

Communio

That All May Be One

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

Winter 2011

“Living an evangelical life: A call to BE”

By Jerry Rousseau, SFO

That is the theme of our 2011 Annual Regional Gathering (ARG) to be held July 22–24 at Ridgecrest Conference Center, Ridgecrest, N.C., near Asheville.

Our featured speaker will be Sister Ilia Delio, OSF. Formerly professor and chair of spirituality studies at the Washington Theological Union, Washington, D.C., she is now a research fellow

at Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

She is the author of *Simply*

Bonaventure: An Introduction to His

Life, Thought, and Writing; Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ; Clare of Assisi: A Heart Full of Love; The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective; Franciscan Prayer; Christ in Evolution; and Ten Evenings with God. With Keith Douglass Warner, OFM; and Pamela Wood, she also co-authored *Care for Creation: [a franciscan spirituality of the earth]*.

Sister Ilia will surely bless all of us with her insights on our Franciscan way of life. Our very own Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., regional spiritual assistant, will also be with us throughout the weekend and will surely challenge us to explore

ARG continued on page 2

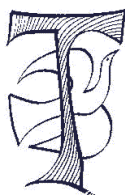


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The Four Pillars of Secular Franciscan Life

Spirituality



Formation



Fraternity



Apostolate



ARG continued from page 1

our Franciscan charism.

This ARG promises to be one of continued growth and conversion as we will have the entire weekend to spend with one another as brothers and sisters in fraternity (no elections, no visitations). Please look for registration materials around March 1. Because of the attraction of Sister Ilia as our featured speaker, we will be asking for a \$5 per person registration fee to ensure adequate space is available for anyone wishing to attend and to help the region defray any additional expenses.

**Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis
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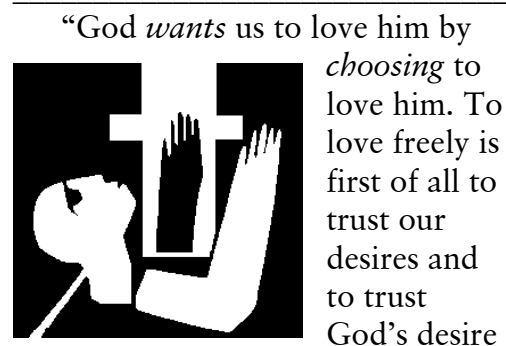
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Prayer Ministry (online prayer requests)

Harriet Sporn, SFO
Fraternity prayer coordinators
submit prayer requests

If you haven't already done so, please mark your calendars so you don't miss this exciting event. Talk it up among your brothers and sisters in fraternity and encourage everyone to attend. As our young people like to say "It will be awesome."

Jerry Rousseau, SFO, is minister of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region; he is a member of Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.



"God *wants* us to love him by choosing to love him. To love freely is first of all to trust our desires and to trust God's desire for us. Love requires faith in the lover and the ability to risk being in relationship with the other. Oftentimes we desire happiness and peace but we are afraid of new things because they require letting go of the familiar and entering the area of the unfamiliar. What will happen if I let go of what I know even though it does not bring me happiness? What will happen if I really trust God's love for me and allow God to direct my life?" (43).

Sister Ilia Delio, OSF,
Franciscan Prayer

National minister asks prayer response to Arizona tragedy

Jan. 9, 2011

Beloved National Family,

As we gather in churches, families, and fraternities this holy last Sunday of the Christmas season, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, let us pray for our brothers and sisters in Arizona and for the souls of those who have been slain: 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green, born on Sept. 11, 2001; Dorothy Morris, 76; Federal Judge John Roll, 63; Phyllis Schneck, 79; Dorwan Stoddard, 76; and Gabe Zimmerman, 30. Let us pray for U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and all of the wounded, as well as for all of us who are traumatized and depressed by this horrible act.

“The anger, the hatred, the bigotry that goes on in this country is getting to be outrageous, and unfortunately Arizona has become sort of the capital,” Clarence Dupnik, the sheriff of Pima County, Ariz., said in today’s newspaper. “We have become the mecca for prejudice and bigotry.”

Having recently participated in our National Chapter in Arizona with Sue Simeone, SFO, and all the good people of her Region, including our NAFRA Peace Award winner Brother David Buer, OFM, I cannot believe the sheriff’s words to be true; but let us

all pray in solidarity with the good people of Arizona that they and all of us in our beloved United States will be people of love and people of peace.

We can never give in to the forces of evil; rather, evil must be overcome by good through the grace of God, the sacrifice of God’s Son and the working of the Holy Spirit.

Let us never cease our prayers, never lose faith, never surrender hope, never run away from God’s command to love.

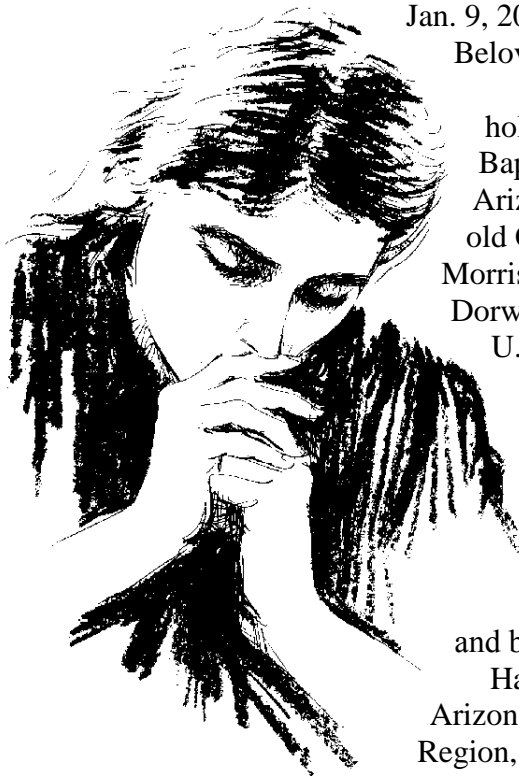
As good Franciscans, let us all continue to be instruments of God’s peace.

With love and peace,
Tom Bello, SFO, national minister
Secular Franciscan Order,
The United States of America

Deacon Tom Bello, SFO, our national minister, is a member of St. Thomas More Fraternity in the St. Margaret of Cortona Region, and is one of three spiritual assistants to that region.

“To have world peace, we must first have peace within ourselves. The idea of ‘world peace’ is abstract unless each person strives for inner peace, and this means opening ourselves to the transforming action of God’s spirit within us. As Francis grew in the love of God, he became a man of peace, becoming more sensitive to and critical of those solutions which, in the end, did not foster true peace, such as the battles between Assisi and neighboring towns. He came to see that peace flows from the river of prayer because it is the grace of the Spirit which seeps into the human heart. Francis’ mission of peace was not one of protest or demonstration; rather he sent the brothers out to announce peace and penance” (167).

Sister Ilia Delio, OSF,
Franciscan Prayer



BSSF Regional “On the Road” Formation Workshop 2011

Theme: Pre-Profession — Day of Reflection Model

By Faye Martin, SFO

I am delighted to announce the 2011 BSSF Regional “On the Road” Formation Workshop. One of the recommendations in our *BSSF Regional Formators’ Guidelines for Orientation and Initial Formation* asks each fraternity to plan a day of reflection for each Candidate before he/she Professes our *Rule*. The day of reflection is to give each Candidate the opportunity to draw aside and reflect upon his/her call and readiness to make a lifetime commitment to Profess our *Rule*. We also recommend that the day of reflection include your Professed, who can reflect upon their faithfulness to our *Rule*.

Presently, we have newly commissioned spiritual assistants, who have much to offer our Region.

Besides being available to be spiritual assistants, they help with visitations and elections. “The principal task of the assistant is to communicate Franciscan spirituality and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the brothers and sisters” (*General Constitutions*, Article 90.1). Helping with formation workshops seems another way to share their gifts. They have been asked to prepare and lead a MODEL for a Pre-Profession day of reflection. If there is a spiritual assistant with the fraternity that is hosting the formation workshop, he/she will be invited to help with the workshop.

If your fraternity/group does not have a spiritual assistant, this particular workshop will show you how to put together a day of reflection, while experiencing the day of reflection. If you have a spiritual assistant, this is also an opportunity to learn different ideas to incorporate into your day of reflection. The day of reflection is the teaching tool. What you learn you can take home, personalize, and develop a day of reflection for your Candidates and Professed. It is not meant to be a day of reflection for the local Professed and Candidates. It is a formation workshop.

Everyone is invited — especially the local ministers and formation directors. We are seeking a minimum of one representative from each fraternity/group.

The following is a list of the spiritual assistants who will be preparing and leading the formation workshop in each area:

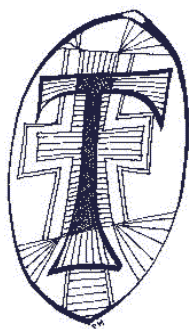
- Area 1 — Cricket Aull, SFO; Nancy Brochu, SFO; and Laura Haukaas, SFO;
- Area 2 — Audrey Binet, SFO; Pat Cowan, SFO; Joanita Nellenbach, SFO; and Barbara Smith, SFO;
- Area 3 — Kathy Taormina, SFO.

If you are able to host a spiritual assistant in your home, please get in touch with either Joanita at sfowriter@att.net or Kathy at Kathysfo@hotmail.com. Area 1 has already offered accommodations for the spiritual assistants in Area 1.

The registration form for the 2011 BSSF Regional “On the Road” Formation Workshop can be found on page 15.

Faye Martin, SFO, is regional formation director for the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region; she is a member of Channel of Peace Fraternity in Chattanooga, Tenn.





Minister's Message

"Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect. Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of the one body you have been called to that peace. Dedicate yourselves to thankfulness. Whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. Give thanks to God the Father through him"

(Colossians 3:12–15, 17).

On the weekend of Nov. 12–14, your newly elected Regional Executive Council held its first meeting. For many of us this was a time to get to know one another more fully. We chose to spend the majority of the weekend sharing with one another about "servant leadership" — for this is who we are.

The actual business part of the meeting lasted a little over three hours. Daily Mass and coming together for the Liturgy of the Hours were integral parts of our time together as were our evening socials. Cricket Aull, SFO, and Jerry Aull facilitated the majority of our gatherings. They led us through a variety of exercises, helping us look at the many ways of serving and the different focus that each of us brings to the council.

Our goal was to help us understand our differences in order to be patient and understanding of others and to work as a unified council. We discovered that many of us need things to be well-organized, some need to process things slowly, while others need to talk things out to make sure everyone has the same understanding. Yet others felt that interaction and communication were the most important, and still others believed we need to keep things enjoyable (service with a smile rather than a gloomy face). As we continued to share, we learned that deadlines, support, feedback, and clear directions are also critical to working with one another.

We accomplished our goal, I believe, and I encourage all of you to take this same approach in building fraternity on the local level. The bottom line is this: As a council and/or fraternity we must leave behind personality and behavior patterns that do not bring unity. The words of St. Paul to the Colossians, as quoted at the beginning of this message, say it best.

I wish all of you a Holy, Happy New Year. As servant leaders, when we deal with one another, may we be less ready to judge and more ready to forgive and forget the injuries done to us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thank you for your support, your communications, and your prayers. As I write this, I am on the downhill side of my radiation treatments. As this issue of *Communio* goes to press, I hope to be completing my final treatment. May God's will be done. I close with my favorite Scripture, which has sustained me for over 35 years: "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances for such is the will of God the Father in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:16–18).

Jerry

Jerry Rousseau, SFO, is minister of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region and a member of Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.

Congratulations

New Council

**Franciscan Martyrs of
Siroki Brijeg Fraternity
Blairsville, Ga., Nov. 21**

Minister: Kathi Traywick, SFO

Vice Minister:

Ralph Kwiatkowski, SFO

Secretary: Marie Diehl, SFO

Treasurer: Caroline Richbourg, SFO

Formation Director:

Jo Schilling, SFO

Councilors:

Joan Furst, SFO

Madeline Rousseau, SFO



Editor's Journal

"As a friend of mine who teaches writing always says to his class, 'If you have any choice about being here, you shouldn't be here.'"

Peter Mattheissen, author
"Zen and the Writing Life" (taped presentation)

That thought about writing could also apply to the SFO. If we really believe this is what God is asking of us, why wouldn't we be open to that call and all that it requires of us? Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., writes about openness to service and "the aha!!!! moment" (page 7). Bret Thoman, SFO, looks at epiphanies (page 9).

Also in this issue, we're including a portion of the January 2010 formation dossiers (page 18) from the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS). We'll run the first section of each month's dossier in upcoming issues. In this month's installment, we read:

With Profession, a Secular Franciscan says "yes" to a specific way of following Christ, living the Gospel in the world in the footsteps of St. Francis. This is a very personal vocation. Indeed, Profession is a very personal answer to God's love and grace. Every Secular Franciscan is called to be an active member in a worldwide "team" (called Fraternity or Order) to build up the body of Christ which is the Church.

I celebrated my 12th anniversary of Profession on Dec. 12, and I find it helps me to remind myself *exactly* what I said "yes" to. Along with the other members of my Fraternity, I renew my commitment each year during the Transitus, but I wanted to go deeper; so, several years ago I started a personal tradition.

Ritual in hand I arrive at the church a half hour or so before Mass. Starting with the introduction, I read and meditate on the entire Rite of Profession. In this private meditation, "you" becomes "I."

For example, during the questioning, the presider asks, "Do you wish to embrace the gospel way of life ...?" Now it becomes, "Do *I* wish to embrace the gospel way of life by following the example and words of St. Francis of Assisi, which are at the heart of the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order?"

This is what I said I wanted when I made Profession. How well have I lived it? Maybe fairly well. Maybe not so much. I'll never be perfect, but in saying, "Yes, this is what I want," I promise to try to be more faithful.

Even the prayers can be prayed in the first person: "Lord, watch over me, your servant. May the Spirit of your love penetrate my heart. ..." Likewise with the gifts. As I look at the ambo, from which the Gospel is proclaimed, at the candles on the altar, the crucifix, and my ring (which features the Franciscan coat of arms), I personalize all of these.

We're united in one worldwide Order, but CIOFS is right: it's also "a very personal vocation ... a very personal answer to God's love and grace." Reflecting on the Rite of Profession can powerfully remind us of that.

Pace e bene
Joanita

Joanita M. Nellenbach, SFO, is Communio editor. She is a member of St. Francis of the Hills Fraternity in Hendersonville, N.C., and spiritual assistant to Franciscan Martyrs of Siroki Brijeg Fraternity in Blairsville, Ga.

Our regional spiritual assistant offers

Words of wisdom to the new Council

Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., wrote prior to the council's retreat and first meeting, Nov. 12–14:

Jerry and my Sisters and Brothers,

May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts!

As you look around, you see your sisters and brothers serving in different capacities. Some of you can remember when those “different capacities” were not in the room. The complexions and activities of the fraternities in the region in the mid- to late '90s were simple and solitary; each fraternity functioned independently. It was the exception when fraternities came together for a retreat. Visitations were viewed as, “THEY are coming!” Fraternal and pastoral visitors were



viewed skeptically and at times as an intrusion. Region was a new entity, and National was on the other side of the world. Things have changed.

My Sisters and Brothers, you are to be commended. You have stretched, worked outside the box, taken on greater responsibilities with new constructs — area councilors, spiritual assistants, workshops — and have seen the Annual Regional Gathering outgrow three venues. You have faced and continue to contend with challenging moments with fraternities, made monumental adjustments to the formation program, expanded the retreat opportunities, engaged the youth-and-young-adult facet

of the Secular Franciscan Order. Much has been done, and there is so much more to do — and that's what I want to address.

In any organization which grows exponentially and provides a plethora of opportunities there are two possible responses: Enough! Or, Why more?

To say “enough” is to speak quantitatively, by the numbers: “Look at HOW MUCH we have.” That is not why you have done what you have done. You realize the interconnectedness of people and programs. We all need structures, although at times we may balk; but we know we need them. Not all of us appreciate them, and sometimes we grudgingly embrace them; but in faith we ultimately realize the value of them even though initially the fit may be a bit tight!

Why more? To assist you “to bring to fulfillment what God has begun in us.” — St. Paul. “I have done what was mine to do, and now you must do what it is yours to do.” — St. Francis. You witness the value of the constructs put in place for good reasons. You come to understand the need for and worth of the mosaic. And, as you know, as each piece is put in place, there are “trailers,” elements which contribute to and complete the picture and construct.

I will cite the latest new element: SFOs as spiritual assistants. They have already served as pastoral visitors; some are spiritual assistants to fraternities. Currently, they continue to develop their skills in presenting in workshops, retreats, and formation. With their experience, they will add another dimension to the breath of insight and energy provided to the Region.

This all takes time, patience, energy, understanding — to cite a few virtues — to effect a

good inclusion. That's the challenge, and the payoff is a deeper and greater appreciation for the gifts demonstrated. Often, we do not readily see the connection; but with time, experience, openness, and a willing heart, we have the aha!!!! moment.

So, why all this? I know you've done it before, and you most likely will do it again. Embrace it as a new venture. Challenge yourselves to make it fresh. See those brothers and sisters who may be difficult as gifts to be refined, instructed, fed, listened to, capable of having a deep abiding Franciscan identity. And with this you will say, "I have done what was mine to do!"

My Sisters and Brothers, while we have time, let us do good!

*Peace and all good things,
Fr. Linus*

Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Province, USA, which has its headquarters in Ellicott City, Md. He is Catholic chaplain at Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y.

From our national minister:

Speaking of family

Beloved National Family,

Happy feast of the Holy Family, on the second day of Christmas in the Christmas Octave from my snowed-in family at my mom's house in Raleigh, N.C., to your family wherever you are gathered this white Christmas Sunday evening of the Holy Family!

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has said, "The family is the privileged setting where every person learns to give and receive love. ... My beloved predecessor Pope John Paul II said that 'man has been made in the image and likeness of God not only by his being human, but also by the communion of the persons that man and woman have formed since the beginning. They become the image of God, not so much in their aloneness as in their communion' (*Catechesis*, Nov. 14, 1979). ... The family is an intermediate institution between individuals and society, and nothing can completely take its place."

As I wrote to all of you in my Annual Report (Oct. 4, 2010): "Although all of us by our baptisms are called to holiness, and our lives in fraternity are empty if we are not pursuing a life of holiness, still, our essential Secular Franciscan call is to pursue holiness together in fraternity.

"The local fraternity is to be established canonically," Article 22 of our *Rule* reads. "It becomes the basic unit of the whole Order and a visible sign of the Church, the community of love. This should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members."

Thus, the "basic unit" of our Order is NOT the individual but "the local fraternity." In Article 2 of our *Rule* we note: "The Secular Franciscan Order ... 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.”

The *General Constitutions*’ Article 3:3, perhaps says this even more clearly: “The vocation to the SFO is a vocation to live the Gospel in fraternal communion. For this purpose, the members of the SFO gather in ecclesial communities which are called fraternities.”

When our fraternities are truly communities of love, “holy families,” we will attract new lives and nourish the lives already there gathered. That is my prayer on this white and snowy Sunday night to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph for all of our local, regional and national fraternities, and for our international fraternity, as well.

May the Lord give us and all our families Peace and Love and Joy,
Tom

Deacon Tom Bello, SFO, our national minister, is a member of St. Thomas More Fraternity in the St. Margaret of Cortona Region, and is one of three spiritual assistants to that region.

The Epiphany of the True Kingdom

By Bret Thoman, SFO

The term *epiphany* comes from the Greek word, *epiphaneia*. It means to manifest or reveal; however, a more common understanding of the word is that of a sudden realization or comprehension of the larger essence or meaning of something.

In our Catholic tradition, the feast of the Epiphany is observed on Jan. 6. Although Luke’s Gospel goes into more detail on the birth and infancy of Jesus, it is Matthew who recounts the arrival of the Magi — the Wise Men or kings, possibly astrologers — from Persia (today Iran) who brought gifts to the Christ Child. In this encounter, the divine nature of Jesus was “manifested” to the gentiles, and Jesus was “revealed” to worldly kings as heavenly Lord and true King.

When we examine the lives of Francis and Clare, we can see numerous epiphanies, especially in the life of Francis. In fact, a look at the early part of his conversion reveals one epiphany after the other. Francis’s first strong divine revelation happened on the way to Southern Italy to join several knights to fight in a Crusade. While overnighing in Spoleto, he had a vivid dream in which he heard a voice. He was asked if it was better to



follow the Lord or the servant. In that event, the true Lord was revealed to Francis when he realized that, indeed, he had been serving human lords: his father, knightly commanders, even himself. The voice then ordered Francis to return to Assisi where more would be revealed.

He immediately began praying fervently, giving away possessions to the poor, and mortifying his body.

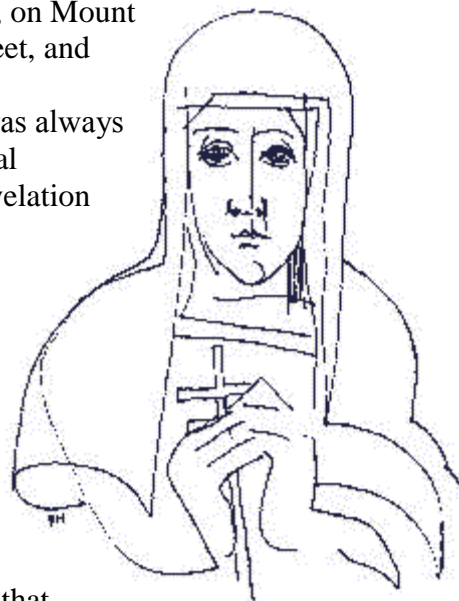
However, the most pivotal part of his conversion was when he was forced to face what he loathed most. On his way back to Assisi after visiting some family property near Rivortorto, Francis crossed paths with a leper. He had always abhorred being in the presence of lepers, who were outcasts in his era. However, Francis later wrote in his “Testament” that his penance (conversion) began when he met and submitted himself in service to the leper — the lowliest of the low. In the leper, Jesus revealed himself to Francis as the crucified Lord.

A short time later, still more was revealed to him in the little church of San

Damiano. Jesus on the crucifix instructed him to rebuild his house. Francis realized his life's mission in that command and set to work on the restoration of San Damiano. Only later would he realize the universal implications of that order when his movement would aid in the spiritual rebuilding of the entire Catholic Church. In San Damiano, the crucifixion of Christ was internally manifested on Francis's soul; some 20 years later, on Mount La Verna, it would be manifested externally on his hands, feet, and side in the reception of the stigmata.

Clare's epiphanies may seem a bit more subtle, as she was always deeply devoted even as a child and never underwent a radical conversion like Francis. However, she referred to a deep revelation when she felt her vocation. After a series of meetings with Francis (according to the "Legend of St. Clare"), she felt compelled to leave her father's house to enter religious life as a follower of Francis. In those meetings, she realized that she was not called to marry, as was her father's and uncle's wish, but was called to live radical poverty by following Francis. In her "Testament," she said that she received from God "the enlightenment to do penance according to the example and teaching of Francis."

Through the example of Francis, she realized that she, too, was called to poverty and would spend her life in pursuit of that calling.



We know of the stories of Francis and Clare, and we revere them. Our own stories are no less important. If we have been baptized and have begun our own faith journey, God has been revealing himself to us. In the end, the lives of the saints — their stories, experiences, their epiphanies — are useful to us as mirrors. Through the saints, we can look at ourselves and compare their stories and epiphanies to our own. We will see how God has often revealed himself in a similar manner, or in a very unique way. But as believers, ultimately we are all headed towards the same goal: the full and complete revelation of our Lord when we arrive in heaven.

Bret Thoman, SFO, is a member of Immaculate Conception Fraternity in Jonesboro, Ga., and director of St. Francis Pilgrimages.

The 2011 H2O Project

A letter from the National Franciscan
Youth/Young Adult Council of the SFO — USA



January 7, 2011

Dear Franciscan Youth and Young Adults, Secular Franciscans,
and all those interested,

Peace be with you! As we celebrate the feast day of Blessed Angela of Foligno, a woman who, after her conversion, worked tirelessly for the weak and poor, we present to you the SFO Franciscan Youth/Young Adult Lenten 2011 H2O Project.

Catholic Relief Services will receive the 2011 H2O Project

donations to provide clean drinking water in Haiti.

Many of you throughout the United States have participated in this project to bring clean drinking water to youth around the world, especially those in most need. In 2010, for the Kenya Water Project, we collected \$20,831.54 by fasting and donating in! National and international tragedies only underscore the world's need for clean, safe drinking water. This one project can be our way of providing some of that needed water.

2010 Top 5 Regions
Saint Francis — \$8,598.99
Solanus Casey — \$2,878.00
Troubadours of Peace — \$1,697.75
Tau Cross — \$1,502.00
Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis — \$1,075.05

We challenge you and your fraternities to not only *donate* but to *participate* in this project. By fasting from all beverages except water, we get a truer idea of how important clean water is to our brothers and sisters around the world. We who participate in the project experience solidarity with the poor, a solidarity that is called for in our Franciscan charism.

There are two new ways to donate to The H2O Project in 2011. This project is a restricted account, so we can accept donations anytime, all through the year. The first new way is to give monthly or quarterly. Donations received after June 1, 2011, however, will be donated as part of the 2012 H2O Project. The second way is to “*Donate in Memory*,” which allows donations to be made in memory of a person, group, or event. For example, you can “Donate in Memory of Mary Elizabeth on the date of her Solemn Profession”; or, “In Memory of Blessed Angela of Foligno Fraternity’s 35th Anniversary.” A certificate stating this donation will be mailed to the address you provide.

We ask you to consider joining us this year. You can find more information on The H2O Project’s Web site (www.theh2oproject.org). If you have further questions, e-mail SFO-H2O@hotmail.com.

As the project Web site video states, “We all gave it up so we could all give it away!” Help our Council to give it away this year to those who need it the most!

Elaine Hedtke, SFO
National Vice Minister



“I was thirsty and you gave me drink” Matthew 25:35

LENT 2011

Change the world in two weeks!
Taking the Challenge (see next page)

The H2O Project is a Franciscan Youth fund-raising event to help create clean water for youth and their families most in need.

Franciscan Youth groups and SFO fraternities around the United States will join to bring clean water to those most in need.

THE PROBLEM

- Women and children walk 2 hours each way to fetch water (hauling dirty water back to their families). They have no time or energy left for education or small businesses, and many of them die.
- Preventable water-related diseases kill one child every 15 seconds. That's 8,000 every day (and that's just the children).

Imagine if that many precious ones were dying in the United States!

**THE SOLUTION****Take the H2O Challenge!**

- For 2 weeks (or the time of your choosing) make water your only beverage. Record your savings on The H2O Project Savings Scorecard (page 13).
- Contribute the money you would have spent at the soda machine and coffee shop toward the drilling of clean-water wells.
 - Is it a sacrifice to give up your milk, coffee, soda, etc. for 2 weeks?
 - Will you be changing someone else's life forever? Absolutely.
- What does The H2O Project get out of it? Financially, absolutely nothing, but they get the joy of knowing they have helped you (and many like you) make a difference.

THE PROCESS

- Pick one 14-day period during Lent.
 - Follow the instructions.
- Start fasting! Start saving! Save the children!

TO SEND THE MONEY COLLECTED

- **Make all checks payable to: NAFRA.**
You must note on the check memo the name of the Fraternity and the name of the Region.

- Mail ALL checks by **May 1, 2011** to:

**NAFRA – H2O PROJECT
920 Whitney Drive
Apple Valley, MN 55124**

- If you or your fraternity wants a **RECEIPT**, make sure you have a legible return address to mail the receipt. Money collected in this way will be credited to our endeavor (*please do not send checks directly to The H2O Project*), and it will then be donated by sending one check in the name of the Franciscan Youth of the USA.

AS FRANCISCANS, YOU CAN BE OF TREMENDOUS HELP IF YOU WILL:

- Encourage your youth and members as they deny themselves for the sake of others.
- Add any savings you see in your grocery bill to their cup banks before Collection Day. Better still, join them in this time of sacrifice, and add your own savings to theirs.
- Pray for THE H2O PROJECT and for the many communities waiting for a well.

Just do it, so you can say,

"WE ALL GAVE IT UP SO WE COULD ALL GIVE IT AWAY!"

QUESTIONS? Contact SFO-H2O@hotmail.com

The H2O Project Savings Scorecard

Beverage	Cost Per Serving	X	Week 1 fast	Week 2 fast	=	Savings
Milk — home, 8 oz.	\$.25					\$
Milk — restaurant	\$1.50					\$
Soda — home, can	\$.50					\$
Soda — restaurant	\$2.00					\$
Soda — machine	\$1.25					\$
Juice — home, 8 oz.	\$.50					\$
Juice — restaurant	\$2.00					\$
Juice — convenience store	\$1.50					\$
Sports Drink — conv. store	\$2.00					\$
Coffee — home	\$.25					\$
Coffee — Shop, small	\$2.00					\$
Coffee — Specialty, small	\$3.50					\$
Other						\$

MY contribution \$ _____

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS REGION
SCHEDULE OF VISITATIONS AND ELECTIONS (PROPOSED)**

* confirmed

V+ follow-up visit

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>V/E</u>	<u>FRATERNAL / PASTORAL VISITORS</u>
<u>2010</u>			
Nov. 21*	Blairsville, GA	E	Willie Guadalupe & John Knippel / Joanita Nellenbach
Dec. 12*	Duluth, GA (EC)	V+	Willie Guadalupe / Nancy Brochu
Dec. 18*	Greenville, SC	V	Jerry Rousseau / Joanita Nellenbach
Dec/Jan	Decatur, AL (EC)	V+	Christine Washington / Nancy Brochu
<u>2011</u>			
Jan. 16*	Knoxville, TN (NFG)	V	Faye Martin / Pat Cowan
Feb. 5*	Hilton Head, SC	E	Charles Meyer Jr. / Audrey Binet
Mar. 13*	Chattanooga, TN	E	John Knippel / Kathy Taormina
Apr. 9*	No. Charleston, SC	E	Jerry Rousseau /
Apr. 10	St. Simons, GA	V	Jerry Rousseau /
Apr. 12*	Winston Salem, NC	V	Paula Zanker / Pat Wilkerson
Apr. 17*	Wilmington, NC	V	Jerry Rousseau & Frank Massey / Pat Wilkerson
Apr/May	Garden City, SC (EC)	V+	Judy Haupt / Joanita Nellenbach
May 1	Aiken, SC	V	Sara Nell Boggs / Audrey Binet
May 1*	Greensboro, NC	E	Jane Sullivan / Pat Cowan

ARG July 22-24, 2011: Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, featured speaker

Possible Canonical Establishments in 2011:

Duluth, GA
Athens, GA

Decatur, AL
Conyers, GA

Formation Book Review

The Unfolding of God's Will



The Wisdom of the Poverello by Eloi Leclerc. Franciscan Herald Press, (1961).
Now Available As: *The Wisdom of the Poor One of Assisi* by Eloi Leclerc;
Marie-Louise Johnson, M.D., translator. Hope Publishing House (Pasadena,
Calif., 1996). 116 pp. Hardcover, \$15.95; Paperback, \$8.95; Kindle edition, \$8.50.

By Faye Martin, SFO

At one of last year's formation workshops, we received a comment that Francis would be scandalized with our formation program. I believe Francis would understand that comment because he experienced similar feelings about the First Order.

I would like to offer some thoughts from the book, *The Wisdom of the Poverello*, by Father Eloi Leclerc, OFM, for anyone who finds it a challenge to accept changes in the Secular Franciscan Order.

The book begins at the end of a Chapter of Mats. Francis spent many months trying to bring his brothers back to their vocation. Father Eloi writes, "When they were together at the last general chapter, he had told them clearly what was on his mind." Francis quickly realized that he and those who had their own visions for the Order "were no longer speaking the same language." His deteriorating health greatly lessened his ability to deal with conflicts. A spirit of painful failure filled Francis. Father Eloi writes that Francis and Brother Leo sought the mountain, where they could "fast and pray until the Lord took pity on him and deigned to show his face."

During this time of solitude, Father Eloi writes, "it seemed to Francis that God was alienated from him and he wondered if he had not presumed on his own strength ... Into this supplication he poured his entire soul, for he was expressing his overpowering desire to know the will of God for him ... He thought he had submitted to God's directions —and yet he had found failure."

Shortly before the next Chapter of Mats, Brother Tancred hiked to the mountain to explain to Francis the changes happening in the Order. He begged Francis to go to the meeting and "impose himself, by speaking in a loud and forceful voice and by threatening sanctions. You must resist them directly."

Francis responded, "The Lord has made it clear to me. The future of the Order is His affair. ... As for me; the Lord has not asked me to convince men by force of eloquence or knowledge, and much less to constrain them."

He continued, "One day we are jarred by failure, a profound failure, and the only thing left to us is this prodigious reality: God is. We discover that He alone is All Powerful. He alone is All Holy and God. The man who accepts God in this way is capable of truly accepting himself. ... He made me see that the highest activity of man and of his maturity does not rest in the pursuit of an idea, however lofty and holy it may be, but in the humble acceptance of whatever is — of all that is."

Francis's time with God made him realize that the Order was, is, and always will be God's Order. His role will always be as our saint, our founder, and our prophet. He left us with the parting words, that he "had done what was his to do; now we are to find what is ours to do."

Knowing that the Order belongs to God, it seems conceivable that as the Secular Franciscan Order evolves, it is proving to be more gifted than what was originally realized or anticipated. The only way we will know if this is God's will for our Order is to begin the journey.

"Let us take thought of our vocation. God in his mercy has called us to it not so much for our sake as for the sake of the many." — St. Francis of Assisi.

Faye Martin, SFO, is regional formation director of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region and a member of Channel of Peace Fraternity in Chattanooga, Tenn.

BSSF Regional "on the road" Formation Workshop, 2011**Registration Form**

Everyone is Welcome!

Cost per person: \$15.00

Please check the Workshop that you will be attending.

_____ Area 3 - Saturday, March 26, @ Blessed Sacrament Catholic School, 515 Hillcrest St.
Burlington, NC 27215

_____ Area 1- Saturday, April 2, @ St. Jude Catholic Church, Family Life Center Bldg.,
930 Ashland Terrace, Chattanooga, TN 37415

_____ Area 2 - Saturday, May 28, @ St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, 161 Dean St.,
Spartanburg, SC 29302-1516

Name of Fraternity/Group and name and e-mail address of contact person listed first:

Names for Registration

1. Contact Person _____ E-Mail Address _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Enclose \$15 per person. That covers the cost of meals and handouts. Make your check payable to **BSSF Region**.
Send your completed registration form and payment ONE WEEK before date of workshop and mail to:

Faye Martin, SFO
6940 River Run Dr.
Chattanooga, TN 37416

Following St. Francis in the secular world

By Jason Morrow

Throughout my life I've been in a slow and steady state of conversion. As far back as I can remember I've been searching for a way to fill the emptiness that comes with confusion and a weak spiritual life. That quest has led me to the Secular Franciscan Order.

I was raised in a nonreligious environment, but I attended many different religious services with friends on occasion when invited. In my late teens I began searching more diligently to find my faith and learn more of the fullness of truth. From my limited past experiences, I felt the pull of Christianity more than any other religious faith I had witnessed.

In the mid-'90s, a friend and neighbor invited me to attend Sunday Mass with her. I had never been to a Roman Catholic Mass, so I was excited about the new experience. That Sunday I walked into The Church of the Good Shepherd in Cumming, Ga., and found what I had been searching for. It is hard to put into words, but I felt more at peace and at home participating in that Mass than I had ever felt during any other religious service I had experienced.

So began my new journey, which was to follow my now less empty heart and become Catholic. At that time I was extremely hungry for knowledge of the faith. I had some of the basics of Christianity down, but there was so much more to learn. The very friendly and welcoming community of Good Shepherd provided me with the guidance I so badly needed. Through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), reading many books, the direction of multiple sponsors, and the grace of God, I came to know much more of the truth I sought.

The empty feeling inside me lessened, then disappeared. April 15, 1995, was a whirlwind. I was baptized, confirmed, and received first Holy Communion at that Easter Vigil.

Now I came upon a new mystery: What was God's plan for me? How was I to serve him and others? I learned about discernment, through that process I discovered that God wanted me to marry and have children. I also learned what my stronger talents were and what I wanted to do as a career. Later, I found who would become my wife, and I experienced yet another sacrament.

I figured my conversion was mostly over or would at least slow down. I felt the need to live my faith more actively than just going to Mass each week.

Not being a cradle Catholic, I was not familiar with lay membership in religious orders. I thought that religious orders were not available vocations for married men and women. I was wrong again and kept coming back to one Order that peaked my interest and sounded a bit like what I already held up as rules to live by: the Order that St. Francis of Assisi founded 800 years ago; its secular branch is now called the Secular Franciscan Order.

My first step was visiting the Web site (www.nafra-sfo.org) of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order. There I found the contact information I needed. I soon received a reply providing me with information on a local fraternity I could visit. After a quick call and a few e-mails with the chosen leader, I resolved to visit the next monthly meeting of the Stigmata of St. Francis, Emerging Community, in Duluth, Ga.

Right away I was welcomed during my visit and provided information about the Orientation Phase of formation, which would help me to learn more about the Order. They readily fed my



hunger for knowledge about Franciscan spirituality.

That was about two years ago. Since that first visit and my participation with the Community I've discerned much about what God's path is for me. I have grown in my faith, and I can say that I live much more of a Gospel-oriented life.

Along the way I became motivated to apply my talents for my SFO Community. Since I work in the information security and technology field, I knew I could build an Internet presence for the Community to help bring the members together online and share what I was learning about Franciscan spirituality. Perhaps that online presence

(<http://www.stigmataofstfrancis.org> and <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=188502352224&ref=ts>) will help bring others to "gospel to life and life to the gospel" (SFO Rule, Article 4).

Now I am in the Inquiry Phase of formation and look forward to the next phase, which will be Candidacy. My conversion continues, and I realize that it will not stop as long as I live. That is comforting to me: Always learning, growing, changing, and hopefully living more like Christ in the secular world.

Jason Morrow is an Inquirer in Stigmata of St. Francis, Emerging Community, in Duluth, Ga.

Congratulations

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity

Sept. 11 — New Candidates

Richard Herdegen, SFO
Denise Hickey, SFO,
Barbara Ouellette, SFO,
Renee Strunk, SFO

Nov. 6 — New Inquirers

Susan McArthur
Steve Urban
Toshiko Urban

Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Fraternity

Jan. 8 — Newly Professed

Dan Cronin, SFO
Cathy Kenney, SFO

Regional Executive Council meeting summary

By Christine Washington, SFO

The newly elected Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council met for the first time at Living Waters Catholic Reflection Center in Maggie Valley, N.C., the weekend of Nov. 12-14.

Minister Jerry Rousseau, SFO, told us the primary focus for us as Franciscans in our gatherings is prayer, followed by formation, socialization, and business. He asked the area councilors to request that the fraternities let him know when they plan a Profession, so he can attend.

The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order — USA (NAFRA) is attempting to make its database more user-friendly. We discussed the NAFRA database and its ramifications for the fraternities in our region.

Each of the area councilors reported on his or her particular area.

In the formation director's report, Faye Martin, SFO, received approval for a workshop on a day of reflection for formation directors and ministers for each area. This 2011 schedule will help our fraternities start considering doing a day of reflection for our Candidates. The spiritual assistants in each area will facilitate the workshops. Faye hopes that experiencing such a day will be a model for the participants of how to do a day of reflection.

In the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation report Jon Strickland, SFO, JPIC coordinator, distributed a vision statement for JPIC. The council approved the purchase of the "Care for Creation" (C4C) program with a facilitator's book on *Total Creation*. Any local fraternity that wants to use the program will contact Jon for the sections needed.

Willie Guadalupe, SFO, from Area 1; Sara Nell Boggs, SFO, from Area 2; and Paula Zanker, SFO, from Area 3, volunteered to work with Judy Haupt, SFO, on the ARG 2011 committee. The theme will be “Living an Evangelical Life: A Call to BE.” Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, will be the main speaker. The ARG will be held July 22-24 at the Ridgecrest Conference Center, Ridgecrest, N.C.

Jerry will ask Father Linus DeSantis, OFM Conv., our regional spiritual assistant, to recommend a spiritual assistant be appointed to the council to represent the spiritual assistants.

The council reappointed Joanita Nellenbach, SFO, as editor of *Communio*.

Jerry Aull and Cricket Aull, SFO, led a retreat for the new council. They helped us focus on our roles as servant leaders in our Region. We also focused on our relationships with each other. In other exercises, we looked at our individual needs as council members. This allowed us to let others know what we needed from them to get our individual jobs done. We also looked at affirming the good in each other.

We had a wonderful weekend of laughter and a growing appreciation of each other as fellow servant leaders of our Franciscan family and are looking forward to our next gathering, Feb. 12–13 in Spartanburg, S.C.

Christine Washington, SFO, is the secretary of the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Regional Executive Council and a member of St. Joseph of Cupertino Fraternity in Bessemer, Ala.

PRESIDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER (CIOFS)



ONGOING FORMATION PROJECT

From MONTHLY DOSSIER for JANUARY 2010

SECTION I: MONTHLY THEME

Topic I: Profession in the SFO

Based on Father Felice Cangelosi's keynote address to the 2008 SFO General Chapter, n. 7-9
Ewald Kreuzer, SFO

Introduction

The brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order make their Profession during a specific celebration according to the *Ritual* proper to the SFO. This celebration constitutes the foundational moment of the identity of the Professed. Profession is God's action and a saving event. It enables the brothers and sisters to make a promise to live the Franciscan Gospel life and to produce in them particular effects of grace within the people of God. The celebration reflects the Church's understanding of Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order.

Summary of *Profession in the SFO: Gift and Commitment*, by Father Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap., (n. 7-9) and comments

n.7. Both the Constitutions and the Ritual insist on a baptism-Profession relationship.

Membership and Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order aim to help persons “live their baptismal grace and consecration with greater intensity of commitment and diligence” (SFO Ritual 12).

Profession produces particular effects on the supernatural organism of a Christian, generated by baptism. Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order has been defined as the “Memorial of

Baptism,” as a movement from the past to the present by which that which happened in the past is now made present and efficacious through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through Profession the implicit potential of baptism is made explicit and brought to fulfillment.

The Profession both of religious and of Secular Franciscans should be considered as an epiphany or manifestation of baptism. In the celebration of Profession the specific Secular Franciscan vocation, sealed by the strengthening action of the Spirit, *enriches* the baptised person and confers on him/her a fullness of being by which to bear witness to Christ and for the building up of the body of the Church.

Baptism is the visible sign of the beginning of a “new life” in Christ. With Profession, a Secular Franciscan says “yes” to a specific way of following Christ, living the Gospel in the world in the footsteps of St. Francis. This is a very personal vocation. Indeed, Profession is a very personal answer to God’s love and grace. Every Secular Franciscan is called to be an active member in a worldwide “team” (called Fraternity or Order) to build up the body of Christ which is the Church.

n. 8. The Christian’s fundamental **relationship with the Church** is established by baptism, since baptism incorporates into the People of God, which is the body of Christ, the sons and daughters engendered by water and the Holy Spirit. Profession gives rise to a new relationship with the Church, or rather, the basic baptismal relationship, renewed and perfected in confirmation, is made “stronger” and “closer.”

Profession in the Secular Franciscan Order develops and intensifies that relationship in the person who is baptised and confirmed. While no different from that of any baptised and confirmed person, the depth of relationship of a Professed Secular Franciscan with the Church is stronger and closer.

In the world of today, we can hear people saying: “Jesus yes, Church no.” Many are disappointed about the Church, the pope, and the priests — they criticize how Christians practice their faith in daily life. These voices are a challenge for us as Secular Franciscans. The Church is the “body of Christ” — all of us — and if one part is suffering, the whole body suffers. Let us follow St. Francis and rebuild together the Church, practicing what we said at our Profession: “to give witness to the Kingdom of God and to build a more fraternal world based on the Gospel together with all people of good will” (SFO Ritual, page 21).

n. 9. The concern of the *Rule*, the *Constitutions*, and the *Ritual* is to highlight the need to live as authentic members of the Church, in line with the stronger and closer bond established with the Church by Profession. This is above all a bond of communion; and this is the fundamental element in the Church, which has to be affirmed in actual everyday life.

The duty **to give witness**, to which Secular Franciscans are destined first by baptism and then by Profession, flows precisely from the innermost essence of the Church, which is a communion of faith and love. The insistence of the *Rule* and *Constitutions* on bearing witness should alert the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order more and more to the fact that their existence in the Church is justified only by the authenticity of their lives. The brothers and sisters of penance are asked to offer, constantly and in all the circumstances of their lives, the supreme proof of their fidelity to God, to give an account to the world of the hope that is in them, to witness in an unmistakable way their faithfulness to the covenant established with the Church

and the fraternity from the moment of their Profession.

*Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today
He has no feet but our feet to lead men in the way
He has no tongue but our tongue to tell men how He died
He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.*

*We are the only Bible the careless world will read,
We are the sinner's gospel; we are the scoffer's creed;
We are the Lord's last message, given in word and deed;
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?*

*What if our hands are busy with other work than His?
What if our feet are walking where sin's allurements is?
What if our tongue is speaking of things His lips would spurn?
How can we hope to help Him or welcome His return?*

Poem by Annie Johnston Flint

Questions for reflection and discussion in fraternity

1. Why is the basic baptismal relationship with the Church of a Professed Secular Franciscan made “stronger” and “closer” by Professing in the SFO?
2. What are some of the consequences of professing in the SFO?
3. Is the SFO Profession a work of man or of God?
4. Why is Profession not a private celebration but a public and ecclesial act?

*Father Felice Cangelosi, OFM Cap., is general vicar of the Province of Messina, Italy.
Ewald Kreuzer, SFO, of Austria, was elected in 2008 as presidential (international) councilor
for the German-speaking areas of the Secular Franciscan Order.*

The complete monthly dossier is available at www.ciofs.or/en.htm.
For January 2010:

SECTION II: SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

Topic 1: “The Baptism of the Lord.

The SFO Profession builds upon our baptism.”

SECTION III: SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Block 1: “Pope Benedict XVI Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace:
If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation.”

*Father Amando Trujillo Cano, TOR, who wrote these sections, is CIOFS general spiritual
assistant for the Third Order Regular. He is a member of the Province of St. Mary of
Guadalupe, Mexico.*