

Decluttering

About a month ago, a Capuchin friar, who is now working in Japan, wrote to me and suggested I get a book which he thought might be helpful in working with the Secular Franciscans. The Secular Franciscans do not take a vow of poverty, but they are called to a "simplicity of lifestyle." They are also called to imitate St. Francis, in so far as possible, given their state in living in the world. I went out and bought the recommended book. I have since learned that the book was on the N.Y. Times Best Seller List and was reviewed in the Book Review Section of the Sunday Times. The book is not a spiritual reading book. As a matter of fact, it is found in the home improvement section of Barnes and Noble. The book is entitled "The Life Changing Magic Of Tidying Up, the Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing," by Marie Kondo, a young Japanese woman. As I said, it is not a spiritual reading book, and is not even Christian, and has overtones of Shintoism and Buddhism. But the book points out how in our materialistic and consumer ridden society, we have so much, and the continual necessity of decluttering and discarding. On a purely natural order, it can bring peace and serenity to an individual to just get control over his/her material things. We know that things can

divert us from seeing the value of the spiritual. When we have everything, we don't see the value of anything.

On a personal level, I know as I get older, having less and everything in its place, is the only way I can function. When I moved about a year and a half ago, I realized that I had accumulated so much and spent weeks before my move, just tossing papers and clothing I had not worn in years. Now, I am trying to organize my mother's possessions, and just contemplating the attic, basement and garage is almost overwhelming. Just trying to get rid of my mother's money was a problem. And Jesus uses such strong language in telling his disciples, "Leave everything behind" and "Not looking back." This is the Gospel life we are called to live.

We have been so blessed in living in the United States in this year of 2016, but it comes at a price, the price of falling into materialism and consumerism. In the prophet Isaiah we read, "Come to the water all you who are thirsty, though you have no money, listen to me and you will have good things to eat and food to enjoy." Being thirsty and having no money is not an obstacle to the feast. The thirstier you are and the hungrier and the poorer you are, seem to be assets or almost requirements for enjoying the feast. What joy St.

Francis experienced in giving up everything for the sake of the kingdom. On the other hand, having too much or not having any material need, can leave us satisfied for the time being, and we can neglect the spiritual.

Just as I frequently look around in the lounge in the Rahab Center and Nursing Facility, where my mother is residing, I can't help but wonder at all the dieting and exercising people do, all the saving over the years, all the running to doctors, and all for this; to sit in a wheelchair all day. Your perspective can change, if you are still able to put things in perspective. Maybe now is time for us to prioritize and look for the things that really bring happiness. And this is a continual call. "Let us begin again for up to now, we have done but little."

"Do not take gold or silver or copper or money for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic or sandals or walking stick. "

Matthew

"Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town."

Luke

The Graces of the Franciscan Charism: Balancing Work and Relaxation

Margaret Birth, ofs
St. Michael Fraternity

As Secular Franciscans, we often find ourselves face-to-face with values in the world around us that do not reflect our own. Consumption of goods is one that comes to many people's minds. But finding a work-leisure balance doesn't come to mind as readily, does it?

In the U.S., we've become surrounded by people whose professional and personal time has become quite fluid—disturbingly so, I think, when we see commuters sending out-of-office e-mails from smartphones, and coffee shop customers using Wi-Fi connections to catch up on work from laptop computers.

Sometimes it seems as if everyone expects everyone else to be connected 24/7/365, and if you don't respond to a text message or e-mail within a certain (brief) period of time, you risk offending. This is a kind of excess too, though—an excess of work time spilling into what should be personal time, an excess of attention being paid to electronic gadgets rather than to fellow human beings, and an excess of ownership of costly technology.

One characteristic common to many of our Franciscan charisms, though, is a lack of excess, expressed through different forms of simplicity and humility. And that includes finding a balance between work and relaxation.

“Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service

of the human community.” (OFS Rule, #16) About this, Article 21 of our Secular Franciscan Constitution says: “1. For Francis, work is a gift and to work is a grace. Daily work is not only the means of livelihood, but the opportunity to serve God and neighbor as well as a way to develop one's own personality. In the conviction that work is a right and a duty and that every form of occupation deserves respect, the brothers and sisters should commit themselves to collaborate so that all persons may have the possibility to work and so that working conditions may always be more humane. 2. Leisure and recreation have their own value and are necessary for personal development. Secular Franciscans should maintain a balance between work and rest and should strive to create meaningful forms of using leisure time.”

Since Franciscans focus on going “from gospel to life and life to gospel,” it may seem obvious that one source for this work-rest balance is the Fourth Commandment (“Six days you shall labor and do all your work./But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God...” [Deut. 5:13–14, NRSV]). Jesus's life is full of examples about this balance too—the question about plucking grain on the Sabbath, and His withdrawal to a private place after the death of His cousin John the Baptist, to name two. Our Rule and Constitution are inspired by such examples

How can we translate these ideals into our own lives? Here are a few suggestions (feel free to add more): Take a volunteer service job or perform a ministry (even part time, in addition to

your regular job). Support political initiatives that advocate for workers' needs—fair salaries, family leave, health care and safe working conditions. Treat people who serve you with special solicitude—generously tip a waitperson who provides exceptional service, and try to speak respectfully even when you have a product or service complaint. Finally, try to guard the time that you're off the clock from your own job; you may wish to let others know that you consider evenings to be family time, or do your best to keep a Sabbath (if not on Sunday, then on another day). As Secular Franciscans, then, we need both to seek to work in ways that benefit other people *and* to take time for rest and leisure.

Formation Corner

Gene Keenan, ofs
Regional Formation Director

You formed my innermost being, you knit me in my mother's womb. (Ps 139: 13)

Isn't it amazing how God formed each of us into His own image and likeness? He took us like clay and formed us as unique persons, created to love and to serve Him, created out of love for love.

I am humbled to be your new Formation Director and given the task of assisting and guiding your formation as Secular Franciscans. We have wonderful examples in Francis, Clare and all the saints in our Franciscan family to help us discern God's will for us and to reach out in love to each other.

My hope is to be able to make

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Formation Corner (continued)

contact with all the Formation Directors in the Region to see how I can be of help in their formation programs. The task is big and I ask for your help and prayers as we begin this work together for the benefit of Our Lord and each other. May God Bless us and all the works we do for His Glory!

Pax et Bonum

REMEMBER: FLIC

8/15-8/18 F.L.I.C. will be held at Mount Alvernia Retreat Center Wappinger's Falls, NY
Presenter: Teresa Baker, ofs
Welcome to:
Four Days of Liturgy, Prayer, R n' R
Quiet Meditation and Fraternity
For further information please contact Deacon Bob Campbell, 516-599-4256 or ARCYC@aol.com
Fee will be \$275 per person.

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Quinquennial 2016 "Reviving Our Spirit"

Frank Scotto, ofs
Regional Vice Minister

A Personal Perspective

The 2016 Quinquennial Congress which convened in St. Louis, MO from June 30th through July 3rd. was my first experience at the "Q". Although I arrived earlier in the day, I was overwhelmed by the constant flood of hundreds of Seculars packing into the hotel lobby on Thursday afternoon. At first, the clamor, hustle and bustle and a bit of disorientation to the new surroundings was quite disconcerting. However, eventually I adjusted and all present were enthralled by the joy of meeting other Franciscans from all over the nation. The Q became a melting pot of cultures, styles, domiciles, and lives but yet all of us were of one Franciscan heart!

It all began later that evening with mass celebrated by Fr. Pio Jackson ofm, who gave a homily on joy and mercy. The highlight of the Liturgy was the 600 voices reverently singing Ubi Caritas in both Latin and English. Each day we were treated to beautiful, uplifting music.

Following Mass, Jan Parker, introduced us to Tibor Kauser, ofs, Minister General of the International Council. Our evening presenter was Fr. Murray Bodo ofm, leading us on a journey into sacramental love and sensitivity. By the end of the night, an exhausted 600 Seculars headed for bed, renewing their strength and preparing for a deeper immersion into faith the next day.

On our second day we were still suffering from 'seraphic' confusion

trying to get to where we needed to be on time. The keynote speaker for the morning was Fr. Daniel Horan ofm, a friar of Holy Name Province, who spoke on Mercy and Minority in the Franciscan Tradition: Creation and Poverty. Dan's message was quite inspirational: "We are a people of joy and should strive to be 'lesser' Sisters and Brothers, seeking a Franciscan Poverty, to enter into creation in the Franciscan tradition of stewardship and kinship.

The afternoon session exceeded expectations with a presentation by Fr. Lester Bach ofm Cap, an awe inspiring dialogue on our interaction with God, and growing in His love. It was a powerful talk, welcomed by an attentive audience.

Part of the afternoon was devoted also to packing the 'Blessing Bags' with all kinds of goodies for the needy of St. Louis, to be distributed by the St. Anthony of Padua Pantry. Hundreds of bags were packed filling a Toyota sedan thereby necessitating an additional van to complete the delivery. We were filled with joy, aware they would help the needy. The rest of the second day was filled with various group talks and open forums to satisfy all of our interests.

The third day began, again, with Morning Prayer followed by a session with 'Dan' who continued our journey on Mercy and Minority, Violence and Peacemaking with emphasis on the Canticle of the Sun, and the Beatitudes. His talk was an interesting departure from the generally held view of the Canticle, as a 'creed.' In reality, it is a writing of greater depth, and tenderness. While it is a 'praise' to God's creation, it also leads us into a new vision of Franciscan life and relationship with God as a part of,

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Quinquennial (continued)

not only praising 'all that is,' but being part of 'what was and what will be'. This can often be upset by a society seeking to protect itself, in contrast to the Franciscan desire to protect all of God's creation. The portion of the lecture on the Beatitudes took on a holistic view of the kingdom of God serving to shelter us from society's endeavor to shape our lives. The remainder of the day provided opportunities to attend 'breakout sessions' on diverse topics.

On the fourth day, Fr. Dan spoke to us about the crippling social evils of Racism and Xenophobia. His presentation was in depth with the key point being to renounce our fears that imprison us and encumber the way we deal with others; to shed those fears which perceive 'others' of different race, color, religion or nationality to be foreign or strange. Evangelical Poverty encourages us, in this regard, to surrender ourselves to the will of the Lord, and to be guided by His grace. The session gave us much to ponder.

In the afternoon, we were treated to a lively presentation by Carolyn Townes, National Animator for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. It was a vibrant presentation in which she ended with this reflective thought "If you take just a small ember of what you have heard and learned in the last few days home with you, and act on it, you will affect not only your life, but the lives of everyone with whom you come into contact." Sadly this was my last day at the 'Q'. I would leave behind many friends, old and new but took with me a well-spring of

joy which has already taken root and transformed me interiorly bringing everyone closer to God and an understanding of themselves. The 'Q' is a magnificent event, which every Franciscan should experience. It will not be back for another 5 years; yet this might be considered a good thing. Why you ask? It most likely will take us, who attended, 5 years to absorb it all preparing us for the very next 'Quinquennial.'

Pace e Bene, Pax et Bonum, Peace

Regional Retreat

Various Writers
Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternity

On April 19-21, 37 Franciscans gathered at Cormaria Retreat House in Sag Harbor, for the annual Tau Cross Regional Retreat. Fr Jim Gavin, OFM Cap, was the Retreat Master; assisted by Lawrence Rosania. The theme was The Practical Spirituality of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

These Gospel passages and Psalms were the basis of each day's reflection: Luke 10:23-37/Psalm 15: The Good Samaritan
Luke 15:11-32/Psalm 103: The Prodigal Son
Luke 7:36-50/Psalm 25: The Woman Whose Sins Were Forgiven.

We had a Holy Spirit filled three days, that included peace in a most pleasant and tranquil setting, very exacting dissection and discussion of the Gospel of Luke by Fr James Gavin, who led the discussion of Luke's Gospel and as he puts it, "breaks open the text", revealing perhaps undiscovered reasoning and messages from God.

A YouFra Update

Jean Donofrio, ofc
Holy Poverty Fraternity

We are still awaiting for the program for HighSchool and Young Adults to be put up on the Regional Website. For those who would like to read it, please send me an email and I will email the attachment. Please put Secular Franciscan in the RE: line.! My email address is:

jld1075@optonline.net (note, it is 3 letters and 4 numbers) The program has LOTS of things in it - more info than one could possibly use in one year. It was designed as a program for HS to be used by teachers along with a Secular Franciscan and his/ her fraternity to provide support over the course of 4 years. Feel free to use it as the Spirit prompts you.

It was a pleasure and indeed a gift to meet more like-minded Franciscans who want to get involved with youth/young adults at the Regional gathering. How wonderful it was that a candidate decided to do a youth activity. For those who would like to plan ahead, it's not too early to meet with your Director of Religious Education and ask how to help out with a program for St. Francis' feastday, blessing of the animals, or care for creation program based on Laudate Si. Making packets of bird seed for distribution as a fraternity, or showing Paddington Bear, or Yogi Bear DVDs for a grade level catechesis (one deals with immigration issues while the other is on stewardship of our environment). These are ways to work with your parish, promote the Order and become involved.

May our good and gracious God bless our efforts

Around the Region

Admissions

5/21: Paul Auwater,
St. Helen Fraternity

Deaths

5/21: Karen Marzovilla,
Il Poverello Fraternity
5/22: Mary Anne Oniewski,
New Pentecost Fraternity
6/02: Miriam McDade,
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Fraternity
6/16: Charles Zeiss,
Holy Poverty Fraternity
7/05: Ann Incremona,
St. Michael Fraternity

Elections

5/23: Carolyn Talento elected
Minister of St. Adalbert Fraternity
6/12: James Cunningham, elected
Minister of Holy Child Jesus
Frat.
6/18: Marylou Hughes, elected
Minister of Il Poverello Fraternity

Activities

4/09: Tau Cross Region Executive Council Election. Raymond Clarke elected Minister; Frank Scotto, elected Vice Minister, Augusta VanDuzen, elected Secretary; +Charles Zeiss, (deceased) elected Treasurer; Eugene Keenan, elected Formation Director; Jean Thomas, Alicia D'Amato, Anthony DaVino were elected Councilors

6/18: Day of Recollection
sponsored by Our Lady of the Atonement and Bl. Raymond Lull Fraternities; Speaker Frank Scotto, ofs, Tabor Retreat House, Oceanside, NY.

6/24-6/26: St. Adalbert Fraternity

Retreat at Mt. Alvernia Retreat House, Wappingers Falls, NY

6/25: Regional Picnic at Elwood Park, 309 Cuba Hill Road, Huntington, NY, sponsored by New Pentecost and Our Lady Queen of Angels Fraternities.

Upcoming Events

8/15-8/18 F.L.I.C. (Franciscans Living In Community) to be held at Mount Alvernia Retreat Center, Wappingers Falls, NY
Presenter: Teresa Baker, ofs
For further information please contact Deacon Bob Campbell, ofs at areyc@aol.com or 516-599-4256
Fee will be \$275 per person.

Date TBA: HELP Suffolk: Annual picnic sponsored by New Pentecost Fraternity for undomiciled family at HELP Suffolk Facility, Bellport, NY. For additional information, contact Frank Harnos, ofs at 631-834-1549 or FHarnos@aol.com.



Secular Franciscan OFS Day of Recollection

DIRECTOR:
Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, ofm, Cap.

Saturday, Sept. 10, 2016
9:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Shrine of O.L of the Island
Eastport, N.Y.

Day to Include:
Morning Prayer, Holy Mass,
Conferences with opportunities for
sharing and quiet meditation

Brown Bag Lunch, coffee & Soda
available at the shrine coffee shop.

Free will offering of \$15.00
Call for more information
Mark Crean, ofs 631-698-5403
Hosted: St. Lawrence of Brindisi
Fraternity

TAU CROSS REGION

The TAU CROSS REGION is published quarterly in January, April, July and in 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 send items of interest (elections, professions, anniversaries, events, etc. to Regional Councilor Alicia D'Amato at P.O. Box 447, Miller Place, NY 11764 or email at: damatol@optonline.net.

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Tau Cross Region at Home ...



Blessed Raymond Lull Fraternity



...and a few more happy retreatants!

**... And With Friends
At the Quinquennial**



Quinquennial 2016: Reviving Our Spirit
L-R: Leslie Knight, Jean D'Onofrio, Elaine Maynard, Frank Scotto, Lori Peiper, Joan Geiger (rear), Louise Sandberg



"Hello, Jeanne!"



Grace Callahan
Bl. Raymond Lull



International guests, L-R: Tibor Kauser, Jenny Harrington, Ana Fruk, Fr. Martin Bitzer, ofm, Conv.



Fr. Murray Bodo, ofm



Joan Geiger (way in the corner) and 'Friends.'



Fr. Dan Horan, ofm