

Communio

That All May Be One

Newsletter of the
Brothers and Sister of St. Francis Region
Secular Franciscan Order
Autumn 2006



Witness: Survivor recalls Kolbe heroism

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, SFO
Communio editor

MURPHY, N.C. — “Reflecting on Maximilian Kolbe in the presence of Joe is like writing the Scriptures in the presence of God,” Fr. George M. Kloster said.

“Joe” is Joseph Waclawski. He and his wife, Irene, parishioners at St. William Church here, live near Murphy in a comfortable home with a view of green hills.

In August, 65 years ago, though, Waclawski’s view was limited to Auschwitz’s drab concentration-camp gray. A Polish army lieutenant, he had been arrested by the Gestapo in March 1940 and imprisoned in Czestochowa, Poland, interrogated and beaten unconscious. He was sent to Auschwitz in May 1941.

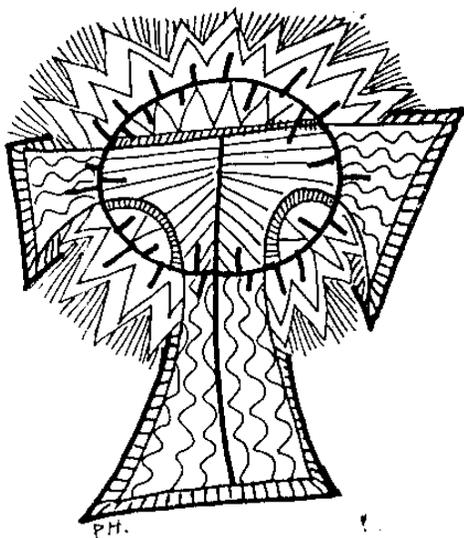
“My daily routine of very hard menial labor, the inhumane treatment together with the unheard of living conditions left me numb to the environment,” he wrote in 1991. “What was left of my energy was directed to the thought of survival. But during these particular days I was shaken and stunned by the courage and selfless brotherly love of inmate #16670 from our ‘block’ (barrack). At the time I did not know, but I was told by other inmates that the special person was Franciscan Brother Maximilian Kolbe.”

On Aug. 14, the feast of St. Maximilian Kolbe, OFM Conv., Father Kloster and several St. William parishioners —Deacon Carl and Carole Hubble, Susan and Mike Kauffman, and Rosemary and Delmont Light—visited the Waclawskis. Joe, 94, is in frail health, so he can’t go

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Minister's Message

Our annual regional gathering keeps growing, in numbers and faith. More than 180 registered to attend Aug. 11–13 this year, so we've outgrown the Wyndham Garden Hotel.



Our region is also growing in numbers because of our faith. We had 37 newly professed as Secular Franciscan in our region this past year. Each one brings new vitality. We are truly blessed!

St. Clare of Assisi Emerging Community, Aiken, S.C., celebrated the Rite of Admission for Val Cadaar and Connie Singer and Rite of Profession during Mass for Diane Longmire. Welcome!

The gathering was an uplifting tribute to St. Clare. Our guest speaker, Sr. Bernadette Marie Cappola, a Poor Clare from the Monastery of St. Clare in Greenville, gave us insight into St. Clare's contemplative spirituality and examples for us to follow as seculars.

Also with us for the weekend were Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR, president-in-turn, Conference of National Spiritual Assistants, and Carol Gentile, SFO, minister of the

National Fraternity, who conducted concurrent pastoral and fraternal visitations of Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Fraternity.

Cricket Aull, our dear vice minister, led Friday's prayer service. She gave us quotes for St. Clare's writings to ponder and pray. At the Saturday prayer service, the members of the Fraternity of St. Clare from Winston-Salem offered a personal look into St. Clare from the perspective of those who knew her. Tamara Marshall-Stevenson, minister of Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity in Nashville, Tenn., wrote and sang a beautiful, touching musical prayer that brought tears to many eyes.

Thanks to St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity, Spartanburg, S.C., which did a great job of coordinating the registration, and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Hilton Head Island, S.C., which coordinated the eucharistic-adoration chapel to allow us to continue to pray and worship throughout the night to our eucharistic Lord.

We are saddened by the loss of eight of our dear members who have left us but we were comforted to know they will be with our heavenly Father and praying for us. St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity, Hendersonville, N.C., led the memorial service for our deceased members and included Carole Gentile's mother, Frances Papavota Dinello, SFO, who died July 12, 2006.

Please remember our region's deceased members and their families in your prayers. They and their dates of passing to new life are:

- ❖ Jean Tomczyszyn, SFO, Sts. Francis and Clare Newly Forming Group, October 2005;
- ❖ Mary Stephenson, SFO, Crucified Christ Fraternity, North Charleston, S.C., January 2006;
- ❖ Toni Willard, SFO, Franciscan Family of Greensboro Fraternity, Greensboro, N.C., Jan. 30, 2006;
- ❖ Yvonne Franz, SFO, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Augusta, Ga., April 19, 2006;
- ❖ Fran Trecartin, SFO Regional Treasurer and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Hilton Head Island, S.C., June 9, 2006;

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- ❖ Dick O'Donoghue, SFO, St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, N.C., July 1, 2006;
- ❖ John LaRock, SFO, Our Lady of Good Counsel Fraternity, Greenville, S.C., July 7, 2006;
- ❖ Deacon Bill Diehl, SFO, Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Emerging Community, Blairsville, Ga., Aug. 11, 2006.

Deacon Bill's favorite prayer was the "Prayer of Abandonment" by Blessed Charles de Foucauld (see prayer below), a French priest who was murdered in North Africa in 1916. John Paul McGuire, a candidate in Bill's emerging community and student in the Archdiocese of Atlanta's diaconate program, had set the prayer to music. He sang it with great warmth and feeling during the memorial service.

Fr Queally and Carol Gentile both spoke to us and gave suggestions for us to continue to grow in our Franciscan journey.

The written report of the visitation will be sent to all ministers and leaders. One of the comments they made was, "There is no question about the spirituality in this region. **It Soars!**"

Editor's Journal

When I returned home from this year's ARG, I had no idea that I was about to meet history.

That Sunday evening, Fr. George Kloster, pastor of St. William Catholic Church in Murphy, N.C., called to tell me that he and some of St. William's parishioners were going to celebrate Mass the next day, the feast of St. Maximilian Kolbe, at the home of a 94-year-old parishioner who had been in St. Maximilian's cellblock and had witnessed him offering his life for a man who was condemned to die.

After attending the beautiful funeral liturgy
See JOURNAL, p. 4

Our next Annual Regional Gathering is scheduled for Aug. 10-12, 2007.

We do not have a location yet! Any and all suggestions are welcome. It must accommodate 200 and be in a fairly central location, if possible. Please contact our secretary, Dale Anesi (dale.anesi@comcast.net), with suggestions.
Peace and all good,
Judy

Prayer of Abandonment

Father,
I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures.
I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul;
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord,
and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands,
without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.

Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916)



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for Deacon Bill Diehl in Blairsville, Ga., I left for Murphy, which is only about 30 minutes from Blairsville.

Meeting Joe Waclawski was a privilege. He could have been the last person alive who witnessed the heroic action of No. 16670, St. Maximilian Kolbe. I've wondered what I would do in the same situation. I still don't know.

My pastor, Fr. Frank Doyle, OSA, said in one of his homilies that no one took Jesus' life from him, he gave it willingly. Indeed, in eucharistic prayer No. 2, the priest says, "Before he was given up to death, a death he freely accepted"

Jesus asks one of his disciples, who tries to prevent his arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, "Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than 12 legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53)

Of all those in Auschwitz that rainy summer day in 1941, Maximilian Kolbe was the only one to choose freely—the only truly free person. "I would like to take that man's place," he told the camp commandant.

Even the commandant, the man selecting those who would die, apparently felt compelled to make an example to discourage escapees. People under a compulsion aren't free to choose.

Maximilian could have remained quietly in the background, but he didn't.

It's not our circumstances that determine whether or not we are free; it's what we do with those circumstances. True freedom comes from within.

Pace e bene
Joanita

Spartanburg fraternity finds apostolate at Miller Place

By Joanne Babin

St. Michael the Archangel Fraternity

Miller Place turned out to be just what we were looking for: to give service, fellowship, and financial support.

Eileen Martin and Joyce Seko headed our search committee, which suggested we help Miller Place, located in a poorer section of Spartanburg. A Medicaid residential facility operating on a very limited budget, Miller Place isn't well-known, so it receives little community support.

Mildred Miller began this home about nine years ago to help the aging members of her family. As they died, she took in homeless people who have emotional problems and intellectual difficulties. She now works with 17 of these "poorest of the poor." In her own quiet way, with limited funds and very little recognition, she is helping the least and setting an example of Franciscan spirituality for us all.

We were delighted with the prospect of a project in which all fraternity members



could be involved and that would include service as well as financial support. So, we decided to officially adopt Miller Place as our apostolate.

Last April we had our first function: an auction held on the grounds to help raise money to pave an area where residents could walk and exercise. We collected auction

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items, then gathered with the residents and their friends for the big event.

Sara Nell Boggs stepped up to the podium to be the auctioneer, and our fraternity members sat with the residents and visited with them while bidding on the articles. We took pictures of residents and gave them copies. Mildred Miller also sold plates of chicken and fish for lunch to help raise money. We raised \$1,300 and enjoyed our special time eating with our newfound friends and getting to know them. The day was a great success.

Later, our fraternity collected clothes for the residents and donated a variety of items for the home, including a dishwasher, TV, VCR, and TV table.

In June we played bingo with the residents. Leonard Zawacki, one of our orientees, brought a bingo set loaned to us by the Knights of Columbus. We all provided prizes for the winners. Sitting with the residents, we helped them to play their bingo cards, then shared in their excitement when they chose their prizes. After the game, we ate lunch with them, then bade them a fond farewell, with promises to return.

We planned a picnic, to be held in September, at a downtown park. In December, we want to have a Christmas party, with gifts and carol-singing.

Truly this apostolate has strengthened the fraternal bonds of love among us in the fraternity and given us a sense of mission to the wider community. **T**

Council Election

Congratulations to St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity's new council, elected in July:

Marie Cordero, SFO, minister
Lana Aumer, SFO, vice minister
Janet Ceraldi, SFO, secretary
Mark Ceraldi, SFO, treasurer
Kathleen Zuckerman, SFO,
formation director
Janice Rucker, SFO, councilor

**In Memoriam**

Deacon William Diehl, SFO, went home to the Lord on Aug. 11, following a painful battle with cancer.

Bill made his Secular Franciscan profession on Oct. 20, 2002. He was a member of the Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Emerging Community in Blairsville, Ga.

From 1961 until Bill's retirement in 1996, the Diehls lived in Miami, Fla., where Bill was an officer of Plumbers Local Union #519, as well as a business representative for the Dade County School Board Maintenance Committee.

He was ordained a deacon in the Archdiocese of Miami on Jan. 4, 1992.

Bill and Marie moved to Hiawassee, Georgia in 1996. Assigned to St. Francis of Assisi Church in Blairsville, he led the parish's RCIA program.

Bill loved ministering to the sick, dying, and homebound, and considered it a special privilege to bring Communion to them. No one who called for his assistance was ever kept waiting, regardless of the time of day or night. He often disregarded his own medical problems in his concern for others.

Bill is survived by Marie, SFO, his wife of 40 years, also a member of Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg; son, Robert; daughter, Kelly; and granddaughter, Kasey.

T

Ecology workshops planned for 2007

By Dr. Jim and Sue Taylor, SFO

BSSF Region Ecology Commission co-chairs

A workshop on how to organize and conduct an eight-session course on voluntary simplicity within each of our local fraternities will be held on Feb. 3 at St. Francis Church in Raleigh, N.C.



It will be conducted at the same time as the minister-and-formation-director workshop. We will try to coordinate other workshops to coincide with the minister-and-formation-director workshops in Greenville, S.C., in April, and in Chattanooga, Tenn., in July or August.

The ecology workshops will focus on (1) bringing the meaning of voluntary simplicity to all of our brothers and sisters in the BSSF Region, (2) exploring the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for the earth, and (3) acknowledging the connection between our lifestyle choices and the condition of the earth.

Topics are:

- The Meaning of Simplicity;
- Living More With Less;
- Your Money or Your Life;
- Do You Have the Time?;
- How Much is Enough;
- Swimming Against the Tide;
- The Practice of Simplicity.

We're requesting that each fraternity minister or leader send or e-mail the name and address of your local fraternity Ecology Commission chairperson to:

Dr. Jim & Sue Taylor, SFO

Taylor's Peak

Wildcat Ridge

Deep Gap, N.C. 28618

E-mail: TaylorsPeak@netscape.com

If you do not have an Ecology Commission chair, we pray that you consider appointing one and sending the requested information to us. If you do not have one, at least let us know by e-mail or "snail mail." Please send the information to us by Dec. 8.

In 1980, Pope John Paul II named St. Francis of Assisi patron saint of ecology. As we all well know, "United we stand, divided we fall." We need your help to make these workshops successful. **T**

Peace

By Judy Haupt, SFO
BSSF Region minister

Peace! Peace and all good! May the peace of Christ be with you!

We greet each other regularly with the word, "Peace." We share it during holy Mass, when we see each other and in our e-mail messages.

But in this troubled world, how do we find this peace and learn how we share it? Do we live a peaceful life? Do we avoid disagreement and dissension in our daily contacts?

We must search our hearts to see the little ways that we can bring peace. The answers and directions are clearly written in Scripture. The Gospel tells us the way to find and share peace. Christ was peace and love. St. Francis spent his time following those directions and by living the Gospel in poverty, simplicity, chastity, and obedience, he found PEACE!

"Practice random acts of charity" is a message on a local TV ad. Can we practice this daily? Are there people waiting for a kind word or just a smile?

Visit the sick. Call a friend. Reach out to someone in need. Extend yourself. Get to know someone of a different race, religion, or nationality. Listen when others speak. Resist the urge to "butt in" or correct. Find ways of welcoming Secular Franciscans who have moved into your area from other places.

Keep in touch with elderly Secular Franciscans. Some have moved away from their homes and have lost contact with their local fraternities. Many of them are physically unable to attend fraternity functions.

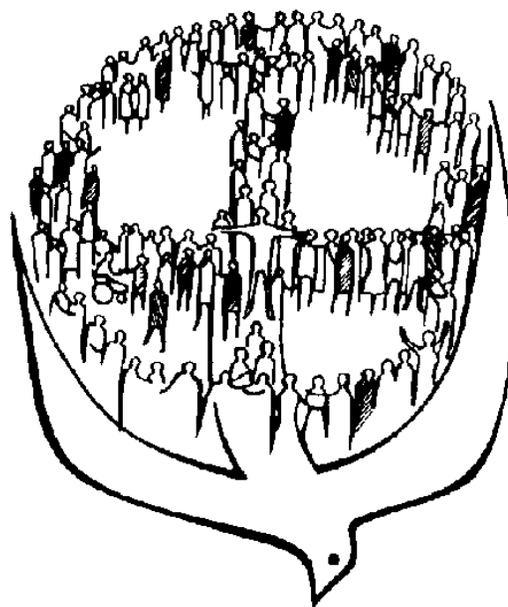
I feel so sad and helpless when I see the hatred and terrible strife in our world today. It must be such a wound to the loving heart of our Lord Jesus.

We can make a difference. It takes time and patience, understanding and tolerance.

You all know this hymn, "Prayer of St. Francis," which, although the prayer on which it is based was written only about 100 years ago, so embodies what Francis stood for that it is traditionally ascribed to him.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your
love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring
hope.
Where there is darkness only light,
And where there's sadness ever joy.



O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand.
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving of ourselves that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

T

Truly following Christ means daily conversion

By Kathleen Zuckerman, SFO
St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity

The Gospel reading for the feast of the Transfiguration is one of my favorites. I can easily imagine myself on the mountain with Peter, James, and John.

This reading causes me to thank our Lord to transform me, including my heart, my soul, my will, which are mostly self-centered.

After spending time in prayer, I always feel God's love and peace, but I never want to leave that mountain. Like the three disciples, I want to set up a tent and camp out up there, not go back out into the world. I want to meditate, read, pray, and stay focused on God.

I was professed last year and I am aware of all the Lord has accomplished.

It has been a year of deep discernment, growth, and awareness of the movement of the Holy Spirit. Our fraternity has been challenged and renewed. Through it all, our Lord has been with us every step of the way.

"Life of Penance," Chapter 5 of *Called to Follow Christ: Commentary on the Secular Franciscan Rule by the National Assistants' Commentary Commission*, by Benet A. Fonck, OFM, really speaks for itself. It also spoke to me in a very beautiful experience.

Early one morning in July, I woke up feeling that I was in the presence of God. I remember praying an act of contrition in a dream, and God was smiling on me. I awoke feeling peaceful. I couldn't remember God's face, but I felt light and warmth. God was revealing his love and mercy deep within my soul. I didn't want to leave my bed that morning, but the dream and the feelings ended as quickly as they came.

At first, I accepted this beautiful experience as a gift from God and accepted it in my heart.

The sacrament of reconciliation has always been so purifying for me and I go regularly, feeling cleansed and renewed each time. I prayed my dream, then went my own way and repeated the cycle.

However, I hadn't forgotten that dream and later shared it with a few people.

When I reviewed this chapter on penance, the very beginning appeared at me. The "Life of Penance"—my call, my vocation, to be part of a community who call themselves brothers and sisters of penance

motivated by the Gospel—caused me to reflect on my vocation. The words, "Let them conform their thoughts and actions to those of Christ by means of a radical interior change," humbled me. I had never thought of living a life of penance.

A life of self-discipline? Choosing to fast? Gifts of sacrifices and mortification? A pilgrimage to the Father day by day? Sacrificial service to lessen my selfishness?

The more I read, the more I realized that my human frailty makes it necessary for a conversion within myself—daily! I reviewed my dream in my mind and knew that this was not just a nice dream.

God was giving me a message, a wake-up call. I felt God asking, "Kathleen, do you love me more than your pleasures? More than your time, your TV, your material things, more than anything or anyone? God was calling me to come away from the



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busyness of my life. He and I quietly, peacefully, withdrawing to climb our mountain. It was there that I was able to deeply examine my vocation once again.

I dug out my *Recovery Bible*, the one my daughter, Pat, bought for me 11 years ago, and I reviewed the “12 Steps to Wholeness.” I soon saw that I had taken back control from our Lord. I was busy doing good things, but my time alone with God was rushed. I needed to get into reading my Bible, to let God speak to me through His word. I needed to yield to the Holy Spirit. I needed penance.

At a Catholic bookstore I found a DVD on the “Little Flowers of St. Francis.” Although it was in Italian with English subtitles, I got the message. Francis was so in love with our Lord that he followed Jesus in everything he did. If Francis did the slightest thing that he considered uncharitable or not in keeping with the Gospel, he immediately got down on his knees and wept. He asked the brothers for a penance—sometimes to be whipped with a cord.

Francis “wore” Jesus daily and tried never to take him off like a garment. He did everything for the glory of his Lord and Savior.

So, I thought, I can examine myself for each human frailty and offer a sacrifice of love before I go to confession. I can be immediately accountable before God, as Francis was.

I felt joyful as I gave up an ice cream, a few mindless TV shows, and some extras that I love. Each time I did this, I was practicing a new way of keeping God first.

Another wonderful way of examination that works well for me is Cursillo. In 1990, I went on a Cursillo retreat weekend, which centers on Jesus and his love for us. Afterward, small groups meet weekly to share how they have been able to keep their focus on God (reviewing strengths and weaknesses). It’s being accountable while renewing the commitment to our Lord.

Chapter 5 says that sin and worldliness turn us inward, but God, through his grace and mercy, is challenging us to a better way: Gospel to life and life to Gospel. We must embrace this life of penance. It’s a lifelong journey, day-by-day, attitude-by-attitude, action-by-action, decision-by-decision, in order to be in union with God. The gift of the holy Eucharist is an important part of centering our lives around Jesus. The Bread of Life is strength for the journey and life for our souls.

We can expect many ups and downs, but daily conversion is putting on Jesus and conforming our lives to the Gospel. Striving without perfection, yet faithful and open to God’s challenge to be one with him, to climb that mountain with him regularly as Francis did.

There used to be a television commercial for Hebrew National Frankfurters that ended with, “We have to answer to a higher authority.” As Franciscans and followers of Jesus, we do too. **T**

By the numbers

By Jim & Sue Taylor, SFO
Fraternity of Brother Francis

What equals 100 percent? What does it mean to give more than 100 percent? Ever wonder about those people who say they are giving more than 100 percent?

We’ve all been in situations where someone wants us to give more than 100 percent.

What equals 100 percent in life? How about achieving 101 percent?

Here’s a little mathematical formula that might help you answer these questions:

Suppose that the letters of the alphabet are represented by numbers: (A) 1, (B) 2, (C) 3, (D) 4, (E) 5, (F) 6, (G) 7, (H) 8, (I) 9, (J) 10, (K) 11, (L) 12, (M) 13, (N) 14, (O) 15, (P) 16, (Q) 17, (R) 18, (S) 19, (T) 20, (U) 21, (V) 22, (W) 23, (X) 24, (Y) 25, (Z) 26.

Then H-A-R-D-W-O-R- K would be

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$8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98\%$.

K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E would be
 $11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = 96\%$

But A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E is
 $1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = 100\%$

And, look how far the love of God will take you:

L-O-V-E-O-F-G-O-D will be
 $12+15+22+5+15+6+7+15+4 = 101\%$

Therefore, one can conclude with mathematical certainty that, while Hard Work and Knowledge will get you close, and Attitude will get you there, it's the Love of God that will put you over the top! T

Calendar

Ministers may contact editor with fraternity events for the calendar.

2006

Oct. 1–12Fr. Linus & Judy: Pilgrimage—
Assisi, Loreto, Rome

Oct. 24–29Judy: Wisconsin—NAFRA

Nov. 10–11.....REC-CG: Plan to meet in
Hendersonville

Nov. 12Visitation/Election:
Hendersonville

Nov. 13Visitation: Asheville

Nov. 14Visitation: Franklin

Dec. 7Visitation: Morehead City

Dec. 8–9Visitation: Raleigh

Dec. 10Greccio celebration: Hickory,
N.C.

2007

Feb. 3Workshop: Raleigh

Feb. 4REC-CG: Raleigh

AprilWorkshop

June.....Fr. Linus: Area 1 Retreat,
Monteagle, Tenn.

July 3–8Quinquennial:
Steubenville, Ohio

Aug. 9–12ARG (elections)

2008

OctoberBSSF Region hosts NAFRA
(week of 12th or 19th)

Notice

The Chapter of Elections for our region will be held during the 2007 Annual Regional Gathering. Volunteers are needed to serve on the nominating committee. Please contact Judy Haupt (843-689-9045 or jahaupt@yahoo.com) by Nov. 4 if willing to serve.

**Communio**

Published four times a year for members of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Upcoming deadlines for copy submission and publication dates:

- ❖ **Fall 2006** deadline, Sept. 22
Publication date, Sept. 29
- ❖ **Winter 2007** deadline, Jan. 12
Publication date, Jan. 19
- ❖ **Spring 2007** deadline, March 23
Publication date, March 30
- ❖ **Summer 2007** deadline, June 22
Publication date, June 29

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Joanita M. Nellenbach, SFO
Editor

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regularly to Mass at St. William. The Mass celebrated at his home honored all who died at Auschwitz.

“Since Joe hasn’t been able to be with us in so long, this day we come to him,” Fr. Kloster said.

Fr. Kloster reflected on John 15:13: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

St. Maximilian “did that literally,” Fr. Kloster said. “He gave his life so that one of his brothers could live. That is what Jesus did. That raises the bar. Jesus becomes the standard for how we should live our lives.”

One day in August 1941, Auschwitz inmates, formed up for the evening roll call and were told that a prisoner in Waclawski’s cellblock had escaped.

“After an unsuccessful search by the SS-men, the inmates from the other blocks were dismissed and our block remained standing in the rain while further checking and searching went on,” Waclawski wrote.

“We stood wet, hungry and half-dead until morning,” he continued. “The roll call was taken again and all other inmates were ordered to proceed to their work and our block remained standing in files 5-men deep. The ‘Lagerfuehrer’ (camp commandant) announced that since one man

was missing, ten inmates would be chosen as hostages and placed without water or food in the ‘bunker’ (isolation cells underground) until the missing prisoner was found dead or alive.”

Waclawski has forgotten nothing of those moments when his life hung in the balance: “I can still see the Lagerfuehrer with his index finger up and slowly moving

down to point to the inmates selected by him. It was a death verdict. As he walked in front of us, he looked at each one of us. We were dying a thousand deaths at this moment. As he passed, we were as if reborn and a glimmer of hope lightly touched our souls. God Almighty in His mercy saved us and just maybe we could come out alive from this nightmare. In terror we looked at the selected victims who were ordered to step forward. Their numbers had to be written down. We lived as numbers.”

Grateful to be spared, Waclawski was even more overwhelmed by what happened next.

“Not too far from me, in the striped gray mass of prisoners, stood anonymously inmate #16670,” he wrote. “As the Lagerfuehrer pointed to a man next to him, the poor man moaned, ‘Oh, God! What will happen to my wife and children?’

“At this moment, inmate #16670 stepped forward and said in a clear voice that he wanted to take the other man’s place. The Lagerfuehrer stopped for a second, looked at the man who was willing to give



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KOLBE, from page 11

his life for another and asked him if he knew what he was doing. ‘Jawohl’ was the short answer. Inmate #16670 remained in front and the man he saved was ordered to step back.”

The condemned were led to the death bunker. Most died within a few days, but Fr. Kolbe lived for about two weeks. He was finally killed when a guard injected him with carbolic acid.

According to “Wikipedia,” an Internet encyclopedia, the man whose “escape” resulted in 10 deaths, “was later found, drowned in the camp latrine.”

By the end of the war, Waclawski had been in two other concentration camps: Mauthausen, July to October 1942; and Sachsenhausen, October 1942 to early 1945.

He recalls the cold of those camps in the winter, and once stole a stove from a Gestapo officer’s room, carrying it to his own quarters to warm himself and fellow inmates.

“If someone asked what I was doing with it, I would say I was repairing it,” he said.

In Mauthausen, prison officials needed an electrician. Another prisoner advised Waclawski to say that he had that skill.

“All of a sudden, I was an electrician,” he said.

It inadvertently helped him to escape.

Four months before the war ended, Waclawski was assigned to a “bauzig,” a sort of railroad concentration camp, whose inmates repaired rail and electrical lines.

Waclawski’s bauzig was in the Austrian Alps shortly before the war ended in May 1945.

“I escaped at the top of a mountain,” Waclawski said. “I was looking and I saw something on the road. It was an American jeep. I went to the commander of the jeep. Oh, God, he spoke Polish. He gave me right away chocolate. He told me, ‘Don’t worry. You’re free.’ He told me to go to Innsbruck. I walked through Austria, more than 100 miles. I was free.”

Others helped him get to Italy. There he

met and married his wife, Irene, who is also from Poland. She was not interned in the camps, but some of her uncles died in Auschwitz.

The Waclawskis moved to England; Joe studied chemistry. They immigrated to Detroit, where he worked for Sherwin-Williams. Joe and Irene have two children and four grandchildren.

For years, Joe Waclawski never spoke of what had happened to him. He wanted to erase it from his mind, but he couldn’t forget.

Eventually the Waclawskis retired and moved to Port Charlotte, Fla. On Aug. 14, 1991, the 50th anniversary of St. Maximilian Kolbe’s death, ground was broken for St. Maximilian Kolbe Church there. Waclawski wrote his account, printed on the program for the groundbreaking, of a man offering his life for another.

“It is probably the most difficult of all the commandments to live,” Fr. Kloster said during the Mass on Aug. 14, 2006. “We have within ourselves that sense of self-preservation.”

Soldiers going into battle hope that they’ll survive.

“To willingly give up our lives and to do it so intentionally—in this situation, when (Fr. Kolbe) made that decision so intentionally, he knew he was giving his life,” Fr. Kloster said.

Editor’s Note: I received word from Fr. Kloster that Joe Waclawski died at 2:45 a.m. on Sept. 28.

Story reprinted courtesy of
The Catholic News & Herald.

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION (61)
2007 BUDGET Approved 8-13-06**

EXPENSES

\$3,800	NATIONAL FRATERNITY FAIR SHARE (380 professed x \$10)
\$1,000	ANNUAL NATIONAL MEETINGS (NAFRA in St. Louis and CNSA)
\$1,700	NATIONAL VISIT TO REGION – ELECTIONS (travel, lodging, stipend for 2 visitors)
\$3,300	ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING \$300 socials \$400 room, meals Spiritual Assistant \$400 room, meals guest speaker \$400 audiovisual etc. equipment rental \$500 materials, handouts \$700 conference room rental \$600 scholarship funds, if needed
\$3,200	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL – COMMISSIONS GATHERINGS \$2,250 lodging 1 night for 3 meetings 10 members @
\$75	\$750 transportation costs for 3 gatherings \$200 conference room rental
\$600	FRATERNAL — PASTORAL VISITATION EXPENSE travel and materials, if needed
\$450	COMMISSIONS (excluding formation) \$300 materials \$150 travel
\$1,500	FORMATION WORKSHOPS
\$900	OFFICE SUPPLIES, POSTAGE, COPIES
\$1,000	SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT
\$500	CHARITY
\$400	INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY (CIOFS) DONATION
<u>\$18350</u>	<u>TOTAL EXPENSE</u>

\$15,200 INCOME REGIONAL FRATERNITY FAIR SHARE
(380 professed x \$40)

(\$3,150) **NET INCOME (DEFICIT)**