

# Communio

That All May Be One

Newsletter of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region  
Secular Franciscan Order

Summer 2009



## Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region: Celebrating Fraternity

By Judy Haupt, SFO  
BSSF Region minister

**J**oin us this year as we focus on Fraternity at our Annual Regional Gathering, Aug. 7–9, at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, just minutes east of Asheville, N.C. Fraternities will make short presentations about something they wish to share. All fraternities and groups are encouraged to bring their banners, scrapbooks, and any pamphlets or materials to share. We'll allow time to get together and explore ideas.

We will be honored to welcome Patrick Mendés, SFO, national minister, who will be with us making a Fraternal Visitation; and Brother Bob Brady, OFM, president-in-turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA), making the Pastoral Visitation.

Guest speakers include Sister Bernadette Marie Cappola, OSC; Father Paul Gabriel, OFM Conv.; and our own special spiritual assistant, Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.

Workshops are planned for local formation directors, secretaries, and treasurers on Friday at 4 p.m. Please let me know who and how many plan to attend one of the workshops.

I'll need your ARG reservations by July 6.

Our agenda is on pages 4 and 5. **T**

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### The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

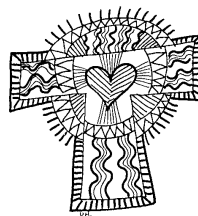
Spirituality



Formation

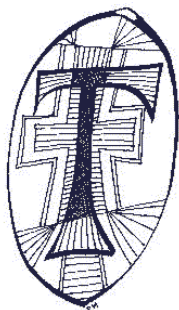


Fraternity



Apostolate





## Minister's Message

*Why is community life necessary? Why must we get together so often?*

St. Francis had brothers and gave us the model to follow the Gospel.

Our Rule and Constitutions are our guides. Our brothers and sisters lift us up when we are down and we reach out when they need us. Our Rule calls us to “seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone” (Article 19).

We do not journey alone. We gather to pray together, to learn, to serve, and to grow as members within our particular spirituality and lifestyle.

Fraternity calls us to do things like speak the truth in love —the love of Christ and the spirit of Francis and Clare. We’re encouraged to dialogue and brainstorm regarding each one’s expectations, hopes, and vision for the fraternity.

We must sift among these pieces to find the common elements for the “good of the fraternity” rather than promoting our individual agendas.

Let us come together as fraternity and celebrate who we are. I hope you’ll join us at our annual gathering, but continue to celebrate each other in local fraternity gatherings and activities.

We are truly blessed to have each other.

### From the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order

**Article 1.** The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church, unites all members of the people of God — laity, religious, and priests — who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. In various ways and forms but in life-giving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church.

**Article 2.** The Secular Franciscan Order holds a special place in this family circle. It is an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. In these fraternities the brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of St. Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.

**Article 19.** Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.

Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.

### From the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order

#### Article 26

**2.** In the fraternity, the brothers and sisters should promote mutual understanding and they should see to it that the atmosphere of their meetings is welcoming and that it reflects joy. They should encourage one another for the good.

#### Article 30

**1.** 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.

**2.** 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.

Peace and all good,  
Judy



## Editor's Journal

We're focusing on fraternity at this year's ARG, and this Communio has so much about fraternity.

We have Father Linus's article on the value of fraternity apostolates, Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity going out to help residents in another town, Father Kevin Queally urging us to look at just how co-responsible we feel about our fraternities, ways for our fraternities to implement JPIC (Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation), the Minister's Message reminding us of just how vital fraternity is to our growth in SFO life.

St. Francis lived community. When he preached, at least one other friar was with him. When he went to remote places to pray and contemplate, other friars were nearby.

Even Franciscan hermitages weren't for lone individuals. We might think of hermits as solitaries, but that wasn't Francis's concept. Hermits were to have solitude for prayer and contemplation, but other friars were there to minister to them and to make sure they had the privacy they needed.

In "A Rule for Hermitages," Francis wrote, "Let those who wish to stay in hermitages in a religious way be three brothers or, at the most, four; let two of these be 'the mother' and have two 'sons' or at least one. Let the two who are 'mothers' keep the life of Martha and the two 'sons' the life of Mary. ... The 'sons,' however, may periodically assume the role of the 'mothers,' taking turns for a time as they have mutually decided" (*St. Francis of Assisi, Early Documents, The Saint*, pp. 61–62).

The first time I went to Italy with St. Francis Pilgrimages, we visited the remains of Soffiano, a hermitage built in 1101, about three miles from the Convent of San Liberato, in a canyon in the Sibylline Mountains.

All that's left of Soffiano is one wall, which the friars maintain. It's built into a cave, and there's a simple stone altar. The holes in the wall and in the cave wall indicate where were the support beams that held the upper floors. At three stories high, it was too large a place for just one person.

We heard Chapters 47 and 46 from *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, which tell of friars who lived at Soffiano (the friar in Chapter 47 is believed to have been Liberato).

Chapter 46 tells of Brother Pacifico and Brother Umile, who were not only brother friars but biological brothers, as well. They are united in a special way even though not living in the same place. Brother Umile died at Soffiano, and Brother Pacifico, "while praying in a solitary place, was rapt in ecstasy and saw the soul of his brother Umile ascending straight into heaven, without hesitation or obstacle, as it departed from the body."

Brother Enrico, a friar who was with us that day, said this story teaches us that we can't become holy until we learn to love one another. It's not just about me and God, he said. God loves each person, and that makes them worthy of our love. We don't become holy by ourselves but with one another. It takes a community intention and accepting our brothers and sisters. Forgiveness is the most important virtue in achieving this.

Pace e bene  
Joanita

Freedom means the ability to live the fullness of life, an inward liberation from the chains of the mind and heart that weigh us down. It means being able to love someone more than one's own life, for the sake of the other.

Sister Ilia Delio, OSF  
*The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective*

ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING (draft 6-8)  
BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION  
LifeWay Conference Center, Ridgecrest, N.C.

Aug. 7–9, 2009

Theme: Fraternity

Friday, Aug. 7

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|-----------|--|
| 1:00 p.m. | Meeting: Regional Executive Council with<br>National Fraternal and Pastoral Visitors   |
| 3:00      | Registration ( <i>Channel of Peace Fraternity</i> )<br>Choir practice — cantors/musicians, West Wing Conf. Rm. 7                             |
| 4:00      | Meeting — Spiritual Assistants   |
| 4:00–5:00 | Workshops — Secretaries, Treasurers, Formation Directors   |
| 5:30–6:30 | Dinner buffet (tickets required)   |
| 7:00      | Welcome, Opening Prayer — Judy Haupt, SFO,<br>BSSF Region minister<br>Gathering song<br>Introductions of Guests, New Councils, New Attendees |
| 7:30      | Recognition of Newly Professed, Anniversaries of Profession<br>( <i>St. Thomas More Fraternity</i> )   |
| 8:00      | Fraternity Pillar — Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.,<br>BSSF Region spiritual assistant   |
| 8:30      | Evening Prayer — Liturgy of the Hours  |
| 9:00      | Social   |

Saturday, Aug. 8

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 7:00 a.m.      | Morning Prayer — Liturgy of the Hours  |
| 7:15–8:15      | Breakfast buffet (tickets required)  |
| 8:45           | Gathering song<br>Presentation — National Fraternal and Pastoral Visitors:<br>Patrick Mendés, SFO, national minister<br>Brother Bob Brady, OFM, CNSA president-in-turn |
| 9:30           | Presentations by fraternities  |
| 10:30          | Break  |
| 10:45          | Celebration of Eucharist — Commission of new SAs<br>Procession to Eucharistic Chapel* ( <i>Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg</i> )                                   |
| Noon–1:00 p.m. | Lunch buffet (tickets required)  |
| 1:15           | Community — Sister Bernadette Marie Cappola, OSC   |
| 2:00           | Presentations by fraternities  |
| 3:00–5:00      | Regional Fraternity Council Meeting **<br>Area Group Discussions on Fraternity Issues (room set for each area)   |
| 5:30–6:30      | Dinner buffet (tickets required)   |
| 7:00           | Franciscan Prayer — Father Paul Gabriel, OFM Conv.   |
| 8:00           | Evening Prayer — Liturgy of the Hours  |
| 8:30           | Social   |

See AGENDA, page 5

**AGENDA, from page 4**Sunday, Aug. 9

7:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer — Liturgy of the Hours/Novena Prayer
7:15–8:15	Breakfast buffet (tickets required) (Time to check out)
9:00	Gathering Song Presentation: National Fraternal and Pastoral Visitors
9:45	Memorial for Deceased Members of Region ( <i>Immaculate Conception Fraternity</i> )
10:00	Celebration of the Eucharist
11:30	Closing Prayer and Sending — Father Linus
Noon	Adjournment

Bring your Liturgy of Hours or Christian Prayer Book

FRANCISCAN BOOKS AND ARTICLES WILL BE FOR SALE

**\*A Chapel will be open for Eucharistic Adoration**

**11:30 a.m. Saturday–10:00 a.m. Sunday**

**\*\*Opportunity Time:**

Group discussions, time for reflection, sharing, napping, and/or enjoying God's creation.

Please take this time to introduce yourself to someone and get to know each other.

Conference rooms 1, 2, 3, 4 open for small-group discussions.

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**REGIONAL FRATERNITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Opening Prayer — Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes

Treasurer's Report

Business

Approval of Budget for 2010

Approval of BSSF Regional Guidelines Revisions

Report on Formation

Review Archives Plan

Appoint Nominating Committee

Calendar

Fraternal and Pastoral Visitors

Open Forum — Please discuss items with regional minister before meeting.

Adjournment — Closing Prayer

Every elected fraternity minister is a member of the Regional Fraternity Council.

Please be present or delegate this responsibility to another member. If you are a delegate, please bring the authorizing letter from your fraternity minister to give to the regional secretary prior to the Regional Fraternity Council Meeting.

MEMBERS OF FRATERNITIES, NEWLY FORMING GROUPS, AND EMERGING  
COMMUNITIES ARE INVITED TO OBSERVE  
THE COUNCIL MEETING.

## Co-responsibility, personal presence

Father Kevin M. Queally, TOR  
Conference of National Spiritual Assistants

While reading *Pick More Daisies* by Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap., I came across two paragraphs from the General Constitution of the SFO, which caused me to reflect on and, indeed, go to the Constitutions! I have included a third paragraph from the Constitutions, one that is in close proximity to the others.

“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” (GC, Article 30. 1). This is quite an article. Imagine! All of the members are co-responsible for the life of the fraternity, not only on the local level, but also on the regional, national, and international level!

This is something we must think about and examine ourselves about. Are we really involved in the fraternity so much so that we feel co-responsible? What about our region? It is tempting to think that service to the fraternity, as a leader, is an option. No, it is not. We are all co-responsible!

The life of the local fraternity is extremely important, but it is not the only part of the Order. Each member has brothers and sisters in the SFO all over the United States and, indeed, all over the world. The members are connected by a common Rule and spirituality. How developed is that concept and reality in my local fraternity? This must be asked, and each fraternity should be finding ways to express this interconnectedness.

“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 animation of the fraternity” (GC, Article 30. 2).

In another article by Father Lester, the Seculars are called to DO something. He



emphasizes “personal presence.” The fraternity is not the fraternity without you there. In addition, for active collaboration, you must not only be here, you must collaborate — work with others! The fraternity depends on each and every one.

You are a Franciscan. Your life must reflect this call, this vocation: witness. It is fairly impossible to do it for one hour a month. That would be like eating only once a month. For instance, prayer is something we do each day. Our witness and our prayer are linked organically. There cannot be one, authentically, without the other. The SFO is not a contemplative Order. There must be action and contemplation!

The personal presence is essential to build your community. One hour a month is the very least you can give. Perhaps you already know that the burdens of being minister are great. Do you offer to help? Do you jump at the chance to volunteer to organize an event? In what way do you work with other fraternity members so the burden is lighter for all? We must all animate the fraternity, whether it is on the local, regional, national, or international level! It calls on us to give of ourselves.

“The leaders should see to the spiritual and technical preparation and animation of the meetings, both of the fraternities and of the councils. They should seek to inspire life and soul into the fraternities by their own

See CO-RESPONSIBILITY, page 7

**CO-RESPONSIBILITY, from page 6**

witness, suggesting appropriate means for the development of the life of the fraternity and of apostolic activities in the light of the fundamental Franciscan options. They should see to it that the decisions made are carried out and they should promote collaboration among the brothers and sisters" (GC, Article 31. 4).

While this article does address the leaders, please remember what was said earlier about co-responsibility. We all help decide the appropriate activities to be developed for the fraternity, both on the spiritual and apostolic side. (This includes spiritual assistants!)

The General Constitution says: "They should seek to inspire life and soul into the fraternities." This is quite a tall order. Perhaps many are daunted by the idea of leadership. Too often at elections, it is difficult to find fraternity members to serve in all the positions. Our documents do not allow the same person to serve over and over. There are "term limits." We are all called to serve. None of us should feel we are in it alone. We are able to call on the whole fraternity to help in the responsibilities.

As I reflected on these articles of the General Constitutions, I was reminded that these ideals are something that we need to bring to mind and strive toward. It is difficult for us to be doing well in all areas of our Franciscan life. It almost never happens. We are human beings. Only God is perfect. But the key is to keep striving, keep trying, and continue being active. The Rule is something for SFOs to work at their whole lives.

Many, I fear, are not familiar with our documents. Some are too familiar and get lost in legalism. For all, the admonition is to live the Rule, bring it to life in your own home and workplace and neighborhood and parish. To borrow from the popular saying, you are the only Franciscan many will ever meet.

Our Franciscan life constantly challenges us to grow. Remember St.

Francis saying, "Let us begin, for up to now we have done very little." This was at the end of his life! We can grow and change and constantly become better Franciscans! T

*This article originally appeared in TAU-USA, Fall 2006, when Father Queally was president-in-turn of the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants.*

### **To All Local Formation Directors**

The new "BSSF Regional Formator's Guidelines for Initial Formation" have been approved by the Regional Executive Council. They will be given out at the 2009 ARG.

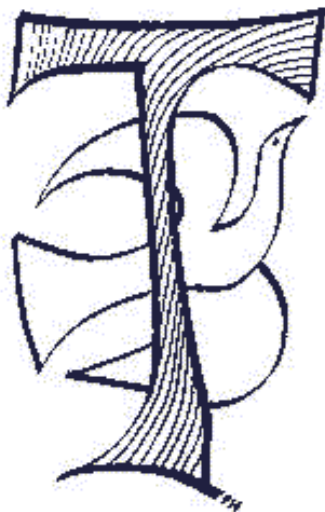
When you or your delegate check in at the registration table, please ask for your hard copy and CD-Rom copy of the guidelines. My fraternity is responsible for the registration desk, so I have asked Barbara Garrison to be responsible for giving the hard copies and CD-Roms to you. Please ask for Barbara because she will not recognize you.

I would also like to thank Ronald Evans for burning the CD-Roms.

When you return home, please make arrangements for your local minister and every member of your formation team to receive copies. Copies of the guidelines will also be posted on our regional website, [www.secularfranciscans.org](http://www.secularfranciscans.org)

Faye Martin, SFO,  
BSSF Region formation director

## Spiritual assistant course concludes with retreat



By Joanita M. Nellenbach, SFO  
SA Course Coordinator

"The Spirit is moving us into this era of lay spiritual assistants," said Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., BSSF Region spiritual assistant, during the retreat he led June 19–21 at Living Waters Catholic Reflection Center in Maggie Valley, N.C.

"You've been called to this by the Lord," Father Linus said. "It's a matter of surrender: 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'"

The retreat wrapped up a program in which we spent a year studying and praying as we prepared for a new ministry. A commissioning is scheduled to take place during the Annual Regional Gathering.

Sixteen SFOs began the course, but several were unable to finish because of work schedules and other commitments.

Eleven of us completed the program and attended the retreat:

- Dale Anesi, SFO, Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Nashville, Tenn.
- Cricket Aull, SFO, Immaculate Conception, Jonesboro, Ga.
- Audrey Binet, SFO, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Augusta, Ga.
- Nancy Brochu, SFO, St. Joseph of Cupertino, Bessemer, Ala.
- Patricia Cowan, SFO, St. Francis of the Hills, Hendersonville, N.C.
- Laura Haukaas, SFO, Stigmata of St. Francis EC, Duluth, Ga.
- Joanita Nellenbach, SFO, St. Francis of the Hills, Hendersonville, N.C.
- Linda Perunko, SFO, St. Thomas More, Wilmington, N.C.
- Barbara Smith, SFO, San Damiano NFG, Athens Ga.
- Kathy Taormina, SFO, Blessed Pope John XXIII, SFO, Bloomington, Minn.
- Patricia Wilkerson, SFO, Franciscan Family of Greensboro, Greensboro, N.C.

The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants developed Franciscan Family Connections, the name of both the program and its textbook. The CNSA is a group of four friars, one from each of the obediences. The CNSA members who developed the program were Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap.; Brother Bob Brady, OFM; Father Bart Karwacki, OFM Conv.; and Father Kevin Queally, TOR.

We discussed most chapters in class sessions with Father Linus, in accordance with the program recommendation for periodic student meetings.

*Franciscan Family Connections* notes that the CNSA "strongly urges applicants (from a proximate geographic area) to gather regularly (with the mentor) to share ideas and insights. Common sessions help people to know one another while deepening their understanding of the role of spiritual assistant" (from the Introduction).

We met six times, starting in March of last year. Gatherings were at Belmont, N.C. (twice); the 2008 Annual Regional Gathering; at Athens and Jonesboro, Ga.; and for the retreat in Maggie Valley. Since several students serve on the Regional Executive Council, class sessions usually coincided with REC meetings. At each session we covered one or two chapters of *Franciscan Family Connections*.

Topics included the spiritual assistant's role, Franciscan theology and spirituality, the Trinity, initial and ongoing formation, Franciscan writers such as St. Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus,

See SPIRITUAL, page 9



**SPIRITUAL, from page 8**

Vatican II, SFO organizational structure, the Ritual and devotions, and Church and Eucharist.

So, what's next?

At this writing, Father Linus and the REC haven't yet determined where we'll serve. As *Franciscan Family Connections* notes, "CNSA recommends that ordinarily SFO members not be appointed to serve their own fraternity. However, there are times when pastoral considerations may make this necessary. Please realize that an SFO spiritual assistant does not vote in elections or on economic issues" (p. iii).

A spiritual assistant is a member of the council of the fraternity he or she serves. Although we'll continue to participate in the activities of our home fraternities, Father Linus recommended that we not serve on the councils in our own fraternities. It's important, he said, that as we help to feed those in the fraternities in which we minister as spiritual assistants, we allow ourselves to step back to be fed in our home fraternities.

On Saturday morning, Sister Bernadette Marie Cappola, OSC, from the Poor Clare monastery near Travelers Rest, S.C., joined us, as she's interested in spiritual assistant work. She offered to compile a list of books and other materials related to Franciscan life and spirituality.

During the retreat, we reflected as a group on what we had learned and what might be our futures as spiritual assistants. We agreed that getting together was invaluable and that we need to keep in touch. **T**

**Going the extra mile: Fraternity treks to housecleaning apostolate**

By DorothyAnn Rowland, SFO  
Minister

Members of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity, Hilton Head Island, S.C., gathered for a "5th Saturday Apostolate" and traveled to Allendale, S.C., on May 30.

Barbara Elkins and Daly Guitierrez, inquirers; Dan Cronin, SFO, candidate; Joe Bailey, SFO; Maureen Cronin, SFO; Rhoda Haight, SFO; Judy Haupt, SFO; and I helped in the SugarHill/Flatt Street Community.

We mowed, raked, and cleaned the yard; painted rooms, cleaned windows, and power washed a home chosen by Lottie Lewis, community coordinator. The three residents were truly grateful for our help and were quite astonished that we had traveled so far to come to help them.

The fraternity became aware of needs in Allendale after reading an article in the Diocese of Charleston's newspaper, *The Catholic Miscellany*. The paper had reported how the Franciscan Center on St. Helena Island sponsors community gardens and other programs there.

Franciscan Sisters Sheila Byrne and Stella Breen have run the Franciscan Center for more than 20 years; it is well known in

Beaufort County for its outreach to immigrants and the needy.

George Bellas, SFO, our treasurer, brought the article to the fraternity council, which chose to donate funds for garden tools, seeds, and supplies. The sisters were thrilled to have the local Secular Franciscans "partner" with them in to help Allendale.

One Saturday in March, the sisters and I went to Allendale to see the community gardens and meet with the coordinator there. And a new "seed" was planted — to offer our help to their community at a future date, on a fifth Saturday. **T**

The Spirit is free with her call. None of us can say we deserve it. We can only be thankful that we received it. With that call comes the responsibility for a total embrace of the spirit of St. Francis. It requires a lifelong openness to personal growth in understanding more fully, and embracing with greater commitment, this special call.

Father Lester Bach, OFM Cap.  
*Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to  
the Secular Franciscan Order*

## Theological reflections after fraternity apostolic experiences

By Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv.

BSSF Region spiritual assistant

You may be familiar with the story of Brother Leo and St. Francis when St. Francis invited Brother Leo to accompany him on a journey.



On this journey Francis was to preach. Brother Leo was delighted.

As they went through the town Brother Leo waited with great anticipation.

They came to the other end of town. Francis had not preached. Haltingly, Brother Leo asked Father Francis why he hadn't preached.

Father Francis said, "Oh but, Brother Leo, we did. As we met and greeted the people of the town, we shared our love and the peace of Christ. As we walked in harmony sharing our joy and praising God — we preached."

So, my sisters and brothers, it is not always in what we do, but how we do it. Apostolic life for a Franciscan lies more in the cooperation, sharing and participation than in the act of doing.

Not to minimize acts of charity, but the Franciscan formula highlights the shared approach. So the preferred is that a community adopt an apostolic activity or activities in which the members can participate with their brothers and sisters in some creative way.

This visible activity to make a difference in the world will attract people to the fraternity or group and the Secular Franciscan Order. Others will see how you as a Franciscan community minister together.

### Practical Application:

Provide a time of "theological reflection" — verbal or written — after each apostolic experience. Suggestion: Select perhaps three questions to reflect upon after an apostolic experience. The next experience, you might reflect upon three different questions.

- What was done?
- What was the benefit of the experience?
- What was the result for those served and for you?
- What was the "feeling" in the giving?
- How was your service received?
- How were you present to the experience?
- How was Christ present?
- How did you minister to Christ?
- How did you, as Francis, receive the Christ and share the Christ?
- Did others see you as a Franciscan community ministering together?

See APOSTOLIC, page 11

**APOSTOLIC, from page 10**

- Was the community sensitive to the gifts and temperaments of its members?
- Are you coming to know each other at a deeper level?
- Are you sharing values, telling your story, telling about your relationships, and working with others?
- Did you cooperate, share, truly listen, embrace change, respect the other, and appreciate the person and the task?
- Did you communicate individuals working as a unit in peace and harmony?
- Was there mutual cooperation among the members?
- Was there sincere respect among the members?
- Was there generous sharing and energy expended?
- What was the experience in working and sharing the task with the other members?
- How were you, as Francis, one with your brothers and sisters? T



## Called to follow Christ

By Faye Martin, SFO

BSSF Region formation director

*Called to Follow Christ* is one of the books written by Father Benet Fonck, OFM. It is a commentary on our Rule and most helpful during a fraternity dialogue about the articles of our Rule.

In an effort to take away the best understanding as to how each article is meant to be understood, our fraternity uses it as a resource.

At our June fraternity gathering, our members dialogued about

Article 8 of our Rule:

“As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation (element of Franciscan spirituality) be the soul of all they are and do.

“Let them participate in the sacramental life of the Church, above all the Eucharist. Let them join in liturgical prayer in one of the forms proposed by the Church, reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ.”

Our dialogue brought us to the following understanding, about which Father Fonck writes so beautifully on pages 41–48 of his book:

“Prayer as an essential element of our Franciscan way of life puts us in intimate communication with God, puts us in touch with our own identity, and gives us the energy, strength, and determination to live the gospel more effectively.

“Francis’ life shows that prayer, as an experience and expression of intimate faith, is not just a dream or an ideal, but something very real, very attainable. When we survey the texts written by and about Francis on his relationship with God, we readily see his preoccupation with making God’s presence unfold in community and be inserted into the world. The heart of his life’s project was to meet and recognize the Lord.

“Francis definitely knew the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, and he honestly and confidently could say, ‘The Lord inspired me.’ ‘The Lord gave me,’ etc. because this truly happened.

“That exciting, overpowering personal awareness of Francis that the Lord had touched his heart and was active and present in individuals as well as in community, brought him to such depth of being at one with the Lord that his intensely personal, deeply intimate union with God

See **FORMATION**, page 12

**FORMATION, from page 11**

became the source, the goal, and the energy of his whole life.”

Suggested reflections at the end of the chapter: 1) Have you been conscious of

growth in your personal life? 2) Do you practice the silence of contemplative prayer, too, that the Lord may speak to you? 3) Are you prepared to **LISTEN**? T

## JPIC invites SFOs to reach out — together

By Judy Haupt, SFO  
BSSF Region minister

*Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone “who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself,” let them exercise their responsibilities competently in Christian spirit of service (SFO Rule, Article 14).*



Each fraternity has at least one apostolate and is making a difference in its community. When we join forces, we can accomplish even more.

JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) is a way to collaborate and work together, but it has caused some confusion.

“I’ve received e-mails stating that while waiting for JPIC to put together ‘a program,’ people are homeless, starving, suffering, etc.,” Pat Brandwein-Ball, SFO, JPIC transition chair, wrote in this summer’s issue of TAU-USA. “JPIC is an invitation to a mature understanding and authentic living of our Rule, with enthusiasm and gusto! ... As Franciscans, living in the secular world, we must realize (make real) our way of life.”

She went on to write: “JPIC contact information was requested from each Regional Minister. Twenty of the 30 responded. Some had no one appointed and had questions, but nonetheless, 20 responded.”

Please pray and offer to serve our region on a JPIC Team. Contact you local minister to send your name to me. Judy Haupt, SFO, ([jahaupt@yahoo.com](mailto:jahaupt@yahoo.com)).

Here’s what Rob Breen, SFO, JPIC chair for the Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Region (upstate New York & Western Pennsylvania), envisions:

In relation to JPIC commissions, I think it is crucial for us to get away from the “information dump” roles that have been traditionally played.

Some chairs simply get on several e-mail lists and forward them to all their fraternity members. This is not effective at mobilizing Franciscans to apostolic action. We simply get

See JPIC, page 13

**JPIC, from page 12**

inundated and overwhelmed with information. Something more strategic and Franciscan needs to be created. For example:

1. Form a committee (or two) to focus on particular issues (poverty and environment, for example).
2. Focus initially on developing a literacy of Catholic and Franciscan approaches to the issues. This is a focused formation period, and everyone in the fraternity can be involved. Keep in mind that we Franciscans often act our way into thinking (not vice versa), so “formation” can involve participating in a local poverty or conservation service project and then reflecting on the experience and learning about the related issues.

3. Study the local issues. Rain Forests in South America are neat, and we should be concerned about them, but there are important local and regional issues that need to be addressed, too. When problems get too abstract or distant, they can cease to be a mobilizing experience for our SFO fraternities. (There are other agencies that are better equipped to address international environmental and social justice issues.)

In our area, we have pollution in our Hudson River that is impacting human health, and flooding brings PCBs and other toxics into the backyard of poor and working-class neighborhoods. Fraternity members can walk to these places, talk to the people affected, touch the grass and trees, hear the birds chirping, touch the leaves, and canoe on the water.

4. Adopt an issue or two and get to work. Pull in outside speakers, specialists, or experts to talk about the issues, and set up some hands-on projects to start making a difference. Simple projects, like tree planting, lead testing in homes, community gardening, etc., can quickly engage SFOs in helpful ministries.

There need to be ongoing formation opportunities, too, to help SFOs understand our own Franciscan tradition, and to allow ongoing and daily conversion as we enter more deeply into relationship with God’s Creation and God’s poor people. Focus on our Rule, which calls us to be Franciscan in this way.

5. We also need to find ways to collaborate with fraternities throughout the region, and with neighboring regions, sharing our stories and Franciscan ministries.

We can create interregional conferences on Franciscan JPIC, perhaps in collaboration with friars and Franciscan sisters. Regional fraternities from the Northeast (or Southeast or Midwest or the West, etc.) could gather annually. Or at the annual meeting, perhaps we turn them more into mini-conferences, to include formation activities, strategic discussions about apostolic Franciscan ministries, service project experiences, dynamic liturgies that “commission” SFOs in JPIC ministries to go out into the world to be the Good News.

Certainly “tagging along” with other Franciscan family conferences (or even having a Franciscan presence at a secular social justice or environmental conference, in the same way that we host Franciscan Youth (YouFra gatherings at World Youth Day) keeps the logistical problems and cost issues reasonable.

6. At nearly every peace, justice, and environmental event, there should be SFO/Franciscan faces (and hands) and discreet Taus letting everyone know that SFOs are present and engaged.

See JPIC, page 14

**JPIC, from page 13**

7. We need to come together at regional and national levels to develop a funding and development strategy to support these SFO JPIC ministries. We are developing just such a strategy in our region.

8. We also need to develop effective SFO JPIC leadership that can mobilize SFOs to contemplative action.

9. Keep remembering that we are the Secular Franciscan Order, that we made a lifelong commitment to a Franciscan life, and that we professed to live out the SFO Rule. We have obligations to live out the call of the Holy Spirit, and to be the presence of Christ in the world. We have vocations to walk in the footsteps of Francis and Clare to do the gospel life according to the little way.” T

**A Magnificat**

By Lisa DiProfio, SFO

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Fraternity

hard, dusty and weed choked,  
until a caring Hand comes near.  
brushing away the dirt the years have placed  
and nurturing the seed.

He brings the sun, the wind, the rain  
an ever patient God.

a tiny speck of green appears,  
it struggles to break free  
of years held trapped below the earth,  
the SON is what she now seeks.

and slowly as the days unfold,  
that ever patient Hand,  
gives room to stretch and grow and spread  
across His well made land.

*Lisa composed this “Magnificat” as part of her fraternity’s May formation lesson “Mary, Hail Full of Grace.”*

### **Newly Elected Councils Congratulations**

#### **Our Lady of Good Counsel Fraternity, Greenville, S.C. February**

Minister: Judy Bruce, SFO  
Vice Minister: Valerie Baronkin, SFO  
Secretary: Nanette Perron, SFO  
Treasurer: Cindy Gravely, SFO  
Formation Director: John Bruce, SFO  
Councilor: Deanna Mechensky, SFO

#### **Immaculate Conception Fraternity Jonesboro, Ga., May 9**

Minister: Rose Campbell, SFO  
Vice Minister: Jan Pitts, SFO  
Secretary: Jo Jo Mekolichick, SFO  
Treasurer: Lori Moran, SFO  
Formation Director: Laura Cleary, SFO  
Councilor: Bernadette LaSorsa, SFO  
Councilor: Sharon Loiselle, SFO  
Councilor: Eugenia West, SFO

#### **St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity Charlotte, N.C., June 28**

Minister: David Roman, SFO  
Vice Minister: Earl Glenn, SFO  
Secretary:  
Catherine Leibensperger, SFO  
Treasurer: Gloria Buchanan, SFO  
Formation Director: Donald Baker, SFO  
Councilor: Mary-Claire Dempsey, SFO  
Councilor: Bernadette Sewak, SFO

## Regional Executive Council Recap

The Regional Executive Council (REC) met June 6-7 at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Spartanburg, S.C. Actions taken include:

1. Approved 2009 actual expense/income report presented by Jerry Rousseau, BSSF Region treasurer.
2. Report of activities and updates on fraternities given by area councilors:
  - a. St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity, Charlotte, N.C., profession on June 13, 2009.
3. Reviewed calendar of planned and completed elections and visitations:
  - a. Visitations to be scheduled for the following —
    - i. St. Joseph of Cupertino, Bessemer, Ala.
    - ii. Saint Francis of the Living Waters, Franklin, N.C.
    - iii. St. Clare in Asheville, N.C.
    - iv. Crucified Christ, North Charleston, S.C.
    - v. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Augusta, Ga.
    - vi. Father Solanus Casey, Morehead City, N.C.
    - vii. Sts. Francis and Clare NFG, Knoxville, Tenn.
    - viii. Stigmata of St. Francis Emerging Fraternity, Duluth, Ga. 2010
  - b. Visitations scheduled —
    - i. Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary Fraternity, Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 20, 2009
  - c. Elections completed —
    - i. Immaculate Conception Fraternity, Jonesboro, Ga., May 9, 2009
  - d. Elections scheduled —
    - i. St. Maximilian Kolbe, Charlotte, N.C., June 28, 2009
    - ii. St. Francis of the Hills, Hendersonville, N.C., Nov. 22, 2009
    - iii. St. Clare in Winston-Salem, N.C., May 2010
  - e. Elections to be scheduled —
    - i. Saint Clare of Assisi, Aiken, S.C.
    - ii. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Elizabeth City, N.C.
4. Reviewed evaluations from Minister/Formation Director Workshops.
5. Approved revisions to the BSSF Region formation manual.
6. Discussed plan to distribute BSSF Region formation manual at ARG and schedule workshops in 2010.
7. Reviewed progress of spiritual assistant class and planned retreat.
8. Reviewed draft of ARG schedule.
9. Reviewed plan and completed visitation report for BSSF Region visitation from NAFRA (National Fraternity) and CNSA (Conference of National Spiritual Assistants) at 2009 ARG.
10. Reviewed and approved 2010 budget to submit to council at ARG for approval.
11. Approved revisions to BSSF Regional Guidelines to be presented to council for approval at ARG
12. Reviewed plan to present guidelines for preservation of records by archivist, Sara Nell Boggs, SFO, area councilor.

Next REC meetings: Aug. 7, Ridgecrest, N.C.

Nov. 14–15 Monastery of St. Clare, Greenville, S.C. T

## Aiken fraternity canonically established

The Fraternity of St. Clare of Assisi, Aiken, S.C., celebrated its canonical establishment on May 1 at St. Mary Help of Christians Church in Aiken.

Father Paul Williams, OFM, dean of the Midlands Deanery of the Diocese of Charleston and pastor of St Martin de Porres Church, Columbia, S.C., celebrated the Mass of Canonical Establishment.

Concelebrating: Father James LeBlanc, pastor, St. Mary Help of Christians Church; Father Jeffrey Kirby, parochial vicar, St. Mary Help of Christians Church, and spiritual assistant to the fraternity; Father Ernest Hepner, retired; and Father Anthony Batung, pastor, St. Gerard Church, Aiken, S.C.

The fraternity has 10 professed, three candidates, one inquirer, and one orientee.

"Our apostolate is RCIA," writes Laura Jarvi, SFO. "We go to the meetings, we are mentors; also, if the catechumens need sponsors, we do that, and anything else associated with the RCIA program.

"We're also involved with meals for various functions within our church. The pastor knows if he needs us for anything regarding parish functions, we are there for him." T

## Newly Professed Congratulations

### **Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity Blairsville, Ga.**

**May 3**

Joan Furst, SFO  
Mary Jenkins, SFO  
Ralph Kwiatkowski, SFO  
Jo Schilling, SFO  
Max Schilling, SFO  
Kathi Traywick, SFO

### **May 24 (same fraternity)**

Jennifer Forster, SFO

### **Stigmata of St. Francis EC Duluth, Ga.**

**June 13**

V. David Rohr, SFO

### **St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity Charlotte, N.C.**

**June 13**

Mary-Claire Dempsey, SFO  
Yvonne Durham, SFO  
Earl Glenn, SFO  
Catherine Leibensperger, SFO  
David Roman, SFO  
Martha Roman, SFO

## **Treasurer's report to the BSSF Region Council to be presented, Aug. 8, at the 2009 Annual Regional Gathering**

By Jerry Rousseau, SFO  
BSSF Region treasurer

Since we are at the midyear point in the work of the region, it is only proper that we reflect on the actual results of calendar year 2008, the projections for calendar year 2009, and the forecast for calendar year 2010.

I am pleased to report that we ended calendar year 2008 with a balanced budget. In actuality we had a positive \$305.76 for the year on income and expenses of nearly \$21,000 each.

Thus far in 2009, although we forecasted a sizable deficit, we have managed to maintain control on expenses and anticipate exceeding our income projection. Therefore, we are optimistic that we should close this calendar year with a balanced budget, as well.

The 2010 calendar year budget (see page 18) reflects forecasted expenses and income of \$24,080 each. If we are able to meet this forecast we will once again operate under a balanced

See TREASURER, page 17



**TREASURER, from page 16**

budget. This would represent four years in a row of fiscal responsibility by your regional council.

One major change in the 2010 budget reflects a different approach to accounting for fraternal and pastoral visitation and election expenses. This is a change that we began implementing in 2009.

We are now requesting that all executive-council members submit actual expenses for their service to the region during visitations and elections.

Furthermore, we request that stipends provided by the fraternities to fraternal visitors be made payable to the BSSF Region. This procedure allows us to more accurately reflect the true cost of serving the region.

I will be happy to answer any questions or concerns regarding the 2010 budget or related topics. **T**

The new formators' guidelines will include a document called "Twelve Elements of Franciscan Spirituality. One of those is "Communal Life":

Francis recognized that we are all brothers and sisters and that we need one another.

A hallmark of the Franciscan Order is the communal life. He believed that God had sent the men who came to follow him and so he would not refuse any of them entrance into the community.

He told his friars, "If a mother loves her child how much more should spiritual brothers and sisters love and help one another." Francis believed that Gospel living was communal living. He wanted his friars to live a common life which reflected the life of the early Christian depicted in the Acts of the Apostles.

"The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common" (Acts 4:32).

Franciscan Spirituality is characterized by a love for community. Francis would encourage us to build caring communities. During his life he tried to recreate the warm, compassionate, loving communities of the early Church and he invites us to do the same.

This aspect of Franciscan Spirituality calls us to love one another as brothers and sisters and to promote friendship and community with all people. It calls us to set aside prejudice and hatred and to be family with one another.

*What attitude(s) or disposition(s) could I embrace to improve the quality of life in my community?*

## Communio

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### Spring 2010

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Publication date, Mar. 31

### Summer 2010

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Publication date, June 30

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Joanita M. Nellenbach, SFO  
Editor

BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION (61)

2010 BUDGET Proposed (6-12-09)

**EXPENSES**

\$ 5,880	NATIONAL FRATERNITY FAIR SHARE (490 professed x \$12)
\$ 600	ANNUAL NATIONAL GATHERING
\$ 1,800	NATIONAL VISIT TO REGION – ELECTIONS/VISITATION (travel, lodging, stipend for 2 visitors)
\$ 3,800	ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING \$ 1,700 socials \$ 300 room, meals Spiritual Assistant \$ 300 room, meals REC \$ 400 audio visual etc. equipment rental \$ 500 materials, handouts \$ 600 scholarship funds, if needed
\$ 3,900	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL – COMMISSIONS GATHERINGS \$ 3,060 lodging 1 night for 3 meetings (12 members @ \$85) \$ 840 transportation costs for 3 gatherings
\$ 2,100 needed)	FRATERNAL – PASTORAL VISITATIONS/ELECTIONS (travel and materials, if
\$ 900	COMMISSIONS (JPIC and Youth) \$ 500 scholarship support \$ 150 materials \$ 250 travel
\$ 1,800	FORMATION (including workshops)
\$ 600	OFFICE SUPPLIES, POSTAGE, COPIES
\$ 1,500	SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT (stipend, travel costs)
\$ 0	SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT COURSE (travel, lodging)
\$ 500	INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY (CIOFS) DONATION
\$ 700	CHARITY

**\$24,080**      **TOTAL EXPENSE**  
**INCOME**

\$ 19,600	REGIONAL FRATERNITY FAIR SHARE (490 professed x \$40)
\$ 4,480	

**\$24,080**      **TOTAL INCOME**