

Communio

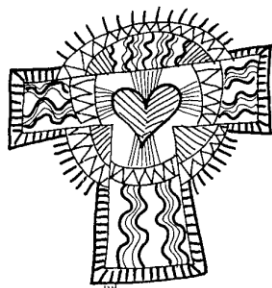
That All May Be One

Newsletter of the
Brothers and Sister of St. Francis Region
Secular Franciscan Order
Summer 2005

ARG 2005

Four pillars support Franciscan life

“There are four pillars of foundation on which our Secular Franciscan way of life is based. These pillars are Spirituality, Formation, Fraternity, and Apostolate” (from the *Formation Manual*, A4).



**Fire of
Apostolate**

“These ‘four pillars of our Franciscan way of life’ will be the theme for the Annual Regional Gathering this year,” said Cricket Aull, BSSF regional vice minister, who will lead our reflections.

“Each pillar,” Cricket said, “will be presented through Scripture and Franciscan writings to see, first, examples of St. Francis and the early Franciscans as they incorporated

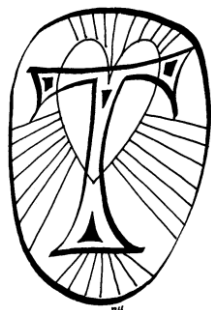
these foundational pillars into everyday life, and then to reflect on our own call to spiritual growth, integrative formation, a stronger sense of community, and a more active apostolic life. Each pillar is interconnected; singularly and collectively they can deepen our call to Gospel life.”

Be sure to make your reservations by July 26. We hope to include every fraternity in the annual gathering. Bring your *Ritual, Liturgy of the Hours*, an open mind and a loving spirit.

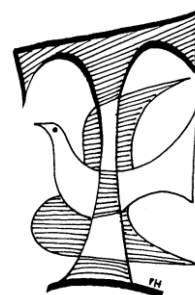
The ARG will be held Aug. 19–21 at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Charlotte, N.C.

The room price has increased for the first time in three years from \$55 to \$65 (plus state, local, and occupancy taxes), a flat per-room rate, regardless of the number of people in the room.

The meals have also increased an average of 65 cents. Please note that the correct cost of the Saturday-night dinner is \$19 (**NOT** \$18 as shown on some of the registration information). ❁



Fraternity



Spirituality



**Growth and
Formation**

Minister's message

Peace and all good to each of you.

It is the time of year for us to come together in community. The Annual Regional Gathering will be held Aug. 19-21 at the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Charlotte, NC. Please register by July 26.

The regional executive council met April 22-23 and June 17-18 along with the commissions to plan the annual gathering. We opened our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit and were not disappointed in what he sent.

All of us will participate in exploring how our spirituality supports the pillars of our Franciscan way of life. This will be an uplifting experience. I look forward to spending time with you as we gather to grow in our Franciscan spirituality.

Three fraternities held elections recently:

- The Franciscan Family of Greensboro elected Frank Massey as minister. Welcome back, dear servant leader. Thanks to Georgette Schraeder for your service the past three years.
- St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Augusta elected Charleen Luther as minister. Our prayers will be with you dear coordinator of the prayer warriors as you expand your service. God bless you, Louise, for all your years as minister and for the future as secretary of your fraternity.
- St. Joseph Cupertino in Bessemer re-elected Earnestine Braxton as minister. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide you.

Please welcome and pray for the new ministers and the council members.

Three fraternities — Our Lady of Good Counsel in Greenville, St. Maximilian Kolbe in Charlotte, and St. Stanislaus in Wilmington — are planning elections in the next quarter. Pray for guidance as they seek a new council.

We regretfully accepted the resignation of our regional secretary, Skyler Harvey, with grateful thanks for her faithful service to our region for over three years. We pray that her health will continue to improve.

Welcome Cathy Arcand, SFO, St. Benedict the Moor Fraternity, Macon, Ga., as Work commissioner and Hal Sieber of the Franciscan Family of Greensboro Fraternity who has offered to serve as Peace and Justice chair.

We wait in anxious anticipation for the Holy Spirit to call and send willing servants to fill the positions of Ecology commissioner and archivist.

Please contact me for additional information.

Pax et bonum
Judy

Region welcomes new secretary

By Judy Haupt, SFO
Minister
BSSF Region

The regional council is pleased to announce the appointment of our regional secretary. Dale Anesi, SFO, has been a professed Secular Franciscan since 1994.

He previously served the St. Francis Region in California as its formation director. While a member of the San Juan Capistrano Fraternity there, he served as its treasurer, vice minister and minister.

After moving to Nashville, Tenn., Dale became a member of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity. Please meet and welcome Dale at our Annual Regional Gathering.

I met Dale at the All-Commissions Conference in Denver last June and again in Detroit at the NAFRA annual gathering.

"Congratulations, you have just inherited an excellent Secular Franciscan," The minister of his previous region said. "We were sorry to lose him"

I am most grateful that the Holy Spirit selected and sent Dale to us.✱



BSSF submits families for NAFRA Franciscan Family of the Year

By Lana Aumer, SFO
BSSF Family Commission chair

In response to the National Family Commission's request for submissions for the fourth annual Franciscan Family of the Year Award, three of our BSSF fraternities sent submissions for six families to be considered.

Thanks to the fraternities who submitted these families:

- Immaculate Conception Fraternity, Jonesboro, Ga. — Joel Alesi and Robert Murtha families;
- Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Hilton Head Island, S.C. — Joseph Bailey, Rosemary DeWolfe, and Joseph Nazzaro families;
- St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, N.C. — Lee and Sharan Caracofe family.

Submissions addressed a number of questions about the family, such as:

- How does the family bring the spirit of St. Francis to others?
- What does this family do to exemplify and inspire Franciscan values?
- Has the family made a significant contribution to the church, community, and/or fraternity?

Fraternities were encouraged to add additional comments, which they did.

Members of the Apostolic and Youth/Young Adult commissions were charged with selecting one of these families to submit to the National Family Commission. This was no easy task. However, Betti Longinotti, Youth/Young Adult Commission chair; Jennye Taylor Johnson, Apostolic Commissions coordinator; and I felt tremendously privileged to read these wonderful families' inspiring stories. We sent our selection to NAFRA (the National Fraternity).

Our region has been truly blessed with families who really bring the spirit and values of our Franciscan charism to the world.

We will announce our selection for BSSF Family of the Year at our Annual Regional Gathering in August. We hope to have this family, as well as the other families submitted, attend the ARG. ✱

Pilgrims eager for WYD

By Betti Longinotti, SFO
BSSF Youth/Young Adult Commission Chair

As you are probably aware, the Youth and Young Adult Commission of the Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region, SFO, is host for a pilgrimage to World Youth Day (WYD), Cologne, Germany, Aug. 14–21. We are a small but mighty group of six Franciscan Youth pilgrims!

The BSSF Council awarded two of our pilgrims scholarships of \$750 each. The recipients are Kelly Hart of Charlotte, N.C.,

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and Shernel Brooks of Lutz, Fla. These recipients were awarded scholarships based on their exemplary essay submissions.

"God once called Saint Francis to rebuild his Church," Kelly, an aspiring youth minister and rising freshman at Franciscan University, wrote in her essay. "I believe that I, along with many others, am being called to this same vocation nearly eight hundred years later. Over the past couple of years, I have been amazed at how God has worked in my life. I have witnessed him truly change me into a passion-filled young Catholic with a desire to serve him in all that I do."

Shernel, a recent college graduate and aspiring to a religious vocation as a Poor Clare, wrote, "Going to WYD with the Franciscan youth would give me a chance to share this wonderful journey with youth that are dedicated to living their life for Christ while establishing friendships that will last a lifetime. WYD is a way to show the world that we are not a lost generation but rather a generation that is experiencing and showing the love of Christ."

The complete essays are can be read on our BSSF Youth and Young Adult Web site: http://community-2.webtv.net/SFO_YYA/YouthandYoungAdult.

Please keep all of us in your prayers for a safe and blessed pilgrimage to World Youth Day.✽

HELP WANTED

The BSSF Region seeks
Ecology Commission Chair
AND
an Archivist

Contact Judy Haupt, SFO
Regional Minister
jahaupt@yahoo.com



Poor Clares celebrate jubilee

By Diane Curran, SFO
Minister
Crucified Christ Fraternity

The Poor Clares of Greenville, S.C., celebrated their 50th year in the Diocese of Charleston on May 29. Bishop Robert Baker was the celebrant, and people from all over the diocese attended the joyous eucharistic Liturgy.

We are blessed to have the sisters not only in the Diocese of Charleston but in the BSSF Region as well. Their faithfulness to prayer for all of us, their simplicity and true Franciscan poverty, are gifts to the Church and to all of God's people. Those of us who have responded to the call to follow Jesus in the tradition of St. Francis can be especially grateful for the prayers that rise daily from the Monastery of St. Clare.

To get the full introduction to our sisters, I encourage everyone to visit their Web site, www.poorclaresc.com. On the site you can meet each sister, read their history in the diocese, and get to know a very special community.

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You'll also notice that the sisters will soon build a new monastery and move to a new location. As you read the message from the abbess, you can see that this has been a challenging decision, but they are committed to staying in the area and continuing to be the contemplative presence that they have been for half a century.

I have made a retreat at the monastery at least once a year for the past five, and I can tell you that these sisters carry all of us and our intentions in their hearts 24/7. I have also experienced their great appreciation of and the reverence they have for those of us in the Secular Franciscan Order. They have so welcomed me as a true member of the Franciscan family.

As they celebrate 50 years in the diocese and as they begin to plan for their move, I'm thinking about what we could do to show our solidarity with our second-order sisters. Perhaps at our regional gathering each local fraternity might give just one dollar to represent each member. If all fraternities in the region participated, there would be a significant and symbolic gift toward the new monastery.*

**Seventh annual Scanlon writing contest announced**

In memory of Franciscan Friar Simon Scanlon, longtime editor and publisher of *The Way of St. Francis*, the magazine has

established the annual Simon Scanlon Writing Awards.

The Franciscan friars of the Province of Santa Barbara, Calif., have published *The Way of St. Francis* bimonthly for more than 50 years.

The contest is open to everyone except employees, board members, or friars of the Province of St. Barbara.

An applicant submits an original essay or feature-length article (1,500–2,000 words). This entry must not have been previously published or presented in any form. Subject: any theme dealing with the influence and relevance of Franciscan life, spirituality, history, and so forth, to our world today.

Essays must be oriented to a general reading public, not an academic audience. Profiles, essays, poems, human-interest stories, interviews, etc., are acceptable. Published examples in *The Way* can be used for reference.

Submissions must be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Entries should be submitted electronically, as e-mail attachments. (MS Word is strongly preferred.)

For a sample copy send of *The Way*, send an SASE (with four first-class stamps) to *The Way*, 1112 26th Street, Sacramento, Calif. 95816-5610. Sample articles can also be downloaded from (www.sbfranciscans.org/publications/theway/about.htm).

As an alternative form of submission, text can be typed directly into the body of the e-mail; if this method is used, it is understood that *The Way* will not be responsible for electronic alterations of format and content. Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged by return e-mail.

Prizes are: 1st, \$1,000; 2nd, \$500; 3rd, \$250. (Prize awarded when winner is informed and submits signed letter of acceptance.)

Submissions must be postmarked by

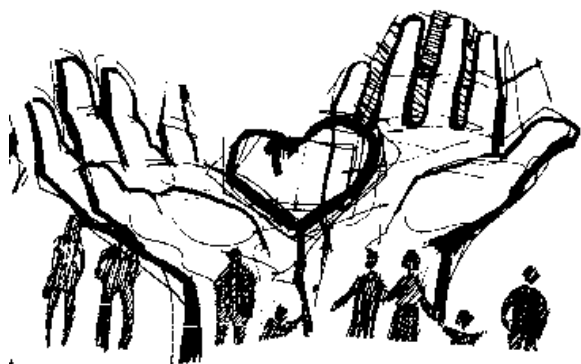
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Oct. 4, 2005. All entries will be submitted to a jury. The jury's decision will be announced by Dec. 15, 2005.

Applicants agree that, if chosen, their work will be published in *The Way*, which holds exclusive first-time rights in all media, and that winning entries will be posted on *The Way's* website. Authors are responsible for submitting photos and accompanying materials, such as photocopies, prints, drawings, etc.

Send all submissions to ofmcaway@att.net. Include telephone number(s) as additional, essential contact information.✱



Home Place — where the heart is

By Faye Martin, SFO
Minister
Channel of Peace Fraternity

Last year the Channel of Peace Fraternity, Chattanooga, Tenn., decided to reach out to the residents of The Home Place, a facility for patients with HIV/AIDS. It is a part of Catholic Charities and administered by Sister Adamarie Kost.

We decided to prepare and share a monthly meal with the residents. Our membership is divided into groups of four to five members. As we are able, we give money from our common fund to help with some of the needs of the residents.

Since getting to know the residents, some of our members have become more involved with them and have made The Home Place their personal apostolate.

Residents need to be driven to doctors, drugstores, supermarkets, and so forth. We also visit them in the hospital and clean and paint apartments for new Home Place residents.

Our simple desire to reach out and do something for these brothers and sisters has become a wonderful time to encounter Christ within each other.✱

A reflection on the four pillars

“One of the brothers in our fraternity [St. Maximilian Kolbe, Charlotte, N.C.], presented our ongoing formation (in March) — and it was excellent,” writes Jennye Taylor Johnson, SFO, the fraternity minister. “It was so good I asked him to write up one portion that I thought would be so meaningful and helpful to our BSSF brothers and sisters. He spent a portion of time talking about the four pillars.” Here’s what the brother, who wished to remain anonymous, had to say:

The Secular Franciscan present

The gifts of the Secular Franciscan are strong — vivid and are from God to be used in the fulfillment of Christ’s mission in the Church.

Through the love of Jesus and his Church, we are blessed with the sacraments of baptism and confirmation at an early age. These sacraments are gently watered by the gifts of the Eucharist and reconciliation as we mature through the desert of life.

As we mature on our journey through life, a few of us are called to the Secular Franciscan Order. We begin by learning of Francis and Clare. We are attracted by their simplicity and love. Thus we start to build the foundation of a mature Secular Franciscan.

We become aware of our four pillars of love. We grow in our *Spirituality* pillar by frequent reception of the Eucharist and frequent use of the sacrament of reconciliation. We learn to enjoy our *Liturgy*

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of the Hours, along with many other avenues of prayer.

The *Spirituality* pillar flows into our *Fraternity* pillar. Here we learn to pray together, grow spiritually together, to love each other, to laugh and cry together.

This leads us to our *Formation* pillar. Here the road narrows and we strive with a hunger to be in accordance with the will of the Holy Spirit in all facets of our life.

This leads to our *Apostolate* pillar. We join with our fraternity in any and all apostolic works we are privileged to be involved with.

Now we take these four pillars and make them into our spiritual table offering of our lives. We are encouraged to take a daily inventory of our lives to maintain strong legs for our table. If these legs are kept strong, our table will be balanced and our offerings to the world will be beautifully presented.

It is obvious to me that if one or more of these legs are weakened, then our spiritual table will tilt and our gifts will be lost. Our profession is indeed a precious gift. May we always cherish and maintain this beautiful calling from God. May we always present the present properly.✱

Perpetual profession

Webb Bufford
St. Elizabeth of Hungary
Fraternity, Augusta, Ga.
April 9

CIOFS seeks permanent home

By Judy Haupt, SFO
Minister
BSSF Region

Our minister general, Encarnación del Pozo, has expressed a need for support to secure a location in Rome for international operations.

“The presidency of CIOFS [SFO International Council] carries out its service from a location loaned to us by the General Curia of the Capuchins,” she stated in her report to our National Council. “The Capuchins now need to take the location back for the activities of their own order. Now CIOFS has to buy an apartment in order to do the work of the international fraternity. Brothers and sisters, can we count on the generosity of those who have the means and with small contributions from those who are less favored economically?”

Our CIOFS councilor sent this request to all regions:

“Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In solidarity with our sisters and brothers throughout the world, we are asking that each member of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States make a one-dollar donation towards the acquisition of a permanent residence for the international headquarters of the Secular Franciscan Order in Rome. The funds will be collected by the local fraternity treasurer and forwarded to the national treasurer, to be sent to the international treasurer.

It is my hope and prayers that we can accomplish this task by no later than Aug. 25, 2005, the Feast of St. Louis IX, patron of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Your servant,
Deacon Juan F. Lezcano, SFO
CIOFS Councilor — USA”

Prayerfully consider this request and the need to support our order. We will discuss how to answer this need at our annual regional gathering.

Donations can be sent to our regional treasurer:

Fran Trecartin, SFO
8 Hickory Knoll
Hilton Head Island, S.C. 29926

The sense of belonging to the SFO

By Rosalvo G. Mota, SFO
Vice Minister General
CIOFS (SFO International Council)

1. Introduction

We live in times of deep social, economic, cultural, and religious change;



times of uncertainty and instability. We ask: "Who are we? What does each person want in her or his own life?"

The first years of the 21st century have been marked by extreme violence and by the outbreak of terrorism.

Our Secular Franciscan fraternities participate in the transformation of today's world, breathing the air of post-modernity, and are aware of the errors of a hurried society, consumer oriented and concerned with immediate pleasure in "things." The duty of holding true to the Franciscan charisma, which has been given by the Spirit for the renewal of the Church in the strength of the Gospel, falls on these fraternities. This must be their identity.

We are aware that each fraternity is different. On the one hand, there are groups that show vitality and enthusiasm: We find many members in formation; there are sympathizers; the joy of fraternal life is experienced carrying out apostolic duties. Many fraternities are a genuine "sign" of the commandment of love.

On the other hand, an absence of vitality and enthusiasm can be seen in isolated brothers and sisters or even whole fraternities. There are also those who, for varied reasons, lose the evangelic and Franciscan motivation due to personal crisis, fatigue, monotony, lack of formation, pastoral activism, and involvement in other spiritual movements while they are asking themselves about the meaning of their belonging to the order. They feel uneasy at election time because they do not want to assume duties. There are also those who are regularly absent from the meetings because of other programs.

For this and for other reasons it is necessary to think about the *meaning of belonging* to the SFO, or about the *identity* of the Secular Franciscan.

2. Development

a. The most important changes that have taken place in our fraternities in the last 50 years

Some of us, laity or religious, were acquainted with the different realities in the past of the Third Order. There were some very large groups. Their members used a habit that was typical of the brothers and sisters. In some places the brothers sat on one side and the sisters on the other.

Not very long ago, in the second half of the 20th century, great changes took place in the Franciscan family. On June 24, 1978, the members of the Third Order received the new Rule approved by Pope Paul VI.

An intense period of renewal began. A new way of being Franciscan among the brothers and sisters began to substitute for the old, identical in substance but different in its manifestations. There was a period of study and assimilation of the new Rule, which became an essential point of reference in the search of an identity.

The Third Order assumed the name Secular Franciscan Order. A greater accent began to be put on the presence of Secular

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Franciscans in the world. They tried to find precisely in this secularity the main characteristic of the SFO. Later, in



“Christifideles Laici” (“Christ’s Faithful People”), Pope John Paul II insisted on the doctrine of Vatican Council II. He wrote, “The vocation of the lay faithful to holiness implies that life according to the Spirit expresses itself in a particular way in their involvement in temporal affairs and in their participation in earthly activities” (17).

b. What is the meaning of the SFO profession and what are the consequences?

Secular Franciscans make a profession: the promise to lead an evangelical life. They don’t enter an association but rather join a school of sanctity through a profession accepted by the Church. Profession is a public celebration of a personal consecration and commitment to God.

Through the profession one corresponds to Christ’s call. Through profession the Secular Franciscan seeks *the perfection of charity*. Such a profession is by its nature perpetual.

From this moment the professed are linked and bound to the order. They become

part of a specific fraternity; their lives acquire meaning within the fraternity; they serve their brothers and sisters. The profession is the basis of opening one’s heart, taking on activities and service to the advantage of the order, of society, and of the Church. Evidently, to make the profession means assuming a continual pledge of evangelic conversion.

The perpetually professed, according to their capability and possibility and in the light of the interests of the order, cannot be exempt, except for serious motives, from accepting the positions or functions asked of them at any level in the fraternity whenever requested.

c. How should we feed the sense of belonging to the SFO?

Art. 30 of the “General Constitutions” says, “The brothers and sisters are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity to which they belong and for the SFO as the organic union of all fraternities throughout the world.” That is, the Secular Franciscans are members of a local fraternity but they belong to all of them in life and in the mission of co-responsibility.

The profession involves a commitment to the Gospel and the fraternity. The interests of the fraternity always come before one’s

own interests. The Secular Franciscans live their monthly meetings intensely as sacraments of fraternal life. It is



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fundamental to take a stand to be present in the life of the brothers and sisters, joyfully welcoming those who arrive and reflecting on those who do no longer come, trying to understand the reasons why they are no longer motivated. The councils will know how to create the conditions to make the meetings pleasant, fruitful, and enriching.

The brothers and sisters should take care to follow the rules about financial offerings as an expression of belonging to the order and sharing its necessities.

Identity shall grow in the measure in which the Rule enters into the life of its [individual] members and in the fraternity with continual reading of the works of St. Francis and St. Clare and with the study of spiritual texts and in revising ones own life.

The secularity of the SFO cannot be emphasized enough. God has called us to sanctification in the heart of the world. Our specific vocation consists in searching for the Kingdom of God exercising temporal functions orienting them towards the will of God.

3. Conclusion

In any case it would be opportune to remember our Franciscan past. Why did we enter the SFO? What was most important in the first years of our Franciscan life? What generated enthusiasm? Why did we, at times, abandon our first love? What was our initial formation like?

As a consequence, we evidently need to search within ourselves. There exist ways to re-establish the person, to discover our identity, to meet others and to acquire a sense of belonging; to be able to distance ourselves from immediate needs, to develop a capacity for contemplation, thought, consideration, and silence.

The foundation of the person is based on small commitments that must open out to a greater commitment, which is called a "life project." It is a project building the

individual, the family, the Christian, and in our case, the Franciscan.*

This article, published on the Internet in CIOFS Bulletin No. 8, June 2005, is a summary of "Secular Franciscan Identity – Sense of Belonging to the SFO" by Fr. Almir R. Guimares, OFM, published in "Paz e Bem," Brasil, July/August 2004.

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