

The Doorkeeper's Notebook

A Publication of the
Fr. Solanus Casey Regional Fraternity
"Blessed Be God in All His Designs"

Winter 2008



Apostolic Commissions to JPIC An Evolution

At the NAFRA annual meeting in October 2006, the Regional Ministers and National Executive Council passed a motion to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to re-vision the Apostolic Commissions.

Through prayer and study, the Ad Hoc Committee discerned that a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) model, would, at this time, best serve the SFO in fostering greater understanding and living of the Gospel.

The current Apostolic Commissions vision statements and missions will be rewritten into one statement giving a deeper understanding of our apostolic life and a single website will be developed.

The intention of this change is to renew the vision of who we are called to be.

"In the spirit of conversion, they should live out their love for the renewal of the Church, which should be accompanied by personal and communal renewal. The fruits of conversion, which is a response to the love of God, as works of charity in the interactions with the brothers and sisters."

SFO General Constitutions, Article 13.2

The structure of the Apostolic Commissions, therefore, will cease in its current form. At the National level, a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) team (up to 4 persons) will be established with a keen awareness of Articles 14-19 of the SFO Rule and of the social issues before the USCCB. JPIC team members will be appointed by the National Executive Council after a review of resumes. The term of service is three years with a second three-year term possible. For more information, or to submit a resume for consideration, please contact Sarah Mulholland, National Secretary, at sarahmai@aol.com.

**Fr. Solanus Casey
Regional**

Chapter 2008

PLAN TO ATTEND
**Saturday
April 19th**

**All professed members are
welcomed to attend and
greet our visitors from the
National Executive Council**

**Patrick Mendes, SFO
National Minister**

**Fr. Kevin Queally, TOR
Spiritual Assistant**

**Fraternity Ministers
will receive detailed information
to share with their members**

Answering the Call—Prison Ministry

by Otto K. Schaefer, SFO

This all began over two years ago while I was the Formation Director for our Solanus Casey Region. I began receiving letters, which were forwarded to me by other fraternities and Secular Franciscans, concerning a group of men who were incarcerated at Sullivan Correctional Facility in Fallsburg, New York. They were requesting that a Secular Franciscan come to their facility and conduct a formation program. I tried for many months to find an SFO to perform this work but I was not successful. I convinced myself that someone else should do this work and that the prison was too far away (about 65 miles from my house). I had a number of other excuses why I should not be the one. After receiving about five letters (all of which were not addressed to me), I decided that I would make a trip to the facility, meet the men and the catholic chaplain Fr. Stan Ogbonna. Well, I have been going just about every month since that initial visit and the Holy Spirit, after many pushes, has directed me to the place that I can be of the most help at this time in my life.

I began with five men with monthly gatherings and formation classes using the "Catch Me a Rainbow Too" text. We meet in the prison chapel and the men gather for discussions of living the "Gospel Life" several times just prior to each of my visits. The men clearly understand that I do not have permission to admit or profess them but I have promised to pursue a more formal program. The group that we call "Friends of Francis" has expanded from the initial five to eleven men and we have had several men who have been transferred and/or paroled. Included in this group of men are two Secular Franciscans who were professed in prison many years ago. One of them had written greater than eighty letters over a period of years (of which I indirectly received the five I mentioned earlier) in order to find an SFO to teach formation classes. For the man that has been paroled, I have contacted the spiritual assistant for a fraternity in the location where he was paroled so that a he could

continue his formation, when he was prepared to do so.

The men continue to translate their formation from words and lessons into action. They assist Fr. Stan, the chaplain at the prison with catholic programs, held a day of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on October 4, 2006 praying for the intentions of other inmates and those of several SFO fraternities. They did this again in 2007. It was extremely amazing the reactions of my own fraternity members when I asked them to fill out prayer requests for the prisoners. Many of them thought that they would be praying for the prisoners rather than the prisoners praying for them. In addition they supported the children's Christmas Party at the Cardinal Hayes Home in Millbrook, New York by making cartoon paintings for each of the children. They perform many other acts within the prison including monthly videos and coffee and pastries after Mass.

In the summer of 2006, I met with the chaplain of the Downstate Correctional Facility in order to discuss a letter, which I received indirectly from Harry Harned, our region's Minister, who had received it from the SFO National Secretary. It was from a man in that facility requesting SFO formation classes. After my meeting with the chaplain, I gave him a copy of "Catch Me a Rainbow Too" and told him that I would pursue finding an individual to work at his facility. There is a clear need being shown by the regular and consistent participation of the men at Sullivan and also from this request from Downstate. I'm still praying for the help of the Holy Spirit, so that someone will be inspired to become involved in this important ministry.

We had a special gathering the month of November 2006, which included Br. Jack Moylan, OSF (Chaplain for NY State Prisons) who participated in the formation class and donated a book and video to our group's library. Br. Jack was impressed with the dedication of these men as well as their sharing during the forma-

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Attention Fraternity Ministers:
Report change in your mailing
address or change in the
number of newsletters required
for your fraternity to the
Distribution Manager.

Humility

by Fr. Matthias Wesnofske, OFM, Cap., Regional Spiritual Assistant

As political candidates are proclaiming their virtues and talents during the primaries, let us consider humility. Humility is not a popular subject for consideration, not only among politicians, but also among ourselves as followers of the Little Poor Man., *the Poverello*.

Once again, as the Regional *Spiritual* Assistant, I feel I can best serve the Region by speaking of spiritual things, and the spiritual and the temporal, the worldly, the secular, rub shoulders. This is true with regard to the proper conduct of the Order and the virtue of humility. We need Ministers and Councils, we need the sharing of ideas, we need formation, we need laws and regulations, Rules and Constitutions. But so often a lot of time is spent at the Regional Executive Council Meetings

discussing problems in fraternities that arise due to the lack of humility. Fraternities know the rules and regulations, but there is a spiritual element missing. Conflicts, dissension, disputes and uncharitableness result from a lack of genuine humility. (*This observation can be more obvious to the outside observer.*)

There is a section in the formation book, "Imitating the Life of St. Francis" (pg 155), which I think is important. The authors clearly make the distinction between self-hate and a lack of self worth, which can lead to emotional sickness, and the genuine humility as expressed by Jesus Christ and Francis of Assisi. Humility is truth. Humility is honesty. The lack of humility, which we sometimes see manifested in our fraternities, is that which says, "My talents are mine. I will show them off, and take the credit. My ideas are important; my preferences must be respected; my ideas are not to be questioned." The tragedy of so many good

people is the infection of pride that runs through their whole lives. One can also be proud of the holiest things such as prayer and kindness. One can even be proud of humility. Oftentimes members will not accept the decisions of others, will be so stubborn and become blind to the opinion of others, not even allowing another to speak. Some feel they have all the answers to all the problems of the world. Some



have their particular apostolate or their favorite devotion and feel that everyone should have the same enthusiasm for that apostolate or devotion. Some might feel that if they give in to someone else's ideas they have lost the game or contest.

Humility and poverty are connected. According to Pope Benedict, the Third Order is particularly called upon today to master the tension between owning and living as if owning nothing. The Third Order is called to a poverty of spirit. Humility is poverty of spirit. The love of littleness, to be minor, is true and genuine poverty. Humility is perfect poverty. Humility is counter-cultural.

St. Francis speaks of humility with regard to superiors as ministers. Ministers are to be feet washers. With regard to education, we are to know self first of all, with honesty. In warnings against self-complacency, we are not to glory in the virtues and graces one might possess. Virtues and graces should be manifested in deeds and not in words. Simplicity and obedience are the products of humility. The ideal of Franciscan obedience would be superiors and subjects in humble contention for the last place and united in rivalry by the bond of fraternal love.

Finally, growth in humility will make the Order stronger, more spiritual and a greater sign of love, joy and peace in our society.

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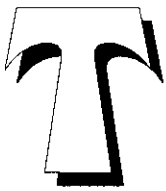
tion portion of gathering. Br. Jack indicated to me of his support in formalizing a program for these men and other's in the New York State correctional facility.

At first I thought that I may be the only person doing this work, but as time has gone by several people have contacted me and are either involved already or asking for advice as to how to begin. I believe that it is key to put a formal program in place, so that individuals who are drawn to this work have the full support of the SFO organization. In order to put a formal program in place I have made a request to our National Council to define guidelines that would include the following capabilities:

- 1.Capability of attachment to a fraternity and/or fraternities (a cell to the main fraternity)
- 2.Allow ing admission and profession for those who successfully complete the formation process.
- 3.Expand the concept of this attached cell beyond a single prison but rather more on a statewide level. This would eliminate the concern of isolation of a single SFO by being transferred to another facility within the state system.

The National Council has agreed to develop guidelines and I ask each Franciscan to pray for the important work that our National Council has undertaken. As I tried to describe earlier in this article, I did not choose this ministry but it was through the Holy Spirit that I have answered this call. I ask each of you for your prayers for this work and our "Friends of Francis".

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otto.schaefer@verison.net



Formation Material Analysis – Part I

by Annabelle Sarno, SFO, Regional Formation Director

According to the *Elements of Formation: A Reflection on the Formation Process* by the Presidency of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, the following criteria is needed for successful Franciscan formation. Programs should include a knowledge of human rights, the Catholic faith, St. Francis, Franciscan history and the Secular Franciscan Order. The SFO Rule, Constitutions and Statutes should also be studied. A Franciscan vocation involves being engaged in the learning process and applying the knowledge to daily life.

Review the Initial formation book and materials your fraternity is currently using to evaluate if the criteria mentioned is achieved in your formation program. Ongoing formation material should build on the aspects of these criteria.

I will begin my analysis of formation material by reviewing three books widely used in our Region. Fraternity goals should be similar, but each fraternity must determine what material is best suited for their members.

Catch Me A Rainbow Too by Fr. Lester Bach, OFM, Cap., Barbo-Carlson Enterprise, (785) 227-2364 is a spiral bound book with 24 Chapters. It is an easy book to read. Each chapter has a theme, SFO rule, Franciscan focus, scripture reading and questions addressed to the individual. If your fraternity is using *this book*, I suggest that supplementary material be used to provide more detailed information about the Secular Franciscan Order.

Dolores Falatyn, the Formation Director of Our Lady of the Rosary in Woodstock, NY, is currently using *Catch Me A Rainbow Too* and said that there is more than enough material in each chapter for a lesson. Geri DeSanto, Minister of Korban in Oakdale, CT said that the book is easy to understand and there is enough material to cover the whole formation period.

Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ

by Fr. Benet Fonck, OFM, Franciscan Press, (217) 228-5670 is a comprehensive workbook for SFO Initial and Ongoing formation. It has plastic wrapped perforated pages for use in binders. This scholarly program is modeled on the structure of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). There are 18 lessons consisting of questions and reflections, SFO rules, scripture readings, writings from St. Francis and St. Clare, prayers, study lessons, activities and liturgical services. This book meets the SFO criteria for successful formation.

Wayne Caldwell, the Formation Director of St. Mary of the Angels in Darien, CT said that *Fully Mature with the Fullness of Christ* is the most organized and thorough training tool he has used. Lynn Carney, the Minister of Our Lady of the Angels in Belchertown, MA said that *the book* has challenging group questions and provides a good solid formation in the rule.

Imitating the Life of Francis compiled by Dorothy Henkes, SFO and Fr. Silas Baumann, OFM, Cap., Francis & Clare Publications, (414) 281-9856 is written in a clear, direct and basic style which appeals to varied educational backgrounds. It consists of 4 Orientation Sessions, 6 Inquiry Sessions and 24 Candidacy Sessions. Some topics included are the lives of St. Francis and his followers, SFO history and rules, Franciscan spirituality, scripture readings and Catholic doctrine. It meets the criteria for a successful formation program.

My fraternity, Holy Spirit in Fairfield, CT, is currently using *Imitating the Life of Francis*. The material has organized lessons and quality information about Franciscans and Catholic dogma. Nancy Marino, the Formation Director of St. Francis in Harrison, NY, said that the book is scholarly with much detail, historical information and inspiring spiritual passages. She said that each session has a theme with good discussion questions.

Let our formation conform us to Christ.

Prayer for the General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order

*Most High Glorious God,
we praise You for Your
presence in the world and
for the tremendous gift of
our Franciscan vocation.
We beseech You to inspire
every brother and sister of
the Secular Franciscan
Order as we prepare for the
upcoming General Chapter
in Hungary
Grant the necessary wisdom
to our brothers and sisters
who will take part in the
Chapter to develop the
priorities for the Order for
the next six years and to
elect those You want to lead
and animate us.*

*Guide and direct us so that
we may follow the Gospel
and our Rule more closely
and be coworkers with You
in the rebuilding of the
Church and the World.
We ask this through Christ
our Lord and through the
intercession of the
Blessed Virgin Mary,
St. Francis, St. Clare, and
our holy patrons
St. Elizabeth and St. Louis.
Amen.*

*The General Chapter
will take place in Hungary from
November 15-22, 2008*

A Franciscan Vision for Windhoek, Namibia

By Michael Guertin, SFO

It all started in the 1990's when I started making rosaries and sending them to various missions around the world. One day, in my rosary makers' newsletter, I saw an address and decided to send rosaries to them. The place was the Poor Clares of Windhoek, Namibia, Africa. The Poor Clares were the only Franciscans in Namibia. We began a correspondence, and as we wrote back and forth, Mother Clara and all the Poor Clares and myself prayed for Friars and Secular Franciscans to come to Namibia. On December 15, 2002, a cell group of about six people was formed. A Secular Franciscan named Theresa Nowah was willing to come from Lilongwe, Malawi to help in training, but travel fare was needed. Mother Clara shared this with me and the funds were raised and sent to her. Theresa, however, had to return to Lilongwe. The small group of Secular Franciscans continued to meet and learned what they could by reading whatever literature was available.

In December 2004, six Friars came to Namibia: two brothers and four priests. At that time, the Secular Franciscan group tried to get a formation program started. Brother Sydney Daniels O.F.M. took on this task. Mother Clara kept me informed on the progress of the Secular Franciscan group and asked me to come for a visit to share what I could with them. In March of 2007, I traveled to Namibia to visit Mother Clara and the Poor Clares in Windhoek. I arrived on March 21 and was met at the airport by four Secular Franciscans who took me to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph Monastery, the residence of the Poor Clares. Mother and all the sisters gave me a very warm welcome and invited

me to stay in their guesthouse. There were about twelve Secular Franciscans in formation, and their acting Minister was Martin Moses. I told Mother I wanted to help out while I was there. My first job was to repair a set of steps leading into the church. I was reminded that our Father Francis also got his start by building with stone, so I dove right into the project. Mother Clara was able to get two local men to help me, and three days later, the steps were ready -- just in time for Palm Sunday services. I also repaired a two-burner hot plate and worked in the orchard and gardens. I had a wonderful time there and the sisters were just wonderful to me. The Secular Franciscans met almost every night for about a month. I shared with them about the SFO and how it was organized. There was good sharing and a lot was learned by all. Archbishop L. N. Nashenda O.M.I. stopped by to see Mother Clara while I was there and asked how things were coming along. He was very gracious to take the time to speak with me. I gave Brother Sydney some of our formation books to read and see how he could use them there. The titles I gave him were "Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order", "Catch Me a Rainbow Too", and "Making the Journey with Christ" by Judy Sardello, S.F.O. My stay ended on Easter Sunday. The Easter services were just wonderful and I was sad to have to leave so soon. The Secular Franciscans of Windhoek are going to travel to South Africa in late May to meet with another group of Secular Franciscans there. Let us pray that they will increase their Franciscan family in Namibia.

Elizabeth of Hungary

Celebrating the 8th Centenary
of her Birth



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Formation Material
prepared by the
International
Fraternity
can be found at
www.ciofs.org

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A wonderful resource !!

Congratulations to ...

Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity
Newport, Rhode Island on the
celebration of their 85th
anniversary as a fraternity this past
year.

Val Borg, Holy Spirit Fraternity,
Fairfield, Connecticut, on her 20th
Anniversary in the Order.

Fr. Solanus Casey
Regional Executive Council

Notice of Change

The Regional Executive Council has accepted the resignation of Rose Story as Regional Secretary. To fill this vacancy, Sally Haddad has been appointed to this position. Sally's contact information can be found in this newsletter on Page 2.

Many thanks to Sally for accepting this servant leadership role, and to Rose for her service to the Region.

FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK

At the 2007 NAFRA gathering, the National Fraternity voted 34 to 3 to join the Franciscan Action Network.

What is the Franciscan Action Network?

The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) is designed to bring a coordinated and effective voice to matters of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in our world. The particular focus of the Franciscan Action Network's advocacy is the U.S. Government and related Washington, D.C. based institutions. The advocacy topics will be both international and domestic in scope. In these arenas, the Franciscan Action Network hopes to bring a spirit of healing and reconciliation as they advocate for the transformation of the world, as inspired by the Spirit of God.

Who is the Franciscan Action Network?

At present the Franciscan Action Network is made up of recognized Franciscan entities based in the U.S. that chose to be associated with the efforts. These entities are both Catholic and Ecumenical—congregations and provinces of religious men and religious women, and regions of Secular Franciscans.

How does FAN function?

The Franciscan Action Network is composed of three interrelated parts, each inspiring and supporting the other in a relational Franciscan style:

** Members of FAN*

The backbone of the Network is the friars, sisters, Secular Franciscans, ecumenical Franciscans, and the men and women with whom they minister.

** Action Commission*

The Commission serves as a recognized group of leaders who will work to help the larger FAN formulate and focus the issues of advocacy for transformation, as well as to enhance the communication conduits of the Network.

** Action Center*

The Action Center, based in Washington, D.C., with staff trained and dedicated to help the FAN achieve its goals of social transformation.

How is the Franciscan Action Network Supported?

In its inaugural year, the Franciscan Action Network will be supported by donations from the entities of the member communities. In the future, additional means will be sought as the FAN grows and becomes ever more effective.

NAFRA voted to request a voluntary donation of at least \$1.00 per member. Fraternities are asked to collect the funds and forward:

Dennis Ross, SFO
National Treasurer
8933 Trailwood Court
Mentor, Ohio, 44060-2131.

SELF is now *FLIC*

Franciscan Living in Community

August 11–15, 2008

Mount St. Alphonsus Retreat Center
Esopus, New York

Review your Call, Refresh your Spirit
Renew your Community

FLIC is not a retreat, but a gathering of Secular Franciscans living in community, which includes daily Mass, morning and evening prayer, conferences, meal times, rest times, quiet times, and social get-togethers. Professed, Candidates, Inquirers, or those just interested in our Way of Life are invited to this week in community.

For additional information contact Bob Campbell

Phone: 516-599-4256

Email: ArcyC@aol.com

Cost: \$300 includes room and all meals

Sponsoring Regions:
Fr. Solanus Casey
Our Lady of the Angels
Tau Cross

Blessed Franz Jagerstatter

Beatified on October 26, 2007

Franz Jagerstatter was a Secular Franciscan from Austria martyred during World War II by the Nazi Army. Known for his opposition to the Nazi Regime, when German troops moved into Austria, he was called to active military duty but he refused to serve the Third Reich. He was convicted in a military trial and beheaded on August 9, 1943.

In one of his last letters from prison, Franz wrote:

"Just as the man who thinks only of this world does everything possible to make life here easier and better, so must we, too, who believe in the eternal Kingdom, risk everything in order to receive a great reward there ... Let us love our enemies, bless those who curse us, pray for those who persecute us. For love will conquer and will endure for all eternity. Happy are they who live and die in God's love."

Blessed Franz, pray for us!